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Tracey Bennett Carter

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

How Self-Awareness, Motivation, and Empathy are Embedded and Modeled in Community College Preservice Early Educator Online Courses

by

Tracey Bennett Carter

MA, North Carolina Central University, 1999

BS, North Carolina Central University, 1996

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Education, Learning, Instruction, and Innovation

Walden University

November 2017

Abstract

Researchers have determined that early childhood (EC) educators need to have personal and social skills and competencies to address the emotional demands of the EC profession. Research is lacking regarding how preservice programs help prepare students emotionally for the EC profession and on whether online courses are a suitable environment for future EC teachers to learn these skills. The purpose of this study was to explore if and how personal and social emotional intelligence (EI) competencies were being embedded and modeled in community college preservice EC educator online courses. This qualitative multiple case study design was employed using a conceptual framework based on Goleman's EI theory and included 3 community college preservice EC faculty member participants. Research questions targeted self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies and data sources included faculty interviews, syllabi, assignment descriptions, asynchronous discussion forum prompts, and faculty feedback on student assignments. Data analysis included using values coding and the identification of relevant themes as related to Goleman's EI theory. Results indicated that while faculty perceived EI as important and that they modeled competencies in online discussions and feedback, there were not many embedded activities in the online courses that provided practice or helped to show growth in EI competencies. This study contributes to positive social change for EC faculty by acting as an impetus for the intentional incorporation of EI activities in online environments, leading possibly to better prepared EC teachers and therefore improved teacher quality of life and teacher retention.

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Dedication

My dissertation work is dedicated to my mother (Annie B Bennett). She has been there for me through this whole process, from the very beginning to end, as a constant encourager and an avid supporter. I am so thankful to my Heavenly Daddy for creating and blessing her with the love, faith, patience, and fortitude to endure me as I went through this process. I am so abundantly blessed to have a best friend, sister in Christ, confidante, and mother all rolled up into one gorgeous bundle. You are definitely the wind beneath my wings and whisper in my ear that helps to keep me centered. Through all of your encouragement and support I feel like this is as much your degree as it is mine. Thank You Mommy (The first Dr. B)!!! I also dedicate my work to my husband (George Alfred Carter II). Thank you honey for your love, patience, understanding, and for reminding me to do some work. Without the love and support from the two of you this journey would have been unbearable for me and those who had to deal with me. I am so thankful to God for the two of you. Each day with the two of you I am continually reminded of how blessed and highly favored I am.

I also want to acknowledge my brother (Rodney Bennett) and my sister-in-law (Tammy H Bennett) for taking my prayer requests and actually praying for me throughout this journey. Thank you guys! Last but certainly not least, I acknowledge and dedicate my dissertation work to my father, Frank Bennett (1934-2004). I know that you passed your work ethic and tenacity on to me which assisted me with seeing this work through to completion. Thank you daddy (Poe) and I love and miss you!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

It may be taken for granted that early care educators, especially those individuals who work with infant, toddler, and preschool aged children, are emotionally competent. An assumption that early care educators inherently possess the emotional capacity necessary to implement practices that aid in the development of young learners and, even more specifically, the young learners' development of social and emotional competence, is problematic. Jones, Bouffard, and Weissbourd (2013) explained that while having emotionally intelligent early care educators in the classroom is ideal, the reality is that this is not necessarily a common occurrence, which presents a problem.

According to Onchwari (2010) and Osgood (2010), early childhood education (ECE) is an emotionally demanding field. Because of these emotional demands, the issue arises as to how the early care educator's emotional competence affects their ability to foster social-emotional growth in children. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) identified a relationship between the educators' social-emotional competence and the educators' capacity to implement socially and emotionally focused curricula. If this relationship and understanding identified by Jennings and Greenberg holds true, there is a need to address the development of the educators' emotional intelligence (EI), on which social-emotional competence depends.

However, while there has been recognition of the emotional demands of the ECE field, there may be a lack of focus in the preservice educator curriculum on specifically developing emotionally competent early educators. Jennings and Greenberg (2009)

explained that “research has demonstrated that many teachers deal with highly stressful emotional situations in ways that compromise their ability to develop and sustain healthy relationships with their students, effectively manage their classrooms, and support student learning” (p. 515). One way to help prepare preservice teachers for the emotional stress they will encounter in the classroom is to have elements of EI embedded and modeled in the courses they take, particularly online courses. There is a need for increased understanding of how personal and social EI competencies are present in community college preservice early educator online courses.

While the utilization of online learning formats is more prevalent today in educational programs, there are both benefits and challenges that come with learning online. The benefits include convenience and opportunity for learner participation (Fedynich, 2014). For example, learners have the opportunity to complete coursework without the sacrifice of seat and travel time, which is required when participating in face-to-face classes (Castillo, 2013; Fedynich, 2014). Online learners also have opportunities to participate and interact using a plethora of online and communication resources (Fedynich, 2014). However, a major challenge of the online learning format is with regard to course design and implementation (Fedynich, 2014). Designing online courses that meet the educational needs of the learner while at the same time creating experiences that help develop the student’s personal and social skills and competencies is challenging (Castillo, 2013; Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012; Fedynich, 2014). Emotional intelligence is one such competency.

This study has social implications for young learners, preservice educators, and the ECE profession as a whole. Developing early childhood educators into emotionally intelligent professionals is essential if the overall goal is to facilitate the development of young learners into emotionally intelligent learners and citizens. In doing so, it is important to recognize that diverse learners participate in preservice early childhood educator preparation programs at the 2- and 4-year levels. While learner demographics for each of these institutions of higher education (IHE) are diverse, 2-year or community colleges serve a population of learners even more diverse than those of 4-year colleges and universities (Goldrick-Rab, 2010). Community colleges are highly regarded for their open admissions policy, which expands educational opportunities to everyone, regardless of prior advantages or disadvantages (Goldrick-Rab, 2010). As a result, relative to 4-year institutions, community colleges disproportionately serve less academically prepared students (Porchea, Allen, Robbins, & Phelps, 2010). Goldrick-Rab (2010) also identified the EI trait of motivation as a common deficiency in learners enrolled in community colleges. Because many potential early care educators utilize the community college online classroom as a means of preparing for their professional journey, understanding how community college ECE courses may or may not address EI is essential. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore if and how self-awareness, motivation, and empathy, three EI competencies, were being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses.

This chapter is an introduction to the study. In this chapter, I presented background information from the research literature related to the study, a description of

the research gap that this study addressed, and an explanation of why this study was needed. In addition, I described the research problem, the purpose of the study, and the conceptual framework in relation to the research questions. I also provided an overview of the methodology of the study as well as the assumptions, limitations, and significance of the study.

Background

There was a variety of research that addressed topics related to this study. Measurement of the preservice early educator's EI level was one area of focus for current research (Corcoran & Tormey, 2010, 2012b; Kasler, Hen, & Nov, 2013; Oberst, Gallifa, Farriols, & Vilaregut, 2009; Vesely, Saklofske, & Leschied, 2013). Another area of research focused specifically on the academic and personal preparation levels of community college students (Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Martin, Galentino, & Townsend, 2014; Porchea et al., 2010; Van Doorn & Van Doorn, 2014). This area of research highlighted the diverse characteristics and challenges of educating the community college demographic. Other research focused both on community college students and the increase of online course delivery formats and the impact online course formats have on student performance (Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Martin et al., 2014; Porchea et al., 2010; Van Doorn & Van Doorn, 2014). The available research more specifically related to this study focused on EI and online learning (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012; Han & Johnson, 2012; You & Kang, 2014), but it was not applied to community college students. While varying aspects of this study have been conducted in isolation, there was no available

research which connected EI preparedness with community college early childhood preservice educators in online courses.

This review of the available research highlighted a gap in the literature. There was no available research that specifically addressed how elements of EI are incorporated into community college ECE online courses. Because the community college classroom is the venue that many potential educators utilize to gain entry into the ECE field, it was important to understand how learners are being prepared at this level. Although literature was present regarding the EI of preservice early educators, that literature primarily focused on those preservice educators enrolled in bachelor or master's degree programs (Corcoran, & Tormey, 2010, 2012, 2013; Ersay, Kaynak, & Türkoğlu, 2014; Guo, Piasta, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2010; Onchwari, 2010; Singh & Kumar, 2009; Vesely, Saklofske, & Nordstokke, 2014). Therefore, the problem wass that there is a lack of understanding regarding how EI competancies are embedded and modeled in the community college early childhood preservice online courses.

This study was also necessary because there is a need for emotionally intelligent early educators in the early childhood profession. However, because those entering the field often possess less EI than those entering other professions (Bedel, 2014; Corcoran & Tormey, 2012b), the programs that prepare them for the classroom must help them to build up their own EI so they are better able to handle the emotional demands of the early childhood classroom. The primary approach for doing so in online courses is through the use of assignments, the feedback on those assignments, and discussion forum prompts. This study may assist faculty with developing, incorporating, and implementing

instructional approaches that intentionally facilitate the development of emotional competencies in learners. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore if and how self-awareness, motivation, and empathy, three EI competencies, are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this study was a lack of understanding of how personal and social EI competencies are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. This problem was multifaceted. Young children benefit by having emotionally intelligent early educators in the classroom (Bedel, 2014; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Näring, Vlerick, & Van de Ven, 2012; Onchwari, 2010). Despite this however, research showed that preservice early educators have lower than average levels of EI especially in the areas of perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotion (Corcoran & Tormey, 2012b, p. 2452). Preservice preschool teachers have scored lower in EI compared to majors such as secondary math and biology (Bedel, 2014). These findings indicated a need to focus on improving the preservice early educator's EI competencies between the time they enter the program and when they graduate. If preservice early childhood educators lack sufficient EI when entering education programs, improving their EI may need to result from their coursework. Official course objectives or outcomes, however, rarely included aspects of EI; they tended to place more emphasis on cognitive objectives (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012; Cleveland-Innes, Stenbom, & Hrastinski, 2014). Therefore, it is the interactions between preservice educators and their course faculty where students are most likely to

improve their EI (Ladyshewsky, 2013). However, little was known about these interactions especially as it related to online course formats.

The problem of how to build EI competancies was current and compounded when student and faculty interactions occur solely online. Even with the improvements in online learning, the issue of the lack of connectedness continued to be a problem. In online learning environments, emotion was present for the learner personally and experientially, but was often not addressed in the design and implementation of the learning environment (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012). Research highlighted student perceptions regarding online learning environments. For example, students often did feel a strong sense of community (Seckman, 2014), they felt the online learning environment was two dimensional and lacked emotion (Fedynich, 2014; Mekie, Mehta, & Saija, 2014), and they did not feel connected to instructors (Mastel-Smith, Post, & Lake, 2015). If preservice early educators are to improve their EI competancies, a closer exploration of student and faculty interactions in the online environment must be further explored.

The problem was relevant in several contexts. Better understanding of how EI was embedded and modeled in online courses was applicable to students, faculty, the community college as a whole, and future teachers. For students, the problem was germane because EI competencies such as self-awareness and motivation are necessary for dealing with challenges encountered personally as a result of completing coursework (Martin et al., 2014). EI competencies were also noted as necessary for dealing with the challenges students will encounter while working in the early childhood classroom (Baltaci & Demir, 2012; Curby, Brock, & Hamre, 2013; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014;

Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White, & Salovey, 2012). Better understanding of how EI was embedded and modeled in coursework is most relevant for students as they have the most to gain or lose if they enter the classroom without these personal and social competencies.

For faculty, the problem was significant because faculty are charged with facilitating the development of students into effective educators and for creating the learning environment in which to do so. Because faculty are responsible for developing and implementing online courses that produce emotionally intelligent professionals, improving EI through coursework must be addressed. Online courses are being offered in increasing numbers, and these environments are not always viewed as the best for learning personal and social emotional competencies (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012). Therefore, the faculty must develop the necessary skills to create and implement courses that build the student's content knowledge regarding ECE while at the same time intentionally developing the students' EI competencies.

The problem was also pertinent for the community college as a whole. Because of the diversity of challenges faced by the community college demographic and the increased number of online courses taken, community colleges must be intentional regarding the development and implementation of online courses to ensure that personal and social EI competencies are incorporated (Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Han & Johnson, 2012; Porchea et al., 2010). Community colleges serve populations of students who often lack preparedness academically and personally, requiring additional scaffolding to improve emotional personal and social competencies (Barnett, 2011; Clotfelter, Ladd, Muschkin,

& Vigdor, 2013; Katz & Davison, 2014; Dobmeier, Kalkbrenner, Hill, & Hernández, 2013; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Martin et al., 2014). Community college students also have diverse mental health issues and needs, which tends to prolong or act as a barrier to degree completion (Clotfelter et al., 2013; Katz & Davison, 2014). Better understanding of how EI competencies are being embedded and modeled in online courses could help community colleges understand the relationship between student EI competency and retention and completion rates.

Lastly, the problem was also relevant because EI is a critical factor in how the preservice teachers will interact with others in the professional environment. The problem is most important to future teachers who themselves need to have proper EI in order to be emotionally prepared to care for young children (Bedel, 2014; Corcoran & Tormey, 2012b; Denham, Bassett, & Zinsser, 2012; Vesely et al., 2013). This is especially true because some children are entering the classroom having experienced challenging emotional, mental, and family life situations (Davis et al., 2011). Emotionally intelligent educators can better create, develop, and foster relationships in the learning environment as well as with families and administrators (Ergur, 2009).

How EI competencies are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses is a significant area for study. Community college students need role models and examples of how to address and assist with the development of emotional competencies in young children (Nissen & Hawkins, 2010; Rivers, Tomeney, Obryon, & Brackett, 2013). If data from faculty interviews, syllabi, assignment feedback, and discussion forum prompts show that EI is being modeled in

online courses, more research can be done to determine the long-term effectiveness of the EI influence. On the other hand, if the online environment does not prove to be a place where personal and social emotional competencies are modeled, encouraged, and learned, then community colleges need to consider other options to support their students emotionally. Community colleges will need to examine if preservice early educator preparation programs should provide specific training for online instructors regarding the development of emotional competencies in learners. Community colleges may also want to consider if the online learning environment is the best format for addressing this competency in students.

Research showed that elements of EI are connected to faculty presence (Cotler, DiTursi, Goldstein, Yates, & DelBelso, 2017; Dyment, Downing, & Budd, 2013), which can be expressed in asynchronous discussions and in how assignments are designed and assessed. Possible solutions to the problem have been studied by researchers who examined student interactions in asynchronous discussion forums and the impact of incorporating reflective journaling assignments (Cornish & Jenkins, 2012). To address how levels of emotions are present while participating in online courses, some researchers examined the emotional components of student interactions in online courses through the discussion forums (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2014; You & Kang, 2014). To address issues of preparing students' personal and social competencies, other studies investigated how reflective journaling might encourage the development of emotional competencies such as self-awareness (Cornish & Jenkins, 2012). Most of the research, however, has been focused on the university level demographic. What was missing is

research specifically focused on the presence of EI in online courses for the community college preservice early care educator. Specifically, there is a need for increased understanding of how preservice early educator community college online courses reflect Goleman's (1995) personal and social competencies of EI.

Purpose of the Study

The intent of this qualitative case study was to explore how personal and social EI competencies are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. The phenomenon that was examined in this study was the presence of EI in online courses. This research focused on if and how three competencies of EI were reflected in community college preservice early educator online courses. To accomplish this purpose, I described how faculty perceptions, syllabi, discussion forum prompts, and assignment feedback reflected or encouraged self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies. Studying these areas of the online classroom provided insight into if and how programs were intentionally addressing and assisting with the development of EI competencies in preservice early educators. A better understanding of how online classrooms embed and model EI competencies is important to community college early educator faculty so they can better assist in the development of the preservice early educator's emotional competence.

Research Questions

This qualitative case study was based on one central question and four subquestions. The central research question was:

RQ: How are self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?

Related subquestions were:

SQ1: How do ECE faculty perceive their role in embedding and modeling self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in their online courses?

SQ2: How is self-awareness embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?

SQ3: How is motivation embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?

SQ4: How is empathy embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on the EI research of Goleman (1998), which informed the research design for this study. This framework provided a contextual lens through which understanding how personal and social EI competencies were being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses was explored.

Emotional intelligence is described as the ability of an individual to recognize, motivate, and manage emotions and feelings, personally and in relationships (Goleman, 1998, p. 317). EI includes five competencies: self-awareness, motivation, empathy, self-regulation, and adeptness (social skills) in relationships (pp. 24, 318). With EI, Goleman identified an emotional competence framework and defined emotional competence as "a

learned capability based on EI that results in outstanding performance at work" (p. 24). Goleman's framework included two categories of competencies, personal and social. Goleman defined the personal category as competencies that "determine how we manage ourselves" (p. 26) and the social category as competencies that "determine how we handle relationships" (p. 27). EI elements under personal competence included self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation; EI elements under social competence included empathy and social skills. From the personal competence framework, Goleman defined self-awareness as "knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources, and institutions" (p. 26) and motivation as the "emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals" (p. 26). From the social competence framework, Goleman defined empathy as the "awareness of others' feelings, needs, and concerns" (p. 27). Essentially, Goleman identified competencies that reflect an individuals' ability to understand and manage themselves and to understand and interact with others.

Goleman described five components in his framework and divided them into competencies, personal and social. For the purpose of this study, self-awareness and motivation, both personal competancies, and empathy, a social competency, were chosen as factors to be explored and identified as relevant to this study, as these are the competencies that are needed most in early childcare providers. Studies showed that self-awareness (Baltaci & Demir, 2012; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014), motivation (Mansfield, Beltman, Price, & McConney, 2012; Vesely et al., 2013), and empathy (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014) are important attributes teachers and caregivers of young children should

have. The importance of the framework components will be further described in Chapter 2.

Goleman's EI framework has been used in varying areas of research. It has been primarily used in the world of business to identify and examine leadership and organizational skills in the workplace (Basu & Sujatha, 2015; Rodrigues & Madgaonkar, 2014; Vinod et al., 2014), but EI has also been used to examine the inclusion of EI competencies into health related curricula (Bhochhibhoya, & Branscum, 2015; Nelson, Fierke, Sucher, & Janke, 2015). Because Goleman's framework has been used previously to examine the curricula of health related fields, and due to the similarities between the health-related and education fields, Goleman's framework was chosen for this study. Goleman's framework was also chosen because it has been used in curricula and trainings that address the development of leadership skills (Boyatzis, Smith, Van Oosten, & Woolford, 2013; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Nordin, 2012; Sánchez-Núñez, Patti, & Holzer, 2015), which is necessary for early educators.

Goleman's EI framework was specifically chosen to help answer the central research question and to aid in the research design and analysis of this study. The purpose of the framework was to keep me focused on the concrete level and to provide me with an emic view (Fram, 2013; p. 12). For research design, the framework acted as a lens to explore EI components in the online coursework. One form of data that was collected as part of this study was faculty interviews. Goleman's definitions of the three EI competencies from the personal and social categories were the basis for developing interview questions for the online faculty to gain an understanding of their perceptions of

the presence of EI in online courses and how they facilitated EI competencies in that environment. During data analysis, the use of Goleman's EI framework first allowed me to identify whether or not online courses have elements of personal and social EI competencies. The framework's focus on self-awareness, motivation, and empathy guided and informed the coding process allowing themes to emerge (Yin, 2014) I provide a more thorough explanation of how the conceptual framework was used for research design and analysis in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

For this qualitative study, I used a case study design. According to Yin (2014) a case study is defined in two ways. Yin explained that a case approach is relevant if the goal of the research is to explain how or why a social phenomenon exists (p. 4). First, Yin identified a case study as an empirical inquiry which provides an in-depth and contextual investigation of a present phenomenon in which the phenomenon and contextual boundaries are not clearly evident (pp. 16-17). Second, Yin defined a case study in terms of the actual methodology including the need to utilize multiple data sources in order to address the multiple variables of interest (p. 17). This study specifically used a multiple-case study research design. Yin also explained that case study approaches are useful and appropriate when contextual conditions have relevancy to the targeted phenomenon. Therefore, the design of this study was chosen to gain an in-depth and contextual understanding of how the identified phenomenon of EI in online courses, exists and how varying aspects of the learning environment reflect attributes of Goleman's elements of self-awareness, motivation, and empathy.

In this multiple-case study, the phenomenon explored was if and how EI is embedded and modeled in online preservice early educator courses at community colleges. The case or unit of study was a required, introductory, ECE course titled, "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) at community colleges in a Southeastern state in the United States of America. Three community colleges were purposely selected, with one section of the course being studied at each location. A total of three sections of the EDU 119 course from 3 different community colleges in the same region were a part of the study. The number of course sections were according to the number of sections being offered by each of the selected sites. According to Mason (2010) the concept of saturation is a factor in most qualitative and referred to as the point of redundancy. It was also explained as the point at which the information gained has been maximized or no new information can be gained (Mason, 2010; Merriam, 2009). Mason (2010) and Merriam (2009) also explained that determining the sample size for qualitative studies is really dependent upon the question being asked. Because this study had the goal of gaining an in-depth and contextual understanding of the phenomenon, the sample size of three sections of the EDU 119 course from three different community colleges in the same region provided the required information to answer the aspects focused on in the research.

This case study was conducted using courses taught at programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation (ECADA) and nonaccredited community colleges in the Southeastern part of the United States of America. According to Miles, Huberman, and

Saldana (2014), the case is a unit of analysis can include one or several cases. This definition of case therefore, fit the purpose of this study because the phenomenon occured in a context bounded by organization (community colleges), environment (online course work), role (faculty for preservice early educator programs), and process (incorporation of EI into course work).

Data was collected from multiple sources, including individual faculty interviews, course documents, and observations of transcripts of asynchronous course discussions. First, interviews were done with Skype, phone calls as follow-up measures were not necessary. The second source of data, course documents such as syllabi, assignment descriptions, and samples of faculty feedback from those writing assignments, were collected from the faculty member electronically via e-mail. And the last source of data, asynchronous discussion forum prompts were also collected from faculty members electronically via e-mail.

Data analysis was conducted using a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) program, an Excel spreadsheet, to code the data. Data sources were coded for the emergent themes and discrepant data. Using a CAQDAS program assisted me with conceptualizing the data. The CAQDAS program managed and stored data and permitted the coding and retrieval of data. Coding according to Miles et al. (2013) is a means of retrieving, assembling, and condensing the data. For this study, data analysis strategies most appropriate for the research questions and data included both informal and formal strategies. Specifically, reviewing documents and interview transcripts acted as the informal strategy and coding acted as the formal strategy. Values coding which Miles

et al. (2014) identified as the "application of three different types of related codes onto qualitative data that reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives and worldview" (p. 75) acted as the pre-coding measure. While values coding, approximately 10-20 codes, acted as the set of pre-codes during the First Cycle Coding, flexibility occurred during the Second Cycle Coding process. Essentially, during this coding process attention to how, where, why, and when flexibility was warranted and permissible was necessary. Having flexibility during Second Cycle Coding allowed codes to emerge from the data rather than having the codes pre-determined. After the data were coded, key findings as related to the research questions were reported through the lens of Goleman's (1995) domains of EI.

Definitions

Associate degree: A two-year degree program based out of the community college.

Community college: A two-year higher educational institution.

Community college ECE faculty: Instructors and professors teaching associate degree courses in the early childhood or closely related disciplines in a community college educational setting.

Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation (ECADA): Accreditation awarded to associate degree programs that demonstrate evidence of meeting the Professional Preparation Standards (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2015).

Early childhood education (ECE): The area of study which focuses on the care, teaching, and educating of young children from birth to age 8.

Early educator: Individuals working as teachers in the early childhood classroom.

Emotional awareness: Recognition of one's emotions and their effects. (Goleman, 1998, p. 54).

Emotional competence: "A learned capability based emotional intelligence that results that results in outstanding performance at work; shows how much of that potential we have translated into on-the job capabilities" (Goleman, 1998, p. 24).

Emotional intelligence: "The capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (Goleman, 1998, p. 317). Emotional intelligence "determines our potential for learning the practical skills that are based on its five elements: self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation, empathy, and adeptness in relationships" (Goleman, 1998, p.24).

Empathy: "Awareness of other's feelings, needs, and concerns" (Goleman, 1998, p. 27).

Motivation: "Emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals" (Goleman, 1998, p. 26).

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC): Professional association for the field of ECE.

Online course: Courses in which course content is delivered online with no face-to-face meetings between students and instructors.

Preservice early educator: Students enrolled in the early childhood associate (ECA) degree program at a community college preparing to enter into the ECE profession.

Self-awareness: "Knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions" (Goleman, 1998, p. 26).

Assumptions

This study was based on several assumptions. First I assumed that the study participants were familiar with the concepts of self-awareness, motivation, and empathy. While participants do not need to have received any training in modeling these competencies, they do need to know what they are and how students would show evidence of these competencies. This assumption was important to this study because in order to obtain meaningful interview data, faculty needed to identify which, if any, of these competencies they desire and seek to build in preservice early educator students, were addressed and how they do so.

Next, I assumed that participant responses, oral and written, were accurate, and represented the knowledge and understanding participants had regarding the role of EI in online courses and how they addressed EI competencies in their teaching. This assumption was important because accurate responses assisted with identifying areas of strength and areas of needed growth with regard to incorporating EI competencies into teaching practices. The third assumption was that the documents I collected in relation to the preservice early educator online coursework at the community college were accurate and representative of the assignments of the course and feedback provided to students.

This assumption was important to this study because accurate documentation assisted with identifying areas of strength and areas of needed growth with regard to incorporating EI competencies into coursework.

Scope and Delimitations

Research addressing aspects of how competencies of EI are present in community college preservice early educator online courses are limited. This study however, focused solely on how personal and social EI competencies were being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. The focus of the study was also on how the course reflected three EI competencies from the personal and social categories. While the integration of EI competencies into face-to-face teacher preparation coursework were researched, this study focused solely on exploring how personal and social EI competencies were being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. This study was also different because the focus was not on measuring the EI levels of participants which is the focus of much of the current research. Instead, this study focused on how preservice educators were exposed to EI competancies rather than on the measured levels of EI in the preservice educator.

In addition to this scope, this study was further delimited by time, location, and resources. In relation to time, data was collected during a specified semester. In relation to location, this research study was limited to a single community college online course required by the state in preservice early educator programs. In relation to resources, I was the only researcher for this study, and as a result, financial resources as well as time was

also a factor in conducting the study. Therefore, this study was conducted using community colleges that were in close proximity to my home and work.

Also, while the framework chosen for this study supported the purpose of this investigation, it also limited the study. In past studies, others have used frameworks based on Salovey and Mayer's "four-branch ability model" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Mayer & Salovey, 1997, and Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000, 2004). A primary reason that the four-branch ability model was more commonly used as framework in EI research was because it has more of a theoretical foundation (Dacre Pool & Qualter, 2012) and viewed EI as a cognitive function (Corcoran & Tormey, 2012a). This framework however was not chosen because the four-branch ability model is typically used in research that seeks to measure or identify the progression of EI capacity in a learner, which was not the purpose of this study. A conceptual framework using Goleman's concept of EI was chosen because EI was viewed as a teachable construct.

Transferability of the findings from this study may inform future research by providing insight on how course developers for community college preservice early educator program can develop online course content that has the specific goal of developing the preservice early educator's EI. The knowledge gained from this study provided insight as to how the faculty who teach community college online preservice early educator courses can intentionally develop the EI competencies of preservice teachers. Insights from this study may also help to determine if online coursework is the best approach for developing the preservice early educator's EI competencies.

Limitations

In qualitative research, and case study design specifically, there are inherent universal weaknesses such as the potential for researcher bias and the generalization of results to a wider population (Merriam, 2009). Limitations in this study were minimized by incorporating several strategies which included, member checks, descriptive narrative of context, audit trails, and triangulation. With regard to member checks for example, in this study, there were a number of elements in which biases might influence study outcomes. As a result of my role as a faculty member at one of the community colleges in the Southeastern part of the United States of America, for example, the potential for researcher bias existed. It was therefore, important to have a process to identify and manage bias. Therefore, member checks or respondent validation during the data collection phase were incorporated (Merriam, 2009). Also, there were specific elements of this study's design that also contributed to limitations. For example, because I acted as the researcher and the only individual responsible for data collection and analysis the potential for researcher bias also existed. Merriam (2009) and Yin (2009) suggested including measures such as audit trails and triangulation to combat this bias.

Transferability and dependability are issues that must also be addressed with qualitative studies. In this study therefore, to address the limitation issue of transferability, a "thick, rich description" of the context, as Merriam (2009) described, was provided. To address the issue of dependability, audit trails and triangulation are the measures I used. Audit trails for example, were used to document protocol for analyzing data, discuss findings, and to discuss possible influences on the findings. Triangulation of

data sources were used as a measure to increase the credibility and accuracy of findings. These strategies are presented in further detail in Chapter 3 in the section about issues of trustworthiness.

Significance

The significance of a study is determined in relation to advancing knowledge in the field, to improving practice in the field, and to contributing to positive social change. In relation to advancing knowledge, researchers and educators may use the knowledge gained from this study as a catalyst for understanding how EI concepts are and can be incorporated into online teacher preparation courses and programs. In relation to improving practice in the field, this study may encourage faculty of community college teacher preparation programs to understand the need to intentionally incorporate and model instructional approaches to develop EI in learners. In relation to contributing to positive social change, this study may assist in the development of emotionally intelligent early care professionals who have the skills and capacity to facilitate the development of young learners into emotionally intelligent learners and citizens.

Summary

This chapter was an introduction to this qualitative study, which used a multiple-case study design. The background section included a brief summary of the research literature related to this study. The problem statement focused on the lack of understanding of how or if competencies of EI are present in community college preservice early educator online courses. The purpose of this study, as reflected in the central research question, was to explore if and how self-awareness, motivation, and

empathy, three EI competencies, were being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. The conceptual framework was based on the EI research of Goleman (1998). In terms of the methodology of this study, the participants were full-time faculty), teaching online preservice early educator courses at a community college in a state located in the southeastern part of the United States of America. Data were collected from multiple sources, including faculty interviews, course documents, and observations of transcripts of asynchronous course discussions. Data were analyzed using a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) program. Assumptions and limitations were also discussed. This study may contribute to positive social change through the development of emotionally intelligent early care professionals who have the skills and capacity to facilitate the development of young learners into emotionally intelligent learners and citizens.

In Chapter 2, I provide a review of the literature to this study. In relation to the conceptual framework, I describe the EI research of Goleman (1998), I also review current literature which addressed EI and online learning in terms of the major gaps and deficiencies in the literature. Specifically the review focused on early educator preparation and the community college demographic. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the major themes and discrepancies found in the research and how this study addressed the research gap.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This study addressed the problem of a lack of understanding of how EI competencies are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. In general, the teaching profession is an emotionally demanding profession. This is especially true for the field of ECE (Bedel, 2014; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Onchwari, 2010; Osgood, 2010). Early educators need to be emotionally intelligent in order to effectively aid the children's emotional development. While research on EI and preservice early educators has been conducted, little is known about how preservice early educators are being prepared to develop into emotionally intelligent early educators. Little is also known about how preservice early educators are prepared at the community college level. Even less is known about how preservice early educators are prepared at the community college level through online coursework. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore if and how self-awareness, motivation, and empathy, three EI competencies, are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses.

There was a wide variety of research that addressed the need for emotionally intelligent educators. Research studies ranged from an overall focus on EI in young children (Denham, Bassett, Thayer, Mincic, & Sirotkin, 2012) to how early educators can assist with facilitating the development of EI in young children (Curby et al., 2013; Durlak, Weissberg, & Dymnicki, 2011; Rivers et al., 2013). The available research also included a focus on preservice teacher (educator) emotional competence and intelligence

(Edannur, 2010; Onchwari, 2010; Singh & Kumar, 2009). While there was some research available, such as Denham, Bassett, and Zinsser (2012) and Baltaci and Demir (2012), that focused on preservice educator emotional competence and intelligence, the preservice educators were typically from a four-year college or university demographic. There was also a lack of research that specifically focused on the community college preservice early care educator demographic.

Sections in this chapter include a description of the literature search strategy and a detailed description of the conceptual framework, followed by a thorough literature review. The literature review topics include a focus on the challenges of educating community college students, personal and social EI competencies and early care educators, approaches to developing personal and social EI competencies, and online learning and emotional competencies. The chapter ends with a summary of the findings and the gap in literature.

Literature Search Strategy

In order to obtain literature for this review I used a number of library databases and search engines. In an effort to gain an understanding of the available literature regarding preservice early educator EI, I conducted a search of multidisciplinary databases. Multidisciplinary databases such as Academic Search Complete, ProQuest Central, and Science Direct in the Walden University Library is where the literature searches began.

I used a number of search terms and phrases to identify research articles appropriate for this literature review. Literature searches focused on several areas and

included search terms such as *emotional intelligence, emotional competence,* and *social competence,* which acted as catalysts for the literature searches. Literature searches using the term *emotional intelligence*, however, yielded more relative results.

As the search for empirical research continued, I used additional terms and methods. Because this research focuses on the preservice early educator and even more specifically, the community college preservice early educator, search strategies included combining terms in an effort to streamline the results. Because there was little current research on the topic of preservice early educator EI and online learning, additional measures were taken to be sure the literature had been exhausted. Term combinations included *emotional intelligence and preservice early educator* and *emotional intelligence and higher education*, which resulted in securing articles that were more specific to the focus of this research. Also, because online learning is another facet of this research, literature searches also included combining the terms *emotional intelligence* and *online learning*.

A review of the articles' abstracts was the basis for making the decision whether to select the article. I also searched on Google Scholar for articles identified as having the most relevancy through a review of the abstract. Google Scholar is the source that yielded the largest number of relevant articles. Using the key words of selected articles acted as a catalyst for securing additional articles. Google Scholar's "cited by" list and "similar topic" lead to more relevant and popular articles.

Conceptual Framework: Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Model

In this study, I explored the phenomenon of if and how self-awareness, motivation, and empathy, three EI competencies, were being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses through a conceptual framework based on Goleman's EI theory. For this study, EI I defined as "the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (Goleman, 1998, p. 317). Goleman, in his book *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, further defined EI as a competency that "determines our potential for learning the practical skills that are based on its five elements: self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation, empathy, and adeptness in relationships" (Goleman, 1998, p. 24). Emotional intelligence, therefore, involves a person's ability to recognize and manage emotions. With this in mind, I explored the EI phenomenon by looking for evidence of how preservice early educators were being prepared through online coursework to have competency with recognizing and managing emotions in themselves and others.

Goleman (1998) identified five competencies of EI, self-awareness, motivation, empathy, self-regulation, and adeptness in relationships; this research however, focused solely on self-awareness and motivation (personal) and empathy (social). Additionally, these three competencies acted as the guide and focal point for the interview questions and were then analyzed during the coding process.

As discussed in the introduction and background sections of Chapter 1, having high EI is important for the early educator and is only beneficial when coupled with

emotional competence (EC; Bedel, 2014; Palomera, Fernández-Berrocal, & Brackett, 2008). Goleman (1998) defined EC as “a learned capability based on EI that results in outstanding performance at work” (p. 24). Goleman further explained that “simply being high in EI does not guarantee a person will have learned the emotional competencies that matter for work; it means only that they have the excellent potential to learn them” (p. 25). Goleman’s perspective suggested a need for the early educator to not only have an understanding of EI but also be able to demonstrate the competencies of EI (Bedel, 2014; Ergur, 2009). Some of the specific EI competencies needed by the early educator include self-awareness, motivation, and empathy (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Vesely et al., 2013).

Goleman’s emotional competence framework included two categories of competencies: personal and social. Goleman defined the personal competence category as competencies that “determine how we manage ourselves” (p. 26) and the social competence category as competencies that “determine how we handle relationships” (p. 27). In the two competency areas, Goleman identified a total of five specific competencies (see Table 1), which formed these competency areas. Personal competencies included self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation; social competencies included empathy and social skills. This study however, focused on self-awareness and motivation from the personal competencies and empathy from the social competencies. These competency areas were chosen because they were noted in the literature as necessary EI competencies for educators (Corcoran & Tormey, 2012a; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Kasler et al., 2013; Vesely et al., 2013).

Table 1

Components of Personal and Social Competencies

Personal Competence	Social Competence
how we manage ourselves	how we handle relationships

• Self-Awareness
  o Emotional awareness
  o accurate self-assessment
  o self-confidence
• Self-Regulation
• Motivation
  o Achievement drive
  o Commitment
  o Initiative
  o Optimism
	• Empathy
	  o Understanding others
	  o developing others
	  o service orientation
	  o leveraging diversity
	  o political awareness
	• Social Skills

Note. Adapted from Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. New York: Bantam. (p. 24, 318)

Self Awareness

Goleman (1998) defined self-awareness as "knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources, and institutions" (p. 26). Goleman provided a more in-depth breakdown of self-awareness and identified emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence as emotional competencies in self-awareness. As a result of this in-depth breakdown of self-awareness provided in Goleman's work, this study focused on two specific self-awareness competencies. First was the self-awareness competency of emotional awareness, which was defined as recognizing one's emotions and their effects. Second was the self-confidence competency, which Goleman identified as a strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities. Each of these competencies was the focus of this study as these are two of the necessary EI skills identified that educators need in order to believe in their capacity to complete professional tasks and obligations (Farrell, 2013; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Chesnut & Cullen, 2014).

As discussed previously, the development of self-awareness competencies is necessary for educators (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Chesnut & Cullen, 2014). While emotional awareness was viewed as a one of the self-awareness competencies especially relevant and necessary for educators, this competency was not specifically addressed in the curriculum content used to prepare early educators. In coursework, the documented or identified goal or objective of the coursework was typically not on the student's development of self-awareness competencies such as emotional awareness or self-confidence (Edannur, 2010; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014). Understanding and

demonstrating the fundamental educational concepts, however, was the primary goal or objective of educator preparation coursework.

In the EI context, when self-awareness competencies were studied, addressed, or incorporated into the preservice early educator curriculum, it was in terms of the preservice early educators' ability to utilize reflective practice, which incorporates journaling approaches (Cornish & Jenkins, 2012; Farrell, 2013). Utilizing reflective practices is a necessary competency for the early educator. When reflective practices are used in courses however, they are often based only on providing a simple description of experiences or events (Su & Chung, 2015) rather than a discussion of their emotional journey regarding the experience, event, task or challenge at hand. Although reflective practices are incorporated into coursework, utilizing reflective practices is challenging for students (Su & Chang, 2015).

In the preparation curriculum, focus on developing and utilizing reflective practices is appropriate and necessary in the development of the effective early educator. What was missingin the preparation curriculum, however, was the intentional focus and goal of developing the preservice early educators' understanding and recognition of how personal emotions affect professional practice (Chesnut & Cullen, 2014). A component of developing the student's understanding of how personal emotions affect professional development included addressing the content of the course curriculum used to prepare early educators (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Waajid, Garner, & Owen, 2013). While some studies were available that addressed the preservice early educators' development of self-

awareness competencies, examinations of the course content was limited. This was especially true as it related to community college coursework.

Motivation

Second was the personal competency of motivation. Motivation according to Goleman (1998) was defined as “emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals” (p. 26). The competency areas in motivation included achievement drive, commitment, initiative, and optimism. For this study however, the focus was on two specific competencies, achievement drive and optimism. These two specific competencies were chosen because of the challenges regarding the completion rates of community college students in general (Martin et al., 2014) and of community college students enrolled in teacher preparation programs (Huss-Keeler, Peters, & Moss, 2013). First is the motivation competency of achievement drive which is identified by Goleman as an individual striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence. Second is the competency of optimism which is identified by Goleman as an individual’s persistency in pursuing goals despite obstacles. Each of these motivation competencies was the focus of this study.

In the EI context, when motivation competencies was studied in the community college environment, it was studied in terms of identification and completion of graduation goals. Community college students for example, continued and completed their education at lower rates than those students enrolled in 4-year colleges and universities (Martin et al., 2014). Nationally according to Martin et al. (2014), almost fifty percent of the students enrolled in community college will not graduate at the

outlined time of 2 years and in fact, these students will not graduate with a degree in 6 years. Martin et al. (2014) further identified student motivation as one of the factors that acts as a catalyst for the low percentage of community college graduates.

Overall, motivation competencies were particularly relevant with regard to the preservice early educator's decision to continue and complete their education at the college level (Huss-Keeler et al., 2013). This was especially true for those community college students enrolled in preservice early educator programs. Motivation for example, was identified by Huss-Keeler et al. (2013) as a factor for individuals deciding to continue or complete degrees in preservice early educator programs. Huss-Keeler et al. investigated the motivations of preservice early educators for continuing or pursuing their degree and found that a disconnect exists with regard to the need for individuals in the ECE field needing to and actually continuing and completing their education or degree goals. In Huss-Keeler et al.'s. investigation, motivations to continue or complete education or degrees were identified as extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. Extrinsic motivators such as mandates, higher pay, or scholarship funding and intrinsic motivators such as desire to achieve a personal goal, self-improvement, or personal growth were both identified as instrumental in an individual's decision to persist. While both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators were identified as instrumental, Huss-Keeler et al. noted research which indicated that in general, individuals with strong intrinsic motivation are more likely to persist and succeed. What this indicated was a need to further examine whether intrinsically motivated students are more likely than extrinsically motivated students to complete the early educator degree program.

Empathy

Third was the competency of empathy. Goleman (1998) defined empathy as the "awareness of other's feelings, needs, and concerns" (p. 27). In the empathy competency area, Goleman identified several competencies: understanding others, developing others, service orientation, leveraging diversity, and political awareness. First was the empathy competency of understanding others which was identified by Goleman as the capacity to sense the feelings and perspective of others. Next was the competency of developing others which was identified by Goleman as sensing the personal developmental needs and bolstering personal abilities. For this study, the empathy competency was chosen because of the emotional nature of the ECE profession. Understanding others and developing others are the two specific competencies in the emotional competency area that were addressed in this study. These competency areas were chosen because of their relationship to the two primary responsibilities that early educators have. First, early educators have the responsibility of caring for young learners which will require them to have an understanding of the needs of these young learners (Vesely et al., 2014; Ersay Kaynak, & Türkoğlu, 2014). Second, early educators act as socialization agents for young learners (Denham, Bassett, & Zinsser, 2012; Morris, Denham, Bassett, & Curby, 2013) who hold some responsibility with regard to helping young learners to develop empathy competencies (Edannur, 2010; Ersay, Kaynak, & Türkoğlu, 2014; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014). Each of these empathy competencies was the focus of this study.

In the EI context, the empathy competency was studied in a limited fashion. When the empathy competency was studied it was studied in general and not as a

separate construct within EI competencies (Kasler et al., 2013). While educators do need to possess, utilize, and teach empathy competencies what is missing in preparation curriculums is an intentional focus on this development. Empathy competencies are necessary for educators (George, 2013; Gunn & King, 2015; Warren, 2015). It is important however that when addressing empathy competencies, that empathy not be confused or used synonymously with sympathy. Warren (2015) for example, conducted a study on the conceptions of empathy of the White female educator. Warren used a phenomenological approach to conduct an examination of the conceptions or beliefs about empathy as it relates to early career White female teachers. In addition, Warren examined how those conceptions informed the professional decision making practices of those early career White female teachers. Warren found a disconnect between the teachers understanding of empathy and their practice. Essentially, the teachers had an appropriate cognitive understanding of empathy, but the capacity to demonstrate competencies such as understanding the lives and challenges of their culturally diverse students and their capacity to demonstrate perspective taking was limited. What these finding further indicated was a need to develop and incorporate intentional strategies for addressing and developing the preservice early educators' capacity to understand and develop others. In turn, this also suggested a need to develop this competency at both the personal and professional level.

Early childhood education (ECE) is considered a caring profession. In this profession educators are expected to care for the children and have the skills to teach caring concepts to children. Although the ability to understand others for example, was

viewed as an especially relevant and necessary competency for educators, this competency was not specifically addressed in the curriculum content used to prepare early educators (Kasler et al., 2013). Still, early educators are expected to exemplify empathy both personally and professionally. Early educators and educators in general are also expected to have the capacity to promote empathy competencies such as understanding others in young children. In addition to developing and utilizing the empathy competency of understanding others, educators in general also need learning experiences which intentionally and specifically develop abilities in developing others (Goleman, 1998; Peterson, Valk, Baker, Brugger, & Hightower, 2010).

As identified in the purpose section of Chapter 1, the intent of this qualitative case study was to explore if and how self-awareness, motivation, and empathy, three EI competencies, are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. With this in mind, this section included a discussion on the conceptual framework which utilized Goleman's EI theory as the foundation. This section also included an explication of specific personal and social EI competency areas which have relevancy to the development of preservice early educators. Specific personal competencies which included self-awareness and motivation was discussed and the social competency area of emotional awareness was also discussed (see Figure 1).

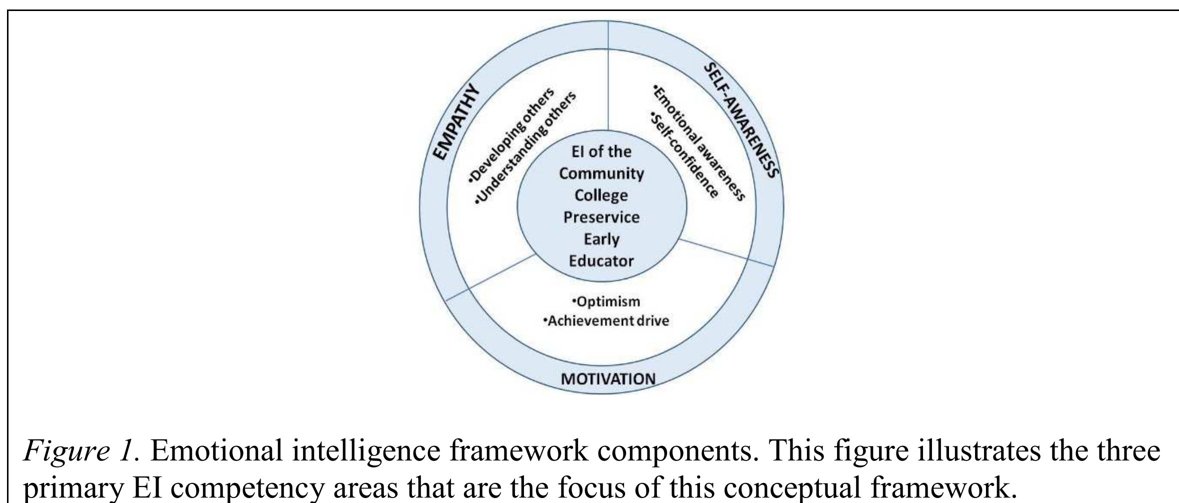

Figure 1. Emotional intelligence framework components. This figure illustrates the three primary EI competency areas that are the focus of this conceptual framework.

Historical Perspective of Emotional Intelligence

While the conceptual framework for this study was drawn from Goleman's (1995, 1998) elucidation and research on EI there were a number of pioneers in the study and research on EI. Pioneers in developing and understanding EI include Edward Thorndike (1921), Robert Thorndike (1937), and David Wechsler (1940). Research on EI however, has only occurred and advanced in the past 25 years primarily through the works of Howard Gardner (1983), and Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990), and Daniel Goleman (1995, 1998).

Previous research used this framework in a number of ways. Historically for example, the overall concept of EI was based on the concept of social intelligence. Emotional intelligence (EI), an area of focus initially studied under the terms of "social intelligence" by Robert Thorndike (Thorndike & Stein, 1937) and as "non-intellective factors" by David Wechsler (Wechsler, 1940) was viewed from two perspectives. Thorndike (1921) examined intelligence from an intellectual and abstract perspective,

with the concept of "social intelligence" as abstract. Thorndike (1921) explained, that dividing the concept of intelligence into absolutes is a challenge:

> If we inventory the behavior of men and try to divide it up according as intellect, character, skill, taste or temperament is primarily involved, we shall agree fairly well in, say, ninety per cent of the cases. If, however, we try to make the division absolute we may agree very seldom. It is probably unwise to spend much time in attempts to separate off sharply certain qualities of man, as his intelligence, from such emotional and vocational qualities as his interest in mental activity, carefulness, determination to respond effectively, persistence in his efforts to do so; or from his amount of knowledge; or from his moral or esthetic tastes (p. 124).

Thorndike's argument for an inextricable link between the intellectual and social intelligences provided support for the need to better understand how these two intelligences support one another.

In the 1900's Edward Thorndike (1921) specifically introduced and redefined the term abstract intelligence as social intelligence. Later, Robert Thorndike (1937) provided further explication of "abstract intelligence" and explained that "abstract intelligence was spoken of as ability to understand and manage ideas and abstractions, mechanical intelligence as ability to understand and manage the concrete objects of the physical environment, and social intelligence as ability to understand and manage people" (Thorndike & Stein, 1937, p. 275). In keeping with Edward Thorndike's (1921) and Robert Thorndike's (1937) explication of social intelligence, researchers such as Wechsler (1940), Gardner (1983), Salovey and Mayer (1990), and Goleman (1995)

provided further explication of this concept of social intelligence. Salovey and Mayer (1990) however are responsible for coining the phrase EI.

David Wechsler's (1940) explication of social intelligence addressed intelligence test and explained that intelligence tests do not provide a comprehensive understanding of an individual's ability or capacity for intelligent behavior. According to Wechsler (1940), intelligence comprises both intellective and non-intellective factors. Wechsler explicitly identified non-intellective factors as traits such as temperament, drive, persistence, and interest. Specifically, Wechsler identified non-intellective factors of intelligence as "all affective and conative abilities which in any way enter into global behavior" (p. 103). While intellective factors such as verbal, mathematical, and abstract reasoning abilities provide insight of an individual's intellect, Wechsler explained that this single focus does not capture the full in-depth view of an individual's intellect.

While Thorndike (1921), Thorndike (1937), and Wechsler (1940) provided the historical foundation for studying EI, Howard Gardner (1983), Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990), and Daniel Goleman (1995, 1998) are the more recent primary figures in regards to theories of EI. Researchers such as Howard Gardner and Peter Salovey and John Mayer for example, have used and modified the EI theoretical framework in an effort to research EI from varying perspectives. Gardner for example is widely known for the theory of multiple intelligences (MI). Initially, Gardner identified six intellectual capabilities that individuals may possess and later revised the listing to include the following nine intellectual capabilities: linguistic intelligence, musical intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence,

interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist intelligence, and existential intelligence. It is the interpersonal and intrapersonal intellectual capabilities categorized by Gardner as personal intelligence, however that align most with this study.

According to Gardner (1983), the development of these intelligences, which include personal intelligence, is dependent upon an individual's interaction with factors and environments that stimulate these intelligences. Gardner (1983) identified, interpersonal intelligence as an individual's capacity to understand others, specifically with regard to their desires, motivations, and intentions. Intrapersonal intelligence on the other hand is described by Gardner as the individual's capacity to understand and appreciate themselves in regards feelings, motivations and fears. Gardner further suggested that personal intelligence is an intelligence that is just as important and necessary as those intelligences that are more cognitive focused.

Later, Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990) based on Thorndike and Stein's (1937) research regarding social intelligence, researched and identified "social intelligence" and "non-intellective factors" using the term "emotional intelligence." Salovey and Mayer (1990) also identified EI as a subset of social intelligence which "involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 189). While Salovey and Mayer's concept of EI has a historical foundation based on Thorndike and Stein's research, Salovey and Mayer (1990) have also provided a more in-depth focus on Gardner's (1983) identification of the two identified constructs of personal intelligence, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.

While research regarding EI was available in the education field, the focus of this research typically addressed the measuring of EI levels in participants. For this study however, the focus was on the course content used to prepare preservice early educators for their role as teachers. Because the current available research typically focused on measuring EI, ability models such as the four-branch model presented by Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990) usually acted as the framework for research. Unlike Goleman (1995, 1998), a major focus of Salovey and Mayer addressed the cognition aspect of EI and identified four types of abilities that include the ability to 1) perceive, 2) use, 3) understand, and 4) manage emotions. Salovey and Mayer explicitly identified this focus as the "four-branch ability model" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Mayer & Salovey, 1997, and Mayer et al., 2000, 2004) which is used to identify the progression of EI capacity in a learner.

After Salovey and Mayer, the theory of EI was further developed and popularized by Daniel Goleman beginning in 1995. Goleman introduced the theory and concepts of EI to a mainstream audience in the book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*, (1995) and further elucidated on EI in the book *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (1998). Salovey and Mayer's theory of EI is commonly used in EI research. However because Goleman's theory of EI is a mixed model and views EI as a teachable competency, it provided the most appropriate foundation for this study. Specifically, Goleman's (1995, 1998) domains of EI provide the foundation for identifying EI skills as it related to academic and professional success for the future early educator. With this in mind, the explication of EI presented by Goleman (1998) provided the foundation for the

conceptual framework for this research which occured in an educational setting, a community college preservice early educator associate degree program.

Historically, perspectives and research on EI focused on identifying and defining social intelligence or EI as a relevant intelligence. However, there has been a shift to measuring EI and identifying the role of EI in various environments. Measuring EI became a focus in the 1990's as Salovey and Mayer (1990) started investigating and developing valid approaches to measure EI and an individual's ability to identify, perceive, understand, and appraise the emotions of self and others (Cherniss, 2000). Daniel Goleman later became an influential figure during the mid 1990's regarding the role EI plays in the classroom, schools, workplace, and in daily living (Cherniss, 2000; Durlak et al., 2011). Rather than focusing solely on measuring EI like Salovey and Mayer, Goleman sought to identify and highlight EI competencies that facilitate academic and professional success.

Goleman's (1995) background in brain and behavioral science, laid the foundation for the book titled *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ* which acted as the catalyst for facilitating the interest of EI in the workplace and schools. Elucidation by Goleman on the overall concept of EI provided discussions, examples, and research on emotions and behavior. Goleman (1995) used understanding of the brain and behavior to explain the interplay or relationship of emotions, reasoning, and behavior both personally and in various environments. In a later work titled *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman focused on identifying EI as a factor in job performance and further articulated that EI incorporates a number of competencies that act as a

contributing predictor of job performance. Specifically, Goleman examined EI in terms of two components, intelligence and competency and explained that EI has to do with the ability to recognize emotions and feelings and that emotional competence comprises the personal and social skills necessary to recognize those emotions and feelings personally and in others.

While theoretical and conceptual perspectives from Salovey and Mayer's (1990) research regarding EI informed the conceptual framework for this study, Goleman's work acted as the primary foundation on which this research will be based. Therefore, it is Goleman's explanation of EI in an educational setting that will provide a strong foundation since this research was focused on community college preservice early educator associate degree program. Specific to this framework were several statements and definitions which included competency and intelligence. Goleman (1998) explained that EI comprises two primary components: competency and intelligence. More specifically, these two components included five competencies that form EI: self-awareness, empathy, motivation, self-regulation, and adeptness in relationships (p. 24). Emotional competence according to Goleman is defined as "learned capability based on EI that results in outstanding performance at work." (p. 24). Emotional intelligence however, has to do with the ability to recognize emotions and feelings

The current research study benefitted from this framework in several ways. First this framework identified EI as a learned skill, competency, or capability (Goleman, 1998; 1995). This identification of EI as a learned skill, competency, or capability acted as a foundation for recognizing that EI is also teachable. Second, the current research

study benefitted from this framework because of the influence that EI has on job performance (Goleman, 1998). As Goleman elucidated, EI incorporates a number of competencies that act as a contributing predictor of job performance. Essentially, utilizing this EI framework also acted as a foundation for identifying and understanding the role of EI in the preparation process and job performance of preservice early educators. Lastly, the current research study benefitted from this framework because of the influence that EI has on academic and professional success (Goleman). As discussed in Chapter 1, a social change goals of this study was to develop preservice early educators into emotionally competent teachers so they can in turn develop young learners into emotionally competent adults. A primary goal however was also to identify and understand the role or influence of EI on the academic and professional preparation of individuals being prepared for their role as early educator professionals.

Challenges of Educating Community College Students

The challenges of educating community college students discussed in the following section focused on the demographics of community college students in general and ECE students, common academic and personal challenges, faculty's role in addressing challenges and the characteristics and competencies needed for success. For each section, an analysis of themes from current research of community college demographics is discussed. Each section ends with a more narrowed look at what the findings mean for participants in ECE training programs.

Demographics of Community College Students

Two-year institutions of higher education (IHE) or community colleges are utilized by many potential early care educators as the means for entering or re-establishing themselves into the ECE field. One of the caveats to attending a community college as a means of obtaining a degree is that unlike a four-year IHE there is an “open admissions policy.” This policy extends educational opportunities to everyone, regardless of prior personal or academic advantages or disadvantages (Goldrick-Rab, 2010). Because community colleges have an open admissions policy, learner demographics for community colleges are diverse and continue to change (Castillo, 2013; Clotfelter et al., 2013). As a result, however, of the open admissions policy and the diverse learner population, relative to four-year IHE, community colleges disproportionately serve less academically prepared students (Capt, Oliver, & Engel, 2014; Porchea et al., 2010). The diverse community college student population presents a variety of challenges for administrators and instructors. These academic and personal challenges impact the success and completion of the student’s program of study. This section highlights the demographic similarities of the community college students in general and ECE student, academic and personal challenges, faculty’s role in addressing these challenges, and characteristics and competencies which facilitate student success.

Community college demographics include traditional and nontraditional students. At one time community colleges were primarily comprised of “traditional learners,” between the ages of 18 and 22 (Castillo, 2013). These traditional students typically enroll in community college directly from high school or shortly thereafter. According to the

research however, the demographic landscape of community college is changing (Martin et al., 2014). There has been growth in the number of older or “nontraditional” learners attending community college. This shift may be as a result of the changes in labor needs, employment needs, and requirements (Ireland, 2015). As a result of these changes, nontraditional learners often choose community colleges when deciding to go back to school (Castillo, 2013; Clotfelter et al., 2013; Goldrick-Rab, 2010).

Community colleges tend to serve an older population of students in comparison to four-year IHE. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) (2015), the average age of students enrolled in community colleges across the United States of America is 28 years old. Almost 50% of the student body was noted as being between the ages of 22 and 39 years old and 14% of the student body age 40 and over.

Gender-wise, community colleges have a predominantly female student body and serve an ethnically diverse student demographic. According to data from the AACC (2013, 2015), in 2011 and 2013, women made up almost 60% of the student body and men 40% of the student body (AACC, 2013, 2015). Also, nationally, the community college demographic has been ethnically diverse with approximately 50% of students coming from a White ethnic background, 21% Hispanic, 14% Black, and the remaining 15% from a variety of ethnic backgrounds (AACC, 2015, p. 4).

Community colleges also tend to have more students enrolled on a part-time basis. In the past, most community college students could be classified as full-time. At present however, the national headcount for full-time enrollment is 39% and part-time

enrollment is 61% (AACC, 2015, p. 4). Also, many students enrolled in community colleges across the United States are also employed either full-time or part-time while attending classes.

Demographics of Early Childhood Education Students

Demographics in preservice early educator preparation programs is typically comprised of “nontraditional” learners and reflects the overall demographics for community college. As a result, the student body for preservice early educator preparation programs consists of predominantly of white women which is reflective of the make up of the ECE profession in general (Cheruvu, Souto-Manning, Lencl, & Chin-Calubaquib, 2014; Gomez, Kagan, & Fox, 2015; Mueller & File, 2015; Saluja, Early, & Clifford, 2002; US BLS, 2015). Also, students in preservice programs typically range in age from late 20 to 40 years of age (Nitecki, 2012; Saluja et al., 2002; Zepeda, Castro, & Cronin, 2011). This demographic composition is considered diverse in the community college demographic. It is not however, in the demographics for ECE preparation programs and professions (Cheruvu et al., 2014).

Similar to the overall community college demographics, there are some individuals who enroll in community college preservice early educator preparation programs directly from high school. There are however, some individuals participating in the community college preservice early educator program that attend while currently working in the ECE field. As a result, ECE students in particular have a host of reasons for pursuing college degrees (Deutsch & Riffin, 2013). Fulfilling a personal desire or decision to earn a college degree is just one reason that ECE students elect to pursue a

college degree. This is especially true for those students that may be first generation college students for their families (Zepeda et al., 2011). Another major reason that ECE students elect to pursue a college degree is that there are new and more stringent educational requirements and standards that early educators must meet in order to enter into and continue in the profession (Deutsch & Riffin, 2013). Although there are educational standards and requirements for entry into the ECE profession, there are no requirements or explicit standards regarding the individual's personal development that would prohibit an individual from entering the profession.

Common Academic Challenges of Community College Students

While community college students do have academic challenges, many have and still choose to pursue a college degree. There are some common academic challenges, however, which tend to impact student success and completion (Capt, Oliver, & Engel, 2014; Clotfelter et al., 2013). Typically these academic challenges include students placing into remedial or developmental courses as a result of having deficiencies in reading, writing, and mathematic abilities and students having low technology skills (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010; Jaggars, Hodara, Cho, & Xu, 2015; Zeit, 2014). Bailey et al. (2010) for example conducted a study of 57 community colleges participating in the Achieving the Dream Initiative. Participating community colleges were across approximately 10 states. Bailey et al. found that 59% of the student body was referred to developmental courses in math, 24% placed into a single developmental math course, 16% were referred to two courses, and 19% were referred to three developmental math courses (p. 8). In that same study, Bailey et al. also found that 33% of students also

placed into developmental courses in reading. Additionally, Crawford and Jervis (2011), conducted an investigation of how community colleges are fulfilling their role as a gateway toward education. Crawford and Jervis specifically identified a lack of basic educational skills, particularly in math as areas of challenge. Research findings by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2010) also identified math as a major hindrance toward community college students progressing through their programs of study.

Overall the community college's student population tends to encounter a diversity of academic challenges. This means that both traditional and nontraditional students face challenges on their educational journeys. While this is true, there are some variations in the types of challenges each face. Castillo (2013) for example, identified traditional learners as the primary individuals who enter into community colleges with academic challenges (Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Purdie & Rosser, 2011). These academic challenges tend to include deficits in motivation, reading, writing, and study skills (Castillo, 2013; Davidson, 2015).

With regard to the demographic most prone to needing developmental courses however, Crisp and Delgado's (2013) findings, differ. Crisp and Delgado conducted an investigation of how developmental courses impact the persistence and transfer of community college students. Crisp and Delgado went on to discuss the characteristics of developmental students and identified age as a factor with regard to students testing into developmental courses. According to these findings, older or nontraditional students and those students identified as first-generation college students, were more likely to be

placed into developmental courses (Crisp & Delgado, 2014; Crisp & Nora, 2010). Additionally, Crisp and Delgado found that enrollment in developmental courses may actually act as a hindrance to students transferring to four-year IHE. Crisp and Delgado also found these results specific to students enrolled in English and math developmental courses. What was missing in the research was a disaggregation of the data by major. Disaggregating the data by major would have provided a clearer picture of how students with ECE majors fair with regard to those necessary developmental skills.

Low technology skills was also noted as a challenge for college students. While students have familiarity with social technologies such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter for example, this familiarity does not translate or equate to the academic technology skills that faculty and instructors expect students to have. Eichelberger and Imler (2015) for example, conducted a quantitative study using a performance-based online assessment to identify the college freshman's ability to utilize academic technology such as Microsoft Office software, PDFs, e-mail, and to manage files. This study included 39 freshman participants from a community college and two 4-year IHE in the northeastern part of the United States. According to the findings, while academic technology use was common for this demographic, however not comprehensive, as "many students have significant gaps in their skills that can affect their ability to succeed in their courses" (p. 337). While the findings do provide an understanding of the traditional college student's technology skills, this study did not include a nontraditional demographic.

Nontraditional students are the individuals who tend to enroll in online courses (Jaggers, Edgecombe, & Stacey, 2013; Xu & Jaggars, 2013). Because nontraditional

students tend to enroll in online courses their success “depends on their ability to access, evaluate, and utilize the varied sources of information available to them in their academic work” (Jaggers et al., 2013, p.58). According to Xu and Jaggars (2013) however, there is a lack of research which addressed the variation of student performance in online courses across the different types of students (traditional and nontraditional). Xu and Jaggars (2013) conducted a study of online performance gaps. Participants of this study included 51,017 demographically diverse first-time degree seeking college students enrolled throughout 34 community or technical colleges in the state of Washington. In this quantitative study Xu and Jaggars found that overall, in online courses in comparison to face-to-face sections of the same course students received lower grades. Xu and Jaggars also found that older students perform better in face-to-face courses than in online and that older or nontraditional students had a narrower online performance gap then their traditional counterparts. As a result, of both the Eichelberger and Imler’s findings and Xu and Jaggars’ findings the need to understand how a lack of technological skills effects those learners that take online courses was highlighted.

Common Personal Challenges of Community College Students

While some of the challenges are more academic in nature, traditional and nontraditional students also encounter personal challenges. Castillo (2013) however found that nontraditional learners tend to experience more of the challenges that fall under the personal category. Nontraditional students however, tend to be more intrinsically motivated but have challenges with balancing job, career, family, and dependent responsibilities while managing academic responsibilities.

According to the research, there are some specific personal challenges that tend to impact the community college student's success and completion of academic programs. Mental health issues for example, are a common issue for community college students (Katz & Davison, 2014). According to the findings of the Community College Task Force & American College Counseling Association (CCTF&ACCA) (2010) stress, depression, and anxiety disorders were the most commonly reported mental issues by community college counselors for community college students. This study by the Community College Task Force & American College Counseling Association (2010) included a participant pool of 67 counselors from 54 community colleges in 28 different states. The next commonly reported mental health issues were crisis intervention, experiences with loss/grief, bipolar disorder, and adjustment disorders (CCTF&ACCA, (2010). Also reported as problems, but not in as high of numbers, were problems and challenges with substance related disorders, sexual abuse/sexual assault, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), nonsuicidal self-injury, addictions, eating disorders, personality/axis II issues, and schizophrenia/schizoaffective disorders (CCTF&ACCA, 2010, p. 14, question 29). While the findings from this study do highlight the diversity of personal challenges that community college counselors encounter and that community college students bring with them into the learning environment, this study did not disaggregate the findings by traditional or nontraditional status. This study also did not identify how students from the various programs faired, particularly from early educator programs.

While traditional and nontraditional students each face a variety of challenges, it is important to recognize, address, and prepare students and faculty to work with and through these diverse challenges (Castillo, 2013; Luke, Redekop, & Burgin, 2015; Miranda, 2014; Porchea et al., 2010). It is also necessary to recognize that while it is the academic challenges which places students into developmental or remedial courses, there are some specific personal challenge such as self-awareness and motivation competencies, that are identified as areas of challenge and needed growth for community college students (Capt, Oliver, & Engel, 2014; Miranda, 2014; Sparkman, Maulding, & Roberts, 2012). These challenges make it difficult for faculty to address the academic challenges (Martin et al., 2014; Görgens-Ekermans, Delport, & du Preez, 2015). While there was research that specifically focused on the faculty members teaching at community college and those students taking developmental courses (Capt et al., 2014; Miranda, 2014; Perin, 2012; Zientek, Schneider, & Onwuegbuzie, 2014), the findings suggested a need to further delineate these findings by major. Doing so would provide a better understanding of how students enrolled in preservice early education program fair in general and in relationship to their counterparts. In addition to describing the findings by major, explaining the findings by course format (online or face-to-face) would also be beneficial as this would also provide a better understanding of how students enrolled in online preservice early education programs fair in relationship to their counterparts taking face-to-face courses.

Faculty's Role in Addressing Challenges with Community College Students

Because students are entering the community college underprepared, the responsibility of addressing remediation has fallen on the community colleges and on community college faculty specifically. As both traditional and nontraditional students continue to enter into the community college learning environment with academic and personal challenges, it becomes more necessary to recognize and acknowledge the challenges that faculty encounter when working with these learners. Capt, Oliver, and Engel (2014) for example, identified some specific challenges that faculty encountered when teaching community college students. One of the challenges faculty encountered was the under preparedness of learners to deal with the demands of college (Capt et al., 2014). Capt et al. explained that approximately half of the high school students that graduate are college ready. Additionally, in this qualitative case study, Capt et al. found that faculty had limited training, administrative support, and professional development with regard to dealing with the diverse challenges and needs of community college students enrolled in the developmental courses.

Characteristics and Competencies Needed for Success in Community College

Even though there are a diversity of reasons that community college students choose to pursue a college degree, the fact remains that student success and completion remains a challenge (Castillo, 2013; Capt, Oliver, & Engel, 2014; Clotfelter et al., 2013; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Luke et al., 2015). There are however some characteristics and competencies which help to facilitate student success and completion (Martin et al., 2014; Luke et al., 2015; Sparkman et al., 2012). Martin et al. (2014) conducted a qualitative

study which included participants from a public community college in the Southeastern part of the United States. In this study, specific competencies and characteristics of students who graduated were identified. Four competencies emerged: ability to set clear goals, strong motivation and a drive to succeed, ability to manage external demands, and self-empowerment. While the study did not overtly address EI skills or competencies, the characteristics identified align well with the personal EI competencies described in Goleman's (1998) EI framework. Specifically, the characteristics identified by Martin et al. demonstrated alignment to the self-awareness and motivation competencies identified in the personal EI competency area.

Personal and Social Emotional Intelligence Competencies and Early Childhood Educators

The personal and social EI competencies of early childhood educators discussed in the following section include self awareness, motivation, and empathy. For each competency, an analysis of themes from current research of early childhood teachers is discussed. An analysis of the conceptual frameworks commonly used in these studies follows. Last, each section ends with a more narrowed look at the competency with study participants in teacher training programs.

Self-Awareness

A review of the literature for self-awareness included studies that researched early childhood teachers and their self-awareness, self-confidence, or self-efficacy. According to the available research, self-awareness and its two subcategories, emotional awareness and self-confidence are important competencies for early childhood teachers. Each of

these self-awareness competency areas is necessary for leading and managing the classroom environment (Baltaci & Demir, 2012; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014). Educators for example, have the responsibility of creating, developing, and fostering relationships in the learning environment (Bullock, Coplan, & Bosacki, 2015; Whitebook, 2014). Educators also have this same responsibility with families and administrators. As a result of this responsibility, competency in self-awareness is necessary. A primary component of effectively managing the classroom for example, includes possessing and utilizing skills in self-awareness (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014). Self-awareness competency areas such as emotional awareness and self-confidence are especially necessary competencies for the early educator (Edannur, 2010; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Wee, Weber, & Park, 2014). Creating learning environments that foster the development of appropriate and professional relationships requires the early educator to possess competency in areas such as emotional awareness and self-confidence. Self-awareness in general, but emotional awareness and self-confidence competencies especially are necessary competencies for teachers.

The literature revealed themes related to self-awareness in early childhood teachers and students in two different topic areas: the importance of teacher self-efficacy and teacher training and experience in creating appropriate learning environments for children.

Self-efficacy and teacher confidence. Much of the literature addressed the topic of self-awareness in early childhood teachers and students in terms of self-efficacy. One study by Bruder, Dunst, Wilson, and Stayton (2013) for example, investigated whether

the belief appraisals of preservice and in-service training participants was similar to regular early childhood teachers and to what extent were they similar. Participants in this study included a total of 1668 practitioners in 45 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands that were either early intervention practitioners or preschool special education practitioners (p. 252). Results from this study concluded that preservice and in-service training participants who received or obtained more training and more intense training had higher ratings regarding beliefs about their competence and confidence. In a study of 369 childcare center teachers, primarily female from Ontario, Canada, results showed a relationship between teacher self-efficacy for classroom management and the early care educators' teaching experience, personality, and classroom management self-efficacy beliefs (Bullock et al., 2015). Guo et al. (2010) investigated teacher self-efficacy and how this impacts young learners and the learning environment. Findings from this study indicated that teacher self-efficacy was a significant and positive predictor of children's gains is print awareness. Teacher self-efficacy in combination with providing an emotionally supportive learning environment for the children resulted in children's vocabulary gains. Study participants included 67 preschool teachers from various educational and experiential backgrounds and 328 children enrolled in their classes. Overall, the findings from each study indicated that teacher self-efficacy impacts the practice of teachers in the classroom.

Self-efficacy was also found to have an impact on teachers' commitment level to the education field. Chesnut and Burley (2015) used meta-analysis to examine the available research focused on the self-efficacy beliefs of preservice and in-service

teachers regarding their commitment to the education profession. In this study Chesnut and Burley examined 33 studies which included 16,122 preservice and in-service teachers (p. 6) and found that “preservice and in-service teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs influence their commitment to the teaching profession” (p. 6). Similarly, Chesnut and Cullen (2014) investigated the effects of self-efficacy on preservice teacher commitment to the education profession. They also investigated the effects of EI, perceptions of satisfaction, and expectations of future work. Participants included 209 undergraduate preservice teachers enrolled in an undergraduate program participating in an undergraduate educational psychology course. An online survey was used to collect data from participants. Chesnut and Cullen found a positive correlation between teacher self-efficacy expectations commitment. Chesnut and Cullen also found that higher levels of commitment were found in preservice teachers with greater emotional awareness.

Self-efficacy research also showed that teachers and student teachers who have more experience working with children in classroom settings tend to have more self-confidence in their ability to work with children. In one study for example, Bullock et al. (2015) found that those early care educators identified as having more years of teaching experience also reported higher levels of classroom management self-efficacy. With regard to student teachers specifically, Hurley and Cammack (2014) examined the student preparation process for the practicum course. They examined the placement processes and procedures and the practicum students’ perspectives of the impact on social and emotional well-being, preparedness for placement and successful placement outcomes in primary schools. In this qualitative phenomenological study, Hurley and

Cammack found that practicum students perceived the current placement procedures as inadequate especially in the area of developing EI. Participants also described the placement process as having a negative impact on their emotional and physical preparations for the course. Wee et al. (2014) also investigated the confidence and concern levels of student enrolled in early childhood practicum courses and how they changed over the course of the experience. Wee et al., found that at the beginning of practicum experiences, those practicum students that had prior experience working in the classroom demonstrated and maintained a higher level of confidence than student teachers who did not have that previous work experience. At the end of the practicum course the confidence levels of practicum students identified as inexperienced showed improvement. Overall, the findings from each study indicated that developing student teachers EI and providing experiences working with children in classroom settings assists with building more self-confidence in the student teachers' ability to work with children.

Teacher training and experience. The literature revealed additional insight into the topic of self-awareness related to the training and experience of early childhood teachers. First, early childhood teachers and students in teacher preparation programs, practicum specifically, lack self-confidence in being able to manage children's behavior. Sak, Sak, and Yerlikaya (2015) for example found that female teachers' self-confidence scores regarding the use of behavior modification strategies when compared to male teachers', was lower. Onchwari (2010) found that preservice and in-service teachers did not feel prepared to address or deal with the stressors that young children encounter while in school. Wee et al. (2014) also found that inexperienced teachers were least confident in

managing children’s behavior. These findings emphasizes the need to assist teachers in developing competencies in emotional awareness and self-confidence so they are able to confidently and effectively address behavior challenges in the classroom.

In teacher training programs, reflection activities and assignments are the primary approaches used to address self-awareness or self-confidence. According to the literature, when reflection activities and assignments were used by early childhood teachers and students, an increase in self-awareness or self-confidence was noted. In a single qualitative case study, Farrell (2013) found that the journal writing process helps to facilitate self-reflection. Similarly, Perez (2011) conducted an exploratory case study which included 25 masters-level ECE students. Perez examined how graduate students’ own self-awareness influenced their ability to assist young children with regulating their own emotions and found that self-reflection helped these students to become more self-aware regarding their own emotions which assisted in co-regulating young children’s emotions.

With the literature showing the importance of self-awareness in teachers, there is a need to better understand the self-awareness of preservice teachers. Ersay, Türkoğlu, and Kaynak (2014) investigated the relationship between preservice early educators' emotional awareness levels and their emotion regulation strategies. In this study, participants included 393 students predominately female, enrolled in pre-service early childhood teacher education programs from six different universities in Turkey. The descriptive study described whether the preservice early childhood teachers’ levels of emotional awareness and regulation strategies are affected by a number of variables.

Results of this study identified the educational status of the Turkish pre-service early childhood teacher's family, mothers in particular, as a factor in the preservice early educator's emotional awareness levels. Ersay, Türkoğlu, and Kaynak (2014) found that preservice early educators with mother's that earned a high school diploma or higher level of education utilized planning strategies for dealing with challenging situations. Participating preservice early educators with "low emotional awareness or difficulty identifying their own feelings were less likely to make plans and think about what steps to take to deal with the event they experienced (refocusing on planning)" (p. 236). In a quantitative study Mehta (2013) used three scales, Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), Teacher Effectiveness Scale (TES), and the Occupational Stress Index (OS1) with 300 secondary school teacher participants. Mehta found that increasing teacher EI resulted in a reduction of occupational stress and improvement in work. While specific strategies were not identified in Mehta's study, Ersay, Türkoğlu, and Kaynak (2014) also investigated the relationship between the emotional awareness levels of the participating preservice early childhood teachers and their emotion regulation strategies. Results indicated that the type of high school that the participants attended and their current places of education played a role in the emotion regulations strategies they utilized.

Of the studies related to self-awareness few used the EI framework as described by Goleman. Some studies looked at self-awareness with self-efficacy (Bullock et al., 2015; Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Guo et al., 2010) while others took the angle of self-confidence (Sak et al., 2015; Wee et al., 2014). In doing so Albert Bandura's (1977) theory regarding self-efficacy acted as the framework for many of the studies (Bruderet

al., 2013; Bullock et al., 2015; Guo et al., 2010). Bandura's theory referred to self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capability to organize and execute the courses of actions required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). Other studies did not look at self-awareness as an individual competency in EI, but in general as a whole with EI.

This study addressed the problem of a lack of understanding of how self-awareness is being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. There is little research on the EI competency self-awareness specifically of preservice early educator participants (Ersay, Türkoğlu, & Kaynak, 2014) even though there is plenty or research reporting on the importance of it (Perez, 2011; Sak et al., 2015) and the ability to improve it (Mehta, 2013) this study focused solely on preservice early educators and how elements of self-awareness are being embedded and modeled in their coursework.

Research regarding each the competency of self-awareness was available, but participants primarily consisted of individuals enrolled in 4-year or university institutions of higher education (IHE) teacher preparation programs (Hurley & Cammack, 2014; Su & Chung, 2015; Wee et al., 2014) or individuals currently working as classroom teachers (Bruder, Dunst, Wilson, & Stayton, 2013; Bullock et al., 2015; Guo et al., 2010; Mehta, 2013; Sak et al., 2015). The available research, infrequently addressed in an intentional manner those individuals in early educator preparation programs. This is especially true for preparation programs at the community college level.

When narrowing the research on self-awareness to preservice early childhood teachers enrolled in community college preparation programs, fewer studies were found.

Fewer studies were also found when narrowing the research to the specific competencies of emotional awareness and self-confidence competencies. As a result of what is currently available in the research what is known is that self-awareness is a necessary competency for educators in their work with young children, and what still needs to be studied is how preservice teacher preparation programs can intentionally address this competency in the preservice teacher preparation curriculum.

Motivation

A review of the literature for motivation included studies that researched the community college student, preservice teacher, and early childhood teacher demographic and their achievement drive and optimism as related to the ECE profession. According to the literature, motivation and its two subcategories, achievement drive and optimism are important competencies for early childhood teachers (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2014). These two competencies are especially relevant as it relates to an individual's decision to enter into the early childhood profession, complete the educational requirements, and to continue on in the field (Huss-Keeler et al., 2013). However, while there was available research on motivation what was missing or limited was a focus on the specific motivation competency areas of achievement drive and optimism. This was especially true in relationship to the community college preservice early educator demographic.

The literature revealed themes related to motivation in the community college student, preservice teacher, and early childhood teachers demographic in two different topic areas. The connection of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to decisions to choose

and remain in the ECE profession and the impact motivation has on teacher burnout. While the specific motivation competencies of achievement drive and optimism were not explicitly identified, the focus of the literature when categorized aligned with these two competency areas.

Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Literature which addressed the motivation for choosing and committing to the ECE profession was categorized into both extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors. This theme aligned most with motivation competency area of achievement drive. Mansfield and Beltman (2014) noted that there are varying reasons as to why individuals choose to enter into, complete the education requirements for, and remain in the ECE profession. For example, with regard to extrinsic motivations for entering into the ECE profession, it is first important to understand the external factors that may lead an individual to choose the ECE profession.

According to the research, a common extrinsic motivation for choosing to enter into the ECE profession was for employment and employment security. Mansfield and Beltman (2014) for example conducted a study to identify the motivations for teaching. This study sought to identify the professional goals of graduating and early career teacher and to identify the differences between their goals. Participants were 332 graduating teacher education students and 162 early career teachers (recent graduates) all from two Western Australian universities. An open-ended question survey using a goal content perspective was used to investigate teacher motivations for teaching. Results of the study indicated that gaining employment and employment security were the most frequently identified motivations for teaching. These findings were consistent for both graduating

and early career teachers. Mansfield and Beltman categorized gaining employment and job security as extrinsic motivations and found no difference between the motivations of graduating and early career teachers.

Another factor noted in the literature regarding the extrinsic motivation of employment and employment security was related to the demographic of the profession. Demographics for ECE teachers in general was predominantly female (Gomez et al., 2015). At the same time, changes in life circumstances can play a role in females choosing employment in the ECE profession. As a result of divorce and other family challenges for example women may be forced to enter into or back into the workforce (Hall-Kenyon, Bullough, MacKay, & Marshall, 2014). These women may have "modest education but find themselves needing to support their families (sometimes with several children) on meager wages" (Hall-Kenyon et al., 2014, p. 155). As a result this need for employment and the education requirements to continue into the profession can act as a motivation for continuing in the profession

Research also identified the need to complete education requirements as an extrinsic motivation. Entry into the ECE profession includes minimal educational requirements. Because of the minimal education requirement to enter the field and because the profession in general lends itself to a female demographic, the ECE profession is often chosen. This means that those who do enter the field may be extrinsically motivated to meet the requirement to increase education levels. Individuals intending to teach in Head Start programs for example, are encouraged to earn associate and baccalaureate degrees from ECE or child development backgrounds (Bassok, 2013;

Whitebook, 2014). In a study by Huss-Keeler et al. (2013) of motivations of ECE professionals for attending higher education results indicated that teachers with 5-10 years of experience identified extrinsic motivation for returning to school. Participants of the study included 23 directors and 67 teachers of Head Start and community-based childcare centers enrolled in community college courses. Participants were enrolled in classes and/or working towards an ECE associate degree. Findings from the study indicated that the motivation to return to school was because this was required by the employer. Returning to school because of a workplace requirement was noted at higher levels among teachers and those teachers with 5-10 years of experience.

Because increasing education levels in the field is becoming a requirement, the individual must have the motivation, willingness, and drive to move forward educationally in the profession. While the research suggested that individuals who enter the ECE field may have extrinsic motivations for doing so, the literature is limited. Because the literature is limited this indicates a need to further examine motivation as it relates to the preservice teacher enrolled in community college teacher preparation courses.

Intrinsic motivation also acts a motivation for choosing and committing to the ECE profession. According to the research preservice teachers were primarily found to have intrinsic motivation as it relates to choosing to enter into, completing the education requirements for, and remaining in the ECE profession. Tekin (2015) explained that intrinsically motivated individual’s act based on aspirations or goals. These aspirations and goals include personal growth, community contribution, or other reasons related to

basic need satisfaction. For example, Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2014) found that a desire to work with children and adolescents was identified as the primary motive, by 53 primary education level and 168 secondary education level preservice teachers enrolled in a Dutch university teacher education program, for wanting to become a teacher. In a study with 62 Omani ECE pre-service teachers enrolled in a teacher preparation program Tekin (2015) found that participants had higher intrinsic motivations than extrinsic motivations for teaching. This study used the self-determination theory for the framework and was conducted in a Muslim-Arab country located in the southeastern part of the Arabian Peninsula using a modified version of the Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST).

In another study, Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2015) used an interaction approach to examine the motivations of 135 Dutch university-based preservice teachers for becoming a teacher. Using a self-assessment questionnaire researchers examined the preservice teachers' professional commitment, self-efficacy and perceptions regarding the quality of the program in an effort to identify which of these factors acted as a determinant of degree completion in the teacher education program. Results of the study indicated that motives related to altruism and affective professional commitment were predictors of degree completion. Researchers also found that for these study participants the most important motive for becoming a teacher was that they felt they had the skills to be an effective teacher. While it was assumed that teaching ability was positively associated with degree completion, the results of the study indicated that teaching ability was a negative predictor of degree completion and that "whenever teaching ability

increased with one standard deviation, preservice teachers were less likely to obtain their degree" (p. 447). These finding may be a result of participants overrating their personal teaching ability on the self-assessment questionnaire and therefore concluding that further schooling is unnecessary. These findings highlight the need to assist preservice teachers with understanding the competencies and skills necessary for being an effective teacher, as well as the need to provide preservice teachers with consistent and honest feedback regarding their performance as teachers.

While the findings of each of these studies suggested that most individuals that enter the ECE field are intrinsically motivated to do so, the participants of these studies did not include preservice teachers enrolled in community college teacher preparation programs. Because these findings are limited to students enrolled in university level program, this indicates a need to further examine motivation as it relates to the preservice teacher enrolled in community college teacher preparation courses.

Teacher burnout. Preservice teachers' motivation for continuing and remaining in the ECE profession was addressed by literature which focused on teacher burnout. This theme aligned most with the motivation competency area of optimism. In the research addressing optimism for example, low wages and education requirement were identified as roadblocks and challenges that an individual faces once they become an ECE teacher. Low wages and continued efforts to increase the educational requirements for entering and remaining in the field (Gomez et al., 2015; Huss-Keeler et al., 2013) are major challenges for ECE teachers and preservice teachers. For example, while an individual may be highly motivated to earn money, they may or may not be highly motivated to

their educational or professional growth which in turn impacts their ability to earn more money. Research also indicated that teacher burnout specifically was often a result of a combination of factors which included low wages, lack of satisfaction with work conditions, and high emotional demands (Bullough, Hall-Kenyon, & MacKay, 2012; Hall-Kenyon et al., 2014; Koltunovych, 2014).

Burnout in teachers in the early phase of the profession is common. Hultell, Melin, and Gustavsson (2013) investigated teacher burnout using a quantitative approach. Hultell et al. sought to “examine whether the use of a person-based approach could identify patterns of intra-individual change in burnout during the first three years of employment for beginning teachers” (p. 77). Participants for this study included a total of 816 student teachers. Results from this study showed that when a person-based approach was used a “multifaceted perspective to the development of burnout” (p. 83) was provided and changes in burnout levels over time were found to even-out. Hultell et al. also confirmed a relationship between turnover and burnout. Good health and educational success were found to be predictors of lower initial levels of burnout among participants. Poor health and experienced educational strain during the education process were found to be predictors of higher initial levels of burnout among participants. These findings highlighted the need to prepare students to deal with the transition from student teacher to teacher.

Retention and turnover are also factors related to burnout. Wells (2015) conducted a study which explored the factors related to teacher retention and turnover among newly hired preschool teachers in Head Start program. Participants included a total of 65 Head

Start teachers that were in the first 24 months of hire. While 65 Head Start teachers participated in the study 17 of those participating preschool teachers left their position before completing the study. Head Start teachers were recruited from ten Head Start programs in a major Mid-western city. Wells used a 16 item job satisfaction survey which included demographic information to identify participants' self-identified levels of job satisfaction. Findings from the study indicated that desire to stay in the ECE field, feelings of unhappiness, relationship with supervisor, and work environment were factors in these preschool teachers quitting. Wells also found that the teachers with lower levels of education were more likely to quit teaching.

Findings from the available research identified a need to address preservice teacher burnout. There are however, a lack of studies which specifically focus on preservice teacher burnout (Hultell et al., 2013). Hultell et al. indicated that a reason for the lack of research is that burnout is considered *"*a work-related construct*"* (p. 77) and tends to be addressed as a factor affecting employment. Hultell et al. also explained that while burnout is considered a work-related construct there are factors that occur during the education process that can affect future work-related well-being which means that the preparation process is also vulnerable time for burnout for the preservice teacher.

While this area lacked research, the few studies that mentioned preservice teacher burnout identified preservice teacher misperceptions regarding the teaching profession and emotional burnout as factors. Hong (2010) for example identified emotional burnout as the "most salient feature of dropout teachers' retrospective explanations of their professional identities and the factors that influenced their decision to leave teaching" (p.

1541). In this mixed-methods study with 84 participants which included teachers in various stages of their teaching career, Hong found that preservice teachers had a tendency toward “naïve and idealistic perceptions of teaching” (p. 1530) which contributed toward emotional burnout. This was especially true for those preservice teachers that left the profession within 5 years of entering. Dicke et al. (2015) also identified the need to understand and address preservice teacher’s perceptions regarding the teaching profession early in the teacher preparation process.

Individuals beginning their educational studies and choosing to enter into the field oftentimes possess less EI than those entering other professions (Bedel, 2014; Corcoran & Tormey, 2012b). According to Mansfield et al. (2012), “If teacher education programs aim to support the development of teachers’ resilience, such programs should address profession related, emotional, motivational and social aspects of resilience at appropriate times in preservice teachers’ development” (p. 366). Therefore, the programs that prepare future ECE teachers must address and prepare these individual so they are highly motivated to complete the educational requirements, continue on in the field, and have realistic expectations regarding the ECE field and their abilities. This in turn will help to ensure that preservice teacher a better able to handle the emotional demands of the educational journey and the ECE classroom.

Of the studies related to motivation few used the EI framework as described by Goleman. Some studies looked at motivation from a self-efficacy perspective while others took the angle of motivation as being linked to psychological well-being. Deci and Ryan’s (2000) self-determination theory (SDT) regarding motivation, which was based

on two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic, acted as the framework for some of the studies. Studies which addressed achievement drive and optimism themes both used SDT as the framework. Tekin (2015) for example used the SDT to investigate the autonomous motivations of ECE preservice teachers for teaching. Desrumaux et al. (2015) on the other hand used the SDT to examine the extent to which optimism and organizational climate were linked to well-being and distress at work. In this study, which included 298 French elementary, middle, and high school teacher participants, the results indicated that optimism was an important health factor for the participating educators "mediated by satisfaction of the need for competence" (p. 179). Desrumaux et al. (2015) also noted that well-being and distress is impacted by optimism. Other studies used expectancy *x* value theory and the theory of teacher development to explore teacher burnout. Most of the studies did not look at motivation as an individual competency in EI, but in general as a competency in addition to EI.

While research regarding each of the competency areas of motivation was available, participants primarily consisted of individuals enrolled in 4-year or university institutions of higher education (IHE) teacher preparation programs or individuals currently working as classroom teachers. The available research, infrequently addressed in an intentional manner those individuals in early educator preparation programs. This is especially true for preparation programs at the community college level. Also, study participants often included individuals from outside of the United States of America.

When narrowing the research on motivation to the specific competencies of achievement drive and optimism competencies, fewer studies were found. Even fewer if

any studies were found when narrowing the research to preservice ECE teachers enrolled in community college preparation programs. As a result of what is currently available in the research what is known is that motivation is a necessary competency for preservice educators on their educational journey toward becoming ECE professionals and as they transition into the ECE workforce. What still needs to be studied is how preservice teacher preparation programs can better prepare students for transition into the ECE workforce and how preservice teacher preparation programs can intentionally address this competency in the preservice teacher preparation curriculum.

Empathy

A review of the literature for empathy included studies that researched the early childhood preservice teachers' and teachers' capacity to understand and develop others. Empathy and its two subcategories, understanding others and developing others are necessary competencies for early childhood teachers (George, 2013). These two empathy competency areas are especially necessary for addressing the needs of the children, families, and administrators (Peck, Maude, & Brotherson, 2015). Empathy competencies are also needed for facilitating the overall development of children into productive citizens. These two competencies are especially relevant as it relates to the preservice teachers role in creating the emotional climate for the classroom (Curby et al., 2013). However, while there was research available on empathy what was missing or limited was a focus on the specific empathy competency areas of understanding others and developing others. This was especially true in relationship to the field of ECE in general and the community college preservice early educator demographic.

The literature revealed themes related to empathy in the preservice teacher and early childhood teacher demographic. The relationship-based nature of teaching and the teachers' role in creating emotional climates in the classroom. While the specific empathy competencies of understanding others and developing others were not explicitly identified, the focus of the literature when categorized aligned with these competency areas.

Relationship-based nature of teaching. Literature regarding the empathy competency of understanding others was limited. In the literature which addressed the relationship-based nature of the teaching profession the research focused on the teacher's role as "carer" (Noddings, 1984). The research also emphasized the belief that a part of teaching young children requires the teacher to make an emotional investment in the well-being of those children (George, 2013; Hall-Kenyon et al., 2014; Shin, 2015). Kemp and Reupert (2012) for example used a qualitative approach to investigate the perspectives and experiences of preservice teachers on caring in teaching. For this study, participants included 13 preservice teachers (10 female and 3 male) enrolled in the junior or senior year of their undergraduate degree program in primary education. Results of this study indicated that participants had a challenging time conceptualizing or defining caring but were able to discuss their role as carer in their role as prospective teachers. Another finding from this study was that the participants identified caring as instinctual but also felt they were not prepared for their role as carer and their responsibilities this role entails.

Research also identified caring as an important and foundational component of teaching (Velasquez, West, Graham, & Osguthorpe, 2013). Therefore it is important for teachers to understand the concept and meaning of care as related to the educational setting. Laletas and Reupert (2015) conducted a study which explored how preservice secondary teachers understand care. Participants for this phenomenological study included 12 preservice secondary teachers between the ages of 21 and 30. Participants were from various disciplines and enrolled in either a practicum course for a bachelor of education or graduate diploma of education program on an urban Australian campus. Focus groups were conducted and the researchers collected and interpreted data using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Findings from the research revealed five interrelated themes regarding the preservice teachers' understanding of care. Analysis from transcripts were categorized into themes around enactment of care, caring and behavior management, boundaries around caring, barriers to caring, and learning to care. Participants described caring as more than offering or providing custodial care and tended to use specific behaviors or enactments to describe the term care. Participants agreed that care is reflected through the pedagogy being used and that the pedagogy should focus on the whole child. Care was also identified as an important component of behavior management and fundamental to the success of behavior management. Participants also shared their challenges with becoming too personally involved by caring too much. Concerns regarding a lack of training were also identified. Participants felt that they were not prepared to address the challenges they will encounter in the classroom in their role as carer and educator.

The available research also highlighted the relationship-based nature of care in specific types of learning environment. Shin (2015) conducted research which focused on care within an infant-care learning environment. Similar to Kemp and Reuperts (2012) findings Shin (2015) noted that the role of carer is often seen as instinctive and innate. Shin (2015) conducted a qualitative single case study to explore the caring encounters and responses of an infant teacher to the needs of the infants in care and to illustrate how those caring relationships are developed by the caregiver. Participant included one head infant teacher of eight infants ranging in age from 5 to 21 months. Findings from this study highlighted the diverse roles the infant caregiver plays in the classroom. Results indicated that the participant provided both routine and responsive caregiving. At the same time, the participant used routine and responsive interactions with infants as a learning opportunity for other infants in the class to develop prosocial and empathy skills. Findings from this study emphasized the need for teachers to have the necessary "pedagogical knowledge and skills" (p. 505) required for the field, the emotional capacity to provide responsive care, and the skills to use modelling and demonstration to teach prosocial and empathy skills to children.

While the findings of each of these studies suggested that participants recognized the relationship-based nature of teaching, their role as carer, and the need to have the skills to understand others, the participants of these studies did not include preservice teachers enrolled in community college teacher preparation programs. Because these findings were limited to students enrolled in university level program, this indicated a need to further examine empathy as it relates to the preservice teacher enrolled in

community college teacher preparation courses. The results also indicated a need to examine how empathy concepts are taught to preservice teachers using an online course format.

Creating emotional climates in the classroom. The research also emphasized that educators have a significant influence on the relationships in the classroom and the emotional climate of the classroom (Curby et al., 2013; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Reyes et al., 2012). Reyes et al. (2012) utilized a multilevel mediation approach which examined the relationship between classroom emotional climate (CEC), student engagement, and year-end grades. Approximately 63 educators and 2,000 students in sixth grade English language arts classrooms from school districts in the Northeastern part of the United States were participants in this quantitative experimental designed study. Researchers utilized the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to assess the classroom climate. Specifically, the CLASS tool measured the emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support in the classroom. Students used a 5-point Likert-type scale which measured personal perceptions of engagement and disaffection levels. Researchers measured academic levels through final report card grades. Findings from the study confirmed a relationship between the CEC, student engagement, and year-end grades. Classrooms scoring high in CEC on the CLASS tool were those classrooms noted as having educators with high teacher sensitivity. According to Reyes et al. “classrooms high in teacher sensitivity have teachers who are not only highly aware of and responsive to students’ academic, social, and emotional needs but also are effective at helping students solve problems” (p. 707). While Reyes et al.’s

findings indicated a positive relationship between CEC, student engagement, and year-end grades, it also highlighted the relevance of the educators EI. Specifically, the findings highlighted the relevance of the educator's own EI, which include the empathy competency and its two subcategories, in creating a learning environment that has a high CEC. Reyes et al.'s findings also outlined the need for educator preparation programs to incorporate curriculum which emphasize how educators develop the emotional climate of the classroom.

Findings from the available research identified a need to address the teachers' role in creating the emotional climate in the learning environment. There were however, a lack of studies which specifically focused on the preservice teacher and on building the preservice teachers' own empathy competency in understanding and developing others. For example, Curby et al. (2013) conducted a study on emotional support that included preschool teacher participants. Curby et al. examined the relationship between the consistency of teachers' emotional support to children's academic and social outcomes. Results from this study indicated that preschool children in classrooms identified as emotionally consistent classroom environments demonstrated higher achievement gains and social competence than children in classrooms classified as lacking in emotional consistency (Curby et al., 2013). While this study did not include preservice teachers, this study highlighted the need to prepare future teachers for their role as the creators of the emotional climate in the classroom. There was also a lack of research which investigated the specific empathy competencies of understanding and developing others (Kasler et al., 2013) in the curriculum and educational content used to prepare individuals for teaching.

Available research with regard to teacher preparation also tended to focus on emotions or emotional support in general. This research also tended to focus on trainings and workshop sessions rather than the curriculum course content used to prepare prospective teachers (Peterson et al., 2010).

The literature revealed additional insight into empathy and the role of empathy in culturally responsive curriculums. According to Gunn and King (2015), empathy is “a highly functional communication strategy that may have important and productive application in the field of creating multicultural awareness in preservice teachers” (p. 173). Gunn and King for example conducted a mixed-method study and explored the use of empathic identification in developing a culturally responsive pedagogy with preservice teachers. Participants for this study included 20 preservice teachers (17 female and 3 male) enrolled in an undergraduate teacher preparation program at a four-year college and one professor. Demographic for this study included a predominantly white participant pool (15 preservice teachers and 1 professor) which is similar to the ECE profession in general (Cheruvu et al., 2014; Gomez et al., 2015; Mueller & File, 2015; Saluja et al., 2002; US BLS, 2015). The specific course used as the focus for this study was an Early and Emergent Literacy course.

This study by Gunn and King (2015) focused on developing a culturally responsive pedagogy for use with preservice teachers through the use of self-reflexive writing exercises which included teaching cases featuring diversity and literacy issues as a teaching tool by teacher educators. Researchers used teaching cases, student-written postcard narratives, nonparticipant field notes, a researcher reflective journal and the

results from the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI) as data sources. According to the researchers, the intent is to build skills in understanding others through providing preservice teachers with the “opportunity for empathic identity with the other” (p. 173). Gunn and King also explained that by “engaging preservice teachers in these emotion-based identification experiences, we embedded opportunities for preservice teachers to understand others and therefore predict the real effects of their actions when in the classroom” (p. 173). For this study the researchers found that utilizing empathic identification allowed preservice teacher participants to develop skills in perspective taking and provided opportunities for the preservice teacher to experiment with “being another person” (p. 180) as a way of “living through characters’ experiences” (p. 180). Another finding was that intentionality and contextualization are important factors in developing the empathy competency. According to the researchers this alignment became a motivation tool for the professor and an engagement factor for both the preservice teacher and the professor. The researchers specifically noted that intentionality and contextualization allowed the professor to “engage her students in a critical inquiry about culturally responsive teaching practices in a literacy conceptual framework” (p. 180). Researchers also found through the preservice teachers’ written responses that the preservice teachers gained experience with providing a voice for other teachers as well as marginalized students. Overall, the researchers found that the use of pedagogical activities, teaching cases, and postcard narratives that utilized empathic identification were valuable tools in addressing and developing cultural responsiveness in preservice teachers.

While some research regarding each the competency of empathy was available, participants primarily consisted of individuals enrolled in 4-year or university institutions of higher education (IHE) teacher preparation programs or individuals currently working as classroom teachers. The available research, infrequently addressed in an intentional manner those individuals in early educator preparation programs. This is especially true for preparation programs at the community college level.

When narrowing the research on empathy to the specific competencies of understanding others and developing others, fewer studies were found. Even fewer if any studies were found when narrowing the research to preservice ECE teachers enrolled in community college preparation programs. As a result of what was available in the research, what is known is that empathy is a necessary competency for educators in general. Empathy was also a necessary competency for developing relationships in the classroom and creating the emotional climate of the classroom. What still needs to be studied is how preservice teacher preparation programs can assist with the development of the preservice teachers' own empathy competencies, their capacity to develop this skill in children, and how preservice teacher preparation programs can intentionally address this competency in the preservice teacher preparation curriculum.

Approaches to Developing Personal and Social Emotional Intelligence Competencies in Future Early Educators

The following section is focused on approaches to developing personal and social EI competencies in future early educators, faculty's role in building EI competencies, and challenges with doing so in online courses. For each section, an analysis of themes from

current research based on the community college demographics is discussed. Each section ends with a more narrowed look at what the findings mean for the online faculty for ECE teacher training programs.

There was some research available regarding personal and social EI competencies and the development of future early educators, but limited research was available on the community college demographic and the approaches used to develop personal and social EI competencies in preservice early educators. The need for personal and social EI competencies are necessary for the preservice early educators' dual role of student (Capt, Oliver, & Engel, 2014; Martin et al., 2014; Miranda, 2014; Sparkman et al., 2012) and future educator was well documented (Baltaci & Demir, 2012; Edannur, 2010; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley, & Weatherby-Fell, 2016; Wee et al., 2014). It was also suggested in the literature that some personal and social EI competencies are teachable (Kasler, et al., 2013; Nelis, Quoidbach, Mikolajczak, & Hansenne, 2009; Oberst et al., 2009; Schutte, Malouff, & Thorsteinsson, 2013). While social EI competency of empathy was identified in the literature as a necessary competency for teachers (Mansfieldet al., 2016; Peck et al., 2015; Velasquez et al., 2013), the research was limited with regard to how empathy was taught to preservice teachers and teachers in general.

Research which focused on teaching personal EI competencies to teachers was more prevalent than the literature focused on teaching social EI competencies, but still limited. With regard to teaching personal EI competencies such as self-awareness for example, Nelis et al. (2009) used Mayer and Salovey's Four Branch Model of EI to

investigate if EI can be increased or improve through training which targets specific components of EI and whether or not the benefits of that training depended on the initial level of EI. Nelis et al. found that participants of the experimental group demonstrated a significant increase in emotion identification and emotion management abilities. Another finding was that EI training facilitated positive changes that last for 6 months after the intervention. Findings also indicated that the initial level of EI was not a dependent factor with regard to the benefits of the training. Results also indicated that intentional and specific EI training can assist with increasing EI. What remains unknown however is whether there were specific instructional approaches used by the facilitator that may have also contributed to the increase in the participant's EI. What was also unknown was whether or not these results would be the same for students enrolled in community college teacher preparation programs. Another unknown was whether or not these same results would occur if the intervention used an online format and whether or not these results can be generalized to an English speaking demographic.

Dacre Pool and Qualter's (2012) research also addressed the personal EI competency of self-awareness by investigating whether a teaching intervention would improve the EI and self-efficacy levels of university students. Similar to Nelis, Quoidbach, Mikolajczak, and Hansenne (2009), Dacre Pool and Qualter used an experimental design based on Mayer and Salovey's Four Branch Model of EI. An overall finding, which was also similar to Nelis et al's. (2009) findings, was that EI training facilitated positive changes in participants. A major finding of this investigation was that EI and emotional self-efficacy (ESE) levels of participants improved using the teaching

interventions. Positive improvements in EI and ESE for both the male and female participants of the intervention group were found. An unexpected finding was that as a possible result of the control group participating in self-awareness activities associated with a career planning module, slight improvements in ESE were noted. These improvements however were not as significant as those demonstrated by the intervention group but still demonstrate that the incorporation of self-awareness activities can assist with the development of self-awareness in learners.

In addition to emotional self-efficacy, interventions to improve student social emotional competencies have shown to be successful. Kasler, et al. (2013) investigated how studying social emotional competencies in a college course through the use of experiential learning would enhance the social emotional competencies of the participants. A thirty-hour social emotional learning course for undergraduate education students which spanned over 14 weeks was developed. Some of the intervention approaches used by Kasler et al. included lecture, experiential learning, group discussions, and similar to Nelis et al. (2009) and Dacre Pool and Qualter (2012), reflective journaling. Likewise to the findings of Nelis et al. (2009) and Dacre Pool and Qualter (2012) participants from the intervention group demonstrated increases in EI and emotional self-efficacy. Participants however did not demonstrate an increase in the social EI competency of empathy.

Intentional EI competency instruction can impact EI growth of future teachers. One way to do that is for those who teach future educators to create and utilize application opportunities that intentionally build and develop the EI competencies that

are expected in teachers (Edannur, 2010; Goroshit & Hen, 2012; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Kasler et al., 2013; Vesely et al., 2013). Therefore, the development of EI competencies in preservice teachers through preservice training coursework has confirmed that EI training was effective in increasing the EI of study participants. Vesely et al. (2013) for example conducted an experimental designed study on the effectiveness of EI training for preservice teachers. Participants included 49 preservice teachers enrolled in a university level teacher education program. Similar to Nelis et al. (2009), Dacre Pool and Qualter (2012), Kasler et al. (2013), the training components for this study included group discussions, skill practice assignments, and also workbook exercises. Also similar to these studies, Vesely et al. (2013) confirmed an increase in participants' EI competencies such as self-awareness and empathy.

Application opportunities which include practice and experiential-based methods and assessment should also be included in teaching models used to develop EI in teachers. Although limited, there was some research available which suggested utilizing specific approaches such as mindfulness programs and stress reduction techniques (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009) to develop EI in teachers. Hen and Walter (2012) used the Sherborne Developmental Movement (SDM) teaching model to develop EI and empathy competencies in preservice teachers. Hen and Walter explained that the SDM teaching model is the "psychotherapeutic use of movement and dance through which a person can engage creatively in a process of furthering his or her emotional, cognitive, physical and social integration" (p.11). The intervention for this study also included the use of

reflective diaries, pre and posttests of participants' EI and empathy levels, and a final project. Participants from this study demonstrated increased levels of EI and empathy.

Each of these studies utilized some common intervention approaches such as lectures, group discussions, role play, experiential learning, and reflective journaling. Several of these studies also utilized an experimental design which included an intervention and control group. Improvements in EI were noted in the participants of each of these studies. Although each of these studies utilized common intervention approaches, none of the interventions were delivered in an online format. Participants for each of these studies were also from a four year university demographic and therefore made it challenging to note whether or not these results would be the same for participants from a community college demographic. Whether or not there are specific applications that better address and promote the development of EI competencies is an area of focus that remained under researched. What also remained understudied was whether or not there were specific application approaches that work best with the community college demographic.

Faculty Role in Building Emotional Intelligence Competencies

There was some research available regarding the roles of faculty in building EI competencies. Although the literature was limited faculty can play a positive role in building EI competencies in future teachers. The primary roles of faculty included positive faculty/student interactions (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013; Kuo, Walker, Schroder, & Belland, 2014; Ladyshewsky, 2013) and utilizing mentoring/teaching approaches that intentionally build and develop the EI competencies.

With regard to faculty/student interaction, the literature revealed themes related to faculty and student relationships. Fostering peer-peer collaboration and building support systems among the future teachers in their preservice training programs was one role that faculty have. Soini, Pietarinen, Toom, and Pyhältö, (2015) for example conducted a study to gain an understanding of the sense of professional agency of first-year student teachers. Participants of this study included 244 Finnish first-year student teachers. According to Soini et al. (2015) professional agency was comprised of "motivation, efficacy beliefs and activities for facilitating and managing learning in the classroom" (p. 645). While this research did not specifically or solely address EI competence, the research did address aspects of the personal EI competency of motivation. Participants of this quantitative study completed the student teacher professional agency (STPA) in the classroom scale. Student teachers confirmed that their sense of professional agency included motivation, efficacy beliefs and activities for facilitating and managing learning in the classroom. Another finding of this study revealed the significance of quality relationships. Peer to peer relations or support during the early stages of the student teachers' educational journey was identified as an important factor to the development of their sense of professional agency (Soini et al., 2015). The quality of these relationships also played a key role. While peer relations was identified by participants as a key factor in the development of professional agency, relationships with faculty was not. Student teacher participants reported that while the learning environment overall was supportive, they reported receiving more support from peers than from faculty or teacher educators.

Although the findings of Soini et al. (2015) are limited to students enrolled in a university level program and to students from a Finnish demographic, these findings suggest that faculty may be able to facilitate the development of EI competencies such as motivation and self-awareness by creating opportunities for students to develop relationships with one another. These findings also highlighted the role and relevance of faculty-student relationships. While the students reported receiving less support from teacher educators, these findings highlighted the need to have intentionality with regard to developing quality relationships between faculty and students enrolled in preservice teacher preparation programs. Similarly, Arghode (2013) identified quality faculty-student relationships as an essential component to developing positive student learning outcomes in general. Arghode further explained the role and relevance of the instructors own EI competency and emphasized that the instructor's EI acts as the foundation for the development of faculty-student relationships, student engagement, and improved student participation. While the literature revealed themes related to faculty and student relationships, the literature was limited and not specific to the community college demographic. The literature was also not specific to those future teachers in preservice early educator programs at community colleges. These findings however, suggested that faculty must develop quality relationships with students in an effort to create ways to foster the development of peer-peer collaboration opportunities. These findings also suggested that the instructor's own understanding of EI and EI competencies have relevancy and act as a foundation for building support systems in classes.

With regard to mentoring/teaching, the available literature revealed themes related to reflection and feedback. Mentoring/teaching by providing students with opportunities to reflect on observed and personal professional practice is a role that faculty have in building EI in future teachers. According to the available literature providing future teachers with opportunities to reflect on observed and personal professional practice assists with the development of EI competencies such as motivation and self-awareness (Farrell, 2013; Hen & Walter, 2012; Palmer & van Wyk, 2013; Perez, 2011; Soini et al., 2015). Providing responsive feedback to students that reflect EI competencies promotes EI in students is another role that faculty have (Ergur, 2009; Waajid et al., 2013). While there was a scarcity of studies which specifically focused on faculty feedback to students, the available research indicated that faculty feedback facilitates student learning (Chang, 2011; Moos & Ringdal, 2012). It was also suggested in the research that structured faculty feedback assists with developing and strengthening student awareness (Goroshit & Hen, 2012; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014). These findings suggested that faculty must be intentional with regard to the development of courses and be intentional about incorporating opportunities for preservice teachers to reflect on their personal and professional practices. These findings also suggested that faculty feedback played a role in the development of EI in the preservice teacher. Faculty feedback therefore must be responsive and a reflection of the EI competencies desired in their students.

Challenges in Online Courses

Community colleges offer educational opportunities that utilize both face-to-face and online classroom formats as a means of preparing individuals for their professional

journey. According to the research however the utilization of online course formats is becoming more prevalent (Castillo, 2013; Mamiseishvili & Deggs, 2013; Shea & Bidjerano, 2014; Xu & Jaggars, 2013). An outcome of this increased utilization of online course formats that was well noted in the literature was the high level of attrition (Kizilcec & Halawa, 2015; Layne, Boston, & Ice, 2013; Xu & Jaggars, 2011, 2014; Jaggars & Xu, 2010). Some of the research which addressed attrition also identified individual student factors related to the EI competencies of self-awareness and motivation. These factors included student readiness for participating in online courses (Bork & Rucks-Ahidiana, 2013; Colorado & Eberle, 2010; Rust, Brinthaupt, & Robbins, 2015), student self-awareness for recognizing personal capacity for participating in online courses (You & Kang, 2014; Jaggers et al., 2013), and student motivation for persisting in online courses (Xu & Du, 2013, 2014) as reasons for the lack of success in online course formats. Although attrition was well noted in the literature as a challenge with utilizing online course formats, and the focus of the research was on a both university and community college level demographic, the research however did not specifically address the community college preservice early educator demographic. The available research also did not focus specifically on EI competencies.

Findings from the research also identified some of the challenges that faculty encounter with regard to using online course formats. These challenges were primarily related to course design and implementation. The literature however was limited with regard to assisting learners with building EI competencies such as self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in online course formats. Research which specifically addressed

the online community college preservice early educator courses and demographic was even more limited. While the focus of the available research did not have an intentional or explicit focus on EI or EI competencies and was not specific to the community college or ECE demographic, the research revealed themes related to the challenges with course design and online course implementation in general.

Challenges with online course design was one theme found in the literature. The available research identified course design as a primary factor with regard to addressing course content (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012; Hernandez, Newman, Seiler, Shultz, & McVey, 2014; Hosler & Arend, 2012; Niess & Gillow-Wiles, 2013). Course design was also a factor with regard to developing personal and social EI competencies such as self-awareness, motivation, and in a limited fashion, empathy. While the research did not explicitly focus on challenges with building EI in online courses, the concepts related to some of the competencies. Cleveland-Innes and Campbell (2012) for example explained that emotion is present in the online learning environment, it has an impact on the learning process, and must be considered in the online learning environment. Cleveland-Innes and Campbell used a community of inquiry (CoI) framework to investigate emotional presence in the online learning environment. In this qualitative study, with 217 participants from 19 different graduate level courses, Cleveland-Innes and Campbell concluded that emotion is present and must be considered when designing and implement online learning environments. Also suggested was that students need to develop an awareness of their emotions and the role those emotions play in life and in the learning process. While the researchers did not explicitly investigate the EI competency of self-

awareness, the findings suggest that addressing and incorporating this competency into the course design is beneficial for students (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012).

While it is beneficial to have intentionality regarding the incorporation of EI competencies into the course design, the research indicated that instructors were challenged with regard to having the necessary skills and knowledge to design online courses in general (Hernandez et al., 2014; Hosler & Arend, 2012; Niess & Gillow-Wiles, 2013). Along these same lines, Hosler and Arend (2012) for example noted that a challenge for online instructors included designing and incorporating relevant assignments. Similarly, Hernandez et al. (2014) conducted a study which investigated how teacher candidates are prepared to teach in online learning environments. The researchers for this study concluded that the teacher participants lacked skills in instructional design principles. These finding suggested that ECE faculty need to have effective skills in course design as well as a clear understanding of the role of EI in the ECE profession in order to design and incorporate relevant assignments.

Challenges with online course implementation was also a theme found in the literature. A factor related to this theme that was found in the literature was faculty/student interactions in online learning environments. In the literature, for example teaching presence was associated with faculty/student interaction. Research indicated that students want and need faculty to be active facilitators of discussions in online learning environments (Hosler & Arend, 2012; Lorenzo, 2012). The research also noted that positive and frequent faculty/student interactions allows the faculty to engage students in the learning process (Arghode, 2013; Chakraborty & Nafukho, 2014; Han & Johnson,

2012). In a case study conducted by Ladyshewsky (2013) for example, the researchers confirmed that teaching presence is an important factor that impacted the quality of learning and student satisfaction. Niess and Gillow-Wiles (2013) also concluded that the instructor has an important and primary role in creating and facilitating online educational experiences that provide opportunities for learners to interact, share knowledge, and reflect in the learning community.

Overall the literature revealed that the primary challenges that exist with regard to the implementation of online courses revolved around course design and implementation. Although the literature was limited and not specific to the community college and preservice early educator demographic, the findings highlighted the need for the online faculty of preservice early educator programs to understand and have effective skills in course design concepts. The focus of the literature was also not explicit to EI competencies or the challenges with incorporating EI competencies into online courses. The findings however did suggest that understanding and intentionality with regard to course design and implementation assist with creating online learning experiences that intentionally provide a foundation for learners to develop EI competencies.

Online Learning and Emotional Intelligence Competencies

The following section addressed online learning and EI competencies and focused on how assignment design, faculty assessment and feedback, and asynchronous discussion forum prompts in online learning environments reflect specific EI competencies. For each section, an analysis of themes regarding the competencies of self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in assignment design, faculty assessment and

feedback, and asynchronous discussion forum prompts in online learning environments is discussed. Each section ends with a more narrowed look at what the findings mean for early childhood teacher training programs.

Assignment Design

The literature overall was limited with regard to how assignment design in online learning environments reflect self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies. A part of course design in general includes creating appropriate objectives and learning outcomes and developing and incorporating assignments that appropriately address those stated course objectives and learning outcomes (Boettcher, 2007; Hosler & Arend, 2012; Niess & Gillow-Wiles, 2013; Whetten, 2007). While this can be challenging in general, this is an even greater challenge for those responsible for designing online courses (Hernandez et al., 2014; Hosler & Arend, 2012; Niess & Gillow-Wiles, 2013; Stavredes & Herder, 2014). According to research, creating and implementing assignments in online learning environments requires time with regard to planning the appropriate assignments and creativity in the implementation of those assignments (Cook, 2012) with entire texts and courses dedicated to how to develop appropriate online assignments (Stavredes & Herder, 2014). This becomes an even greater task when seeking to intentionally address EI competencies such as self-awareness, motivation, and empathy.

Research which specifically addressed the online community college preservice early educator courses and demographic was even more limited. Most of the available research did not have an intentional or explicit focus on developing EI competencies specifically and was not specific to the community college or ECE demographic. A

common theme found overall in the research was the use of reflective journaling assignments as the means for developing aspects of EI in students. Research also emphasized the role of instructor presence in leading students toward higher levels of thinking with regard to the utilization of reflective assignments (Redmond, 2014).

Self-awareness. The literature which addressed how assignment design reflects self-awareness competencies tended to incorporate an emphasis on reflective journaling. Allan and Driscoll (2014) for example used reflective journal writing to understand and assess student learning. Cullinan, Rutschow, and Welbeck (2012) incorporated reflective journaling activities into a community college student success course in an effort to assist student with overcoming personal challenges. Redmond (2014) conducted a study which used reflective journaling as a way to identify, develop, and assess the cognitive presence of preservice teacher participants. In general, reflective journaling was considered as a way to assist learners with focusing on their learning process, developing their metacognition awareness, and transferring knowledge (Allan & Driscoll, 2014; Cornish & Jenkins, 2012; Cullinan et al., 2012; Farrell, 2013). There was some variation and a lack of consensus however found regarding the definition of reflection (Cornish & Jenkins, 2012; Denton, 2011). However, there was consensus with regard to its use and benefit. The process of reflection for example was identified overall as a way to make connections between thought and action and to provide an opportunity to describe and articulate challenges and successes (Allan & Driscoll, 2014). Reflection was also identified as a way to assist with the development of professional identity in students (Mulder & Dull, 2014). While reflective journaling was categorized in the literature as

natural fit for facilitating the development of self-awareness and professional identity in students, intentional planning and implementation is a key factor to the success of its use.

Motivation. Motivation in general has been researched frequently. Research on motivation in online learning environments however has typically focused on two primary perspectives. The first perspective that was most prevalent in the literature viewed motivation as a personal trait or characteristic of the learner (Hoskins & van Hooff, 2005; Lim & Kim, 2003; Stewart, Bachman, & Johnson, 2010; Xu & Jaggars, 2013; Yukselturk & Bulut, 2007, 2009). According to the research for example the student's motivation to learn was identified as a primary factor with regard to course success (Holder, 2007; Lee, Choi, & Kim, 2013; Lim & Kim, 2003; Richardson, Abraham, & Bond, 2012; Wighting, Liu, & Rovai, 2008). Holder (2007) for example conducted an online survey of 259 participants enrolled in an Adult and Professional Studies online, degree-completion programs at a university located in the Midwest. Participants were enrolled in various degree programs (associate, baccalaureate, and master's level) and in various areas of study (accounting, business administration, information services, criminal justice, nursing, management, and education). The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which measures of students' hope, academics, motivation, and environment, predict persistence in online learning. Holder asserted that students with high levels of personal and academic motivation are more prone to persist in online learning environments. Results of this study indicated that participants identified as persisters in their identified programs of study had higher scores than non-persisters with regard to hope, academics, motivation, and environment. Similarly, in a

later study, Lee, Choi, and Kim (2013) also found that metacognitive, self-regulation, and academic locus of control skill levels were higher in those students identified as persisters in online classes. Participants of this study included 169 junior and senior level students enrolled in an online distance learning course that was part of the baccalaureate degree program for students majoring in Education. Each of these studies highlighted role of student motivation with regard to students' persisting in their online classes. What was not addressed in the literature was emphasis on the use of specific assignment designs that seek to intentionally develop skills such as motivation, metacognitive self-regulation, or academic locus of control in students.

In this literature some of the research specifically noted that students with high metacognition and self-regulation skills have more success in online courses (Cho & Shen, 2013; Lee et al., 2013). When the literature was narrowed down to a specific focus on learners in preservice teacher programs the literature tended to address intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2014; Huss-Keeler et al., 2013; Mansfield & Beltman, 2014; Tekin, 2015). While some of the available literature focused on motivation as a personal trait or characteristic, the research also noted that understanding what influences a student's motivation in general (Dörnyei, & Ushioda, 2013; Wlodkowski, 2011) and in online learning environments is complex (Harnett, 2012; Hartnett, St. George, & Dron, 2011; Marchand, & Gutierrez, 2012; Richardson et al., 2012).

The second perspective found frequently in the literature focused on how the online learning environment was designed in terms of encouraging motivation in learners.

This research primarily focused on the learner's self-regulatory processes and addressed the development and utilization of self-regulated learning (SRL) in online learning environments (Narciss, Proske, & Koerndle, 2007; Winters, Greene, & Costich, 2008). In this literature the focus was primarily on the learners' interaction with the course content or instructional tools and resources (Bannert & Reimann, 2012; McLoughlin, & Lee, 2010; Narciss et al., 2007). Also in this literature, SRL was identified as requiring high cognitive, meta-cognitive, attention, and self-motivation skills (de Bruijn-Smolders, Timmers, Gawke, Schoonman, & Born, 2016; Devolder, van Braak, & Tondeur, 2012; Narciss et al., 2007; Winters et al., 2008). While high cognitive, meta-cognitive, attention, and self-motivation skills were identified as necessary for successful SRL, it was also noted in the literature that many learners struggle with these skills.

Literature which specifically addressed how assignment design reflects motivation competencies however was limited. Emphasis tended to focus on ensuring that assignments are considered relevant by the student (Hartnett et al., 2011, 2014). Service learning assignments were also the primary approach discussed in the literature addressing assignment relevancy by the student. Service learning as noted in the literature acts as a bridge between the classroom and workplace and provides an awareness of the available professional options (Bourelle, 2014; Chambers & Lavery, 2012; Nielsen, 2016). Instructor support and interaction were also noted as necessary components of assignment design in online learning environments (Bierema, 2014; Schallert et al., 2015).

Empathy. Literature which addressed how assignment design reflects empathy competencies was also limited and did not always provide an intentional focus on empathy as a means of developing EI in students. Literature was even more limited with regard to online learning environments. Chambers and Lavery (2012) for example sought to understand the experiences of preservice teachers participating in service learning during their undergraduate student teaching experiences. Reflective journals were used by the preservice teacher participants to describe and capture their perspectives regarding their experiences. Similarly, Seban (2013) also conducted a study which focused on service learning and preservice teachers. In this study Seban explored using different types of projects for service learning and like Chambers and Lavery included a reflective journaling component. One of the findings was that depending on the type of project used for service learning, participants were more frequently led to concentrate on the needs and problems of the community. While each of these studies did not have intentional emphasis or goal of developing empathy competencies, themes related to empathy were found. Service learning for example was found to assist participants with understanding others and their circumstances. Service learning was also identified as a process for developing and building empathy. Although the use of service learning was identified as a possible approach to developing empathy, the research did not address how the implementation of service learning would work in an online learning environment.

Faculty Assessment and Feedback

Faculty assessment and feedback helps to facilitate learning. In the online learning environment faculty assessment and feedback is even more essential as students do not

have the luxury of participating in face-to-face discussions or interactions. While feedback was noted as essential to learning, feedback was also described as entailing more than simply giving advice but included being goal-referenced. Wiggins (2012) for example explained that "helpful feedback is goal-referenced; tangible and transparent; actionable; user-friendly (specific and personalized); timely; ongoing; and consistent" (par 10). Additionally, some of the available research also noted that faculty assessment and feedback included having teaching presence and connected to the student's successful progression through classes (Moallem, 2015; Hosler & Arend, 2012; Lorenzo, 2012). Although faculty assessment and feedback was noted in the literature as important, the timeliness, specificity, and type of feedback were also noted as factors (Andrade, 2014; Denton, 2014; Hosler & Arend, 2012; Leibold & Schwarz, 2015). While the timeliness, specificity, and type of feedback were identified as factors in the literature, they were not investigated through the lens of EI competencies. Overall the literature on feedback did not specifically address the EI competencies of self-awareness, motivation, and empathy. A common theme found in the research overall however was the role of faculty assessment and feedback as a facilitator toward higher levels of thinking and as evidence of social and teaching presence.

Self-awareness. All feedback is not equal and does not necessarily lead students to higher levels of thinking and operating. According to the literature the type of feedback that does promote learning is effective feedback. Effective feedback is feedback that is positive (Leibold & Schwarz, 2015), helps to improve errors (Zsohar & Smith, 2009), and specific to the needs of the individual learner. Andrade (2014) for example

explored the role of online instructor feedback and course design in a self-regulated learning (SRL) course component that was a part of an English course. Andrade found that instructor feedback or dialogue between student and teacher positively impacted student progression through the SRL course component. Students that received constructive feedback noted being able to stay on task. Results also indicated that students produced assignments of higher quality. In another study Hosler and Arend (2012) examined how individualized instructor feedback encouraged or discouraged critical thinking. Findings of the study indicated that students felt the instructor's feedback was valuable especially when the feedback encouraged movement towards deeper thinking regarding the content. On the other hand, when feedback was lacking from the perspective of the student, students noted feeling discouraged (Hosler & Arend, 2012). Each of these findings highlighted the role of faculty assessment and feedback and further emphasized the need for faculty to provide constructive, specific, and intentional feedback focused on developing self-awareness in students.

Available research was limited with regard to the demographic and specific focus. Research specific to online faculty assessment and feedback typically included participants for a four-year college or university and did not include a community college demographic nor the community college preservice teacher demographic. With regard to a specific focus the literature was also limited and did not include a specific or intentional emphasis on the EI competency of self-awareness. While the research was limited, the available literature does have implications regarding the development of self-confidence in learners.

Motivation. Effective feedback can influence a student's desire to achieve and pursue goals and objectives. In the literature effective feedback was noted as a factor in student motivation toward learning (Chang, 2012; Denton, 2014; Jones & Blankenship, 2014; Sopina & McNeill, 2014). Chang (2012) for example conducted a study which included twenty preservice teacher participants and examined their perspectives on how e-feedback helped their learning process. Results indicated that the preservice teachers found the e-feedback helpful and facilitated learning especially when the feedback had a quick turnaround time. Additionally Hartnett et al. (2014) noted that in online classes for example, instructor interactions may come in the form of providing formative feedback or encouraging students toward higher levels of thinking. Instructor interactions may also come in the form of modeling concern, respectful, and inclusive practices using strategies such providing students with relevant personal examples that assist students with linking and associating relevant personal experience to professional practice (Hartnett et al., 2014). Hartnett et al. (2014) also used the term "supportive community" (p. 47) to describe the type of online course structure which facilitates the students' motivation to learn. Unlike the findings of Soini et al. (2015) which identified peer-to-peer relationships in online classes to have more benefits for student teacher study participants, Hartnett et al. explained that instructor interaction is an indispensable element. While effective feedback was identified as a factor of motivation, the research also noted the role of the techniques and delivery formats used for providing feedback. Most importantly, the literature noted that these interactions should be planned and in

alignment with clearly identified learning objectives (Bierema, 2014; Hartnett et al., 2011, 2014).

Similar to Chang (2012), Denton (2014) conducted a study which also examined feedback to students. Denton however focused specifically on the effects of using screen capture technology to provide feedback to students. Participants included 36 students enrolled in an undergraduate teacher education course. Denton used a case study approach that included an intervention in which participants completed a reflective composition assignment and received instructor feedback. Instructor feedback consisted of using screen captures of student work during the initial reflective composition. Feedback addressed student performance as outlined on the rubric criterion and was also used to facilitate the revision process. Feedback videos were used for the final revised version to identify overall strengths and weaknesses of the assignment and steps needed to make improvement. Results of study indicated that the use of screen capture assisted with the revision process and the participants also found the screen capture feedback useful for the revision process. While Denton's study did not specifically address motivation, the findings to have implications in that the use of screen capture as a feedback tool can act as a motivating factor for students to make improvements to assignments.

While the research described effective feedback as a factor with regard to motivating student learning, the research also noted the role of the techniques and delivery formats used for providing feedback (Sopina & McNeill, 2014). Although the technique used to deliver feedback and the delivery format was identified as important

factors it was also noted in the literature as an area that is under researched. Also, none of the available research included participants from community colleges or participants enrolled in community college preservice teacher programs, therefore making it a challenge to generalize these results and findings to this demographic.

Empathy. Literature which addressed how faculty assessment and feedback reflects empathy competencies was limited and did not provide an intentional focus on empathy as a means of developing EI in students. While most of the available literature for example, placed emphasis on providing quality and feedback (Basturkmen, East, & Bitchener, 2014; Borup, West, & Thomas, 2015; Mujtaba, 2011), the rationale for doing such was not with the intention of developing the EI competency of empathy. Some of the research however addressed approaches to providing feedback (Borup, West, & Thomas, 2015) and the need to provide feedback that is supportive, encouraging, and that assists with building the student's ego (Borup, West, & Thomas, 2015; Yang & Carless, 2013). Borup et al. conducted a study which examined instructor feedback to teacher candidate participants enrolled in three sections of educational technology courses. Courses were offered in an online format which also included some face-to-face interaction. Student and instructor perception of instructor feedback was the focus of this mixed-methods study and included a focus on both text and video feedback approaches. Results of this study indicated a preference by students and instructors for feedback provided in a textual format even though video feedback was noted as being more supportive in nature. Video feedback was also found to provide more praise, relationship building, and supportive comments than feedback provided in a text format. Feedback by

text on the other hand was more specific with identifying and discussing needed corrections.

Similar to Borup et al. (2015), Yang and Carless (2013) noted that utilizing technology such as Podcasting can assist with strengthening teacher-student relationships "Technology within the structural dimension can also play a role in personalizing feedback, and so contribute to strengthening teacher-student relationships, that is the social-affective dimension" (p. 291). Although these studies by Borup et al. and Yang and Carless for example do not intentionally emphasize or address the development of empathy competencies, they do provide some insight on the various approaches for providing feedback to students that may assist instructors with developing this competency in preservice teachers. While studies which specifically address how faculty assessment and feedback reflect empathy competencies is limited, findings from the available literature highlighted the need to investigate how instructor feedback can be used to develop empathy competencies and how the different approaches for providing feedback may be utilized in this process.

Asynchronous Discussion Forum Prompts

Asynchronous discussion forums are a primary component of online courses. Discussion forums in online courses provide opportunities for learners to discuss and debate different topics while at the same time acting as a replacement for face-to-face classroom discussions (Hew & Cheung, 2011; Redmond, Devine, & Bassoon, 2014). According to Yoon (2003) in order for students' to have success in online learning environments learner/instructor, learner/content, and learner/learner interactions are

necessary components and considerations. Asynchronous discussion forums provide an environment for each of these interactions to occur. Specifically, Yoon stated that in order “For meaningful learning experiences to occur, learning should emerge from students’ interactions with meaningful contents, the course instructor, and peers” (p. 20). Along these same lines, for example, the use of asynchronous discussion forums was noted as a tool that can facilitate student engagement with course material (Redmond et al., 2014; Szabo, 2015). According to the literature, asynchronous discussion can also promote higher order thinking in students (Niess & Gillow-Wiles, 2013). Asynchronous discussion forums were also noted in the literature as a primary way for student and instructors to interact with one another in online courses (Redmond et al., 2014; Szabo, 2015; Wei-Ying, Manfen, & Hsing-Wen, 2013). It was also noted in the literature that because there is such an increase in the utilization of online courses (Castillo, 2013; Mamiseishvili & Deggs, 2013; Shea & Bidjerano, 2014; Xu & Jaggars, 2013) especially in teacher education programs, there is also a need to ensure that faculty are prepared to teach online (Szabo, 2015). While there was some research available regarding asynchronous discussion forum prompts in online courses, the literature was limited. There was some literature available for example that addressed the promotion of critical thinking (Niess & Gillow-Wiles, 2013; Schwartz & Szabo, 2011; Wei-Ying et al., 2013) and social interactions (Hilton, 2013; Pawan, Paulus, Yalcin, & Chang, 2003). In this research however the focus was typically on the techniques for developing and facilitating asynchronous discussion forum environments rather than the development of specific EI skills and competencies. The literature overall was especially limited with

regard to how asynchronous discussion forum prompts encouraged self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies.

Self-awareness. Literature which focused specifically on how well asynchronous discussion forum prompts encourage self-awareness was limited. Literature which addressed the specific self-awareness competency of emotional awareness and self-confidence was even scarcer. The available literature tended to focus on designing asynchronous online discussion forums that promote higher-order thinking and that engaged the learner socially and cognitively (Hew & Cheung, 2011; Niess & Gillow-Wiles, 2013) to the content rather than specifically on developing self-awareness competencies such as emotional awareness and self-confidence in learners.

Hew and Cheung (2011) conducted a qualitative study which examined the occurrence and frequency of higher level knowledge construction in discussion forums. Forums were from graduate level and non-graduate level courses at an Asia-Pacific university. A total of 40 forums (p. 308) from different courses was the focus of this examination. Each of these forums were student-facilitated under the supervision of the same instructor. Forums were examined to identify the occurrence and frequency of higher level knowledge construction in discussion forums and the relationship to group size and duration of the forum discussion. Overall Hew and Cheung found that forums with a large number of participants making postings had more occurrences of higher-level knowledge construction. Hew and Cheung also found that certain student facilitation techniques were used more frequently, those being providing own comments, asking questions, showing appreciation, and encouraging contribution.

Similarly, Redmond et al. (2014) conducted an ethnographic case study which explored evidences of higher-order thinking in discussion forum postings. Another purpose of this study was to explore the "inter-relationship of how students in different disciplines use online forums to develop a broader knowledge community" (p. 126). Discussion forums where from the Engineering and Teacher Education programs at a university level undergraduate program. Forum postings from the participants in the Engineering and Teacher Education programs were compared to one another and analyzed using the content analysis Model for Asynchronous Conferencing. Forums were analyzed so that social, cognitive, and metacognitive incidences could be identified in the forum postings. Findings from this study indicated a significant difference between the participation rates of students in the Engineering and Teacher Education programs. Participants from the Teacher Education program appeared to participate more frequently and in greater length. Results however indicated that the postings did not demonstrate a high level of critical thinking. Postings from the Teacher Education group were identified as more superficial and social in nature.

There are some differences between this study and the studies conducted by Hew and Cheung (2011) and Redmond et al. (2014). For example, demographics for the studies conducted by Hew and Cheung (2011) and Redmond et al. (2014) are both from university level programs. Each of these studies also investigated student responses to the forum prompt whereas this study examined only the discussion forum prompts. The focus of each of these studies were also not directly related to developing self-awareness competencies. While there were some differences, each of these studies highlighted the

role of discussion forum post design, modeling, and appropriate facilitation. Specifically these findings highlighted how design, modeling, and the use of appropriate facilitation techniques might assist students in the intentional development of EI self-awareness competencies (Pawan et al., 2003) such as emotional awareness and self-confidence.

Motivation. Learning in online learning environments can be challenging for students. As a result students can become disengaged from the learning process, which in turn can impact their achievement drive and optimism about their abilities to complete the course. Overall literature which addressed motivation in general was varied. Research included for example, a focus on the learner's motivation overall in online learning environments (Azaiza, 2011; Giesbers, Rienties, Tempelaar, & Gijselaers, 2014), students' participation in discussion forums (Croxton, 2014; Hew, Cheung, & Ng, 2010), and the facilitation of discussion forums by instructors (Ladyshewsky, 2013; Rogers & Fleck, 2014). While the research was varied, literature which specifically focused on how well asynchronous discussion forum prompts encourage motivation competencies such as achievement drive and optimism was still limited.

Although the available research was limited and not directly related to how discussion forum prompts in online learning environments reflected motivation competencies, some of the findings from the available literature still had some relevancy for this study. According to Ladyshewsky (2013) and Rogers and Fleck (2014) for example, social presence which included student-student and student-instructor interactions in asynchronous discussion forums, encouraged student motivation to participate in online learning environments. Ladyshewsky also noted that a strong

predictor of student learning is instructor-to-student interaction. Similarly, Croxton (2014) explained that student-instructor interaction played a significant role in student persistence and satisfaction. Croxton further explained the importance of promoting meaningful, satisfying, and deep learning experiences and interactions in the online learning environment that elicit students to persist in the course. While this study was not focused on student participation, each of these studies highlighted the important role that faculty have in the discussion forums especially as it relates to intentionally developing motivation competencies in learners.

Empathy. Empathy is a competency that the preservice early educator needs as a student and as a future early educator. Developing empathy competencies, such as understanding others and developing others, online however is challenging (Hall & Hall, 2009). Development of these competencies are often not the intentional focus in online coursework even in preservice early educator programs. Overall, literature which addressed how asynchronous discussion forum prompts reflects empathy competencies was scarce. Literature was even scarcer with regard to the community college and preservice early educator demographic. Some of the available literature however tended to focus on the student's feelings of isolation while taking online classes. For example, it was noted in the literature that individuals taking online courses may experience feelings of isolation (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012; McInnerney & Roberts, 2004). While asynchronous discussion forums do act as a primary component of online courses allowing students to communicate with one another and with instructor, it was noted in the literature that some students still experience feelings of isolation as a result of the

communication and responses not being immediate (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012; McInnerney & Roberts, 2004). Other literature noted the role and need for instructors to facilitate the development of relationships in online classes (Pawan et al., 2003; Shea & Bidjerano, 2010; Zelihic, 2015). Zelihic (2015) argued for example that relationship building between instructor and student is a necessity and increases student retention and graduation rates. Zelihic also noted that while developing this relationship in an online environment has unique challenges, there are a number of communication tools (such as discussion boards, chat boards, and ask your instructor boards) available to instructor to assist with developing this relationship.

While the literature was limited and scarce there was one study conducted by Hall and Hall (2009) which examined specific empathy training for the development of tutors' ability to identify the emotional subtexts that students provide in e-mails. Hall and Hall (2009) utilized the Online Empathy Training Tool (OLETT) to assist tutors in institutions of higher education (IHE) with their ability to read the subtexts in online interactions with empathic awareness and accuracy. According to Hall and Hall "OLETT was designed to specifically address the issue of understanding the feelings and underlying messages embedded in e-mail communications and how appropriate responses can be composed taking account of these more subtle or hidden aspects of the process" (p. 45). Participants for this study included six online tutors from a university in Malaysia. Participants completed a pre and posttest to evaluate the extent to which they are personally and professionally empathic in their lives. Participants then listened to a case history narrative of an online counselor and composed responses to the questions presented by the

counselor. The Empathy Unit was completed, which included working with the OLETT and then participants were provided with a series of e-mails in which they had to respond. Participants using the AWARE protocol (Affiliative, Warm, Appropriate, Respectful, and Empathetic) then had to respond the series of e-mails. Findings from this study indicated that tutors were able to recognize that practicing empathy was an issue for them. Participants were also able to use the knowledge gained from completing the OLETT to competence in empathy.

Overall the available research was limited with regard to the demographic and specific focus of this study. Additionally, the available research did not specifically addressed how empathy is developed in preservice early educators. While the findings from the Hall and Hall (2009) research does highlight an approach to doing so, the participants for this study were tutors and not future educators. Also, the available literature tended to address student emotion with regard to participating in online courses and the instructors' role in that process rather than how asynchronous discussion forum prompts reflects empathy competencies.

Gap in the Literature

Three personal and social EI competency areas were specifically chosen for examination in this literature review, as they play a significant role in the development of ECE professionals. Aspects of the self-awareness and motivation (personal) EI competency areas and empathy (social) EI competency area were examined using a conceptual framework based on Goleman's EI theory which purports that EI is teachable (Goleman, 1998). This framework and lens then acted as a foundation for exploring how

early care professionals are being prepared through the use of online course formats with regard to these specific components of personal and social EI competencies for their role and profession. While the development of EI competencies was noted in the literature as being essential for future early educators (Mehta, 2013; Perez, 2011; Sak et al., 2015), there were gaps in the literature with regard to how future early educators are being prepared for their role. This was especially the case for preservice early educators in community college teacher preparation programs. Specifically, there were gaps in the literature with regard to how EI (EI) competencies are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses.

The gap was important and studied because teachers in general have the role of socialization agent (Morris, Denham, Bassett, & Curby, 2013) and act as a facilitator in the emotional and social development of children. However this is especially true for those individual working with young children (Denham, Bassett, & Zinsser, 2012). Because teachers are socialization agents, understanding how future teachers are prepared for this role should be studied. As the use of online course formats are becoming more prevalent (Castillo, 2013; Mamiseishvili & Deggs, 2013; Shea & Bidjerano, 2014; Xu & Jaggars, 2013) in general and with teacher preparation programs (Downing & Dyment, 2013) it was also necessary to understand if and how teacher preparation programs are addressing EI competencies in the online courses.

This study filled the literature gap in several ways. Self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies were noted in the literature as especially relevant competencies for the early educator (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Huss-Keeler et al., 2013;

Gunn & King, 2015), but understudied in the context of the development of early educators. This study therefore, added understanding to that gap by exploring how EI competencies are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. Exploring if and how EI competencies are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses could act as an impetus for developing and utilizing instructional approaches that intentionally facilitate the development of EI in future early educators. Overall the role of EI has not being examined even though many aspects related to it have been discussed and researched. This study therefore was situated in and expanded on current research by exploring the role of EI in preservice teacher preparation at the community college level.

Information in Chapter 2 was explored through the literature by focusing on the challenges of educating community college students, personal and social EI competencies and early care educators, approaches to developing personal and social EI competencies, and online learning and emotional competencies. Chapter 3 will include a discussion on the research methods which will outline the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, discuss the biases, and the steps to maintain trustworthiness in this case study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore if and how personal and social EI competencies were being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. The phenomenon that was examined in this study was the role of EI in online courses. This research focused on if and how three competencies of EI were reflected in community college preservice early educator online courses. To accomplish this purpose, I described how faculty perceptions, syllabi, discussion forum prompts, and assignment feedback reflected or encouraged self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies. Studying these areas of the online classroom provided insight into how programs were intentionally addressing and assisting with the development of EI competencies in preservice early educators. A better understanding of how online classrooms embed and model EI competencies is important to community college early educator faculty so they can better assist in the development of the preservice early educator's emotional competence.

This chapter outlines the research methodology that was employed in this study. In this chapter, I explained the research design and rationale for this study and how those aligned with the study research questions. In addition, I also discussed my role as the researcher and the ethics and bias associated with that role. Next, I described how I selected participants. In the instrumentation section, I included explanations of how I designed interview questions and tools used to analyze discussion forum prompts and assignment feedback, as well as an explanation as to why the data was sufficient for

answering the research questions. Next I discussed procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection. Then I explained the data analysis plan. Issues of trustworthiness are included in the discussion of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Lastly, I addressed ethical procedures related to the study.

Research Design and Rationale

In this study I investigated if and how self-awareness, motivation, and empathy, three EI competencies, were being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. I examined the presence of EI in introductory online preservice early educator courses. Research was specifically focused on if and how three competencies of EI were reflected in community college preservice early educator online courses. This qualitative case study was based on one central question and three subquestions. The central research question was:

RQ: How are self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?

Related subquestions were:

SQ1: How do ECE faculty perceive their role in embedding and modeling self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in their online courses?

SQ2: How is self-awareness embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?

SQ3: How is motivation embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?

SQ4: How is empathy embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses

The research tradition for this study was a qualitative multiple-case study approach. For this multiple-case study, the phenomenon being studied was if and how personal and social EI competencies were being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. The case or unit of study was a required introductory ECE course titled "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) at community colleges in a Southeastern state of the United States of America. A qualitative multiple-case study design was chosen because this approach provided an opportunity to gain an in-depth and contextual understanding of if and how the identified phenomenon of EI existed in online courses. This approach also provided an in-depth and contextual understanding of if and how varying aspects of the online learning environment reflected attributes of Goleman's elements of self-awareness, motivation, and empathy. Therefore, the basic concepts of EI embedded in Goleman's theory was the basic framework on which this study was based.

Role of the Researcher

For this study, my role was that of data collector, observer, interviewer, transcriber, data analyzer, and data interpreter. Specifically, I was the contact person for study participants, which included collecting the requested data and then observing the requested data. This process included observing syllabi, discussion forum prompts, and samples of faculty feedback on assignments. I was also responsible for scheduling and conducting faculty interviews and then observing and transcribing the collected data.

After collecting, observing, and transcribing all data, I was responsible for the analysis and interpretation of the data.

As a result of my experience as a face-to-face and online ECE instructor and my role as an early childhood program department chairperson in a community college, it was necessary to incorporate some strategies and approaches to prevent any biases. Therefore, I incorporated the following strategies to manage and reduce instances and occurrences of bias: member checks, descriptive narrative of context, audit trails, and triangulation. I incorporated member checks or respondent validation during the data collection phase (Merriam, 2009). Because I acted as the researcher and the only individual responsible for data collection and analysis, the potential for researcher bias also existed. Therefore, I included measures such as audit trails and triangulation to mitigate this bias. Also, I refrained from asking leading questions to participants and followed pre-established protocol with each interview.

My current role is that of instructor and department chairperson for one of the community colleges in the Southeastern region of the United States of America. As a result of my role as a department chairperson, I do have a professional relationship with the potential participants that can be categorized as collegial. This relationship was not supervisory; however, on rare occasions I may have ended up on a committee or workgroup with participants. Biases and power relationships therefore were be managed by incorporating member checks or respondent validation during the data collection phase (Merriam, 2009). Also, audit trails and triangulation acted as measures to combat biases. As a result of there being a limited number of community colleges with preservice

early educator programs located in a Southeastern state in the United States of America, there was the possibility that participants from my own work environment would be included. In order to address this bias and potential conflict of interest or power differentials I omitted my college from the potential participant listing, and I also incorporated the strategy of reflexivity. This included maintaining a research journal in which I reflected on my personal experiences while engaging in the research process.

Methodology

In this section I described the methodology for this study. Subsections include descriptions of how participants were selected; the instrumentation that was used; procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; and data analysis. This qualitative case study included data collection and analysis from two types of sources. First, I collected and analyzed interview data from the community college preservice early educator faculty members teaching the “Introduction to Early Childhood Education” (EDU 119) course online. Second, I used a variety of course documents from the community college online sections of the “Introduction to Early Childhood Education” (EDU 119) course taught in the preservice early educator program that I also collected and analyzed.

Participant Selection Logic

One of the first required education courses that students take for the ECA degree is the preservice early educator preparation course titled “Introduction to Early Childhood Education” (EDU 119). This course serves several purposes in the program. This course is a foundational course for students entering the field of ECE. It is also a program

requirement for all students enrolled in the ECA degree program. This course is also a state required course for individuals seeking employment in a childcare setting. Community colleges located in a state in the Southeastern part of the United States of America offer this course using both face-to-face and online formats. The case or unit for this study, however, was the online format of the course.

Community college preservice early educator programs have the option to seek and earn national accreditation from the NAEYC ECADA. Preservice early educator programs attain this accreditation voluntarily and as a demonstration of having a commitment to meeting the standards of excellence set by the ECADA commission. The case or unit for this study therefore included both accredited and nonaccredited preservice early educator preparation programs in a state located in the Southeastern region of the United States of America.

I used purposeful sampling as the sampling strategy for this study. According to Patton (2002), purposeful sampling is used to provide information-rich cases in an effort to target the research questions. The first inclusion criteria for the college was that it must be a community college that offered an ECA degree program accredited by the NAEYC ECADA or nonaccredited community college ECA degree program in the Southeastern region of the United States of America. Next, I identified among these community colleges those that offered the introductory ECE course titled “Introduction to Early Childhood Education” (EDU 119). Three community colleges were purposefully selected, with one section of the online course being studied at each location. A total of three sections of the EDU 119 course from three different community colleges in the

same region were a part of the study. The number of course sections were scaled down according to the number of online sections that were being offered by each of the selected sites.

My rationale for selecting this sample size was based on approaches used in two research studies. While these studies were not identical to this study, the focus on discussion forums was similar. Pawan et al. (2003) conducted a qualitative study to examine the types and patterns of interaction taking place in an online teacher education course. For this study, Pawan et al. (2003) used a teacher education program at one graduate-level university and examined three online discussion forums in that program. In another study, Redmond et al. (2014) used an ethnographic case study to explore the types of online discussion forum postings and evidences of higher-order thinking in discussion forum postings. Discussion forums for this study were from two undergraduate courses that were part of a 4-year engineering and education program. Each of these studies were qualitative in nature, just as was this study. Like this study, these studies also identified specific programs and specific online courses in those programs with which to conduct the exploration.

With regard to the size of the sample, Mason (2010) explained that the concept of saturation is a factor in most qualitative studies. Saturation is referred to as the point of redundancy or the point at which the information gained has been maximized or no new information can be gained (Mason, 2010; Merriam, 2009). While saturation was identified as a factor in qualitative research, specific guidelines for identifying sample size that will reach saturation beforehand was challenging. Mason (2010) and Merriam

(2009) also explained that determining the sample size for qualitative studies is really dependent upon the question being asked. Because this study had the goal of gaining an in-depth and contextual understanding of the phenomenon, the identified sample was sufficient.

Community colleges located in a Southeastern state in the United States of America were listed in a community college directory. This directory was used to identify community colleges that had ECA degree programs. The accreditation listing from the NAEYC's ECADA directory was used to identify and select the programs with accreditation. An e-mail listserve which included all of the community college ECA degree program director's e-mails and contact information was also provided by a the Early Childhood Program Coordinator from the Community College System Office. A letter and e-mail to gain permission to explore the asynchronous discussion forum prompts used in the community college preservice early educator online "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) course was sent to the all of the community college ECE department chairpersons or program heads/directors. E-mails were also sent to the individuals responsible for each college's Institutional Review Board (IRB). After this contact was made and approval from each responding college's department chairperson or program head/director and IRB contact person was provided, the department chairperson or program head of the identified ECA degree programs was also asked to provide the contact information for the faculty member responsible for teaching the online section of EDU 119. These faculty members were then contacted via letter and e-mail.

The potential faculty participants also had inclusion criteria. I determined potential participants for this study based on the following inclusion criteria. Participants had to (a) be community college faculty (b) be a community college faculty member in a preservice early educator preparation programs, and (c) have taught an online section of the "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) course in the past semester. Potential participants were identified by the department chairperson or program head of the identified ECA degree programs. Department chairpersons or program heads of the identified community colleges in a Southeastern state in the United States of America were asked to identify those faculty members who met the inclusion criteria. Because this study utilized a purposeful sample, results were only generalizable to similar participant samples. The department chairperson or program head was asked to identify the faculty teaching "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) in an online format. Identified faculty teaching the "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) in an online format were then contacted and invited to participate.

Sample size for qualitative research is both small and purposeful; it is important, however, that the sample is not too small. With these factors in mind, a sample size for this multiple case study reflected the contextual nature and purpose of the study, which was to explore how personal and social EI competencies were being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. For this study, therefore, the goal was to secure a total of at least three sections of the online "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) course along with the faculty members who taught the online sections of this course.

Instrumentation

Data for this study was collected from multiple sources which included, faculty interviews, asynchronous discussion forum prompts, and student assignments. There were several course documents that were collected. Participants sent requested course documents including syllabi, assignment descriptions, asynchronous discussion forum prompts, and sample papers with faculty feedback to me electronically via e-mail. I designed several data collection instruments aligned to my conceptual framework that helped with the organization of data during the data analysis process. I also conducted individual faculty interviews. Interview data was collected using another self-designed data collection instrument, which was also aligned to my conceptual framework, to assist with the organization of data.

Researcher-Developed Instruments

There were two researcher-developed instruments that I used to organize data; a demographics questionnaire and individual interview questions. First, the Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix C) was used during the individual faculty interviews to collect demographic information. Next, individual faculty interview questions (Appendix D) helped answer related RQ 1, which seeks to determine faculty perceptions of the importance of EI in early childhood preservice teachers. For this study I developed analysis charts that were used to collect and document the EI phrases, concepts, and themes used in the syllabi (Appendix F), assignment descriptions, and sample papers (Faculty Assessment & Feedback Analysis Chart, Appendix G). I also developed a chart to collect and document the EI phrases, concepts, and themes used in the discussion

forum prompts (Discussion Forum Prompt Analysis chart, Appendix H) of the online "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) course. Organizing data aligned to the conceptual framework ensured that the focus of this study was reflected through the data and also assist me with retrieving and managing the data (Merriam, 2009).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Specific procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection were used in this study. First, there were specific procedures for college and faculty recruitment. Colleges who fit the college inclusion criteria, were contacted and I determined what IRB protocol the college had for using faculty as part of research projects. I obtained letters of cooperation (Appendix A). Once IRB approval from Walden and the participating colleges were passed, I began to recruit participants.

Procedures for recruitment. After receiving approval from Walden University's IRB, procedures for participant communications and interviews began. Once permission was granted by the identified community colleges an e-mail was sent regarding the study to the department chairs, program heads, or directors of the ECA degree programs to inform and gain program permission.

Department chairs, program heads, or directors of participating ECA degree programs were asked via e-mail to identify the faculty members who teach the online "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) course (Appendix B). Once qualified faculty participants were identified by the ECA department chairs, program heads, or directors, I contacted potential participants and invited them to participate in the study. Potential faculty participants, received a letter which included a request for

demographic information (Appendix B). This letter provided the purpose of the interview, time limit, confidentiality, and recording procedures. Upon request the faculty participants received a copy of the research questions prior to the interview. The goal of the individual interviews was for faculty participants to have the opportunity to share their ideas and perspectives regarding how personal and social EI competencies are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses.

Procedures for participation. Notification to the community college and the ECA degree programs of the identified colleges included a request to receive asynchronous discussion forum prompts and course documents from the "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) course. Requested course documents included documents such as syllabi, assignment descriptions, and sample student papers with student names removed and that included the faculty feedback for that assignment.

Potential faculty from each of the participating colleges were first identified by a department chairperson or program head of the identified ECA degree programs. These individuals had the study's inclusion criteria and were asked to construct a list of faculty and a method of contact (e-mail) from which I recruited study participants. All potential participants received a consent letter via e-mail once permission was received from the partnering community colleges. The consent letter described background information on the study, procedures for participation in the study, and sample questions. The consent letter also included the voluntary nature of the study, risks and benefits of being in the study, payment, privacy, as well as directions for how to contact me to ask questions. The letter indicated that those interested in participating in the study should reply to the e-

mail, with the words, "I consent." At that time, I worked with the study participants to set up a time for the interview.

Faculty interviews took place at an arranged time that was suitable to the participant's schedule. Faculty participants had the option of conducting the individual interview in-person or using Skype. The use of Skype was dependent upon the participant's availability to meet in person. If in person, the interviews would have been audio-recorded. Because Skype was used, the interviews were also audio-recorded. Faculty participants received a reminder e-mail 24-48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting in order to confirm the meeting format, time, and place. All participants received a copy of the research questions prior to the interview. Once consent was granted by faculty participants, audio recording and note taking acted as the tools for collecting data. Participants were informed at the conclusion of the interviews that upon request they could receive a copy of the recorded transcripts. Participants also received notification that information from the interviews may be used for educational and research purposes and therefore will not include any names. Participants were also informed of the confidentiality, that even if using direct quotes, the interview transcripts would use pseudonyms.

Procedures for data collection. Data was collected from two sources, faculty interviews and course documents. Each data source was aligned with the appropriate research question. With regard to answering related RQ 1 for example, data was collected from faculty interviews. These interviews were used to obtain faculty perception of their role in promoting and reflecting self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in their online

courses. The first related research question was “how, do ECE faculty perceive their role in embedding and modeling self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in their online courses?” See Table 2.

Table 2

Alignment of Research Questions and Data

Research subquestions	Faculty interviews	Syllabi	Faculty assessment & feedback	Discussion forums prompts
SQ1: How do ECE faculty perceive their role in embedding and modeling self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in their online courses?	X			
SQ2: How is self-awareness embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?	X	X	X	X
SQ3: How is motivation embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?	X	X	X	X
SQ4: How is empathy embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?	X	X	X	X

Data collection for the faculty interviews was collected by audio recording and note taking during the interview. Each of the interview sessions were done through Skype and recorded with the audio equipment on a personal tablet and a personal digital audio recorder. In addition to audio recording, I took brief notes. These notes included supportive documentation of the participant responses. Additionally, I developed a

detailed interview protocol list that I followed for all of the faculty interviews (Appendix J).

With regard to answering related SQ2, SQ3, and SQ4, as show in Table 2, data was collected from course syllabi, faculty feedback on student assignments, and asynchronous discussion forum prompts. Related SQ2, SQ3, and SQ4 for example addressed how the identified competencies (self-awareness, motivation, and empathy) were embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses

This exploration required that I obtain online course documents from study participants. First, course syllabi for an online section of "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) was requested from faculty after they had given their consent to participate in this study. Faculty participants were asked to send the file as an attachment in an e-mail. The syllabi were used to get an overall view of the course, its assignments, and the tone the instructor sets for assignment and assessment feedback. I used the Syllabi Analysis Chart (Appendix F) to collect, identify, document, and categorize the EI phrases, concepts, and themes used in the syllabi.

Second, I requested five previously submitted sample student assignments with names removed or blacked out that include faculty feedback. Participants were asked to send the assignments with feedback to me as an attachment in an e-mail. This feedback data was examined through the lens of the EI competencies being examined in this study helping me to answer SQ2, SQ3, and SQ4. Additionally, I requested from faculty any separate documents or assignment descriptions participants posted in their online

classroom that provided students with a detailed explanation of the course assignments. Participants were asked to send assignment descriptions in a file as an attachment in an e-mail. The syllabus, five sample student assignments with faculty feedback as well as any supplemental text faculty use to describe the course assignments were used to help answer SQ2, SQ3, and SQ4.

Lastly, as shown in Table 2, data collection for related SQ2, SQ3, and SQ4 also included collecting data related to the asynchronous discussion forum prompts used in the online sections of “Introduction to Early Childhood Education” (EDU 119). I requested that faculty e-mail me either screenshots or copy and pasted samples of the asynchronous discussion forum prompts they use to initiate student-student interactions in the online class. Because the focus was on the discussion forum prompt, student responses were not required and therefore students in the course were protected. The discussion prompts were then examined in light of the EI competencies in order to answer SQ2, SQ3, and SQ4.

There were procedures for recruiting and exiting the study. If there were too few participants, the search area for candidates would have been widened or the number of cases for the study reduced. Not only were there specific procedures for how participants entered the study, but also how they exited the study. Participants were informed and reminded that this study was voluntary. Participants were also informed that their decision participate or not participate would be respected and that they would not be treated differently if they decided not to be in the study. Additionally participants were

informed that if they did decide to join the study at that time, they could change their mind later.

Upon completion of the study, participants received a “thank you” e-mail for their participation. If any participants had chosen to not complete the study they would have also received a “thank you e-mail” for their participation thus far. In the “thank you” e-mail, participants were reminded that I would not use their personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, that I would not include their name or anything else that could identify them in the study reports. Participants were also informed that the data would be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Data Analysis Plan

Once the data from the faculty interviews and course documents were collected and coded, the data was analyzed for relevant themes as related to the conceptual framework which is based on Goleman’s (1995, 1998) EI theory. Data analysis for this case study included retrieving, assembling, and condensing the data (Miles et al., 2013). Data analysis strategies most appropriate for the research questions and data included both informal and formal strategies. Specifically, collecting and assembling the data from the online course documents and interview transcripts acted as the informal strategy and coding acted as the formal strategy. Data for example from the discussion forum prompts was assembled using an Excel spreadsheet to organize and code the data. The spreadsheet program also managed and stored data and permitted the coding and retrieval of data. Data sources were coded and the emergent themes and discrepant themes and cases

identified. Excel spreadsheet assisted with conceptualizing the data. Syllabi wascollected and analyzed using a self-created Syllabi Analysis Chart (Appendix F). A self-created Faculty Assessment & Feedback Analysis Chart (Appendix G) was used by the researcher to collect, identify, document, and categorize the EI phrases, concepts, and themes used in the faculty feedback. A self-created Discussion Forum Prompt Analysis Chart (Appendix H) was used by the researcher to collect, identify, document, and categorize the EI phrases, concepts, and themes used in the asynchronous course discussion forum prompt transcripts.

Values coding specifically, which Miles et al. (2014) identified as the "application of three different types of related codes onto qualitative data that reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives and worldview" (p. 75) acted as the pre-coding measure. During the pre-coding process an Excel spreadsheet was used to document codes. This values coding process included documenting approximately 6 codes on the spreadsheet. The documented Values Codes, acted as the set of pre-codes during the First Cycle Coding. During the Second Cycle Coding process was where flexibility occured. Essentially, during this coding process attention to how, where, why, and when flexibility was warranted and permissible was necessary. Having flexibility during Second Cycle Coding allowed codes to emerge from the data rather than having the codes pre-determined. After the data was coded and documented on the Excel spreadsheet, key findings as related to the research questions were identified and reported on through the lens of Goleman's (1995) domains of EI. Discrepant cases that occured were analyzed as a means of gaining further understanding of how preservice,

early educator online community college courses reflect Goleman's (1998) personal and social competencies of EI (Merriam, 2009).

A self-created Interview Analysis chart (Appendix E) was used by the researcher for each of the interview sessions to collect, identify, document, and categorize the EI phrases, concepts, and themes presented in the faculty participants' interview responses.

Issues of Trustworthiness

To maintain credibility this study incorporated triangulation and member check strategies. Faculty interview responses were compared and cross-checked with the course documents and asynchronous discussion forums. Also, because of my role as a faculty member at one of the community colleges in the southeastern part of the United States of America, the potential for researcher bias existed. In order to address this issue member checks or respondent validation during the data collection phase were incorporated (Merriam, 2009).

In order to address the issue of transferability, a "thick, rich description" of the context, as Merriam (2009) described, is provided. This "thick, rich description" includes detailed descriptions of the faculty population, student population, and descriptive narratives of the course. This process of providing a detailed descriptive narrative also occured with regard to presenting the findings of this study. Direct quotes, for example, from faculty participants and course documents were included as these assisted with providing a clear understanding of the context.

To address dependability issues, audit trails were used to document the protocol for analyzing data, discussing the findings, and the possible influences on the findings. I

kept an ongoing record of my interaction with the data throughout the study using a journal. These journal recordings or memos were used to make judgments about any limitations in the methodology and assisted with the evaluation of the results (Merriam, 2009). Triangulation as outlined for issues of credibility, were also used to address the issue of dependability. Triangulation of data gathered from various sources such as interviews, discussion forum prompts, student work, and syllabi were also used.

Reflexivity is the strategy that was used to establish confirmability. As discussed for the issue of credibility, because of my role as a faculty member at one of the community colleges in the southeastern part of the United States of America, the potential for researcher bias existed. In order to ensure that this relationship did not affect this relationship, I critically reflected on my personal and professional views and position regarding the focus of this study (Merriam, 2009).

Ethical Procedures

Institutional permissions which included IRB approvals were obtained and the following IRB approval number was received 09-26-16-0185362. With this in mind, the first step I took was to gain IRB approval from Walden University's IRB department. After receiving approval from Walden University's IRB department (09-26-16-0185362), approval was sought from the three identified community colleges in a Southeastern state in the United States of America where data was collected.

In order to address the ethical concerns related to recruitment materials and processes I kept participant information confidential. Participants' names were kept confidential and any individual student data collected or used was from past students and

did not include student names or identifiers. As a part of the approval process, A Letter of Cooperation was obtained from each community college representative as required by IRB. Before any interviews were conducted, faculty participants signed a Consent Letter which provided me their permission to use their responses, in a confidential manner. Participants were also made aware that the interviews would be recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Participants were also made aware that identifiers were kept private by the researcher. Also, participants were reminded and assured that their participation is truly voluntary and that anonymous data collection was preferred, whenever possible. To address ethical concerns such as participants choosing not to participate in the study, the participant pool was broadened. In the case of early withdrawal from the study, this occurrence would have been noted in the study results.

All data that was collected was in digital form and therefore, was saved, password protected, and stored on the researcher's personal password protected computer and then backed up on a personal external drive and a cloud-based system such as OneDrive for Business and password protected. Files categorized by each of the various types of data (course documents, asynchronous course transcripts, and individual interviews) were created and included the notes obtained from this data. Files were labeled with a code to identify the file, in a manner that maintains the confidentiality of the participants.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided an explanation of the qualitative case study methodology that will be used to support an examination of the research questions. This chapter also included a description of the role of the researcher and identified potential biases along

with a means to alleviate those potential biases. Also included in this chapter was a discussion on the qualitative case methodology that was chosen and issues of trustworthiness and the ethical procedures for addressing issues that might arise in this study. Concluding Chapters 4 and 5 include a discussion on the study's findings and implications for further research.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore if and how personal and social EI competencies were being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. A better understanding of how online classrooms embed and model EI competencies is important to community college early educator faculty so they can better assist in the development of the preservice early educator's emotional competence. The phenomenon that was examined in this study was the presence of EI in online courses. This research focused on if and how three competencies of EI (self-awareness, motivation, and empathy) were reflected in community college preservice early educator online courses. To accomplish that purpose, I reviewed faculty perceptions, syllabi, discussion forum prompts, and assignment feedback and described how they reflected or encouraged self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies. Studying these areas of the online classroom provided insight into how programs were intentionally addressing and assisting with the development of EI competencies in preservice early educators.

This qualitative case study was based on one central question and four subquestions. The central research question was:

> RQ: How are self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?

The related subquestions were:

SQ1: How do ECE faculty perceive their role in embedding and modeling self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in their online courses?

SQ2: How is self-awareness embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?

SQ3: How is motivation embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?

SQ4: How is empathy embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?

Chapter 4 includes a description of the settings for each of the three cases presented. In Chapter 4, I also provided a description of the specific preservice early educator online course that was the focus of this study (EDU 119, "Introduction to Early Childhood Education") and the specific EI competencies that were explored in the EDU 119 online course. This chapter also includes demographics of the faculty participants who taught the online section(s) of the EDU 119 course. An overview of the data collection process is followed by a review of the data analysis. These discussions on the data analysis include a description of the coding process, emergent themes, and consideration of discrepant themes. Consistent with Chapter 3, for evidence of trustworthiness I addressed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability here in Chapter 4. Chapter 4 includes a discussion of the results organized first by what was common between the cases according to the identified EI competency and then what was common across the data sources. I also shared descriptions of the results for each

case (case A, B, and C). Then I present the study results organized in relation to the central and related research questions.

Setting

The setting for this study was the community college preservice early educator "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) online course. This course is one of the first education courses required by a state located in the Southeastern region of the United States of America that students take to earn their ECA degree. The case or unit for this study included community college ECA degree programs accredited by the NAEYC ECADA system or nonaccredited community college ECA degree programs in the Southeastern region of the United States of America. This particular course serves several purposes in the ECA degree program. It is a foundational course for students entering the field of ECE, it is a program requirement for all students enrolled in the ECA degree program, and it is also a state required course for individuals seeking employment in a childcare setting. Community colleges located in a state in the Southeastern region of the United States of America offer this course using both face-to-face and online formats. The case or unit for this study, however, was the online format of the course.

Demographics

A total of three online sections of the EDU 119 course from 3 different community colleges in the same region were a part of the study. It was anticipated that the community colleges would offer at least two online sections of the EDU 119 course. Because the programs that agreed to participate were only offering one online section of the EDU 119 course, the number of course sections were scaled down according to the

number of online sections that were being offered by each of the selected sites. Each of the online courses that were included in this study were arranged using a module format. While each of the courses used a module format, they each differed in the number of modules included in the course. Included in those modules were discussion forums, reading assignments, and writing assignments.

Faculty interviews were also a data collection strategy. Three faculty members, one from each of the participating programs, agreed to participate in this study. As such, the faculty participants also had inclusion criteria. For this study the inclusion criteria were as follows: participants had to (a) be community college faculty (b) be a community college faculty member in a preservice early educator preparation program, and (c) have taught an online section of the "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) course in the past semester at the identified program. Specific demographics for each of the participating faculty members were as follows:

- Case A, Community College #1, ECE Faculty #1: Jane (a pseudonym) is a non-Hispanic White female between the ages of 50-59. Jane is an adjunct instructor who has taught the online section of the "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) course approximately 12 sections over 11 semesters. Jane also stated that there have been a couple of semesters where she has taught more than one online section of this course. The ECA degree program in which Jane teaches the EDU 119 online course is not accredited by the NAEYC ECADA system.

- Case B, Community College #2, ECE Faculty #2: Jill (a pseudonym) is also a non-Hispanic White female between the ages of 50-59. Jill is a full-time early childhood instructor who has been teaching the online section of the "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) course for four semesters and a total of five sections. The ECA degree program in which Jill teaches the EDU 119 online course for is accredited by the NAEYC ECADA system.
- Case C, Community College #3, ECE Faculty #3: Jackie (a pseudonym) is a Black female between the ages of 30-39 who holds a dual position at the participating community college. Jackie holds the title of education stars director and early childhood recruiter. Jackie is also an adjunct instructor for the ECE program. Jackie has been teaching the online section of the "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) course for six semesters. Each of the six semesters, Jackie has taught one section of the online section of EDU 119. The ECA degree program in which Jackie teaches the EDU 119 online course for is accredited by the NAEYC ECADA system.

Table 3

Demographics of Community College ECA Degree Program Faculty Participants

School/Case	Faculty	Gender	Age range	Ethnicity	NAEYC ECADA accreditation	Semesters teaching	Online sections taught of EDU 119
1/A	Jane	F	50-59	Non-Hispanic White	N	11	12
2/B	Jill	F	50-59	Non-Hispanic White	Y	4	5
3/C	Jackie	F	30-39	Black	Y	6	6

Data Collection

Data collection included several documents that were obtained from the community college early childhood faculty member teaching the online section of the EDU 119 "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" course. Data for this study was collected from multiple sources that included faculty interviews, asynchronous discussion forum prompts, and student assignment samples. A total of 57 community college ECE programs were sent invitation letters and invited to participate in this study (Appendix B). Of the 57 community college ECE programs, 26 programs responded, with 20 of those programs declining to participate. Initially, 6 programs agreed to participate with two of those programs later changing their minds and declining to participate. Approval was received from the IRBs of each of the four remaining community colleges that agreed to participate. After receiving approval from each of the ECA department chairs, program heads, or directors, and the community college's IRB, I requested the names and e-mail

of the faculty member(s) teaching the online section(s) of EDU 119. After receiving permission from the community colleges, I contacted a total of 9 faculty members from 4 different programs across the same state via e-mail and invited them to participate in this study (Appendix J), with three of those faculty members responding in agreement to participate in this study.

As stated in the previous paragraph, the final study participant totals were 3 faculty members from three different ECA degree programs in a state located in the Southeastern region of the United States of America. Data for this study was collected via e-mail directly from participating faculty members and from multiple sources that included faculty interviews, asynchronous discussion forum prompts, and student assignments. Once faculty members agreed via e-mail to participate, they received a consent form that included a request for demographic information and a Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix C) that they were to complete. After the demographic information was received, the faculty members were asked to schedule their interviews and then submit their course documents. The requested course documents included the following:

- syllabi for the EDU 119 online course that they taught during the previous semester;
- asynchronous discussion forum prompts that were used in the EDU 119 online course;
- assignment descriptions for the assignments used in the EDU 119 online course; and

- five previously submitted sample student assignments (same assignment) from the previously taught EDU 119 online course, with names removed or blacked out and that included faculty feedback.

Securing the course documents from the participants took approximately 2 weeks for each participant. After the course documents were received, the faculty interviews were conducted with each participant. During the 2 week time period between receiving consent from the faculty members and scheduling and conducting their interviews, the participants submitted their documents. During this time I reviewed the documents in order to address any questions that I had regarding those documents. I requested approximately 30-45 minutes of the participants' time to conduct their interviews. Actual interviews, however, lasted between approximately 25-45 minutes.

- Case A, Community College ECE Faculty #1: 27.57 minutes
- Case B, Community College ECE Faculty #2: 23.09 minutes
- Case C, Community College ECE Faculty #3: 40.59 minutes

Data were recorded in several ways. Demographic data, which included gender, age, ethnicity, and length of time teaching EDU 119 online, was documented on a self-created Demographic Questionnaire form (Appendix C) submitted electronically via e-mail as an attachment. Syllabi and student assignments were also submitted via e-mail as attachments. Discussion forum prompts were copied and pasted onto a self-created Discussion Forum Prompt chart (Appendix I) and submitted via e-mail as an attachment. Each of the faculty interview sessions were conducted using Skype and recorded using a personal handheld digital audio recorder along with the audio equipment on a personal

iPad tablet. In addition to audio recording, I took brief notes during the interviews. These notes included supportive documentation of the participant responses. I transcribed all of the recordings with assistance of a dictation program called Dragon Dictate. Recordings were all transcribed in the same day or a few days of the interview to better address intelligibility.

There were no variations in data collection from the plan presented in Chapter 3. There were also no unusual circumstances related to data collection that were encountered with the interviews or the receiving of documents.

Data Analysis

As discussed in Chapter 3, data analysis for this case study included retrieving, assembling, and condensing the data (Miles et al., 2013). The process of retrieving the data included obtaining and reviewing specific course documents. Course documents from each program which included syllabi, discussion forum prompts, and faculty feedback on student assignments were retrieved from the faculty participants and then reviewed. Goleman's (1995, 1998) definition of each of the EI competencies (self-awareness, motivation, and empathy) acted as the guide for identifying and assembling the statements, comments, and/or examples found on the course documents. All of the coding was manual and consisted of utilizing a color-coded system.

Statements, comments, and/or examples provided by participants that were included on the collected document were categorized according to EI competency. These statements, comments, and/or examples were thenthen highlighted according to the assigned color code and copied on to the respective analysis chart (Appendices G, H, and

I). After retrieving the data, the assembling process included copying and pasting the highlighted statements, comments, and/or examples onto the form and placing them in the section which corresponded with the identified EI competency which was based on Goleman's (1995, 1998) EI theory. Each chart included three columns. Column 1 listed the EI competency focus, column 2 was for listing the portion of text in the document which addressed the corresponding competency, and column 3 was where the relationship to the EI competency was explained. In this column the text and examples were coded as examples of the action being embedded and/or modeled in the course.

As explained in the previous section, faculty interviews were transcribed after each interview. Once transcriptions were completed they were reviewed and the same process that was utilized for the course documents was also used for the interview transcription. Interview transcriptions were reviewed and the statements, comments, and references pertaining to the EI competencies being studied were highlighted. These statements were highlighted according to the assigned color code and copied on to the Interview Analysis chart (Appendix E) and placed in the section which corresponds with the identified EI competency.

All of the data from the course documents and interview transcriptions were coded according to EI competency and according to whether the examples and comments were relevant examples of the action being embedded and/or modeled in the course. Afterwards, the occurrences were then compiled and calculated using the Excel spreadsheet program. Information that was reported on the analysis charts were

categorized by EI competency. Comments and texts from each competency were then counted and documented on the Excel spreadsheet.

As discussed in the data analysis plan, the documented Values Codes, which consisted of the EI competencies as outlined in Table 4 acted as the set of precodes during the First Cycle Coding.

Table 4

Values Codes used in the First Cycle Coding Process

Research Question 2: self-awareness embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses	Research Question 3: motivation embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses	Research Question 4: empathy embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses
1. Emotional awareness	1. Achievement Drive	1. Understanding Others
2. Self-confidence	2. Optimism	2. Developing Others

- Emotional awareness: recognizing one's emotions and their effects.
- Self-confidence: a strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities.
- Achievement drive: an individual striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence.
- Optimism: an individual's persistency in pursuing goals despite obstacles.

- Understanding others: the capacity to sense the feelings and perspective of others.
- Developing others: sensing the personal developmental needs and bolstering personal abilities

After the interviews were conducted a Second Cycle Coding occurred. This is also when statements, comments, and/or references in the data were identified as an example of the action being embedded or modeled. After determining whether or not the data was an example of the action being embedded or modeled, the emergence of themes was noted. Some of the major themes that were found are as follows:

- Intentionality. Faculty participants shared during interviews that there was a lack of intentionality with regard to addressing EI competency in course assignments. For example, Jane (Community College EC Faculty #1) said that she was unsure of "how many of them (assignments) are directly related to motivation." In a further discussion regarding the EI competency of motivation being addressed in the course, Jane stated that "indirectly they (students) have to be motivated to get it done (assignments) but and I guess just in any online environment there has to be a level of motivation to accomplish all the work but probably nothing specifically addressing motivation [*sic*]."
- Development. Faculty participants shared the diverseness of student's personal development and noted that there is a wide range in their student's capacity to persevere, recognize and understand personal emotions and the

emotions of others, and address personal challenges. For example, Jill (Community College EC Faculty #2) shared that some students have a challenging time recognizing and understanding personal emotions and the emotions of others "It's hard for them (students) to recognize emotions in other people and in themselves." Jill further stated, "And then we have others that have master's degrees and they're coming for training, just to get the training and they have a good understanding of what that (EI) is and how to implement it into the system (*sic*)."

- Course format: Faculty participants also shared the challenges of the online course format and incorporating EI competencies. Each of the participants for example shared that they felt self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies were important and should be required elements in a preservice early educator online courses, but that it was "hard to do." Jackie (Community College ECEEC Faculty #3) also shared that with "teaching an online class you don't necessarily always have that face-to-face interaction" and that this presents a challenge for addressing EI competencies in online course formats.
- Assignments: A review of the sources and faculty interviews revealed some common types of embedded assignments utilized which address EI development which included observations, scenarios, and discussion forum assignments.
- Approaches: A review of the sources and faculty interviews revealed some common modeling approaches used that address the development of EI

> competencies which included providing relevant personal and professional examples, providing feedback on assignments, and engaging in discussion forums.

There were no discrepant cases. While there were no discrepant cases, there were some instances of where participants emphasized some of the common themes that arose. For example, Jackie, Community College ECEEC Faculty #33 discussed the college's enrollment process which included potential ECA degree students taking a learning styles assessment:

> When students actually apply online to the college, it's actually with the whole admissions process, I believe they complete, a section that tells a little bit about them and their learning style. So I think we have access, that just to kind of see what type of learner that they are. Whether they're in giving instruction or receiving instruction and then use that as a conversational starter in a sense. Kind of like 'what is your teaching style' [*sic*]?

Jackie explained that the learning styles assessment was a way to "finding out what their (student) niche, what their style would be [*sic*]." Jackie further explained that this assessment assisted the instructor with "making suggestions along the way (to the student) that maybe this is the track as far as education and this maybe some of the programs that would cater towards your style [*sic*]." Jackie also discussed that she has her students to complete a professional development plan when they begin the program:

> One thing that I do with students coming in is to do like a small professional development plan. And on there they can say what their short-term goals are and long-term goals, and give a little bit of background history about them.

Jackie, Community College ECE Faculty #3 was the only participant however who discussed the enrollment process for new students which included the student completing a learning styles inventory and a professional development plan. Jackie emphasized how, from her perspective, it addressed EI skills of the preservice early educator students she comes in contact with in her work as faculty for the ECA degree program. These comments by Jackie were most aligned to the motivation competency of achievement drive which addresses an individual's striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Evaluating qualitative data is a necessary process when taking steps to ensure the trustworthiness of a study. As discussed in Chapter 3, triangulation and member checking were strategies that were outlined and used to maintain credibility. Data gathered from syllabi, discussion forum prompts, faculty feedback on student work, and faculty interviews, were compared and contrasted to one another to identify connections to the EI competencies of self-awareness, motivation, and empathy. Specifically the evidences of trustworthiness included credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

For this study, triangulation and member checks were the primary strategies incorporated in this study to maintain credibility. One of the first steps that I took during

the observation of course documents however, was to ensure that I maintained a mindset of neutrality. According to Merriam (2009) having neutrality is a necessary skill, "an interviewer should also assume neutrality with regard to the respondent's knowledge" (p. 106). Merriam further explained that it is important to "avoid arguing, debating, or otherwise letting personal views be known" (p.106). Because of my experience as a face-to-face and online ECE instructor and my position as an early childhood program department chairperson in a community college, it was necessary for me to not allow my personal and professional views and biases to be known to the participants. It was also necessary for me recognize, acknowledge, and reflect on the various assumptions I may have held with relationship to what I was seeing in the documents and hearing from the participants.

With regard to triangulation, before each interview all of the course documents provided by the participant were reviewed and analyzed using the appropriate and same analysis forms. If there were questions regarding any of the documents and their connection to one another and to the course, those questions were presented to the participant during the interview. Regarding member checking, Merriam explained that member checking is a common approach to ensuring the validity of information. So with this understanding in mind, during the interview I asked the participants questions to ensure that my understanding their comment was accurate. After the interviews were transcribed, participants were provided with a copy of the transcript for their review. Credibility strategies also included reminding participants before and after the interview of the steps taken to maintain their confidentiality.

Another step taken to ensure credibility was to use the same questions for all participants. While all the questions were the same, after the first interview, the order of the questions was changed. During the first interview for example, questions were organized and asked according to the EI competency. Questions regarding the modeling of each EI competency ended up being the last set of questions. After conducting and reflecting on the overall flow of the first interview, I decided that changing the order of the questions would provide a smoother flow and transition into the next set of questions regarding the next EI competency. Essentially, for the remaining interviews, the questions were reorganized so that all of the questions regarding the specified EI competency were clustered together. Also, during the interviews, if there was a need to have the participant to clarify their response, they were asked to provide further elaboration. Additionally, if the participant's response seemed to deviate from the topic, the question was asked again or further clarification of the question was provided.

Merriam (2009) provided explication on the role of transferability in qualitative research and explained that "rich, thick descriptions" of the setting, the participants, as well as the findings are what helps to ensure and enhance the transference of the study results. Another strategy that adds to the transferability is the consideration taken to purposefully select the study sample. According to Merriam, purposefully selecting a sample allows for the gaining of understanding regarding the uniqueness of a particular situation. Merriam added that the gaining of this knowledge and understanding contributes to the current body of knowledge. Overall, findings from this study can be transferred to other similar preservice early educator programs that teach the

"Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119) in an online format. While this study focused specifically on the EDU 119 course, the knowledge gained from this study can be beneficial to other online preservice early educator courses offered at community colleges.

Dependability was accomplished primarily through the triangulation of data and journal recordings as outlined in Chapter 3. Triangulation acted as a support to the dependability of this study. As explained in the earlier paragraphs, all of the course documents were reviewed prior to the interviews. For example, once I received the syllabus which included the listing of assignments, I coded that document. I then reviewed and coded the discussion forums. As I was coding the discussion forums I referred back to the syllabi and the assignment directions for the syllabi to ensure that I was fully capturing the requirement of the discussion forum assignment. I also referred back to the syllabi once I began coding the faculty feedback on the student assignments to ensure that I understood the assignment. After all of the documents were coded I made a note of any questions I had regarding them. After the interviews, the coded data from all of the course documents were analyzed for any strong connections they had to one another and to the identified EI competency. Dependability was also accomplished by clearly identifying my role as the researcher and being cognizant of and documenting any biases that arose throughout the data collection and interview process in my journal. Additionally, clearly defining and staying focused on the research questions and the specified EI competency also acted as a strategy to accomplish to the dependability.

As discussed in Chapter 3, confirmability was achieved through the use of reflexivity strategies. According to Merriam (2009), reflexivity acts as a tool to assist the researcher with maintaining the integrity. For this study as discussed previously it was important for me to identify my professional role and acknowledge some of the biases and dispositions I have as a result of my experience and work as a faculty member at a community college and with teaching preservice early educator online courses. When going through the course documents for example, it was necessary for me to remember to focus on identifying if and how the EI competency was addressed and not provide my opinion of how it may or may not have been addressed. Similarly when conducting the interviews I also had to remind myself to stay focused on the interview questions and the participant's response and not on how or what I felt about their responses. Essentially, because of my experience it was important for me to be objective in reviewing the course documents as well as conducting the interviews.

Results

Data for this case study came from several sources, faculty interviews and course documents, which included course syllabi, discussion forum prompts, and faculty feedback on student assignments. Findings for this study are organized by research questions, which are aligned to the three EI competencies (self-awareness, motivation, and empathy) that were the focus of this study, and then by emergent themes from each of the research questions.

Research subquestion 1

SQ1 focused on faculty perception and was addressed through the faculty interviews. For this study, faculty members answered interview questions which addressed the following research question: How do ECE faculty perceive their role in modeling and embedding self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in their online courses? Emergent themes from each of the interviews indicated that ECE faculty modeled elements of self-awareness, motivation, and empathy more than embedding these elements into the online course itself. In regards to modeling, two primary themes emerged: making a connection with students and being involved and responsive. With regard to embedding these EI elements into the course, the primary theme that emerged was related to how they provided feedback. See Table 5. Responses given by faculty of how they modeled self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies primarily included actions such as the sharing of relevant personal and professional experiences which is discussed in the identified themes. Faculty indicated that they modeled self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies primarily in an effort to make connections with students and as an effort to demonstrate responsiveness to student needs. The results for research question 1 are organized by these themes outlined in Table 5.

Table 5

Major Themes and Findings of Research Question 1 From Interviews

Research subquestions	Data source	Major themes	Major findings
SQ1: How do ECE faculty perceive their role in embedding and modeling self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in their online courses?	Faculty Interviews	Theme 1: making a connection with students Theme 2: being involved and responsive Theme 3: the role of providing feedback	Faculty viewed themselves as a model of the self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies through the use of relevant personal and professional examples

Making a connection with students. During the interviews each of the participants shared that one way that they modeled self-awareness, motivation and empathy competencies is through making a connection with students. Jane, the faculty participant from Case A shared that making a connection with students helped them see that she has some understanding of their experience and that when relevant, she could relate to some of their experiences. Jane described several approaches, which she used to make a connection with students in the online course. One approach Jane described included the use of an introductory e-mail assignment that is used to connect with student personally at the beginning of the course. With regard to the e-mail, Jane explained that if she had a similar experience that was relevant, she shared that with the student. Jane also stated that she "will always e-mail back [to students] and try to connect in some way with them just to let them know I see that they are real person and that I'm also a real person." Making course announcements was indicated as another approach used to make

connections with students in online courses. Jane for example, stated that in her weekly announcements she tried "to put a little bit of the human touch and to try to connect with them [*sic*]."

With regard to motivation, Jill the faculty participant from Case B, shared that in online classes one way that she modeled motivation was through the sharing of her professional experiences with students. She said this not only assists students with gaining a better understanding of concepts and but also provides a way for her to make connections with students and motivate them. Jill for example, stated that it is important for her to "Tell them about my experiences and how I got through them and the passion that I have for early childhood." Jill further explained that she thinks "Sometimes just letting them know that I started where they started helps them to see that there's more that can be done once they get into it."

Jackie modeled the EI competency empathy by sharing personal experiences through the discussion forums. She shared that even though she creates the discussion forum topics, she also replies to the students when they post. Jackie explained that this allowed her to acknowledge their experiences, share her experiences, connect with the students, as well as share her perspective on topics. This approach afforded Jackie the chance to demonstrate to the student that she has a sense of what they are going through and to provide them with some possible approaches to deal with what they are experiencing. Jackie further reiterated her perspective about the value of and why she shares her professional experiences with students, especially those students enrolled in

the online section of the EDU 119 course. She stated that she provided examples as a way to:

> Share my professional experiences. A lot of the 119'ners the past semester, there are a few that were in high school so, they're not necessarily in the field and then you have those that have been in the field for a while. Also sharing my professional experiences with working in childcare and then administering the More at Four and PreK program for years, just helps with being relatable in a sense to their need and their concern.

Being involved and responsive. The second theme that emerged was related to being involved and responsive to students. Faculty discussed how being involved and responsive was important for keeping students motivated and involved in the class. Jane for example explained that a part of her role in being involved and responsive includes being a cheerleader for her students and views this as a way of motivating students to persist and stick with the course:

> I feel like especially in the EDU 119 class, that part of my role as instructor is to be a cheerleader. Because for so many of them this is their first class in college and it's also the first time they've ever been online. So for some of them they really are nervous some of them are very needy, some of them don't need me. So I really try to encourage them and say hey "you can do this" in the announcements if it's been a rough week and all of a sudden people aren't turning stuff in just to try to say "hey look we only have three more weeks we can do this."

Jill also explained that she has to be involved and responsive to students at the outset of the course in order to motivate students to stay involved in the course:

> If they're (students) not motivated to learn or keep up with stuff, then they get behind right of the bat and that sets them up for failure. So we have to stay right on top of them . . . especially if the course is going to be mini-mester [*sic*]. . . . So sometimes we have to find that trigger that sparks that passion that is in them that they just don't know is there yet.

Jackie also explained that students who are enrolled in the course tend to have personal challenges that make it difficult to focus on their coursework. Jackie also discussed her belief that she modeled empathy by being responsive to the needs and challenges of those students:

> I put myself in the perspective of my students. I put myself in their shoes, which a lot of the things that you know our students have gone through, they are things that I've never experienced or I never will experience or understand [*sic*]. I like to have open communication, just keep me aware of what's going on.

Providing feedback. The third theme that emerged was related to how providing feedback to students is a means of connecting with students and being involved and responsive. One primary example of an embedded feedback approach for example was discussed by Jill and Jackie. Both shared how they incorporated and utilized faculty feedback in the assignments or discussion forums to motivate students and move them toward the expectations for the assignment. Jill for example stated that "in the feedback I provide them with lots of good points," Jill also explained her expectations of the student

with regard to utilizing the provided feedback. Jill stated that she expects students to "look at the feedback and come back and ask questions about their feedback, reflect on what they're doing in order to move themselves forward."

Jackie also discussed that she incorporated and utilized faculty feedback in the assignments in order to motivate students and remind them of expectations for the assignment "I think being involved, being engaged and then also in the assignments providing feedback, not to tear them down in a sense, but to meet the expectation." In addition, Jackie said that she tells them "you had a rubric with expectation of the assignment, this is what I was looking for." Also, because there are no prerequisites for the EDU 119 course, Jackie allowed students to submit drafts of their assignments for feedback prior to final submission:

> You know I just don't want to mark your paper up and say this is your final grade. Allowing them to submit a draft and to provide feedback . . . have them to look at rephrasing this and look at some figures to support this before you accept it as the final assignment. So it gives them the opportunity to make improvements before getting that final grade.

Jackie further indicated that in order to motivate and assist future students with progressing in the course and to improve on the assignment, she requested that current students provide her with feedback regarding the effectiveness of the assignment "I'm really big on them providing me with feedback in order to do things different." Jackie stated that she asked students "What do you think about this assignment" in order to make the necessary changes to the assignment for the next semester. Jackie also

explained that she posted the assignments and the directions at the outset of the course so students have the expectations, “I post assignments and I give directions and instructions, but I’m also posting announcements making sure, students get it, you know.” Additionally, with regard to the feedback and discussion forum postings, Jackie discussed her expectations of the student and herself, “So if my expectation is that you post and you respond to a classmates then that’s the same expectation for myself.”

Unlike Jill and Jackie however, Jane indicated that she tends to provide less feedback in online courses than in face-to-face courses: “I think I mentioned that I see in online courses that I don’t give as much feedback as maybe I do when I actually have a hardcopy piece of paper and writing feedback.”

Cross-case analysis. As discussed in the previous section, each participant identified some of the approaches they used to make connections with and for students. One of the common approaches described by each of the participants was how they provided relevant personal and professional examples to students as a means of connecting with students and at the same time addressing EI competencies in their online courses. Table 6 provides a breakdown of the three primary approaches that were identified by the faculty participants for making connections with students and the number of times they were specifically mentioned. As identified in Table 6, the approach of providing relevant personal and professional examples to make connections with students was primarily referenced for a total of 13 occurrences for the EI competencies of motivation and empathy. Specifically, providing relevant personal and professional examples to make connections with students was the approach identified most frequently

(7 occurrences) for the EI competency of empathy. Faculty participants tended to refer to these examples as their way of modeling how they demonstrate their understanding of student perspectives which aligns with the EI empathy competency of understanding others. With regard to providing relevant personal and professional examples to make connections and the EI competency of motivation, there were six occurrences. Faculty participants tended to refer to these examples as their way of modeling how they encourage students to persist in their endeavors which aligns with the EI motivation competency of optimism.

Table 6

Number of Times Primary Approaches, According to EI Competency, That Were Identified by Faculty Participants as a Means to Make Connections With and for Students

	EI competency					
	Self-awareness		Motivation		Empathy	
Approach	Model	Embed	Model	Embed	Model	Embed
Providing relevant personal and professional examples	0	0	6	0	7	0
Providing feedback on assignments	0	1	1	2	1	1
Engaging in discussion forums	0	0	1	0	1	0

While the examples provided by faculty participants aligned with the EI competencies of motivation and empathy, their examples also only demonstrated

instances of modeling this approach. Providing relevant personal and professional examples in order to make connections with students was not an embedded component of the course or a requirement of the faculty. It should be noted however that providing relevant personal and professional examples as a means for making connections with students was not referenced at all with regard to the EI competency of self-awareness.

Providing feedback on assignments as a means of connecting with students was the next most frequently mentioned approach with a total of six occurrences. Occurrences, as identified in Table 6, were noted for each of the EI competencies. Specifically, providing feedback on assignments to make connections with students was the approach identified almost equally for the EI competencies of motivation and empathy. With regard to motivation, the EI motivation competency of achievement drive in particular, there were a total of three occurrences. While providing feedback is an embedded component of the course, faculty participants shared that they modeled using feedback in assignments to assist students with moving toward the goal of the assignment or the course. As stated previously, providing feedback is an embedded component of the course. Similarly, for the EI empathy competency of understanding others and developing others, there were a total of two occurrences. Faculty participants also indicated that they modeled using feedback as a tool for students to have the opportunity to provide their feedback regarding assignments and the course structure. Unlike the approach of providing relevant personal and professional examples to make connections with students, providing feedback on assignments was indicated by faculty as both a modeled and embedded component of the EDU 119 course.

Each participant also mentioned how being involved and responsive was how they modeled EI competencies for students. With regard to the empathy competency, Jane for example described her way of demonstrating involvement and responsiveness was to contact students via e-mail, to find out what is going on when they missed submitting an assignment. Jane stated that she believed that a part of her "role as an instructor is to be a cheerleader." Jane explained that in the e-mail to students in order to motivate them she might say "You know I believe in you. If you need help let me know. If you are near the campus where I'm closest to you know I will meet you. If you need to call me." Another example of an e-mail that Jane gave was "Hey I noticed that you missed the deadline. Just wanted to check and make sure everything's okay." With regard to sending those e-mails Jane also stated that "Some of them I never hear from, but some of them will e-mail back and say I've never had a teacher do that."

Also regarding the empathy competency and similar to Jane, Jackie also indicated that at times she also makes phone calls to students. In the initial e-mails to students, Jackie explained that she encouraged students to call if they needed to. Jackie further indicated that she tends to be the one who actually initiates the phone calls in an effort to motivate students. Jackie stated that if students have missed 5 or 6 online meeting dates then they get a call from her:

> You haven't been in the class in 5 or 6 days, or maybe a little longer than that, 10 days or so, I'm picking up the phone and giving a call to say "hey is everything going okay?" I try my best to also have the same personal relationship with the students that are online that as I do if it was a student face-to-face.

Unlike Jane and Jackie, Jill however did not indicate, as illustrated in Table 7, that she uses phone calls as a means of being involved and modeling responsiveness for students. Jill did however indicate that modeling empathy is challenging in an online class but would be open to utilizing a resource such as Skype in her courses. With regard to the specific EI competency of empathy Jill stated that "Practicing it is really very difficult in an online class because it's just back-and-forth conversation. Well Skyping, if we could Skype with all our students that would be good."

Table 7

Types of Feedback Approaches Identified by Participants in Order to be Involved and Responsive to Students

Types of feedback approaches	Embedded (E) or modeled (M)	Jane	Jill	Jackie	Total
		Number of times feedback approaches were mentioned by participants			
E-mail	M	9	0	0	9
Skype	M	0	1	0	1
Phone calls	M	1	0	1	2
Course announcements	E	2	0	2	4
Discussion Forum	E	1	0	3	4
Feedback on individual assignments	E	5	4	10	19

Some of the primary feedback approaches that were identified by the participants for demonstrating how they make connections with students and involve themselves and demonstrate responsiveness to students are identified in Table 7. One of the common

approaches identified by each of the participants was providing feedback on individual assignments. Providing feedback on individual assignments was mentioned a total of 19 times during the interviews, with Jackie making emphasis of this 10 times. Jackie identified this approach for each of the EI competencies that were the focus of this study. For each of EI competencies, providing feedback on individual assignments was one way in which the faculty felt they modeled the competency. Providing feedback however is also an embedded component of each of the courses. Although each of the utilized feedback approaches listed in Table 4 were common for participants, Jane and Jackie primarily, the only approach consistently utilized by all three participants was feedback on individual assignments. Also, the posting of course announcements, discussion forum postings, and feedback on individual assignments were also identified throughout the interview as embedded components of the course. Each of the other approaches were not indicated by the instructor as components of the course design or in the syllabus for the course.

Summary. Making connections with students is challenging in online courses. This lack of connectedness was an issue that was discussed in the literature. According to Seckman (2014) for example, students in online classes often do not feel a strong sense of community. Mastel-Smith et al., 2015 further noted that students in online classes do not feel connected to instructors. This lack of connectedness was also an issue that was mentioned by each of the interview participants. Each of the instructors mentioned how challenging it was for them to make connections with students in their online courses versus the courses they teach face-to-face. Jane for example stated “There is some level

of an impersonalness [*sic*] with online." Similarly Jill stated that "In online courses there is very little actual interaction." Along these same lines, Jackie acknowledged the challenge of making connections, but also recognized the need to move past the challenge and make those connections stating that "In online class you don't necessarily always have that face-to-face interaction every week per say, but I need to be as involved, as engaged with the student as my expectations are for them."

While making connections to students was mentioned by each of the faculty members as a challenge, they also indicated that the lack of connectedness further complicated the challenge of incorporating self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in their online courses. One of the common approaches that was described among each of the participants to incorporating self-awareness, motivation, and empathy was that of providing relevant personal and professional examples for the student. Throughout each of the interviews, faculty participants noted how they provided examples for students to assist them with understanding and gaining knowledge of various course concepts.

As stated previously, each of the faculty members classified self-awareness, motivation, and empathy as important and necessary competencies for the ECE professional. Each of the participants also felt that these competencies should be required elements in preservice early educator coursework. Jane for example, explained that she believed that self-awareness, motivation, and empathy are important and necessary competencies for her students and that is a part of being a healthy teacher:

> When I'm talking to students, or when I'm teaching, especially face-to-face, I really talk to them about taking care of themselves, being aware of their needs. So

> if you are taking care of yourself . . ., if you're making sure that you're caring for yourself you're gonna be able to better teach and care for your students.

Jane also shared her belief as to how this relates to their work with children:

> I think the more you are self-aware the more you’re likely to be in tune with your students and aware of things they may be dealing with. I think you may be a little more empathetic or understanding and hopefully also in tune with picking up on some of the needs families may have as their bringing kids in and out. So I think it’s a huge part probably a part that is often neglected in preservice programs.

Similarly, Jill stated that she believed that self-awareness, motivation, and empathy are important and necessary competencies that should be required elements in preservice early educator coursework and the challenge of doing so in online courses:

> Yes, I do think it's very important, yes. I just think it’s hard to do. There is very little actual interaction in them (online courses). I mean you can type all you want and talk back-and-forth, but you don’t see the body language, you don’t see the facial expressions. So I think then it’s easy for those (self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies) to get glossed over in an online class. So I think it has to be purposeful when you’re talking about being able to look at children’s emotions. If we don’t understand our own emotions and what our triggers are we’re not going to be able to help a child get through the stages they have to go through with their emotions.

Jackie also stated that self-awareness, motivation, and empathy are important and necessary competencies that should be required elements in preservice early educator

coursework. Jane also shared how these competencies will act as the foundation for developing relationships with the children and families they will work with in the profession:

> Well I do agree, that EI should be a part of a program of a course or any online course. And more so because if you don't have the compassion or passion for the families and children that you work with then I don't know if you should necessarily be in the field early education. That may be reaching out and understanding more about the family whether it's doing parent-teacher conferences, or doing home-visits, if you can't put yourself in the place of that family and that child that you are serving to better understand them and why you do or not do some of the things that they do then again I don't think that you should be necessarily working in the field of early education with the family. If you don't believe in, believe in them and understand them, then how can you serve them as a professional in the field? And one of the ways to do that again, putting yourself in their situation. Seeing yourself through their eyes, through their experiences or lack of experiences that they may have had. And not place judgment on the family or child just because that may have not been your experience growing up or what you were exposed to.

Woven throughout all three participants' goal of being connected was the concept of being involved and responsive. Subsequently being involved and responsive, sharing relevant personal and professional examples, as well as providing feedback appeared as an underlying theme in the theme of making a connection with students. Each of the

participants for example, also noted that they used the act of providing relevant examples as a way of making a connection with students and being involved in the course and responsive to the students' need. While being involved and responsive appeared to come as a result of making a connection with students, faculty also engaged in course feedback and the sharing of relevant personal and professional examples as a means of and making a connection with students by being involved and responsive.

Research Subquestion 2: Self-Awareness

SQ2 focused on the embedding and modeling of the EI competency of self-awareness. This question required a review of the course documents (syllabi, discussion forum prompts, faculty feedback on assignments) in addition to a review of the faculty's reflection on the strategies and approaches they use to address the self-awareness competency. Faculty members were required to address the following research question: How is self-awareness embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses? Emergent themes from each of the data sources (as noted in Table 8) indicated that ECE faculty incorporate examples of modeling self-awareness competencies in community college preservice early educator online courses more so than utilizing intentionally embedded approaches which seek to specifically develop self-awareness competencies in future early educators.

Table 8

Major Themes and Findings of Each Research Question 2 According to Data Source

Research subquestions	Data source(s)	Major themes	Major findings
SQ2: How is self-awareness embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?	Interviews	teacher-child relationships	belief that self-awareness impacts interaction between teacher and child
	Syllabi	self-confidence is an implied competency that students develop by taking the course	focus on the self-confidence competency in the syllabi is based on accreditation standard
	Discussion Forums Prompts	prompts focus on the role of emotional awareness in working with children	contrast from the syllabi with the embedded focus being on emotional awareness
	Faculty Assessment & Feedback	lack of alignment to the EI competency of self-awareness	instructors feedback primarily aligned with motivation competency of achievement drive

Interviews. Each of the faculty participants stated that they believe that self-awareness is an important competency for early childhood providers. Faculty participants also held the belief that the teacher's own self-awareness has an impact on the interaction between the teacher and the child. For example, Jane stated the following:

> It's very important, I think even things like background experiences, biases, you know how you were raised, just your whole family, are things that early care providers really need to be aware of because any of those things are going to in

> some way or another impact how you are with your students and with their families. I mean we all carry baggage around with us and some of that maybe hard to get rid of, but just being aware of it can help you be more effective.

Similarly, Jill explored the ideas of emotions as related to self-awareness:

> It's extremely important for the fact that if they can't recognize their own emotions, and they can't label them, then they're not gonna be able to see that in a child. They're gonna be limited on what their scope is going to be. And I also think that it controls them to where self-respect and self-esteem come under those that they don't understand the emotions then sometimes it's related to their self-esteem and we've got to fill that up in a lot of cases in our program.

Jackie also discussed the importance of the student recognizing their own emotions and how they may impact their relationship with the children and families they will encounter in the classroom.

> So in order for you to be able to understand the child that you're serving, the children you're serving and that family you have to have understanding of yourself. So if you don't quite understand yourself or you're in tune with who you are and what makes you tick the way that you tick, then how… I think that instructor would struggle with, or that teacher or student would struggle with understanding the families that they're serving. So I think having the opportunity where you do a little self-reflection. Look at your level of resilience in a sense and what built that resilience. Looking back at maybe at your childhood, your upbringing, looking at your culture and some of your traditions what, who and

what makes you who you are. When you better understand yourself and you are aware of you, then you better serve that child, in your care.

Syllabi. While each of the faculty participants indicated that self-awareness was an important competency for early childhood professionals, this competency was only implicitly addressed on two of the course syllabi (see Table 9). Case B, Community College #2 and Case C, Community College #3 are both accredited by the NAEYC ECADA system. As a part of this accreditation system, programs have to make sure they are addressing each of the six Standards for Initial Early Childhood Professional Preparation (see Figure 2).

Table 9

Number of Times Self-Awareness Competencies Addressed in Syllabus

Case	Self-awareness							
	Emotional awareness (EA)				Self-confidence (SC)			
	Embed	Model	Implied	Negative reference	Embed	Model	Implied	Negative reference
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
C	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0

Syllabi for the EDU 119 course from Case B and Case C each indicated that they address all 6 standards throughout the course through the various assignments and activities that are included in the course. For each of these EDU 119 courses standard six is identified as being addressed in the course. Standard 6 is also the standard which most closely aligns with the EI competency of self-awareness. Standard six addresses professionalism and has the goal of developing student's capacity to "identify and conduct themselves as

members of the early childhood profession" (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2015). As illustrated in figure 2, there are a total of five key element for standard six. Specifically, key elements 6a (Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field) and 6e (Engaging in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession), which were identified as being addressed in each of the EDU 119 course syllabi, was most closely aligned to the EI self-awareness competency of self-confidence.

STANDARD 6. BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL
Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective and critical perspectives on their work, making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are informed advocates for sound educational practices and policies.
Key elements of Standard 6
6a: Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field
6b: Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other early childhood professional guidelines
6c: Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice; using technology effectively with young children, with peers, and as a professional resource.
6d: Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education
6e: Engaging in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession

Figure 2. NAEYC accreditation standards for initial early childhood professional preparation. This figure illustrates standard 6 of the accreditation standards for the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation (ECADA) system. This figure highlights standard 6 which most closely relates to the EI competency of self-awareness.

While it is indicated on each of the syllabi that key elements 6a and 6e are addressed in each of these EDU 119 courses and although this standard is most closely aligned to the EI self-awareness competency of self-confidence there is no specific mention or

examples of how the competency of self-confidence is intentionally addressed in the course.

Discussion forums prompts. As stated in the previous section, each of the faculty participants indicated that self-awareness was an important competency for early childhood professionals. In the syllabus for the EDU 119 course from Case B and Case C the self-awareness competency of self-confidence however was the only self-awareness competency addressed. Similarly, the self-awareness competency was addressed in the discussion forum prompts for each of the courses. The prompts, unlike the syllabi however, primarily addressed the self-awareness competency of emotional awareness, with only one occurrence of self-confidence being addressed as identified in Table 10.

Table 10

Number of Times Self-Awareness Competencies addressed in Discussion Forum Prompts

Case	Total discussion forum prompts	Self-awareness			
		Emotional awareness (EA)		Self-confidence (SC)	
		Embed	Model	Embed	Model
A	4	0	0	1	0
B	2	2	0	0	0
C	10	2	0	0	0

While each of the courses included online discussion forums, there were however variations for each course regarding the number of forums as shown in Table 10. Case A for example, included four discussion forum prompts in the 16 week course. Case B included 2 discussion forum assignments during the 16 week course. Case C however included 10 discussion forum assignments. As identified in Table 10, there was only one

occurrence of the self-confidence competency and that was from Case A. Students addressed this prompt during the first two weeks of the course. For this prompt students were asked to do the following: "Tell the class a little bit about who you are, why you are taking this class." Although the instructor did not indicate that the intent of embedding this question into the course was specifically to develop self-confidence, the embedding of this question provided an opportunity for students to share their capabilities with their peers.

Case B and C each only included discussion forum prompts that aligned with the self-awareness competency of emotional awareness. As shared in the previous paragraph and as identified in Table 10, Case B only incorporated two discussion forum assignments during weeks 1 and 7 of the course. While there were two forums in the course, the forum for week 7 was the only forum that demonstrated alignment to the self-awareness competency, emotional awareness specifically. For the first part of this discussion forum prompt, which embeds the first occurrence of the emotional awareness competency, students were asked to do the following:

> First, connect personally with a time in your life that someone's words (negative) influenced your feelings on a subject. Or if you were a younger sibling, did your teacher's hold opinions about you based on that older sibling? What about foods? Did someone tell you how awful a food was so it kept you from trying it, but when you did you had a different feeling about those foods?

Similar to Case A the instructor for Case B, Jill, nor the directions for the forum stated that the specific intent behind the embedding of this prompt into the course was to

assist preservice early educators with developing the competency of emotional awareness. This prompt however does demonstrate alignment to the emotional awareness competency and does provide an opportunity for preservice early educators to develop an insight on their emotions and how personal past experiences may influence how they view and interact with children.

For Case C, while there were 10 forums in the course, the forum for weeks 3 and 4 were the forums that demonstrated alignment to the self-awareness competency of emotional awareness. For the prompt during week 3 of the course which embedded the first occurrence of the emotional awareness competency, students were asked to do review a video clip of a teacher's perspective and the family's perspective regarding a classroom situation. After reviewing the clip and identifying the knowledge they gained from the videos, students were asked to "Describe how you would respond in a similar situation." Like Case A and B, there was also no specific statement by the instructor or in the directions as to whether or not the specific intent behind the embedding of this prompt into the course was to assist preservice early educators with developing the competency of emotional awareness. This prompt does however require students to gain understanding and perspective of the situation presented in the video. By doing so students are afforded the opportunity to identify personal and professional feelings they have and how those emotions may frame their proposed actions.

During week four of the course for Case C, the embedded prompt asked students to address the following question: "What personal biases will you need to watch for in yourself as you begin observing, assessing, and evaluating young children in your work?"

As stated previously regarding the week 3 prompt, there was no specific statement by the instructor or in the directions as to whether or not the specific intent behind the embedding of this prompt into the course was to assist preservice early educators with developing the competency of emotional awareness. Even so, this prompt can assist students with gaining an awareness of how personal experiences may influence how they view children.

Faculty assessment and feedback. As discussed in Chapter 3, faculty assessment and feedback is important for student progression. Specifically, according to Andrade (2014), Denton (2014), Hosler and Arend (2012), and Leibold and Schwarz (2015) it is the timeliness, specificity, and type of feedback that are factors in the student's progression (Andrade, 2014; Denton, 2014; Hosler & Arend, 2012; Leibold & Schwarz, 2015). While faculty assessment and feedback is a factor in student progression, there were no occurrences of self-awareness competencies being addressed in any of the assignment feedback for Case A, B, or C as identified in Table 11.

Table 11

Number of Times Self-Awareness Competencies Addressed in Faculty Assessment and Feedback

	Self-awareness					
	Emotional awareness (EA)			Self-confidence (SC)		
Case	General	Implicit	Explicit	General	Implicit	Explicit
A	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	0	0	0	0	0	0
C	0	0	0	0	0	0

Cross-case analysis. Although each of the faculty participants indicated that self-awareness was a necessary EI competency for preservice early educators, the course documents did not emphasize this belief. Syllabi for 2 out of the 3 EDU 119 courses for example, included content that had some alignment with the self-awareness competency. These courses were each from NAEYC ECADA accredited programs. While there was some alignment to self-awareness noted in the syllabus, this alignment was through the indication of the NAEYC ECADA standards the course was identified as addressing. The syllabi from the course that was from a program that was not NAEYC ECADA accredited did not include any content that demonstrated alignment to self-awareness. While the course from Case B and the course from Case C did address self-awareness in their syllabus, the material aligned only with the self-confidence competency. There was no specific mention or examples of how the self-awareness competency of self-confidence was intentionally embedded and addressed in the course noted in the syllabus.

As stated earlier with regard to the syllabi for the courses, the material discussed in the syllabi had some alignment to the self-awareness competency of self-confidence.

Discussion forum prompts from Case B and C however did not demonstrate alignment to self-confidence. Discussion forum prompts were aligned to emotional awareness which is a contrast from the syllabus. Consequently, this contrast was the same with regard to faculty assessment and feedback, there was actually no faculty assessment or feedback from either of the cases that aligned with the self-awareness competency.

Data from interviews and course documents indicated that the self-awareness competency is being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. Although self-awareness competencies were being embedded and modeled, there was variation between each case as to which self-awareness competency was embedded and modeled and how the competency was embedded and modeled. During the interviews for example, each faculty member discussed the importance of helping students to recognize the role of emotional awareness when working with children. Faculty also shared personal experience to demonstrate how they modeled their understanding and recognition of the role that emotional awareness plays in teaching. While this belief was common and visible in the discussion forums prompts, it was not supported in the syllabi.

Only occurrences of the self-awareness competency of self-confidence were found in the course syllabi. Emotional awareness was not addressed in the syllabi. For Case B and Case C for example, self-confidence was an embedded component of the program outcomes for each course syllabus. While self-confidence was an embedded component of the program outcomes in the syllabus, it should be noted that the use of the term “self-confidence” was not explicitly stated. It was implied however as result of Case

B and C's utilization of the 6 NAEYC accreditation standards as their program standards. Syllabi for Case A did not include any reference to self-awareness competencies.

Although emotional awareness was not addressed in any of the course syllabi, it was on the other hand, addressed in the discussion forum prompts. Discussion forum prompts embedded scenarios and situations to provide students with opportunities to gain insight on their emotions and how personal past experiences may influence how they view and interact with children. It should also be noted that the accredited programs incorporated more discussion forum postings into the course.

Research Subquestion 3: Motivation

SQ3 focused on the embedding and modeling of the EI competency of motivation. This question required a review of the course documents (syllabi, discussion forum prompts, faculty feedback on assignments) in addition to a review of the faculty's reflection on the strategies and approaches they use to address the motivation competency. Faculty members were required to address the following research question: How is motivation embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses? Information from each of the data sources demonstrated that ECE faculty more frequently indicated their use of embedded approaches that aligned with EI motivation competency of achievement drive (AD). Overall there was one primary theme that emerged from RQ3 regarding the faculty's role in embedding motivation and that was providing feedback. With regard to modeling, there was also one primary theme that emerged and that was the role of being involved and responsive.

Table 12

Major Themes and Findings for Research Question 3 According to Data Source

Research subquestions	Data source(s)	Major themes	Major findings
SQ3: How is motivation embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?	Interviews	students enrolled in the program encounter personal challenges that impede course completion	belief that faculty have a role in motivating students and that motivation is connected to course completion
	Syllabi	achievement drive is an implied competency that students possess in order to take the course	focus on the motivation competency in the syllabi is based on accreditation standard
	Discussion forums prompts	prompts focus on the role of achievement drive and optimism as students develop into ECE professionals	aligned with the syllabi with the embedded focus being primarily on achievement drive
	Faculty assessment & feedback	feedback is primarily used to improve the assignment	instructors feedback is primarily general and does not specifically focus on developing the motivation competency in students

Interviews. Similar to the faculty responses regarding the self-awareness competency, each of the faculty participants stated that they believed that motivation is an important competency for early childhood providers. One of the common similarities amongst each of the faculty responses was their emphasis on the diverse population of

students enrolled in the course and the motivational challenges that these students encounter as they seek to successfully complete courses. For example, Jane shared the following with regard to the importance of motivation and some of the challenges that students enrolled in the EDU 119 course encounter:

> I think it is very important. I think for so many early care providers, so many of my students are working full-time as they are, many have families, many of them are single parents. So I think they have to be really motivated because going back to school especially so many of them are going full-time, it's not easy. It takes a lot of drive and determination and I think especially for some that either are coming back to school or maybe weren't the best students in high school, they really have to be motivated and see that goal at the end to want to continue and to keep pushing forward. . . . some of them they're not going into a high-paying field so they have to really want to be in the field I think.

Similarly, Jill also addressed some of the challenges students encountered with regard to completing the course. Jill explained that "especially in an online class, if they're not motivated to learn or to keep up with stuff, then they get behind right of the bat and that sets them up for failure. Jill also identified some of the reasons that students are not motivated to complete the course, "For 119 we get a lot of students that have to take it for employment. So they're here, they're doing it, but their hearts are not in it." Additionally, Jill discussed some of the fears and challenges that students have regarding school in general, "They're, afraid of school, some of them are older, they've been out of school for a number of years."

Jackie stated that motivation is:

> Super, super important….if we don't motivate them coming into the field from day one and encourage them along the way then we'll lose them by the wayside. They will sign up for this course, they will not successfully complete it and not receive their credential. . . .You can see the student that will start off very strong at the beginning of the semester and then slowly but surely they'll start slacking off, missing assignments here, missing assignments there. Motivation is the key, that motivation, that enthusiasm for the field, but especially for the 119'ners (*sic*), the newbies coming and that lays the foundation for the remainder of the program (*sic*).

Table 13

Strategies and Approaches Faculty Indicated Using to Develop Motivation Competencies in ECE Students

Case	Motivation: Achievement drive (AD)		Motivation: Optimism (Opt)	
	Embedded	Modeled	Embedded	Modeled
A	Provide clear directions to assist students with achieving the goal	No examples provided	No examples provided	Provide personal encouragement to help students persist in class.
B	Use of feedback to assist students with moving toward the goal of the assignment or the course.	Encouragement and demonstration by instructors of their excitement for the course content.	No examples provided	Sharing of professional experiences used to encourage students.
C	Completion of a learning style inventory by students as part of the admissions process. Post assignment instructions so students have the expectations. Provide rubrics to students to let them know how they will be graded. Use of faculty feedback to remind students of the assignment expectations. Submit draft of assignments for feedback prior to final submission.	Reminding students to go back and review the rubric. Faculty presence and participation in forums	Posting announcements for reminders and encouragement	Use of photos and graphics to personalize the course.

During the interviews, faculty also discussed how they believed they were addressing the motivation competency in the course. Each faculty described strategies and approaches that aligned with both the motivational competencies of achievement drive (AD) and optimism (Opt). Table 13 provides a listing of some of the strategies and approaches faculty shared. Collectively faculty participants shared various examples that addressed both AD and Opt. More of their examples however, approximately 50%, related to the AD competency. The embedded approach of providing feedback was also noted by the two faculty participants from accredited programs as an approach used to assist students with moving toward the goal and as a reminder of the assignment expectations. Other embedded approaches which addressed the AD competency centered on assignment design. Faculty participants for example indicated that providing students with clear directions, grading rubrics, announcements, and the opportunity to submit draft assignments were ways in which students were provided encouragement and support toward meeting the requirements of the assignment.

Syllabi. Faculty participants emphasized during the interviews that motivation was an important competency for students in their role as a student and an early childhood professional. Although all three faculty participants shared their belief that motivation was an important competency and how they believed they addressed this competency, only the syllabi for the EDU 119 course from Case A and Case B however included content which had some relationship to the motivation competencies (see Table 14).

Table 14
Number of Times Motivation Competencies Addressed in Syllabus

Case	Motivation							
	Achievement drive (AD)				Optimism (Opt)			
	Embed	Model	Implied	Negative reference	Embed	Model	Implied	Negative reference
A	3 (.100)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	1 (.14)	0	6 (.86)	0	0	0	0	0
C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Three instances of connections to the AD competency were identified in the syllabi from Case A. While aspects of the AD competency were an embedded component of the student learning outcomes and student responsibilities in the syllabus, it should be noted that the use of the terms “achievement drive” and “motivation” were not explicitly stated. For example, the first occurrence was a part of the student learning outcomes for the course and stated the following: “Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to: Design a personal career plan that includes a self-assessment, possible positions in ECE and professional development goals.” Although term “achievement drive” is not included, students had the opportunity to develop a plan to move forward in their chosen profession, which also included addressing their level of personal readiness to move forward. Also in the syllabi for Case A, student responsibilities were also addressed. Two of the instructor’s expectations for students included the student being “honest and responsible” and the student being “committed to success in the course.” While these are the instructor expectations or requirements of students with regard to the student meeting an ethical standard and striving for course success, there was no

discussion in the syllabus as to how the development of these expectations would be addressed and developed in the student taking the course. There were however no connections made to the Opt competency in the syllabus.

For Case B on the other hand, although a total of 7 instances of connections to the AD competency were noted in the syllabi, 6 (86%) of those instances were implied connections (see Table 14). Similar to the findings for the self-awareness competency, some of the connections to AD were implied as result of Case B's utilization of the 6 NAEYC accreditation standards as their program standards. Also, similar to Case A some of the connections to AD were implied as result of being included in the student learning outcomes and course outcomes. While the terms "achievement drive" and "motivation" were also not explicitly stated in the syllabi for Case B, they were implied. Table 15 includes some of the implied references found in the syllabus. Only 1 (14%) of the references had characteristics of being an embedded approach to addressing the AD competency. Similar to Case A, the syllabi for Case B identified the expectations or requirements of students with regard to meeting an ethical standard, there was however also no discussion in the syllabus as to how the students capacity to meet these expectations would be addressed and developed in the student through participating in the course. There were no connections made to the Opt competency in the syllabus. Case C did not have any connections to the motivation competencies in the syllabi

Table 15
Case B: Implied Statements Included in the Syllabus for With Connections to Achievement Drive

Course component	Statements
Student learning outcome (SLO)	SLO 6: Students will uphold ethical standards use by early childhood professionals.
NAEYC standards	4d: Reflecting on own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child
	6b: Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other early childhood professional guidelines
Course outcome (embedded)	Begin a personal career plan that includes self-assessment of skills and interests, a mission statement, career goals, and ongoing professional development.
Early childhood education professionalism & ethics statement	Students are expected to maintain professional behavior, including respect, sensitivity and confidentiality for children and families.
	As a part of this course you accept that you must ensure the confidentiality of the children and families observed or material discussed in this course.
	When completing observations as a student of the Early Childhood Education Department students must also dress and act as a professional

Discussion forums prompts. As discussed in the previous sections, each of the faculty participants shared during their interview that motivation was an important competency for students as they seek to develop into early childhood professionals. While each of the faculty indicated that motivation is an important competency, only the

discussion forum prompts from Case A incorporated content which had some connection to the motivation competency (see Table 16).

Table 16

Number of Times Motivation Competencies Addressed in Discussion Forum Prompts

Case	Total discussion forum prompts	Motivation			
		Achievement drive (AD)		Optimism (Opt)	
		Embedded	Modeled	Embedded	Modeled
A	4	3 (.60)	0	2 (.40)	0
B	2	0	0	0	0
C	10	0	0	0	0

Connections to both the Achievement Drive (AD) and Optimism (Opt) competencies were noted in the syllabi for Case A. As identified in Table 16, there were a total of 4 discussion forum prompts in the 16 week course, with a total of 3 embedded connections to AD and 2 embedded connections to Opt in the prompts. Of the 4 prompts, 3 (75%) of the prompts occurring during weeks 2, 6, and 8 were where the embedded connections were noted. Prompts included requirements of the student such as having them to “Tell the class a little bit about who you are, why you are taking this class…” (see Table 17). A prompt such as this, while it does not explicitly mention “achievement drive,” it does provide the opportunity for students to identify how they see themselves progressing, while at the same time allowing them to reflect on the commitment needed to have success in the in the ECE profession.

Table 17

Case A: Student Requirements Included in the Discussion Forum Prompts with Connections to Achievement Drive (AD) and Optimism (Opt)

Week	Prompt #	Competency	Discussion forum prompt
2	1	AD	Introduce yourself to the rest of the class. Tell the class a little bit about who you are, why you are taking this class, and anything else you would like the class to know.
6	3	AD	Are you physically active? Are you practicing what you teach? Children are more likely to do what we do versus what we say. What messages are adults giving children in our society in regards to our physical/motor development? What specific ideas do you have for creating positive movement in your life? What specific ideas do you have for creating positive movement in the lives of children?
8	4	Opt	Reflecting upon the whole semester, which part or parts of this course were the most helpful to you professionally?
		AD	How will this course help you in your career?
		Opt	What was the most useful thing you learned about using the library resources this semester?

For prompt 3, while there were connections to the empathy competency of developing others (DO) which will be discussed in the findings for RQ4, there was also some alignment to AD. For example, one of the requirements as noted in Table 17, was for students to answer the following question: “What specific ideas do you have for creating positive movement in your life?” Although overall this prompt aligns with the

empathy competency of developing others (DO), this component of the prompt provides an opportunity for students to identify how they plan to make personal improvements.

Prompt 4 included connections to both AD and Opt. For the first requirement of this prompt, as outlined in Table 17, students were asked to do a reflection. Specifically, students were asked to reflect “upon the whole semester” and they were then asked to describe, “Which part or parts of this course were the most helpful to you professionally?” This requirement was most closely connected with the Opt competency and in turn, provided an opportunity for students to analyze and evaluate their experiences and to identify the challenges and professional benefits of the course. Similarly, the last requirement of this prompt also had connections to the Opt competency. In this portion of the prompt 4, students were asked to describe the following: “What was the most useful thing you learned about using the library resources this semester? Which provided students with another opportunity to opportunity for students to analyze and evaluate their experiences in the course. Lastly, the second requirement in prompt 4 (see Table 17) had connections to the AD competency in which students were asked the following question: How will this course help you in your career? This question provided students with opportunity to identify how they plan to use the knowledge gained to assist them with developing professionally.

Faculty assessment and feedback. During the faculty interviews, each of the participants, shared that they use feedback on assignments as a way of connecting with students and assisting them with moving toward the goal. Jane, Case A, for example stated that she used feedback to say to students: “I understand where you're coming

from" or "I know things get tough but let's figure out how we can make this work." Jill, Case B, shared that she used feedback with her students to "try to and steer them in the right way." Jackie, Case C, indicated that she used feedback with students to remind them of the assignment expectations, Jackie stated that "being involved, being engaged and then also in the assignments providing feedback, not to tear them down, but to assist them with meeting the expectation." Jackie further stated that in the feedback she reminds students "you had a rubric with expectation of the assignment, but this is more so what I was looking towards." Jackie also shared that she may "provide a sample or feedback that relates to show them what their response could have been." Although each of the participants indicated that they do incorporate feedback to motivate students and to assist students with meeting the goals of the assignment, one participant, Jane, also noted that she does not always incorporate as much feedback with the electronic copies of assignments as she does when receiving hard copies of the assignment. For example, Jane stated the following:

> In their feedback, I don't always give as much feedback as maybe I do when I actually have a hardcopy piece of paper and writing feedback. But I do at times if the there's something, especially if there's you know something there to let them reflect a little more.

Table 18

Number of Times Motivation Competencies Addressed in Faculty Assessment and Feedback

Case	Assignment name		Motivation			
			Achievement drive (AD)		Optimism (Opt)	
		General assignment feedback	Explicit feedback	Implicit feedback	Explicit feedback	Implicit feedback
A	Practical experience assignment (PEA) #1: Educational statement of belief	5 (.56)	2 (.22)	2 (.22)	0	0
B	Developmentally appropriate practice basics	17 (.77)	5 (.23)	0	0	0
C	Theorist comparison chart	4 (.44)	4 (.44)	1 (.11)	0	0

As discussed in the previous paragraph, each of the faculty participants indicated that feedback was used as means to motivate students. Faculty participants provided five anonymous student work samples of the same assignment. Each of the samples included the feedback that was given to the student by the faculty participant. It should be noted that general feedback comments on assignments were common for each case. For example, the percentage of general feedback comments for Case A was 56%, 77% for Case B, and 44% for Case A (see Table 18). As indicated in Table 18, faculty feedback from the student assignments for Case A, B, and C each made connections to the

Achievement Drive (AD) competency. Although there was faculty feedback from each case with connections to AD, the percentage of feedback with explicit (E) connections to AD for each case was less than 45%. Case A for example had 22% of feedback with explicit connections to AD, Case B was 23%, and Case C was 44% as shown in Table 18. Table 18 also shows the percentage of feedback with implicit (I) connections to AD that was provided in the faculty feedback. Feedback with implicit connections to AD for Case A for example was 22%, Case B was 0%, and Case C was 11%. There was however, no faculty feedback on assignments which made connections to the Optimism (Opt) competency.

Table 19

Feedback from Case A with Connections to the Achievement Drive (AD) and Optimism (Opt) Included on Student Assignments

Practical experience assignment (PEA) #1: Educational statement of belief		
Student sample #	EI competency	Faculty feedback on the assignment
1	General feedback	Great points and well organized
2	General feedback	I can tell you really care about children.
	AD: I	When we meet we'll work on format, etc... for your assignments.
3	General feedback	Very important points!
	AD: E	Be sure to include an in text citation whenever you quote or reference someone in your written text. Also, for an APA reference at the end, be sure to indent all lines after the first line.
4	General feedback	Well done, and good examples to support your beliefs.
	AD: E	My only suggestion is to work on organization in a couple of places.
5	General feedback	Good ideas
	AD: I	Tell me some more about what you believe about education.

Note. Directions for the assignment: Write a short (one page) paper that describes your ideas about education and how young children should be taught. Be able to support your ideas or beliefs with examples (either personal examples, data or statistics, or references to education theories. When making reference to theories, data or statistics, please remember to include your source at the end of the paper and cite your source within the body of your paper using appropriate APA formatting.

For Case A, the assignment that was reviewed for this study was called the "Practical Experience Assignment (PEA) #1: Educational Statement of Belief." As discussed in the previous paragraph, general feedback comments on assignments were common for each case. There were however only connections to the AD competency in the feedback as indicated in Tables 18 and 19. Furthermore, Table 19 provides a listing of the specific feedback, for Case A, that was provided to each student on the submitted assignments. General feedback comments for Case A included comments such as "Great points and well organized" and "Good ideas" as shown in Table 19. General feedback comments for Case A also tended to focus on providing approval of student work. Feedback that was identified as having explicit (E) connections to AD on the other hand, included feedback that was more specific. These specifics included comments regarding what was missing and what was needed in order for the assignment to meet the identified standard as outlined in the student directions. In the feedback for student sample 3 for example, the instructor stated the following: "Be sure to include an in text citation whenever you quote or reference someone in your written text. Also, for an APA reference at the end, be sure to indent all lines after the first line." This statement provided advice to the student on to the criteria for meeting the expected standard. Feedback that was identified as having implicit connections to AD included comments that provided more general suggestions for the student to make improvements to the assignment. Feedback for student sample 5 for example included the following comment "Good ideas; tell me some more about what you believe about education" which generally acknowledges the ideas of student and then prompts the student to

provide more discussion on those ideas. There was no feedback that was identified as having connections to Opt.

Table 20

Feedback from Case B with Connections to the Achievement Drive (AD) and Optimism (Opt) Included on Student Assignments

Developmentally appropriate practice basics		
Student sample #	EI competency	Faculty feedback
1	General feedback	Need more information about "why" they are beneficial.
	General feedback	…If construction was what the children are interested in learning about.
	General feedback	You can read to the whole group if it is an interesting book and the children are allowed to ask questions about the book as you read. The idea is to gain comprehension of the story.
	General feedback	Watch size of stones for choking hazards.
	General feedback	You have some very good suggestions.
2	AD: E	When working on an assignment that has specific parts, please be sure and number your paper the same as the assignment guide. You have 10 pieces listed on your page, but there are only 3 parts to this assignment. Since you did not copy and paste the requirements or questions into your paper, I am having a hard time determining what part of the assignment matches your answers.
	General feedback	You are forgetting that DAP is about finding out where the child's skills are currently and providing activities that will increase the child's skills.

(table continues)

Student sample #	EI competency	Faculty feedback
3	General feedback	What would be at the learning centers? Many classrooms have centers, but that doesn't mean the activity at the center is appropriate
	General feedback	Children should not be making a "craft." They should be exploring art materials and creating their own art. A craft is something you put together or decorate that becomes a product.
	General feedback	Flashcards are inappropriate at this age level. You do not want to create competition between "teams" at this age. We want to develop their social skills, not cause them stress for not winning.
	AD: E	Circle is a time for wonderful teaching moments. You need to have a book available about what the children are talking about in order to increase their knowledge of the subject. Having them make a book list at the beginning of the week, probably will not be useful by the middle of the week because their interest will change.
	General feedback	This would be terribly time consuming and not appropriate for this age group.
	AD: E	License plates would not have any meaning to a child that has not traveled outside of the state. You could have geometric shapes that are the shapes of the road signs and let them decorate them.
	General feedback	This activity as you explained it will only show geometric shapes and they may or may not be able to recognize them.
	General feedback	Communication is the back and forth information. You have one way communication here.

(table continues)

Student sample #	EI competency	Faculty feedback
3	General feedback	The scavenger hunt would work if you had letters that matched the letters they chose and they had to find them. Preschoolers are just learning about the letters and sound they make. This activity needs some work to be DAP.
	General feedback	Games are fine, but you need to create teamwork and not competition. You could just have the children take turns throwing the bean bag and count how many times it landed in a hole.
4	General feedback	Great ideas!
5	AD: E	This activity would work only if all the children knew how to write the letter. You would have to do a little modification for younger preschoolers.
	General feedback	Actually this is a great teachable moment. Use the excitement and interest of the children to encourage learning. Children's interest is a large part of an activity being DAP. This means that teachers have to be flexible and willing to change the plans they had for the day in order to take advantage of the enthusiasm.
	AD: E	The gathering of leaves is great, but you should not use a printable (Xerox) hedgehog. The children should be able to draw their own version. You would also have to make sure that you have hedgehogs in your area and that children know what they look like.
	General feedback	You did not list the benefits.

Note. Directions for the assignment: This assignment is designed for students to apply basic knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). You will answer basic questions about DAP. Then you will be given several developmentally inappropriate activities for which you will be asked to provide a developmentally appropriate alternative. Finally you will be asked to give your own examples of a developmentally appropriate practice and provide an explanation of how your activity will benefit children.

For Case B, the assignment that was reviewed for this study was called the "Developmentally Appropriate Practice Basics." Table 20 provides a listing of the specific feedback for Case B that was provided by the instructor to each student on the submitted assignments. For Case B, as shown in Table 20, there were only connections to the AD competency in the feedback. Similar to Case A, some of the general feedback comments as noted in Table 20 tended to focus on providing approval of student work or what was wrong with the submitted assignment. General feedback comments for example, included comments such as "You have some very good suggestions" and "Great ideas!" which provides student with general praise about the work. Feedback that was identified as having explicit (E) connections to AD, on the other hand, included feedback that was more detailed and specific.

Also similar to Case A, feedback that was identified as having explicit (E) connections to AD included details that focused on what specifically was missing as well as comments and discussion on what was needed in order for the assignment to meet the identified standard as outlined in the student directions. For student sample 2 for example, the feedback included the following comment which provides students with a description and examples of what is needed for them to meet the identified standard for the assignment along with general praise:

> When working on an assignment that has specific parts, please be sure and number your paper the same as the assignment guide. You have 10 pieces listed on your page, but there are only 3 parts to this assignment. Since you did not copy

and paste the requirements or questions into your paper, I am having a hard time determining what part of the assignment matches your answers.

There was no feedback that was identified as having implicit connections to AD. There was also no feedback that was identified as having connections to Opt.

Table 21

Feedback from Case C with Connections to the Achievement Drive (AD) and Optimism (Opt) Included on Student Assignments

Theorist comparison chart		
Sample #	EI competency	Faculty feedback
1	General feedback	Over all well done!
	AD: E	I needed to see a bit more for Howard Gardner. For the real world column, I needed to see actual (specific) activities you would implement in the classroom to align with each theory.
2	General feedback	Well done!
	AD: E	For the real world column, I needed to see actual (specific) activities you would implement in the classroom to align with each theory. For Piaget, children are "little scientist" for a hide-n-seek activity/game would be appropriate to align with his philosophy. For Vygotsky, doing a challenging puzzle is a great way to scaffold a child's play
3	AD: I	Submission was very vague, not enough detail. I need to see much more detail:
4	General feedback	Perfect!
	AD: E	You provided a detailed explanation for each section and actual real world activities to align with each theory (SA4)
5	General feedback	Great detail on your comparison chart! Well done.
	AD: E	For the real world column, I needed to see actual activities you would implement in the classroom to align with theory. For Piaget's theory of children being scientist, the activity could be "hide-n-seek" (SA5)

Note. Overview of the assignment: Using the theorist comparison chart attached in this module, you will complete a comparison of each theorist described in your chapter reading. For each theorist listed, you will include: 1. Philosophy: What does the theorist believe about how children learn; 2. Key terms: Name key terms that relate to the theory; 3. View of the child: Describe how the theorist views the child (for example active, engaged, interacting with the environment); 4. Real world application: Describe how you would apply the theory in the classroom.

For Case C, the assignment that was reviewed for this study was called the "Theorist Comparison Chart." Table 21. Feedback from the Case C assignments were identified as having both explicit (E) and implicit (I) connections to AD. Similar to Case A and B, the feedback included general feedback from the instructors such as "Over all well done!", "Perfect!" and "Great detail on your comparison chart! Well done." This feedback provides students with general praise about the work they submitted. Some of the explicit feedback on the other hand, included feedback with details and specifics regarding what was needed in order to get the assignment up to the desired expectation. Feedback for student sample 2 for example provides a description and examples of what is needed for students to meet the identified standard for the assignment along with general praise and included the following comment:

> Well done! For the real world column, I needed to see actual (specific) activities you would implement in the classroom to align with each theory. For Piaget, children are "little scientist" for a hide-n-seek activity/game would be appropriate to align with his philosophy. For Vygotsky, doing a challenging puzzle is a great way to scaffold a child's play.

There was one instance of feedback having an implicit connection to AD. Feedback that was identified as having implicit connections to AD included the following comment "submission was very vague, not enough detail. I need to see much more detail" which provided a general suggestion on how the student could improvement the assignment.

Cross-case analysis. As discussed previously, faculty participants indicated during their interview that motivation was an important competency for ECE students as

they seek to develop into early childhood professionals. While connections to the motivation competency were addressed in the course documents, there was some variation. With regard to the syllabi for example, although it was stated by each of the participants that motivation was an important competency, only the syllabi for Case A and B included instances of connection to the motivation competency. Connections however were only made to achievement drive (AD). None of the syllabi included content that was connected to optimism (Opt). In the syllabus for Case A, there were a total of three clear examples of the embedding of the AD competency. While in the syllabus for Case B, there were a total of seven. Six of them however were implied because they were a part of either the NAEYC standards, Student Learning Outcomes, or Professional & Ethics Statement that are utilized by the program.

As discussed in the previous paragraph, there was some content that was connected to the motivation competency included in the syllabi for Case A and B. For the discussion forums however, Case A included the only discussion forums with content that was connected to the motivation competency. Discussion forum prompts for Case A included embedded content that was connected to both the AD and Opt competency.

With regard to faculty assessment and feedback, the majority of feedback provided to students on their submitted assignments, was general feedback. Overall, general feedback for each case included brief comments which focused on providing approval of student work. For each of the cases, approximately 45% or more of the comments provided to students were general comments. Also there was no feedback for any of the Cases that was connected to the Opt competency. While some of the feedback

was identified as being connected to the AD competency, the feedback however only addressed the assignment and did not address AD with regard to the student's personal development.

During the interviews faculty participants described some of the challenges that students encountered with regard to having the motivation to overcome personal challenges, complete the assignments, and coursework. While faculty participants recognized and acknowledged that students who are enrolled in the program encounter personal challenges which may impede course completion, the focus of the syllabi, discussion forums prompt, and feedback however was primarily on the motivation competency as it relates to completing assignments. Faculty participants also in their responses indicated that they have a role in motivating students. For each of the participants, for example, providing both formal (clear directions, rubrics, assessments, or announcements) and informal feedback (personal encouragement, faculty presence, sharing of experiences) was how they believed they motivated students. While faculty participants held the belief that they have a role in motivating students and that motivation is connected to course completion, the course documents did not provide clear examples to how both the AD and Opt competency are being intentionally addressed and developed in students.

Research Subquestion 4: Empathy

SQ4 focused on the embedding and modeling of the EI competency of empathy. In order to address RQ4 course documents (syllabi, discussion forum prompts, and faculty feedback on assignments) and faculty reflections on the strategies and approaches

they used to address the empathy competency were explored. Faculty members addressed the following research question: How is empathy embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses? Information from each of the data sources demonstrated that ECE faculty embed and model approaches that aligned with the EI empathy competencies of Understanding Others (UO) and Developing Others (DO). As noted in Table 22, one primary theme that emerged from RQ4 regarding the faculty's role in embedding empathy competencies in the EDU 119 course, was the use of observation and discussion forums to assist students with gaining an understanding of the feelings and perspectives of the children and families they will work with in the ECE profession. With regard to modeling, there was also one primary theme that emerged and that was the sharing of personal experiences to demonstrate an understanding of various perspectives. While faculty did not specifically indicate that the approaches and strategies that were utilized were intentionally incorporated to address the empathy competency, they did have connections to the empathy competency.

Table 22
Major Themes and Findings for Research Question 4 According to Data Sources

Research subquestions	Data source(s)	Major themes	Major findings
	Interviews	challenges with addressing empathy in online course sharing of personal experiences to assist students with developing an awareness of children's needs	empathy is an assumed competency that is not intentionally addressed in courses
SQ4: How is empathy embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?	Syllabi	empathy is an implied competency that students naturally possess in working with children	focus on the empathy competency in the syllabi is based on accreditation standard
	Discussion Forums Prompts	prompts focus on the role of developing others as a part of their work with children	embedded focus is primarily is primarily on developing others
	Faculty Assessment & Feedback	assignments have some alignment to EI competency of empathy	instructor feedback does not have connection to the empathy competency

Interviews. Similar to the faculty responses regarding the self-awareness and motivation competencies, faculty participants also stated that they believed that empathy is an important competency for early childhood providers to possess. During each of the interviews, faculty emphasized the need for students to have the skills to understand and

accept the diverse experiences and perspectives of the children and families they will encounter in the field of ECE. For example, Jane discussed the importance of empathy and working with children and families:

> To me empathy is very important. If you are not empathetic toward your students, toward their families, and understanding where they are developmentally, the students especially, I think it's really hard to be an early care provider. I think we really have to develop that empathy to really care, otherwise it's just a job and it's so easy to go in and just get frustrated with the kids… You have to really understand where they're coming from and what they've experienced before they come to you.

Jill also discussed the role of empathy in working with children and families, but also explained that students enrolled in EDU 119 may not get the opportunity to intentionally address this skill in the course:

> I think empathy is extremely important for the provider in the centers. Families go through different things, some of it could be financial, some of it could be you know death, it could be all kinds of things that the provider themselves have never experienced, but they need to be aware of how the family reacts or the child is reacting to something that they can't control. So in doing that, I think that they don't get as much time to practice those kinds of things in that particular class (EDU 119).

While Jackie also discussed the importance of empathy and working with children and families, Jackie also emphasized the need for students to develop an understanding and respect for cultural differences:

> Another one at the very top, being aware of yourself and then being aware of others. Then again being aware of others is putting yourself in others place…. When you're working in childcare you will engage with families of every area of life, so you have to be prepared to have an understanding of who they are and who they represent. Although it may be different, it doesn't mean that it's wrong and a way to do that is again putting yourself in their shoes. Also educating yourself on the differences of that family as well… It's embracing the differences of others and challenging yourself enough to put yourself in their shoes to understand things from their perspective.

Table 23

Number of Times Empathy Competencies Discussed During Faculty Interviews

Case	Empathy							
	Understanding others (UO)				Developing others (DO)			
	Embed	Model	Implied	Negative reference	Embed	Model	Implied	Negative reference
A	2 (.50)	1 (.25)	0	1 (.25)	1 (.125)	6 (.75)	0	1 (.125)
B	2 (.20)	4 (.40)	1 (.10)	3 (.30)	0	2 (.29)	4 (.57)	1 (.14)
C	4 (.31)	9 (.60)	0	0	2 (.33)	3 (.50)	1 (.17)	0
Total	*8 (.30)*	*14 (.52)*	*1 (.03)*	*4 (.15)*	*3 (.14)*	*11 (.52)*	*5 (.24)*	*2 (.10)*

During the interviews, faculty participants also discussed how they believed they were addressing the empathy competency in the course. While each faculty participant shared how they believe the empathy competency was being embedded and modeled in

the course, two participants made negative references as noted in Table 23 for both empathy competencies (Understanding Others and Developing Others). Comments identified as a negative references were those comments in which the participants noted that the empathy competency was not always intentionally addressed and may have only been touched on as a result of the nature of the ECE field. For example, for Case A with regard to the empathy competency of Understanding Others (UO) there was one (.25) negative reference noted, as identified in Table 23, in which the faculty participant shared how the empathy competency may not be intentionally addressed in the course. Jane for example stated: “I'm trying to think about the discussion boards. I'm not sure that any of them really connect with empathy but… so probably that Shadow Study would be the big one that might hopefully create some empathy.” Along these same lines, there were three (.30) negative references noted by Case B. One of which the faculty participant, Jill, explained that sometimes students have a challenging time with recognizing the emotions of others, “sometimes it’s even hard for them to recognize emotions in other people.” Jill later commented that students in the hybrid sections of the EDU 119 course may have opportunities to participate in class activities that promote empathy whereas the online section may not have those same opportunities. For example, Jill stated:

> Sometimes we do some role playing in the hybrid course. I tried to do that a little bit online in a group and it didn't seem to work very well. I didn't get the response I needed, I think that probably goes to different groups too, different dynamics have different results for that. So practicing it is really is very difficult in an

> online class because it's just back-and-forth conversation. Well Skyping, if we could Skype with all our students that would be good.

Jill also explained that their observation assignment was another possible opportunity for students to develop skills in empathy, but this assignment tends to occur in the hybrid section.

> Well part of it is just they have observations but in this one (EDU 119 section) they don't get a lot of time out in the field. We have a hybrid as well for this, so that one (course) sometimes we can do more in the classroom, again when they can see us interacting it helps. But for the strictly online pieces, the outside observation is really the only place they get to practice it, especially if it's in the 8 week semester. You know you're cramped inside to get the basics down for them.

While negative references were noted in Table 23 for the UO (15%) and DO (10%) competencies for Case A and Case B, each of the faculty participants also discussed how the empathy competency was embedded and modeled in their course. Collectively however there was a higher number of instances in which faculty participants discussed various examples in the interviews that addressed both UO and DO. Overall, however there were more of the instances, approximately 52% respectively, related to modeling the UO and DO competencies (See Table 23).

Table 24
Strategies and Approaches Faculty Indicated Using to Develop Empathy Competencies in ECE Students

Case	Empathy: Understanding others (UO)		Empathy: Developing others (DO)	
	Embedded	Modeled	Embedded	Modeled
A	Incorporation of assignments that require students to gain an understanding of the child and their needs	Provide personal examples to connect with students. Encourage students to understand different perspectives.	Incorporation of assignment that requires students to initiate contact with the instructor	Recognition of student's challenges and providing moral support Acknowledgement of student's challenges and making personal contact with that student Modeling and encouraging students to use people-first language in forums Encouraging students to work through differences
B	Use of observation to gain understanding of children's emotions	Sharing of personal experiences to help students to gain an understanding of children's feelings and perspectives Reflection opportunities are not embedded, but provide students with chances to understand children's development	No examples provided	Reflecting on observation experiences to help students with identifying the developmental needs of the child.

(table continues)

Case	Empathy			
	Understanding others (UO)		Developing others (DO)	
	Embedded	Modeled	Embedded	Modeled
B	Use of observation to gain understanding of children's emotions	Use of personal stories and scenarios to assist students with understanding how children might be feeling about an experience.		
C	Use of discussion forums for students to share their experiences and understand the similarities and differences. Use of discussion forum postings to assist students with gaining an understanding of what others may be experiencing. Review of student files prior to enrollment allows faculty to gain some insight into the lives of students enrolled in certain education programs. Use of real life scenarios to assist students with gaining an understanding of others situations and perspectives.	Provide discussion forum feedback Sharing perspective regarding the topic Sharing of personal and professional experiences. Availability and accessibility of the instructor as support for student. Use of personal examples to demonstrate understanding of student perspectives. Encouraging open communication with students.	Evaluation of the course format to identify if it is meeting the needs of the students. Providing of student feedback regarding the course and the format.	Faculty phone calls to student to identify their needs and give support. Scheduling of in person meetings to gain understanding of student's challenges. Accommodating and meeting the needs of students

As stated in the previous paragraph, each faculty participant described strategies and approaches that aligned with both the empathy competencies of Understanding Others (UO) and Developing Others (DO). Table 24 provides a listing of some of the strategies and approaches faculty participants shared. Collectively faculty participants shared various examples that addressed both UO and DO. More of their examples however, approximately 50%, related to the UO competency. The modeled approach of sharing personal examples and experiences was noted by each of the faculty participants as an approach used to assist students with developing an awareness of children's needs. Other modeled approaches which addressed the UO competency centered on gaining and understanding of the various experiences and perspectives of children and families.

Syllabi. Faculty participants emphasized during the interviews that empathy was an important and necessary competency for students as they develop into early childhood professionals. While all three faculty participants shared their belief that empathy was an important and necessary competency for students in their role as an ECE professional, only the syllabi from Case B and C included content which had some relationship to the empathy competencies (see Table 25).

Table 25

Number of Times Empathy Competencies Addressed in Syllabus

Case	Empathy							
	Understanding others (UO)				Developing others (DO)			
	Embed	Model	Implied	Negative reference	Embed	Model	Implied	Negative reference
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	2 (.33)	0	4 (.67)	0	0	0	7 (.100)	0
C	0	0	4 (.100)	0	0	0	4 (.100)	0

There were no connections made to the UO competency in the syllabus for Case A as noted in Table 25. Similarly, there were also no connections to the DO competency in the syllabi for Case A. Two instances however of embedded connections to the UO competency were identified in the syllabi from Case B. Similar to the self-awareness competency, there were implied connections to the UO (67%) and DO (100%) empathy competencies in the course syllabus for Case B that were made as a result of the program's utilization of specific NAEYC accreditation standards as their program standards (see Table 26). Although aspects of the UO competency were an embedded component of the student learning outcomes and student responsibilities in the syllabus, it should be noted that the use of the terms "empathy," "understanding others," "developing others" were not explicitly stated in the syllabi. While the syllabi for Case B identified the expectations or requirements of students with regard to meeting an accreditation standard, there was however no discussion in the syllabus as to how the student's capacity to meet these standards would be addressed and developed in the student through participating in the course.

Table 26

Case B: Implied Statements Included in the Syllabus for With Connections to Understanding Others (UO) and Developing Others (DO)

Course component	Empathy competency UO or DO	Statements
Student learning outcome (SLO)	DO	SLO 1: Students will use developmental knowledge to create supportive and challenging learning environments for all children.
	UO	SLO 2: Students will develop modes of interaction that involve children's families and communities
NAEYC standards	UO	2a: Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics
	DO	2b: Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships
	DO	2c: Involving families and communities in young children's development and learning
	DO	3b: Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches, including the use of technology in documentation, assessment and data collection.
	DO	3c: Understanding and practicing responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child, including the use of assistive technology for children with disabilities.
	DO	3d: Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues to build effective learning environments
	UO	4a: Understanding positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with young children
	DO	4d: Reflecting on own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child
	UO	6d: Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education
Course outcome (Embedded)	UO	Describe the importance of family and community partnerships

Additionally in the syllabus for Case C there were 4 implied connections to UO and 4 implied connections to DO in the course syllabus (see Table 25). Like Case B the implied connections were made as a result of the program's utilization of specific NAEYC accreditation standards as their program standards (see Table 27). Also similar to Case C the syllabus does not explicitly incorporate or include the terms such as "empathy," "understanding others," "developing others." The syllabi for Case C also does not include a discussion in the syllabus as to how the student's capacity to meet these standards would be addressed and the empathy competencies developed in the student through participating in the course.

Table 27

Case C: Implied Statements Included in the Syllabus for With Connections to Understanding Others and Developing Others

Course component	Empathy competency UO or DO	Statements
NAEYC standards	UO	2a: Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics
	DO	2b: Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships
	DO	3b: Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches, including the use of technology in documentation, assessment and data collection.
	DO	3c: Understanding and practicing responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child, including the use of assistive technology for children with disabilities.
	DO	3d: Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues to build effective learning environments
	UO	4a: Understanding positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with young children
	UO	6d: Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education
Course outcome (Embedded)	UO	Describe the importance of family and community partnerships

Discussion Forums Prompts. Each of the faculty participants indicated during their interview that empathy was an important competency for early childhood students. None of the faculty participants however specifically indicated using discussion forum assignments as their approach to intentionally addressing the empathy competency. Jane, for example the faculty participant for Case A, stated the following with regard to the discussion forum assignments in the EDU 119 course, “I'm trying to think about the discussion boards. I'm not sure that any of them really connect with empathy.” Jill, the faculty participant for Case B, did not make any reference to using discussion forum prompts to address the empathy competency in her interview. While faculty participants from Case A and Case B did not indicate their use of discussion forum prompts to address the empathy competency, Jackie, the faculty participant for Case C shared how she utilized discussion forums in the EDU 119 that she taught. Jackie did not explicitly indicate that discussion forum prompts were utilized to address the empathy competency. Jackie did however discuss her perspective on how there were some connections to the empathy competency. For example, when asked about some of the ways that students might get a chance to practice their skills in empathy, Jackie said:

> I think it goes back to the discussion post and some of the scenarios that may be given. Say that there is an ethical dilemma in a sense. Where a parent drops off their child and they didn't bring any diapers or wipes and the child’s nose is runny and you know just a scenario, the parent was in and out in a minute and a half and they come in on a cell phone. Giving them those real life scenarios and then having them respond back [*sic*] to it.

Jackie also explained that she uses discussion forums for students to share their experiences and to gain an understanding of their similarities and differences. Jackie for example stated that students in their discussion forum replies to classmates are saying:

> Oh well I had this experience in this class pertaining to this, or last semester with this child or this family and this is what I've done.' So you know they can relate to that situation that their classmate is having and then give their personal experiences.

While faculty participants may not have specifically indicated that discussion forum prompts were used to address the empathy competency there were prompts from each of the cases that made connections to the empathy competency as shown in Table 28.

Table 28

Number of Times Empathy Competencies Addressed in Discussion Forum Prompts

Case	Total discussion forum prompts	Empathy			
		Understanding others (UO)		Developing others (DO)	
		Embed	Model	Embed	Model
A	4	0	0	4	0
B	2	1	0	1	0
C	10	1	0	1	0

For Case A, there were no connections to the Understanding Others (UO) and Developing Others (DO) competencies noted in the syllabi. As identified in Table 28, there were a total of 4 discussion forum prompts in the 16 week course, with no embedded or modeled approaches or strategies connected to UO. There were however 4

examples of approaches and strategies identified as embedded as a result of being a required component of the prompt that demonstrated connections to DO. Of the 4 prompts, 2 (50%) of the prompts which occurred during weeks 4 and 6 were where the embedded examples were noted. One of the prompts for example asked students to address the following question, "How would you respond to a parent who thought too much time in your center was devoted to play and they wanted you to teach academics" (see Table 29). While this prompt does not explicitly mention the empathy competency of DO, students are provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of what children need and have an opportunity to demonstrate how they would provide parents with new knowledge.

Table 29

Case A: Student Requirements Included in the Discussion Forum Prompts with Connections to Developing Others (DO)

Week	Prompt #	Competency	Discussion forum prompt
4	2	DO	How would you respond to a parent who thought too much time in your center was devoted to play and they wanted you to teach academics? Remember to review the importance of parent/teacher partnerships.
6	3	DO	Are you practicing what you teach? Children are more likely to do what we do versus what we say.
		DO	What messages are adults giving children in our society in regards to our physical/motor development?
		DO	What specific ideas do you have for creating positive movement in the lives of children?

For prompt #3, there were also connections to DO. For example, one of the requirements of this prompt as noted in Table 29, was for students to answer a series of questions. One part of the prompt asked students to address the following question, “Are you practicing what you teach? Children are more likely to do what we do versus what we say.” This prompt along with the remaining two prompts as shown in Table 29 provide an opportunity for students to be introspective and also allows the student to discuss how personal actions impact others.

Case B on the other hand, had one discussion forum prompt that aligned with both the UO and DO empathy competency and provided an example of approaches and strategies identified as being embedded as a result of being a required component of the prompt. Case B for example only incorporated two discussion forum assignments for the course during weeks 1 and 7. The forum for week 7 however was the only forum that included a connection to the empathy competency. This discussion forum prompt had two parts, the first part of this prompt was connected to the self-awareness competency which was addressed in the RQ2 discussion. For part two of this same discussion forum prompt, students were asked to do the following, “Using more positive language you will REFRAME your peer’s negative statements into positive statements.” This prompt was identified as having connection to both UO and DO. From the UO perspective of the competency, student are given the opportunity to gain an understanding of how classmate may see or experience a situation. From the DO perspective of the empathy competency, students are provided the opportunity to assist their classmates with seeing a situation from a different perspective.

Case C, incorporated 10 forums in the course, the forum for weeks 5 and 9 were the forums that demonstrated connection to the empathy competency. Each of these forum prompts provided an example of approaches and strategies identified as being embedded as a result of being a required component of the prompt. For example, the prompt during week 5 of the course, required students to read selected pages of their textbook and then students were asked to do the following: “Pretend YOU are Esmeralda's teacher (see the first paragraph of the reading). What are some strategies or ideas that you could implement in the preschool classroom to help close her "gaps?" This prompt was identified as having connection to UO because students are required to gain an understanding of both the educator’s perspective and children’s needs. For week 9, the prompt asked students to “Think about the kindergarten and primary classroom.” Students were then asked to do the following based off of course readings: “Give 2 examples of how you have or could modify your classroom of primary age children to meet the needs of diverse learners. This prompt was identified as having connection to DO because students are provided an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding children’s development and then make modifications to address the identified needs.

As stated previously in this section, there was no specific statement by the instructor or in the directions as to whether or not the specific intent behind the embedding of these prompts into the courses was to assist preservice early educators with developing the competency of empathy. Even so, the utilization of prompts such as those discussed in this section, may assist students with gaining an awareness of how

understanding other's feelings, needs, and concerns may influence how they view and work with children.

Faculty Assessment and Feedback. During the faculty interviews, each of the participants indicated using faculty feedback as a way to develop needed skills in student and as a way to connect with students. Although faculty participants indicated using feedback, the feedback on assignments was primarily connected to the motivation competency or the feedback was general in nature including comments such a "Great points and well organized," "Good ideas," or "Very important points!" As shown in Table 30, there was no faculty feedback for Case A, B, or C that made connections to the empathy competencies of UO and DO. Case A for example, used an assignment called the Practical Experience Assignment (PEA) #1: Educational Statement of Belief which required students to do the following:

> Write a short (one page) paper that describes your ideas about education and how young children should be taught. Be able to support your ideas or beliefs with examples (either personal examples, data or statistics, or references to education theories. When making reference to theories, data or statistics, please remember to include your source at the end of the paper and cite your source in the body of your paper using appropriate APA formatting.

While the component of the assignment directions that required students to "Write a short (one page) paper that describes your ideas about education and how young children should be taught" may incorporate some connection to the empathy competency of UO,

the faculty feedback on the assignment was either general or only connected to the motivation competency of AD.

Table 30

Number of Times Empathy Competencies Addressed in Faculty Assessment and Feedback

Case	Assignment name		Motivation			
			Achievement drive (AD)		Optimism (Opt)	
		General assignment feedback	Explicit feedback	Implicit feedback	Explicit feedback	Implicit feedback
A	Practical experience assignment (PEA) #1: Educational statement of belief	1	0	0	0	0
B	Developmentally appropriate practice basics	0	0	0	0	0
C	Theorist comparison chart	0	0	0	0	0

For Case B, an assignment called the “Developmentally Appropriate Practice Basics” was reviewed. Directions for the assignment were as follows:

> This assignment is designed for students to apply basic knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). You will answer basic questions about DAP. Then you will be given several developmentally inappropriate activities for which you will be asked to provide a developmentally appropriate alternative. Finally you will be asked to give your own examples of a

> developmentally appropriate practice and provide an explanation of how your activity will benefit children.

Similar to Case A, there is some connection in the directions to both UO and DO. For example, because students will need to have an understanding of the developmental needs of children, the component of the directions that required students to take "developmentally inappropriate activities" and "provide a developmentally appropriate alternative" has some connection to UO. In the directions, students are also asked to do the following: "give your own examples of a developmentally appropriate practice and provide an explanation of how your activity will benefit children." This component of the directions has some connection to DO because students are required to use their knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) to share how children will be benefitted through the use of DAP.

While faculty assessment and feedback is a factor in the development of the empathy in students, there were no occurrences of empathy competencies being addressed in any of the assignment feedback for Case A, B, or C as identified in Table 30.

Cross-case ACase Analysis. Course documents were not always reflective of the faculty participant's belief that empathy is a necessary EI competency for preservice early educators. Although participants shared their belief regarding the importance of students possessing the empathy competency, two of the participants shared that the empathy competency was not always intentionally addressed and may have only been touched on as a result of the nature of the ECE field.

Similar to the self-awareness competency, syllabi for Case B and Case C, included content that had some connection with the empathy competency. While there was some connection to empathy noted in the syllabus, this connection was through the indication of the NAEYC ECADA standards the course was identified as addressing. Syllabi from Case A, which was not NAEYC ECADA accredited did not include any content that demonstrated connection to empathy. While the syllabi from Case B and Case C incorporated content with connection to the empathy competency, the connections were identified as implied. Additionally, in each of the course syllabi, there was no specific mention or examples of how the empathy competency was intentionally embedded and addressed in the course.

Overall, in each of the cases there were connections to the empathy competency in the discussion forums. While connections were found to the empathy competency, more examples of embedded approaches and strategies were found that had connections to the empathy competency of DO as shown in Table 28. Although the syllabi for Case A did include any connections to the empathy competency, 4 connections to the empathy competency of DO was identified in the syllabus. Syllabi for Case B and Case C on the other hand had discussion forum prompts with connections to both the UO and DO empathy competency. One connection to each competency was made and identified as embedded as a result of being a required component of the prompt.

With regard to faculty assessment and feedback, although the assignment directions for Case A and Case B demonstrated some connection to the empathy competency, the feedback did not. The majority of feedback provided to students was

general feedback which included brief comments which focused on providing approval of student work. Overall, there was actually no faculty feedback from either of the cases that aligned with the empathy competency.

Summary

Data from interviews and course documents indicated that the empathy competency is being embedded in community college preservice early educator online courses primarily through the discussion forum prompts. Although content which connected to empathy competencies was being embedded through the discussion forum prompts, faculty participants only described how the competency was being modeled for students during the interviews. There was also variation between each case as to which empathy competency was embedded, which was modeled, and how they were embedded and modeled. During the interviews for example, faculty participants discussed the importance of their students having the skills to understand and accept the diverse experiences and perspectives of the children and families they will encounter in the field of ECE. Participants also indicated that one of the approaches that they modeled was for student was sharing personal examples and experiences. Faculty participants indicated this as an approach used to assist students with developing an awareness of children's needs. While this belief was reflected to some degree in the syllabi and discussion forums prompt, it was not reflected in the faculty feedback on student assignments. Although faculty participants held the belief that empathy is a necessary competency for individuals in the ECE profession, the course documents provided limited examples as to

how both the UO and DO empathy competencies are being intentionally addressed and developed in students.

Chapter Summary

The results of the qualitative case study were carefully reviewed in order to identify alignment to each research question. This process was to relate the findings from the course documents and the qualitative responses from the faculty participants with the four research questions which referenced how personal and social EI competencies were being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. As a result of analyzing the data, overall themes were developed with regard to specific EI competency and course documents that were explored.

The question posed for Research Question 1 was “How do ECE faculty perceive their role in modeling and embedding self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in their online courses? For this question which was addressed through faculty interviews, several themes emerged regarding the EDU 119 faculty’s perceived role in modeling and embedding self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in their online courses. Overall, faculty perceived their role as being a model of the self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies for students. First, faculty believed that one of ways that they modeled self-awareness, motivation and empathy competencies for students is through making a connection with students. Second, faculty believed that they needed to be involved and responsive to student needs in an effort to keep the student motivated and involved in the course. Last, faculty believed that providing feedback to students acted as a means of connecting with students and being involved and responsive to students.

A summary of themes according to Research Questions 1-3, EI competency, and the reviewed course documents is provided in the following paragraphs. For Research Question 2 for example the focus was on the embedding and modeling of the EI competency of self-awareness into the online EDU 119 course. Research Question 2 asked "How is self-awareness embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses? A primary theme that arose for the interviews included teacher-child relationships. The theme for the syllabus was that self-confidence was addressed as an implied competency that students develop by taking the course, With regard to the discussion forum prompts, the theme that arose was the role of emotional awareness in working with children. For faculty assessment and feedback the theme that arose was the lack of alignment to self-awareness.

Research Question 3 focused on the embedding and modeling of the EI competency of motivation into the online EDU 119 course and asked "How is motivation embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?" Themes that emerged for this question included the following: (interviews) students enrolled in the program encounter personal challenges that impede course completion, (syllabi) achievement drive is an implied competency that students possess in order to take the course, (discussion forum prompts) prompts focus on the role of achievement drive and optimism as students develop into ECE professionals, and (faculty assessment and feedback) feedback is primarily used to improve the assignment.

Finally, Research Question 4 focused on the empathy competency and asked "How is empathy embedded and modeled in community college preservice early

educator online courses?” From the interviews, two themes arose, challenges with addressing empathy in online course and the sharing of personal experiences by faculty to assist students with developing an awareness of children’s needs. For the syllabi, the emergent theme was that empathy was addressed as an implied competency that students naturally possess in working with children. An emergent theme for the discussion forum prompts was the focus on the role of developing others as a part of the student’s work with children. For faculty assessment and feedback, the theme was the lack of alignment between assignments that have some connection to the empathy competency and instructor feedback which had no connection to the empathy competency.

Chapter 4, included an exploration of the data which revealed common themes that emerged from specific course documents and faculty/participant responses. A presentation of qualitative quotes found in the course documents and from faculty participants provided the representation of these common themes which shed light on the phenomenon of if and how personal and social EI competencies are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. Lastly, the process of analysis and presentation of quotes acted as the foundation for the interpretation and discussion that occurs in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore if and how self-awareness, motivation, and empathy, three EI competencies, were being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. The phenomenon that was examined in this study was the presence of EI in online courses. Specifically, the online course that was the focus of this study was a required introductory ECE course titled, "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" (EDU 119). Overall the intent of this study was to gain insight into if and how programs were intentionally addressing and assisting with the development of EI competencies in preservice early educators by embedding or modeling the competencies into online courses. Gaining a better understanding of how online classrooms embed and model EI competencies may assist community college early educator faculty with developing, embedding, and modeling intentional instructional approaches that develop EI in future early educators.

For this case study, I analyzed and coded faculty interviews and course documents. Overall themes were identified and then addressed in the discussion of the findings for each of the study's research questions. The first research subquestion regarded how faculty perceived their role in modeling and embedding EI. Faculty interviews revealed that faculty perceived themselves more as modelers of EI competencies. In their role of modeler, they indicated responsibility for making a connection with students and being involved with and responsive to students. One of the primary approaches that faculty indicated using to make connections with students was to

share relevant personal and professional examples. With regard to embedding EI competencies, faculty perceived themselves as being responsible for providing feedback. Specifically, faculty indicated using feedback as way of assisting students with moving toward the goal of the assignment or the course.

The second research subquestion regarded self-awareness. Faculty indicated their belief that the self-awareness of the teacher has an impact on the interactions that go on between teacher and student. Data from this study showed that self-awareness was not embedded in online courses with this group of community college ECE faculty members; however, the faculty members overall did feel they modeled the self-awareness competency in their courses. Self-confidence was viewed as a necessary competency, but it was only viewed as an implied competency in the syllabus. It was assumed that students continued to build self-confidence as a result of taking the course. Only one aspect of self-awareness, the competency of emotional awareness, was addressed in the discussion forum prompts. The focus in those discussion forum prompts was on the role of emotional awareness in working with children. In the feedback on assignments, there was a lack of alignment overall to the EI competency of self-awareness.

The results associated with the third research subquestion regarding motivation indicated that faculty believed that students who were enrolled in the program tended to encounter personal challenges that impeded course completion. Data for this research question showed that content addressing the motivation competency was embedded in the EDU 119 online courses. Faculty also more frequently indicated their use of embedded approaches that aligned with EI motivation competency of achievement drive (AD).

Faculty felt that they modeled this competency for students through their role of being involved and responsive. Faculty also indicated that they believed that faculty have a role in motivating students and that motivation is connected to course completion. In the syllabi, the motivation competency of achievement drive was addressed as an implied competency that students possess in order to take the course. While there was some connection to the motivation competency of achievement drive in the syllabi, it was based on the NAEYC ECADA accreditation standards. Discussion forum prompts on the other hand focused on both the role of achievement drive and optimism as students develop into ECE professionals. Although the faculty feedback demonstrated connections to motivation, the feedback primarily included general comments meant to improve the assignment and did not intentionally focus on developing the motivation competency in students.

The last research subquestion regarding empathy showed that empathy was embedded and modeled in the EDU 119 online courses. Data also showed that faculty indicated challenges with addressing empathy in an online course. Faculty also noted using the approach of sharing personal experiences to assist students with developing an awareness of children's needs. Empathy was also addressed as an implied competency in the syllabi. Empathy was viewed as a competency that students naturally possess in working with children. While there was some connection to empathy in the syllabi, it was based only on the NAEYC ECADA accreditation standards. Discussion forum prompts focused on the role of developing others as a part of their work with children. While the

assignments had some alignment to EI competency of empathy, the feedback on those assignments did not have any connection to empathy.

In Chapter 5, I provided a detailed interpretation of these findings according to each of the research questions. Chapter 5 concludes with limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and conclusion.

Interpretation of the Findings

The community college faculty of the preservice early educator programs that participated in this study have provided the opportunity to explore some of the ways that preservice programs are addressing EI content in their online courses. The knowledge gained from this study has also provided a foundation for the ECE profession as a whole to build on for future ECE studies. In the field of education, for example, there is available research that is focused on the importance of EI and the role of teachers in developing this competency in children (Curby et al., 2013; Durlak et al., 2011; Lam & Wong, 2017; McLeod et al., 2017; Rivers et al., 2013). Some of this research examined what teachers do in the classroom and the impact it has on developing the EI competency in children (Lam & Wong, 2017; Rivers et al., 2013). Also noted in the research was the importance of teachers having EI competency (Mehta, 2013; Perez, 2011; Sak et al., 2015). Although the importance of teachers having EI competency was studied in the literature, the teachers in those studies were current teachers and not preservice teachers. While some studies addressed teacher preparation (Mueller & File, 2015; Nitecki, 2012), what was missing was a focus on teacher preparation programs at the community college level. This study specifically focused on teacher preparation or preservice early educator

programs in the community college demographic and therefore adds to the literature for the ECE profession. In the studies that examined teacher preparation programs (Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus, 2015; Huss-Keeler et al., 2013; Onchwari, 2010; Tekin, 2015), in addition to there being a lack of focus on the community college demographic, there was also a lack of focus on the course format used in those programs. This study however focused specifically on one course (EDU 119, “Introduction to Early Childhood Education”) offered in an online format and utilized across one of the Southeastern states for students enrolled in the preservice ECA degree program.

In this section, I addressed how the findings confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge in the discipline of ECE and in the discipline of online education in relation to what is found in the literature. I organized the findings by research subquestion and also analyzed and interpreted the findings using the conceptual lens of Goleman’s (1998) EI framework and the current literature as presented in Chapter 2.

Faculty Perceptions of Emotional Intelligence in Online Courses

SQ1 read as follows: How do ECE faculty perceive their role in modeling and embedding self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in their online courses? There were two major findings related to this question. The first finding was related to intentionality with regard to addressing EI competencies. Findings related to faculty perceptions both confirmed and extended literature cited in Chapter 2. Although faculty participants indicated that EI competencies are necessary for the profession, data analysis of the interviews indicated that the faculty’s addressing of self-awareness, motivation, and empathy were not always intentional. While studies have shown that course work and

trainings for future teachers that intentionally target elements of EI have the most potential to increase EI competencies in teachers such as self-awareness (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Vesely et al., 2013), results from this study showed that faculty focused more on working with teachers to develop EI in children rather than developing the future teachers' own personal and social EI competency. While gaining knowledge about children's EI is valuable, a study conducted by Lam and Wong (2017) explored how intentional training of teachers to improve the social-emotional well-being of kindergarten children. Findings from Lam and Wong showed the importance of teacher training as a necessary component to developing these skills in children. Through a pre- and posttest, Lam and Wong found that after the teacher's participation in the intervention program, there was significant improvement in the social-emotional well-being of the kindergarten children. The finding from this study and from Lam and Wang indicated that ECE faculty need to gain skills in developing and implementing intentional approaches to develop personal and social EI competency in future teachers.

The second finding was related to faculty acting as a model of the EI competencies for students. Each of the participants' responses indicated faculty perceived that their primary role was to act as a model for the student of each of the EI competencies. Additionally, the faculty's role of modeling provided an example of the competency for students. It was not clear during the interviews, however, if the faculty informed students of the competency they were modeling or the role and importance of that competency as it related to their work as ECE professionals. Data analysis also revealed that faculty perceived they held a primary role in making connections with

students, which supports the findings of Goodwin and Kosnik (2013), Kuo et al. (2014) and Ladyshewsky (2013). These faculty responses confirmed Goleman's (1995, 1998) framework that EI is a learned competency. However, since no previous research explored elements of EI in community college preservice teacher online courses, this study extends the literature by investigating how community college faculty view and address EI competencies in their courses. These findings and their connection to Goleman's EI framework will be further discussed in the Conceptual Framework section.

Self-Awareness in Online Courses

SQ2 read as follows: How is self-awareness embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses? There were four major findings related to this question. The first findings were related to modeling self-awareness. Faculty indicated that they incorporated examples of modeling self-awareness more than they utilized intentionally embedded approaches designed to specifically develop self-awareness competencies. This finding confirms the empirical research where faculty noted the importance of the self-awareness competency areas such as emotional awareness and self-confidence for the early educator (Edannur, 2010; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Wee et al., 2014). These findings may show that faculty also recognize the need to intentionally address the development of the future teachers' own competency in self-awareness. Findings may also show faculty that there is a need to develop or incorporate approaches or content that facilitate the development of self-awareness competencies.

The second finding, which also confirmed the findings of Guo et al. (2010), was related to faculty's perspective on teacher-child interactions. Faculty believed that the teachers' own self-awareness has an impact on the interaction between the teacher and the child. Although faculty in my study noted this belief with regard to the role and importance of the self-awareness competency, discussion forum prompts from the EDU 119 course were the only components of the course that included the self-awareness competencies of emotional awareness and self-confidence in an embedded manner. Findings from this study however also disconfirmed the literature from Chesnut and Cullen (2014), which indicated that the addressing of self-awareness competency tends to go missing in teacher preparation curricula. However, although self-awareness content was embedded in the online discussions forum prompts, it was not embedded in the online course syllabi that outline the course content. Self-awareness content was also not embedded in the assignments or the assignment feedback. Findings from this study confirmed Chesnut and Cullen's findings that EI is not an intentional focus in ECE programs. However, this study also revealed that in these types of programs, individual faculty are integrating self-awareness into their online courses. The course itself was not designed with any focus on developing preservice early educators' EI or even recognizing the importance of how personal emotions affect professional practice of ECE teachers.

The third finding was related to intentionality in teacher preparation courses. Teacher preparation programs need to have an intentional focus on developing self-awareness competencies in future early educators because self-awareness is a beneficial

quality of early childhood teachers (Edannur, 2010; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Wee et al., 2014), and practicing EI competencies in teacher training improves preservice teachers' EI (Lam & Wong, 2017). Although faculty participants noted during the interview that they felt they modeled self-awareness for their online students, data from the course documents showed that the self-awareness competency was only addressed in an implied manner. Course documents such as the course syllabi, for example, had an implied alignment to the self-awareness competency of self-confidence. However, the alignment was only as a result of those accredited programs addressing standard six of the NAEYC ECADA standards. Although the self-awareness competency of emotional awareness was not found in the syllabi, content that addressed emotional awareness was found in the discussion forum prompts. While designing online courses is challenging in general (Hernandez et al., 2014; Stavredes & Herder, 2014), and student reflection assignments are common in ECE programs (Farrell, 2013; Mulder & Dull, 2014; Perez, 2011), the findings from my study may confirm the need for preservice early educator programs to include course objectives and learning outcomes that specifically target the development of self-awareness in future teachers in online courses. Assignments would then more overtly embed self-awareness to appropriately address those stated course objectives and learning outcomes.

Lastly, the fourth finding was related to faculty assessment and feedback on assignments. Faculty assessment and feedback from the participants on student assignments did not address the self-awareness competency. According to Leibold and Schwarz (2015) and Hosler and Arend (2012) effective feedback is positive,

individualized, constructive, and intentional. Wiggins (2012) also explained that effective or helpful feedback should be "goal-referenced; tangible and transparent; actionable; user-friendly (specific and personalized); timely; ongoing; and consistent" (par 10). However, my study showed that faculty feedback on assignments only included either general feedback or feedback that reflected the motivation competency, not self-awareness. Faculty feedback did not include elements that would encourage the student to reflect on how their own assumptions or experiences may impact their views of teaching and learning. However, in context of the current literature, feedback that might encourage student self-awareness is positive (Leibold & Schwarz, 2015), helps to improve errors (Zsohar & Smith, 2009), and specific to the needs of the individual learner (Hosler & Arend, 2012). Results from this study have highlighted a need for faculty to develop the skills to assess student work and provide feedback that works to build students' EI skills in addition to remarking on the assignment in general. These findings and their connection to Goleman's EI framework are discussed in the Conceptual Framework section.

Motivation in Online Classes

SQ3 read as follows: How is motivation embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses? There were four major findings related to this question. The first findings were related to the embedding of the motivation competency of achievement drive. Faculty in this study utilized embedded approaches which primarily aligned with the motivation competency of achievement drive. While both achievement drive and optimism were noted in the literature as important elements

of the motivation competency for ECE teachers (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2014), data from this study showed more evidence of achievement drive being embedded than optimism. With regard to achievement drive, there was one common motivational approach that was embedded, and that was in the feedback students received. Faculty identified providing feedback as an approach to assist students with moving toward the course goals.

The second finding regarding achievement drive, confirmed the findings of Mansfield and Beltman (2014), Huss-Keeler et al., (2013), and Tekin (2015) that students have extrinsic and intrinsic motivations for choosing and committing to the ECE profession. This study also confirmed the findings of Capt, Oliver, and Engel, (2014) and Katz and Davison (2014) which identified the community college students' encounter with personal challenges as a common issue that impacts their success and completion of academic programs. Faculty participating in this study also confirmed this finding and noted that students in the program encountered personal challenges which have a tendency to impede course completion. Although faculty in this study confirmed that ECE students encountered personal challenges that hindered their completion of the course, my study also showed that faculty identified using instructional approaches which focused primarily on motivating students to address the requirements of the assignments rather than developing metacognition and self-regulation skills (Cho & Shen, 2013; Lee et al., 2013) which was noted in the research as a catalyst for developing the motivation competency (Cho & Shen, 2013; Lee et al., 2013).

A third finding of this study was in regards to the motivation competency of optimism. The findings of this study extend the literature by providing data on how optimism specifically, was embedded and modeled in the online courses. While the literature addressing optimism was limited, the few studies in the literature that did examine optimism did so from the lens of the role it plays in the students' motivation for being in the ECE profession (Tekin, 2015) and overall well-being (Desrumaux et al., 2015). Data from this study showed that course content which addressed the optimism competency was only embedded in two discussion forum prompts, and was related to optimism in association with course, not the ECE profession as a whole. Other literature with regard to the motivation competency of optimism, focused on teacher burnout. According to the findings of Hong (2010) for example which addressed the topic of teacher well-being, preservice teachers had a naïve misconception of the teaching profession which contributed toward a lack of motivation for teachers to remain in the profession. Similarly, Mansfield et al. (2012) also studied preservice teacher perceptions regarding the teaching profession and resilience and found that teachers' perception of resilience varied and changed over time. Wells (2015) conducted a study with newly hired Head Start preschool teacher participants exploring factors related to teacher retention and turnover and found that Head Start teachers were likely to leave the field for several reasons. Some of the reasons cited by Wells included feelings of unhappiness, relationship with supervisor, and work environment. Findings from Hong (2010), Mansfield et al. (2012), Wells (2015), suggest that preparing future teachers so they have the motivation to complete the educational requirements, continue on in the field, and

have realistic expectations regarding the ECE field is needed. Therefore an area that EC faculty could embed more optimism is in online discussion forum prompts, by addressing issues of teacher burnout and encouraging ECE preservice teachers to explore ways to handle the educational challenges that they may encounter in the future. The fact that optimism related to the profession was never embedded or modeled in online courses may indicate a need to further explore the role of optimism in preservice early educator online courses.

The fourth finding was related to the instructional strategies used by faculty. This finding confirms the literature in that faculty in this study used similar motivational instructional strategies identified in the literature, such as instructor-to-student interaction in discussion forums (Ladyshewsky, 2013; Rogers & Fleck, 2014) and personal e-mails to students who might be struggling (Hartnett et al., 2014). In the interviews, faculty noted reasons for using strategies such as interacting with students in the discussion forums and personal e-mails. Faculty noted that participating in the forums was a strategy to "motivate them [students] by being involved and engaged with them in the course." Faculty also noted using personal e-mails as a strategy for providing personal motivation to students. Mansfield and Beltman (2014) shared that there are varying reasons as to why individuals choose to enter into, complete the education requirements for, and remain in the ECE profession. Therefore, in the online learning environment, faculty could benefit from recognizing the varying needs of students in the course and the specific motivation competency in which students may need further development and using that knowledge to develop and use approaches that build or strengthen that

competency. This study has indicated that while faculty do model and embed some motivational strategies, they could be doing it more and improve their skills in better utilizing online instructional approaches and designing course assignments and discussion forums that intentionally develop skills such as metacognitive self-regulation or academic locus of control in students (Lee et al., 2013). These findings and their connection to Goleman's EI framework will be discussed in the Conceptual Framework section.

Empathy in Online Courses

Research Question 4 was "how is empathy embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?" There were four major findings related to this question. The first major finding was that faculty participants believed that empathy is a necessary competency for teachers. This confirms the literature of Peck et al. (2015), that each of the explored empathy competency areas are necessary in the field of ECE as they assist teachers with addressing the needs of children, families, and administrators. Faculty responses in this study also confirmed other studies that indicated that future teachers should possess empathy so that they can effectively address the needs of the children in their classes (George, 2013; Gunn & King, 2015; Reyes et al., 2012; Warren, 2015). Studies exploring elementary teachers (Warren, 2015), preservice elementary teachers (Kemp & Reupert, 2012; Laletas & Reupert, 2015), showed that teachers value and see importance of teachers having strong competency in empathy. The findings of this study also extend this knowledge in that this study focused on the field of ECE.

The second finding was regarding the embedded approaches used to address the empathy competency. Data analysis confirmed that faculty participants utilized embedded approaches that aligned with the EI empathy competencies of understanding others and developing others. Findings for this research question revealed that empathy content was embedded in the course syllabi. While empathy content was embedded the content demonstrated an implied alignment to the empathy competency. This alignment however was only as a result of the accredited programs addressing several of the NAEYC ECADA standards. The data also showed that both empathy competencies were primarily being embedded in the course through the discussion forum prompts. Findings from this study confirmed the literature in that the use of discussion forums were noted as a primary approach in online classes used to build the empathy competency (Zelihic, 2015). Discussion forum prompts in this study however did not explicitly include the term “empathy.” Findings from this study also extended the knowledge in that the discussion forum prompts were made up of various scenarios that included empathy concepts regarding their future work with children, in which the students needed to provide their response or approach. In the literature however, emphasis was placed on the development of relationships in the course (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012; Pawan et al., 2003; Shea & Bidjerano, 2010).

The third finding was regarding the modeled approaches used to address the empathy competency. Data analysis confirmed that faculty participants utilized modeled approaches that aligned with the EI empathy competencies of understanding others and developing others. Faculty participants discussed how they modeled empathy

competencies through their sharing of personal experiences that were relevant. This approach of sharing personal experience however was not specifically reflected in the literature. Kuo et al. (2014), and Ladyshewsky (2013) however indicated that the primary roles of faculty included having positive faculty/student interactions. Reflective journaling (Chambers & Lavery, 2012) and service learning projects (Chambers & Lavery, 2012; Seban, 2013) were however identified in the literature as approaches to developing empathy in preservice teacher. Regarding the findings of this study, it is unclear if this modeling approach was utilized by faculty participants to intentionally build and develop the empathy competencies or to simply help make points clearer to the student and to develop a relationship with the student. Because faculty indicated having challenges with addressing empathy in the online course, it could benefit faculty to develop and incorporate specific empathy outcomes, objectives, and assignments to the online course curriculum. Additionally, not only did faculty participants in my study indicate they model the empathy competencies for their students, they emphasized the value of students building each of these empathy competencies, indicating that the skills act as a foundation for working with diverse population of children and families.

The fourth finding was in regards to intentionality. Additionally, participants for my study also shared that the empathy competency was not always intentionally addressed in their course. These findings highlighted a disconnect between what faculty felt was important and what they intentionally incorporated into their online course content and in their online instructional approaches (Gunn & King, 2015) which prepare future teachers for their role as the creators of the emotional climate in the early

childhood classroom (Curby et al.,, & Hamre, 2013). These findings and their connection to Goleman's EI framework will be discussed in the Conceptual Framework section.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on the emotional intelligence research of Goleman (1998). This framework provided a contextual lens through which understanding if and how personal and social EI competencies are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses was explored. For this study, EI was defined as "the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (Goleman, 1998, p. 317). Goleman's EI framework included two categories of competencies which focused on "how we manage ourselves" (p. 26) (personal) and "how we handle relationships" (p. 27) (social). These specific competency areas were chosen because they were noted in the literature as necessary EI competencies for educators (Corcoran & Tormey, 2012a; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Kasler et al., 2013; Vesely et al., 2013). In each of the two categories this study focused on specific competency areas; self-awareness and motivation from the personal competencies and empathy from the social competencies. For this study, data related to the embedding and modeling of each of these competencies (self-awareness, motivation, and empathy) was collected through faculty interviews and various course documents.

While EI studies have been done related to EI and online learning (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012; Han & Johnson, 2012; You & Kang, 2014), and measurement of the preservice early educator's EI level (Corcoran & Tormey, 2010, 2012b; Kasler et

al., 2013; Oberst et al., 2009; Vesely et al., 2013), this study was the first to use the EI framework for the community college demographic, exploring how online courses used to prepare future early childhood teachers, are addressing EI competencies. Using this framework has expanded what is understood about community college teacher preparation online courses and adds to the understanding of the gap related to how self-awareness, motivation, and empathy, three EI competencies, are being embedded and modeled in those community college preservice early educator online courses.

The central research question for this study was, "How are self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?" Goleman (1995, 1998) viewed EI as a learned skill, competency, or capability. For this study, because EI is being recognized as a learned skill, competency, or capability, EI is also being recognized as a teachable competency all of which acted as a foundation for exploring if and how specific EI competencies are being embedded and modeled in online coursework. Based on the findings and analysis of the data, self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. Throughout all of the data sources however, examples of connections to the empathy competency was noted the most. It should also be noted that self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies were identified as being modeled more so than embedded in the courses. The primary way that these EI competencies were embedded was through the discussion forum postings. This research lays the foundation for examining how faculty can intentionally incorporate EI concepts and how they can

measure if students have grown in these areas. The primary way self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies were being modeled was through the faculty's sharing of their relevant personal and professional experiences. While a key finding was that faculty utilized the approach of sharing relevant personal and professional experiences, this research provides a framework for creating and utilizing evidence-based approaches to develop EI competencies in future early care educators.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are related to the research design of case study. First, because I am a faculty member and Department Chairperson at one of the community colleges located in the southeastern part of the United States of America, the potential for researcher bias existed. In an effort to manage bias, I first made sure to remove the community college where I work, from the possible participant listing. Because I am also an online instructor, I had to have the self-awareness to refrain from allowing my experiences as an online instructor to become or taint the responses from the study participants. To assist me with maintaining self-awareness, I also kept an ongoing record of my interaction with the data throughout the study using a journal. Additionally, in an effort to manage bias I also had to ensure that the interviews and the transcription process of those interviews were carefully structured. Also, in order to ensure that I was fully capturing the responses from the participants, member checks and respondent validation during the data collection phase were incorporated.

Another limitation is related to the number of cases. Yin (2014) explained that having two or more cases has analytic benefit in that it allows for the possibility of direct

replication (p. 64). Yin also explained that having more than two cases can ease criticism and skepticism with regard to the uniqueness of the case. My initial goal was to have a sample size of at least six cases which according to Yin, would be adequate for theoretical replications. However I was only able to obtain permission from 3 out of the 57 community colleges located in a Southeastern state in the United States of America that offer the required, introductory, early childhood course titled, “Introduction to Early Childhood Education” (EDU 119). Initially my goal was also to have programs that offered 2 or more online sections of the EDU 119 course to participate. Because most of the programs that offer the course online only offered one section of the course, this requirement was changed and the study was opened up to programs that offer at least one online section of the EDU 119 course. Therefore, the case load ended up being a total of 3 sections from 3 different community colleges in the same region that participated in the study which according to Yin lends itself to literal replications.

Recommendations

Given the gap in the literature and the findings of this study, recommendations for future studies which specifically address the community college preservice early educator demographic is warranted. Although this study was limited to one specific online course which is a required introductory course, future research might also consider focusing on other required online ECE courses that students take in the preservice early educator program. Because this study only included ECE faculty that volunteered to participate, future research might include having a focus group discussion with all ECE faculty teaching online in a selected region to gain an understanding of how they address EI

competencies in their courses. Studies which examine the community college preservice early educator faculty's own EI development and competency would also be insightful.

Additional studies might also include an investigation of how students in community college preservice early educator programs view the online course as addressing their EI competencies. Because this study only examined selected course documents, research which includes the utilization of specific online teaching approaches with future teachers in community college preservice early educator programs would be valuable. An examination of online teaching approaches which intentionally seek to develop self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies would also be valuable in providing a specific evidence-based approach for faculty to use in their online courses. A quantitative study that explores the effectiveness of faculty modeling EI competencies versus faculty embedding EI content in online courses might have on actual student skill development over the course of a program might also have value in determining which approach is more beneficial. Another study that would also be valuable is a longitudinal study that examines the development of the community college ECE student's EI competency over their time in the preservice early educator program as a result the program's incorporation of online content which addresses self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies.

Implications

The findings from this study have a potential impact for positive social change at the individual, organizational, and societal levels. The implication at the individual level is for students enrolled in community college preservice early educator programs. In the

field of ECE in general, there is an assumption that people who work with young children are emotionally competent. While this is an ideal assumption, the reality and problem is that this is not a common occurrence (Jones et al., 2013). This assumption may also be a reason as to why there is a lack of intentional focus on EI competencies in teacher preparation programs. At the same time, more and more individuals are seeking entry into the ECE profession through the community college (Castillo, 2013; Clotfelter et al., 2013; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Ireland, 2015). These individuals often encounter both academic and personal challenges which at times hinder their professional and academic progress in the community college educational setting. Because the reality is that not all early educators are emotionally competent (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009) and EI competencies are necessary for teachers working in the early childhood classroom (Baltaci & Demir, 2012; Curby et al., 2013; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Reyes et al., 2012), this study could impact social change by providing preservice ECE students and future teachers with an introductory understanding of the relevance of EI in their role as an early childhood professional. This study could also impact social change at the individual level by acting as a catalyst for faculty to reflect on their own belief about the role of EI in the classroom. In this study the EC faculty knew and recognized the importance of EI and that there were gaps in how courses, specifically online courses help students to grow in those EI skills. The findings from this study may encourage faculty to be more intentional about modeling and embedding EI. As a result, preservice teachers might have the opportunity to get early support in strengthening their EI which could then lead to better prepared and possibly more effective classroom teachers.

At the organizational level there are implications for community college teacher preparation programs as a whole. The profession of ECE is emotionally demanding and teachers that have low EI competency will be less effective as teachers (Bouton, 2016; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Lam & Wong, 2017; Patel, 2017). Community college students in general and community college students enrolled in preservice early educator programs in particular also tend to encounter academic challenges (Capt, Oliver, & Engel, 2014; Clotfelter et al., 2013) and personal challenges (Capt, Oliver, & Engel, 2014; Katz & Davison, 2014; Miranda, 2014; Sparkman et al., 2012), and as a result continue and complete their education at lower rates than those students enrolled in four-year colleges and universities (Martin et al., 2014). Therefore, preservice early educator students that lack the necessary skills to effectively handle the academic and personal challenges they will encounter may also find it challenging to handle the emotional demands in the ECE classroom. With this in mind, teacher preparation programs might begin to investigate and examine what is currently being done to assist future teacher with handling the emotional demands of the profession. The results of this study may bring about social change by acting as an impetus for this investigation and examination.

In relation to the organizational level, this study outlines approaches that community college teacher preparation programs are currently utilizing in their online courses. This study specifically outlines on how teacher preparation programs are addressing self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies in online courses. Because the data from this study indicated faculty tended to utilize modeling approaches overall more so than embedded approaches, programs might benefit from identifying and

then implementing embedded approaches program-wide in their online courses for building EI in ECE preservice teachers. Results from this study may also facilitate the incorporation of course objectives and learning outcomes throughout the course curriculum that specifically target self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies. The results of this study may also bring about social change by acting as a catalyst for creating professional development which specifically provides training to faculty on teacher EI, curriculum development, and online course assignment design which has the intentional goal of addressing and developing EI in the future teachers enrolled in the program.

At the societal level, this study may also impact social change. Although this study was a case study, it provided some understanding of how some community college EC faculty perceive their role in addressing the EI competencies, self-awareness, motivation, and empathy, and how they are being embedded and modeled in preservice early educator online courses. Because the results of this study show that ECE faculty value EI competencies, but do not systematically model or embed EI into their online courses, ECE faculty and program coordinators might also consider adopting and utilizing tools, approaches, and assessments in an online format which evaluate and track the growth of EI competencies in those future teachers that are enrolled in community college preservice early educator programs. Intentionally and systematically embedding and modeling EI in ECE online courses may lead to having more emotionally intelligent EC teachers, which in turn may also impact the retention of teachers in the classroom. Ultimately as a result of this study, community college preservice teacher preparation

programs will have the opportunity to play a significant role in the development of emotionally intelligent early care professionals who have the skills and capacity to facilitate the development of young learners into emotionally intelligent learners and citizens.

Conclusion

Social emotional development in young children is a topic that is becoming more prevalent in the field of ECE for a number of reasons. Children's social emotional development for example has been shown to have an impact on their behavior (Denham, Bassett, Thayer et al., 2012; Rivers et al., 2013). In turn, children's academic performance and achievement in school are also affected (Denham, Bassett, Way et al., 2012; Durlak et al., 2011). Consequently, in order to ensure that children's social emotional developmental needs are being addressed in the classroom, how early childhood teachers are being prepared to address children's social emotional developmental needs to be better understood. The unfortunate reality is that not all early care educators have the personal capacity and skill to address these needs making it important to ensure that future teachers are prepared both personally and professionally to address children's social emotional developmental needs.

Currently, some attention is being given to the preservice early educator curriculums being used to prepare future teachers. The focus of research in the past 10 years however has primarily addressed the early childhood teacher's professional preparation by examining their approach to facilitating social emotional development in children. While this is an important focus, ensuring that the preservice early educator is

personally prepared is also necessary. There has also been little examination of whether preservice early educators are given opportunities to improve their EI, in either face-to-face or online courses. This is especially true with regard to those individuals who are prepared through the community college. With this in mind, a primary goal for conducting this study was to highlight for community college ECE professionals, the faculty perceptions of the importance of modeling and embedding EI competencies and how faculty do that in online courses. A clear understanding of this factor may provide ways to help prepare emotionally intelligent early care professionals who have the skills and capacity to facilitate the development of young learners into emotionally intelligent learners and citizens.

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Appendix A: Letters of Cooperation

Community College

Contact Information

Date

Dear Tracey Bennett,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled *A Case Study of How Self-Awareness, Motivation, and Empathy are Embedded and Modeled in Community College Preservice Early Educator Online Courses* within the Early Childhood Education program at _________ Community College. As part of this study, I authorize you to contact the community college faculty members from this college in the preservice early educator preparation programs that have taught an online section of the *Introduction to Early Childhood Education (EDU 119)* course in the past semester; conduct interview with identified faculty member; collect data from discussion forum prompts, syllabi, and anonymous student work samples from *Introduction to Early Childhood Education (EDU 119)*. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: permitting faculty the use of e-mail for correspondence between faculty and me; providing a quiet room or space if necessary for conducting individual face-to-face interview. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

Include the following statement only if the Partner Site has its own IRB or other ethics/research approval process: The student will be responsible for complying with our site's research policies and requirements, including Describe requirements.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,
Authorization Official
Contact Information

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the e-mail, or (b) copied on the e-mail containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their e-mail address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an e-mail address officially on file with Walden).

Appendix B: Letter to Early Childhood Education Program Contact

Hello, my name is Tracey Bennett and I am doing my dissertation research to learn about emotional intelligence and how it is included in community college preservice early educator online courses. I am inviting community college faculty members in preservice early educator preparation programs that have taught online sections of the *Introduction to Early Childhood Education (EDU 119)* course in the past semester to be in the study. I obtained your name/contact info via the college website.

I would like to invite your faculty members that teach the online sections of the *Introduction to Early Childhood Education (EDU 119)* course to be in my research study so I may learn about how they include emotional intelligence in this course. However, because the anticipated participants are teaching the course in your program I want you to have an understanding about the project before you decide if it is permissible for your faculty member to be invited to participate. Attached to this e-mail is a letter of consent that will be provided to potential faculty study participants. You will find more thorough information about the study in this form, including who I am, information about the study itself, sample questions, options for participation, privacy, and contact information.

Once I have faculty from the preservice early educator willing to be part of my study I will ask each faculty to take a 5-question demographic survey that will help me to understand the demographics of the participants. Faculty will first be invited to participate in individual face-to-face or Skype interviews. Next, faculty will be asked to share specific pieces information with me. These are outlined in the attached letter of consent that will be sent to the faculty member you identify.

If you permit your faculty to participate in this study, please respond to this e-mail by providing me with the name and e-mail of the faculty member teaching the online section of the *Introduction to Early Childhood Education (EDU 119)* course. In your response to me, you can carbon copy (CC) the identified faculty member. If you prefer for your faculty not to participate, please respond to this e-mail indicating that you do not your faculty to participate so that I will not send you additional e-mails.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time by responding to this e-mail.

Thank you, I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Tracey Bennett

Walden University
PhD Education - Learning, Instruction, and Innovation Program

Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire

1. Gender (please select one): Male Female

2. What is your age range? (please select one):

    a. 18-29 years old

    b. 30-39 years old

    c. 40-49 years old

    d. 50-59 years old

    e. 60-64 years old

    f. 65 years and over

3. How do you describe yourself? (please select the option(s) that best describes you)
    a. American Indian or Alaska Native
    b. Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    c. Asian or Asian American
    d. Black or African American
    e. Hispanic or Latino
    f. Non-Hispanic White
    g. another _________________________

4. For how many semesters have you been teaching the online section of the Introduction to Early Childhood Education (EDU 119) course?

5. How many sections of the online section of the Introduction to Early Childhood Education (EDU 119) course have you taught?

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Central research question:

How are self-awareness, motivation, and empathy competencies embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses?

- Interview question 1: What is your understanding of the term emotional intelligence?
- Interview question 2: How would you describe the emotional intelligence skills of the preservice early educator students you come in contact with in your work as faculty for the EC associate degree program?
- Interview question 3: Why do you or don't you think self-awareness/motivation/empathy competencies should be required elements in a preservice early educator online courses?

Related Questions:

Research question 1: How do ECE faculty perceive their role in reflecting self-awareness, motivation, and empathy in their online courses?

1.) Interview question 1: How important do you feel self-awareness is for early care childhood providers?

2.) Interview question 2: In what ways do you think opportunities are provided for students to get a chance to practice self-awareness in this introductory online course when you teach it?

a. What are some assignments that you can think of that you've given where students practice self-awareness? Describe the assignment and experience you feel it provided for students.

b. Why or why don't you feel discussion prompts are good place for students to practice self-awareness?

c. In what ways, if any, are you able to build students' self-awareness by the feedback you provide students privately and/or publically?

d. How do you model or promote self-awareness in the assignment, discussion forums, and feedback you provide?

3.) Interview question 3: How important is motivation for early care childhood providers?

4.) Interview question 4: In what ways might students get a chance to practice motivation in this introductory online course when you teach it?

a. What are some assignments that you can think of that you've given where students practice motivation? Describe the assignment and experience you feel it provided for students.

b. Why or why don't you feel discussion prompts are good place for students to practice motivation?

c. In what ways, if any, are you able to build students' motivation by the feedback you provide students privately and/or publically?

5.) Interview question 5: How important is empathy for early care childhood providers?

6.) Interview question 6: In what ways might students get a chance to practice empathy in this introductory online course when you teach it?

   a. What are some assignments that you can think of that you've given where students practice empathy? Describe the assignment and experience you feel it provided for students.
   b. Why or why don't you feel discussion prompts are good place for students to practice empathy?
   c. In what ways, if any, are you able to build students' empathy by the feedback you provide students privately and/or publically?

Follow up prompt(s) if clarity is needed:

1. What is your elaboration of what you just stated?
2. What would be an example of what you mean?

Appendix E: Interview Analysis Chart

College Identification	School:	
EI competency supported	**Interview Notes**	
Self-Awareness	Statement	Relationship to EI
emotional awareness		
self confidence		
Motivation		
achievement drive		
optimism		
Empathy		
understanding others		
developing others		

Appendix F: Syllabi Analysis Chart

College Identification	School:	
EI competency supported	**Syllabi**	
Self-Awareness	Prompt	Relationship to EI
emotional awareness		
self confidence		
Motivation		
achievement drive		
optimism		
Empathy		
understanding others		
developing others		

Appendix G: Faculty Assessment & Feedback Analysis Chart

College Identification	School:	
EI competency supported	**Faculty Assessment & Feedback Analysis**	
Self-Awareness	Assignment	Feedback
emotional awareness		
self confidence		
Motivation		
achievement drive		
optimism		
Empathy		
understanding others		
developing others		

Appendix H: Discussion Forum Analysis Chart

College Identification	School:	
EI competency supported	**Discussion Forum Prompt**	
Self-Awareness	Prompt	Relationship to EI
emotional awareness		
self confidence		
Motivation		
achievement drive		
optimism		
Empathy		
understanding others		
developing others		

Appendix I: Discussion Forum Prompts Chart

Please copy and paste the text of each discussion prompt included in a fully online section of the Introduction to Early Childhood Education (EDU 119) course. If you would prefer, include screen shots of the discussion forum prompts into the chart below. If there are associated images or attachments needed to understand the prompt, please include those as well. Please organize these by week # within the course.

Week # in Course	Text of Discussion prompt.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	

15.	
16.	

Appendix J: Interview Protocol List

Before the interview the following will be completed. I will:

- Make contact with interviewee to confirm the date and length of time they can spend with me.
- Remind the interviewee of the purpose and use of interview information.
- Prepare questions that encourage depth.
- Create and utilize appropriate materials for documenting responses which will include an interview form
- Dress and present myself in a professional manner

During the interview I will:

- Establish rapport and relationship
- Clearly state the purpose of the interview and stay on track. Be mindful of time
- Provide an opportunity for the interviewee to ask me questions
- Remain within the agreed scheduled time line
- Be aware of my own body language (relaxed, confident, interested, and goal-oriented)
- Connect with the interviewee by active listening and appropriate, positive dialogue
- Graciously allow the interviewee to decline responding to a question
- Summarize/paraphrase what the interviewee said to confirm understanding
- Probe for concrete information and specific examples
- Ask follow-up questions
- Ask for examples or evidence when generalizations/contradictions are made

After the interview:

- Transcribe my thoughts/notes as soon as possible to my computer

- Send a thank-you note to my interviewee
- Reflect on the interview and on what I have learned and document reflection in a journal

Interview Notes

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer name:

Interviewee name:

Position of the interviewee:

Purpose of study: The purpose of this study is to explore if and how self-awareness, motivation, and empathy, three EI competencies, are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses.

Questions:

- What is your understanding of the term emotional intelligence?
    - Additional follow up prompt(s) if clarity is needed:
        - Please elaborate on what you just stated?
- How would you describe the emotional intelligence skills of the preservice early educator students you come in contact with in your work as faculty for the EC associate degree program?

- Why do you or don't you think self-awareness/motivation/empathy competencies should be required elements in a preservice early educator online courses?
- How important is self-awareness for early care childhood providers?
- In what ways might students get a chance to practice this skill in this introductory online course when you teach it?
- How important is motivation for early care childhood providers?
- In what ways might students get a chance to practice this skill in this introductory online course when you teach it?
- How important is empathy for early care childhood providers?
- In what ways might students get a chance to practice this skill in this introductory online course when you teach it?

Follow up prompts.

- How do you model or promote self-awareness in the assignment, discussion forums, and feedback you provide?
- How do you model or promote motivation in the assignment, discussion forums, and feedback you provide?
- How do you model or promote empathy in the assignment, discussion forums, and feedback you provide?

Thank individual for participating in this interview. Assure interview of their confidentiality of responses and potential future interviews.

Appendix K: E-mail Invitation to Participate

Program

Hello my name is Tracey Bennett and I am doing my dissertation research to learn about emotional intelligence and how it is included in community college preservice early educator online courses. I am inviting community college faculty members in preservice early educator preparation programs that have taught online sections of the *Introduction to Early Childhood Education (EDU 119)* course in the past semester to be in the study. I obtained your name/contact info via the college website and through the state's community college early childhood associate degree program listserve.

I am inviting faculty member(s)/instructor(s) from across the state that teach the online sections of the *Introduction to Early Childhood Education (EDU 119)* course to be in my research study so I may learn about how they include emotional intelligence in this course. However, because the anticipated participants are teaching the course in your program I want you to have an understanding about the project before you decide if it is permissible for your faculty member(s)/instructor(s) to be invited to participate. Attached to this e-mail is a letter of consent that will be provided to potential faculty/instructor study participants. You will find more thorough information about the study in this form, including who I am, information about the study itself, sample questions, options for participation, privacy, and contact
information.

While I am contacting programs from across the state regarding participation in this study, it is possible however that a program may give consent to participate, but it does not necessarily mean the program will be needed for participation in the study. In order to participate, programs must offer EDU 119 in an online format and offer 2 or more online sections of EDU 119 taught by different instructors. Therefore please include in your response e-mail how many sections are offered by your program, the number of faculty who have taught the online section(s), and the name and e-mail contact information of these instructors. Once this information is received I will contact the faculty member(s)/instructor(s) via e-mail.

Once I have faculty member(s)/instructor(s) from the preservice early educator programs that are willing to be part of my study I will ask each faculty member(s)/instructor(s) to take a 5-question demographic survey that will help me to understand the demographics of the participants. Faculty member(s)/instructor(s) will first be asked to share specific pieces information with me. These are outlined in the attached letter of consent that will be sent to the faculty member(s)/instructor(s) you identify. Next, they will be invited to participate in individual face-to-face or Skype interviews.

If you permit your faculty member(s)/instructor(s) to participate in this study, please respond to this e-mail by providing me with the name and e-mail of all faculty members/instructor(s) teaching the online sections of the *Introduction to Early Childhood Education (EDU 119)* course. Also, if you do permit your faculty member(s)/instructor(s) to participate, please let me know in your response e-mail if your college has an approval process that I will need to complete prior to my conducting this study. If your college has an approval process but does not approve of my conducting the study, then your program will be automatically excluded from the study. If you prefer that they not participate, please respond to this e-mail indicating that you do not want your faculty member(s)/instructor(s) to participate.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time by responding to this e-mail.

Thank you, I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Tracey Bennett
Walden University
PhD Education - Learning, Instruction, and Innovation Program

Appendix L: E-mail to Potential Early Childhood Faculty/Instructor Participants

Dear Early Childhood Faculty/Instructor,

My name is Tracey Bennett, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. You are invited to take part in a research study about emotional intelligence (EI) and how it is included in community college preservice early educator online courses. I am inviting community college faculty/instructors in preservice early educator preparation programs that have taught online sections of the *Introduction to Early Childhood Education (EDU 119)* course in the past semester to be in the study. I obtained your name/contact info via the college website, the Department Head, and/or Program Head/Director. This e-mail provides a brief overview of the study to assist you with deciding whether to take part.

As stated previously, the purpose of this study is to explore if and how self-awareness, motivation, and empathy, three EI competencies, are being embedded and modeled in community college preservice early educator online courses. Please note that faculty teaching will not be judged and is not the purpose of this study. The collection of data relating to emotional intelligence in online courses taught by faculty is not meant as an evaluation of faculty teaching, but simply a means for looking at whether or not or how EI is evident in the identified course(s). This study is voluntary and requires participants to complete a brief survey, participate in an interview (in-person or Skype), and submit specific documents such as the course syllabus, copies of discussion forum prompts, and sample student work. Please submit your decision regarding your participation to me by responding to this e-mail. If you decide to participate you will receive a consent letter that provides more specific details of the study requirements. If you have further questions regarding this study, feel free to contact me via e-mail (tracey.bennett@waldenu.edu) or phone (919-824-8639).

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Tracey Bennett
Walden University
PhD Education - Learning, Instruction, and Innovation Program
tracey.bennett@waldenu.edu