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Program Evaluation of The Leader in Me in a Rural Elementary School with Emphasis
on Hispanic Students

By
John Shepard

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

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Approval Page

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Abstract

Program Evaluation of The Leader in Me in a Rural Elementary School with Emphasis on Hispanic Students. Shepard, John, 2018: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Social-Emotional Learning/Character Education/Leadership/Hispanic Students/Culture

The purpose of this study was to analyze the effects of The Leader in Me (TLIM) program and philosophy on a highly diverse, rural elementary school in North Carolina. TLIM is a program for school-wide transformation that seeks to teach all students 21st century leadership and life skills. TLIM is based on *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Covey (1989) and is an integrated approach to teaching leadership development. The study took place at School X, which has over 440 students. School X is diverse: 46% of the students are Hispanic; 41% are White; and 13% are Asian, African-American, or American Indian. School X is considered a Title I school, with 87% of its students receiving free or reduced lunch. The chosen elementary school suffered from a disjointed school culture: teachers who were ill equipped with how to meet the challenge of growing students living in poverty, student conduct issues, high teacher turnover, and a lack of a common mission or vision. The researcher analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data to answer research questions centered on school culture, effects TLIM had on student conduct, and effects on academic achievement scores. The researcher also analyzed the specific effects TLIM had on Hispanic students at School X.

This research provides evidence that teaching students social-emotional skills and soft skills can impact the overall culture of a school and improve the conduct of the students. This study reveals that TLIM impacts a school's culture regardless of race, economic status, or size. TLIM can be used to actively support educators at a school that has extremely high diversity and poverty rates.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Nature of Problem

While researchers, theorists, and legislatures negotiate the level of success or failure high-stakes accountability has revealed, students are being promoted from one grade level to the next and eventually graduating from high school lacking in life skills; critical-thinking skills; problem-solving skills; and, most importantly, leadership skills (Wagner, 2008). The skills that are required to be successful in the 21st century workplace require a focus and attention beyond standardized testing. School systems struggle to equip students with the skills needed to be successful citizens, workers, operators, managers, researchers, or innovators (Wagner, 2008). Curriculum is constantly changing for teachers, and an entire year's worth of learning is being bottlenecked into a single test. Wagner (2008) stated that "schools aren't changing, in part because there is no consensus about what type of changes are needed or might work – or even whether there's a need for change at all" (p. xiii). Wagner further reported,

- The United States now ranks tenth among industrial nations in the rate of college completion by 25- to 44-year-olds.
- Sixty-five percent of college professors report that what is taught in high school does not prepare students for college. One major reason is that the tests students must take in high school for state accountability purposes usually measure ninth- and tenth-grade knowledge. Primarily, multiple-choice assessments rarely ask students to explain their reasoning or to apply knowledge to new situations.
- Only 47% of 18- to 24-year-olds voted in the last presidential election, compared to 70% of 34- to 74-year-olds.

Currently, public school accountability in the United States takes its form most strongly in the state-level accountability systems that are required by federal education legislation (Gunzenhauser & Hyde, 2007). To receive certain forms of federal education aid, the federal government mandates that states require their districts to periodically and regularly measure (through the use of standardized, grade-level tests) student achievement of the state-determined content standards in core areas such as reading, math, and science (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). As Wagner (2008) stated, “what preoccupies many educators is the growing pressure to prepare all students for ‘high-stakes’ standardized tests. They simply don’t have time to worry about abstractions” (p. 13). School leaders instead continue to worry only with their school or district making adequate yearly progress (AYP).

The issue is how to meet the challenge of delivering content and skills in a rich way that genuinely improves the learning environment and outcomes for all students (Rotherham & Willingham, 2009). Foster (2014) stated, “as a society, we send all of our problems and issues to schoolhouses everyday- issues like poverty, children with incarcerated parents, multiple languages spoken in families and mobility” (p. 21). No amount of testing is going to prepare our students with the life skills, critical-thinking skills, and problem-solving skills to overcome these issues. The demand for leadership education in schools is apparent (Karnes & Bean, 2010). Students encounter real life trials every day; and as they venture into society, the challenges of the global economy and society will weigh heavy on their future. Dewey (1916) stated that it is the business of education to further in a person “discipline, natural development, culture, and social efficiency” (p. 325). Schools should have shared activity, a spirit of companionship, realistic goals, and a shared vision (Dewey, 1916).

Character education and leadership experiences can motivate students and assist them in learning. Young people need more opportunities to practice leadership skills and actively participate in assuming leadership roles and responsibilities (Karnes & Stephens, 1999). Wagner (2008) argued that the 21st century demands that all students learn the “essential survival skills” of reasoning, effective communication, problem-solving, and the ability to think and critically analyze. Character building and leadership skills can and should be taught and developed starting in the elementary level (Karnes & Stephens, 1999). Most leadership training we see in schools today focuses on the secondary or higher education populations. Addressing leadership and character education at an early age can alleviate many problems relating to gang involvement, school dropouts, and drug abuse (Karnes & Stephens, 1999).

Despite what some say about the limits of early education, K-12 education is even more powerful than TV (Kotter, 1999). To cope with the ever-changing work environment, most careers in the 21st century will demand a great deal of management skills and at least some leadership. People who plan to work at the top of the hierarchy must be able to plan, organize, communicate, and negotiate complex relationships (Kotter, 1999). Clark and Clark (1996) stated, “As more and more people decry the lack of leaders in our society today, more and more colleges and universities, an occasional high school, and many professional schools are offering explicit courses and programs on leadership” (p. 87). The character traits and skills our children will need to be effective citizens, workers, innovators, managers, and thinkers can and must be learned and cultivated at an early age. Ideally, character and leadership education should begin as early as preschool or kindergarten (Bisland, 2004). Teachers at all levels should have access to workshops and leadership resources such as books, videos, and software to

assist in planning for leadership education (Bisland, 2004).

Setting of the Study

The study took place in a medium PK-12 rural school district comprised of 23 total schools and 13,562 total students. There are 13 elementary schools, four middle schools, four high schools, one learning center, and one early college. The total population of the county is 100,333 with a median household income of \$46,899.00 and a present median home value of \$197,100.00. Approximately 12% of the student population is served with an individualized education plan (IEP), while another 11% are classified as English language learners (ELLs) and 3% as migrant students.

The total budget for the school district tops \$117 million. The budget is just over 83% personnel costs, and the balance is in contracted services, supplies, equipment, and building expenditures. The school district budgets over \$88 million in direct instructional services and almost \$18 million in support services. The district is spending approximately \$6,500 per pupil for instruction. Just over 56% of the total county revenue comes from property taxes, and 31.94% of that is spent on education.

In 2014, the graduation rate for the system was 87.8%. The dropout rate was 2.58% for Grades 9-12. Just over 54% of students in the system were provided free and reduced meals. The 2010 U.S. census revealed that 21.19% of the students being served in the system were considered living in poverty.

School X has 440 students compared to an average of 471 students in the other K-5 system schools. Just over 46% of the students are Hispanic, 41% are White, and 13% are Asian, African-American, or American Indian. The average daily rate of attendance for School X is 96%, which is exactly the same as the rest of the system's elementary schools.

School X is considered a Title I school, with 87% of its students living in poverty. According to the U.S. Department of Education (1965), the purpose of Title I funding “is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach, at minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments” (Sec.1001). Originally enacted in 1965 under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and eventually rewritten in 1994, Title I schools must meet AYP in order to continue receiving federal funds (U.S. Department of Education (1965). According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI, 2017), Title I funds reach approximately 1.5 million students each year enrolled in both private and public schools. A school must have at least 40% of its students qualified for free and reduced meals in order to receive Title I funds (U.S. Department of Education, 1965). Schools receive over \$14 billion annually from the Title I program, which is the oldest and largest federally funded program.

School X contains a diverse group of students and was initially founded in 2008. The students were placed at School X through a system redistricting process to relieve overcrowding at three other elementary schools. School X’s website (2014) showed that it has the highest impoverished student body in the system. The school’s demographic reports reveal that 46% of the student population is Hispanic and 41% is White. There are 18 countries of origin represented in the student population, leading to 27% of the students being classified as limited English proficient (LEP). The school improvement plan (SIP) for 2012-2014 reveals that the school vision is to “build a culture of greatness by empowering leaders who positively influence themselves and others.”

All states are required to administer assessments that measure the performance of all students with regard to the established standards (U.S. Department of Education,

2004). In order to meet AYP, schools must ensure that all subgroups of students within the school meet or exceed proficiency. School X described its performance data as part of the SIP for 2012-2014:

In 2011-2012, School X met 21/21 subgroup targets, achieved adequate yearly progress (AYP), received high growth status, and was recognized as a School of Distinction. The performance data indicated an overall composite score of 83.3%, a 12.3% increase from the previous year. More specifically, reading scores increased to 79.188%, a 15.588% increase from the previous year; math scores increased to 89.34%, an 8.435% increase from the previous year; and science scores increased to 77.612%, a 15.317% increase from the previous year. Upon further analysis of subgroup performance, data showed significantly higher achievement levels in the All, Hispanic, LEP, and Economically Disadvantaged subgroups; however, the White subgroup fell slightly under AMO expectations, meeting 81.1% out of 83.2% proficiency in reading and 88.4% out of 90.4% proficiency in math. The 2012-2013 new Common Core end-of-year performance data showed an overall composite score of 44.5%. With the attainment of 29/29 state targets and 25/25 federal targets, School X met school wide growth expectations.

Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3 illustrate the proficiency of students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 at School X compared to the students throughout the district and state. The tables support a pattern of inconsistent growth, which is one of the school-wide deficiencies identified by School X's administration and School Improvement Team (SIT).

Table 1

EOG Reading and Math Test Results: 2011-2012

School Year 2011-2012		
Category	% Proficient for Reading	% Proficient for Math
State	71.2	82.8
District X	79.5	88.9
School X	79.7	89.3

Table 2

EOG Reading and Math Test Results: 2012-2013

School Year 2012-2013		
Category	% Proficient for Reading	% Proficient for Math
State	43.9	42.3
District X	51.9	51
School X	39.9	49.7

Note: 2012-2013 Marked Beginning of NC Common Core State Standards

Table 3

*EOG Achievement Levels: 2013-2014**EOG Scores in Reading, Math and Science as Measured by the New NC School Report Card for 2013-2014 School Year*

Performance of Students on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests:

Percentage of Students at Level 1 (Limited Command of knowledge and skills)

LEVEL 1	Reading	Math	Science
School X	24.7%	17.5%	29.1%
District X	16.2%	18.8%	11.6%
State	21.2%	25.0%	17.0%

Performance of Students on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests:

Percentage of Students at Level 2 (Partial Command of knowledge and skills)

LEVEL 2	Reading	Math	Science
School X	21.6%	31.4%	19.0%
District X	19.5%	22.5%	12.0%
State	22.5%	24.0%	15.2%

Performance of Students on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests:

Percentage of Students at Level 3 (Sufficient Command of knowledge and skills)

Students performing at Level 3 are performing at grade level.

LEVEL 3	Reading	Math	Science
School X	15.5%	9.3%	13.9%
District X	11.5%	7.7%	8.4%
State	11.6%	8.0%	10.5%

Performance of Students on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests:

Percentage of Students at Level 4 (Solid Command of knowledge and skills)

Students scoring at Level 4 meet NC Standard for College-and Career-Readiness and are performing at or above grade level.

LEVEL 4	Reading	Math	Science
School X	36.1%	33.5%	34.2%
District X	39.9%	33.6%	45.3%
State	34.4%	28.3%	41.1%

Performance of Students on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests:

Percentage of Students at Level 5 (Superior Command of knowledge and skills)

Students scoring at Level 5 meet NC Standard for College-and Career-Readiness and are performing at or above grade level.

LEVEL 5	Reading	Math	Science
School X	N/A	8.2%	N/A
District X	13.0%	17.4%	22.7%
State	10.3%	14.8%	16.1%

N/A = Fewer Than 5% of Students

Note. NC School Report Card 2013-2014.

The Problem

Interviews with SIT members, classroom teachers, and notes from The Leader in Me (TLIM) grant application communicate that stakeholders were looking for a program to improve a disjointed school culture, improve inconsistent student discipline, raise teacher morale, lower teacher turnover, increase parent involvement, and advance student performance and participation. Teachers felt that there was a lack of a school-wide vision and mission, evidenced by a higher teacher turnover rate and low morale. Furthermore, school administrators recognized a lower than normal attendance rate, inconsistent growth on end-of-grade (EOG) exams, and glaring concerns produced by the 2012 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWCS). SIT is an elected body of school staff members, representing departments from across the school. “Leadership teams that include representatives of the various stakeholder groups, including the principal, have been found to be the most successful strategy for building commitment and sustainability into the improvement process” (Lezotte & McKee, 2002, p. 114).

Student misbehavior and a lack of clearly understood expectations for student conduct affect the learning environment. Unless there is a clear system for dealing with various misbehaviors, disruptions to the school environment discourage teachers and lead to increased teacher turnover (Moles, 1989). All staff members must genuinely and continually be involved in order for students to become self-disciplined, following rules and expectations without the need for examination.

“The mission of a school is a short statement that indicates what that school is seeking to do, where it is attempting to go” (Lezotte & McKee, 2002, p. 121). In order to effectively improve, a school must be clear about its commitment to a mission and vision,

grounded in a passion for clearly understood core beliefs and values. An effective mission is one that is lived every day. Every decision, policy, procedure, or program should be first weighed against a school's mission, vision, core values, and core beliefs. (Lezotte & McKee, 2002). Notes from the TLIM grant application reveal that teachers were frustrated with the lack of a concrete foundation to build their school mission and vision due to the high teacher turnover each year. Teachers felt they were rebuilding each year due to staff changes and lack of consistent relationships with staff, students, and families.

NCTWCS is a survey taken anonymously by teachers online, measuring their perceptions of the school environment (NCDPI, 2012). The survey gathers important information directly from practicing educators in the school building. Teachers are asked to give their insight into management of student conduct, community support and involvement, teacher leadership, school leadership, management of varying resources, professional development, instructional leadership, instructional support, and overall satisfaction of the school as a workplace and learning community. The 2012 NCTWCS for School X indicated that teachers were distressed and frustrated due to inconsistent expectations, a lack of trust and mutual respect, and inconsistencies with management of student conduct. Revealing that a large margin of teachers were dissatisfied and discouraged, the 2012 NCTWCS showed that only 68.4% of certified staff members felt that School X was a "good place to work and learn."

Teachers and administrators expressed serious concerns with how the staff was managing and growing a unique and diverse population of students. Teachers indicated they felt unprepared to deal with the new challenges of growing a high population of students who were living in poverty or ELLs. Students who live under financial

hardships and are from a low economic status suffer from a lack of optimism which is directly correlated with depressive symptoms (Butterworth, Olesen, & Leach, 2012). Children who live in poverty experience an increased amount of stress when compared to their more affluent counterparts (Jensen, 2013). Stress negatively affects brain development, academic success, and social competence (Evans, Kim, Ting, Teshler, & Shannis, 2007). However, the primary factor in a student's motivation to learn and succeed is not the home environment; it is the teachers and the school (Irvin, Meece, Byun, Farmer, & Hutchins, 2011). Encouraging students to be leaders and be responsible, having students engaged in projects, and supporting teamwork and student decision-making can diminish the effects of stress and increase student success (Jensen, 2013).

Program Description

TLIM is a program for school-wide transformation that seeks to teach all students 21st century leadership and life skills. TLIM is based on *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Covey (1989) and is an integrated approach to teaching leadership development. The program was designed by the FranklinCovey Corporation and is aligned to many state and national standards including Common Core Standards. According to FranklinCovey, TLIM "is a synthesis of universal, timeless principles of personal and interpersonal effectiveness, such as responsibility, vision, integrity, teamwork, collaboration and renewal, which are secular in nature and common to all people and cultures" ("Whole School Transformation Process," n.d., para. 5).

The principles of Covey's (1989) *7 Habits* are currently being taught at both primary and secondary educational levels across the United States. The principles are embedded into classroom lessons, hall displays, and school-wide activities and systems.

Both students and staff members are to seek out opportunities to apply the principles by taking on varying leadership roles.

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to analyze the effects of the TLIM program and philosophy on the chosen elementary school in North Carolina. The school fully adopted the program in 2013-2014 and implemented all three phases by the end of 2016. This program evaluation assessed whether TLIM met the school's goals with regard to producing measurable differences in the school's culture, student performance on achievement exams, and student behavior. As a secondary focus and to extend the reach of the program evaluation, the researcher studied the academic and behavioral impact on Hispanic students.

Research Questions

1. What impact did TLIM have on the school's culture?
2. To what extent was student conduct impacted by TLIM, with specific focus on Hispanic students?
3. To what extent was the reading and math proficiency of the school's students impacted by TLIM, with specific focus on Hispanic students?

Definition of Terms

21st century skills. A term used to describe the basic competencies that schools need to teach in order for their students to be productive in the 21st century workplace. While the specific "skills" may differ from person to person, most educators and school reformers agree that current students need to be competent in problem-solving, collaboration, digital literacy, critical-thinking, creativity, evaluating information, global awareness, and leadership (Partnership for 21st Century Skills [P21], 2008).

Academic achievement. Process where student performance on assessments is measured. The extent to which a student or teacher has met or exceeded their learning goals (Akey, 2006).

Character education. “Character education is the intentional effort to develop in young people core ethical and performance values that are widely affirmed across all cultures” (Character Education Partnership [CEP], 2010, p. 1).

Curriculum. Refers to the knowledge and skills schools and teachers implement in the classroom. Curriculum typically refers to what students are expected to learn, the specific learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet (Lezotte & McKee, 2002).

Habit. Habits are powerful factors in our lives. They are consistent, often unconscious patterns that express our character. They can be learned and unlearned. Covey (1989) further defined a “habit” as “the intersection of knowledge, skill, and desire” (p. 55).

TLIM. TLIM is a program for school-wide transformation that seeks to teach all students 21st century leadership and life skills. TLIM is based on *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Covey (1989) and is an integrated approach to teaching leadership development (Covey, 2008).

Program evaluation. Program evaluation is the application of techniques and knowledge to systematically assess and improve the planning, implementation, and effectiveness of programs (Chen, 2004). Evaluation is the systematic use of scientific methods to assess the design, implementation, improvement, or outcomes of a program (Rossi & Freeman, 1993).

School culture. The guiding beliefs and values evident in the way a school

operates (Fullan, 2007).

SIP and SIT. North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS) §115C-47(38) mandates the duty of local boards to ensure each principal establishes a SIT and that the composition of the team complies with NCGS §115C-105.27. NCGS §115C-105.27(a) directs schools to establish a SIT to develop a plan to improve student performance. SITs shall consist of the following members: the principal of the school, representatives of the assistant principals, representatives of instructional personnel, representatives of instructional support personnel, representatives of teacher assistants assigned to the building, and representatives of parents of children enrolled in the school. Participation in the school improvement planning process by the personnel noted above is a legal requirement. Principals do not have discretion to choose SIT representatives (NCDPI, 2016).

School mission and vision. Clearly articulated school-wide goals, priorities, assessment procedures, and accountability that all staff members understand and commit to (Lezotte & McKee, 2002).

Title I. Federal funding provided to school districts and schools that have at least 40% of students receiving free or reduced lunch. The funding is given to build supports and upgrade a school's entire educational program in order to improve achievement of disadvantaged students (U.S. Department of Education, 1965).

Summary

This study used the logic model to systematically evaluate TLIM at a Title I elementary school in North Carolina. The methodology used for this study was both quantitative and qualitative to include an analysis of North Carolina EOG scores, behavior data, an analysis of NCTWCS, and an analysis of focus group answers from a

parents group and a staff group.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Countless schools across the globe are attempting to meet the needs of their 21st century students by implementing transformational programs or initiatives based in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Others are choosing to prepare their students with character education and social-emotional learning (SEL) programs, focusing on soft skills and attempting to develop personal effectiveness and leadership qualities in their students. This program evaluation examined the value of TLIM as a school transformational process and inspected its impact on an elementary school in western North Carolina. There are four themes to the literature review for this study. The first theme is an overview pertaining to the importance of character education and the impact of integrating SEL into the academic realm. The second theme is an overview of information pertaining to the skills that are needed to be successful in the 21st century workplace. The third theme is an overview of school culture, TLIM, and recent research pertaining to the program. The fourth and final theme is a brief overview of research on the needs and supports that Hispanic students and ELLs need in order to be successful in schools today.

Character Education

The word “character” is derived from the Greek word *kharakter*, “engraved one” also “symbol or imprint on the soul.” Good character is what we attempt to find in our leaders, our parents, our co-workers, teachers, and students. It is not the absence of negative things, but instead a well-developed order of positive qualities (Park & Peterson, 2009). Lickona (1991) defined character education as the “intentional and focused effort to help students understand, care about and act upon core ethical values” (p. 28).

Character education is teaching students to embrace the good, love the good, and do the

good (Bohlin & Ryan, 1999).

Socrates himself wrote that the mission of education is to teach students to be both smart and good: “Education has a twofold function to perform in the life of man and in society: the one is utility and the other is culture. Education must enable a man to become more efficient, to achieve with increasing facility the legitimate goals of his life” (King, 1947, p. 124). School environments today are a melting pot of cultures, values, and needs. Curriculum is caught up in the constant pressure to raise test scores and meet the calling for accountability. In order to create safer schools, construct responsible citizens, and improve academic performance, schools must educate the whole child, head and heart (CEP, 2010; Elias, 2003).

In 2008, CEP contended that our view of character needs to be expanded. CEP asserted that qualities of character can be differentiated into two dimensions, moral character and performance character. Moral character contains strengths such as empathy, fairness, trustworthiness, generosity, and compassion. Performance character contains such strengths as effort, initiative, self-discipline, diligence, and perseverance (CEP, 2008).

Lickona (1991) stated, “Character education is as old as education itself. Down through history, in countries all over the world, education has had two great goals: to help young people become smart, and to help them become good” (p. 6). Colonial schools were established mainly to teach children how to read so they could understand the Bible and better comprehend religious principles. The American founders expressed that our national experiment would fail or advance based upon the character of the citizenry (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). For a majority of the 19th century, public schools in the United States were primarily tasked with ensuring students learned moral character,

citizenship, and literacy to prepare children to be productive members of a community displaying the ability to discharge their moral and civic duties (Kliebard, 1999). In 1919, the *McGuffey Reader*, which public school children practiced reading from, had the largest circulation of any book in the world after the Bible (Corinth, 2009). William Holmes McGuffey was the creator of *McGuffey's Eclectic Readers*, a series of textbooks “considered to be the most famous reading textbooks in the history of American education” (Bohning, 1986, p. 263). The readers were full of religious content and maintained a distinct American social value system. Full of heroism, virtue, and a prime distinction between good and bad, the reader’s textual content sought to grow not only the reading skills of students but also their morals and character (Corinth, 2009).

With the growth of urban areas, social mobility, immigration, and the increase of students from different ethnic backgrounds, the middle of the 20th century marked an attrition of character education in U.S. public schools (Sojourner, 2012). “When much of society came to think of morality as being in flux, relative to the individual, situationally variable, and essentially private, public schools retreated from their central role as character educators” (Lickona, 1991, p. 2).

Citing the evidence of increased drug use, vandalism, bullying, harassment, and other negative peer interactions, public opinion polls in the 1970s and 1980s revealed an increase in the public perception that American society and its youth were undergoing a decline. Popular social commentators and scholars attributed this decline to many factors, including fallacious parenting strategies and culture learned in the 1960s (Sojourner, 2012). By the mid-1980s, various communities across the U.S. began a process to reintroduce character education back into public schools.

With the goal of encouraging national education leaders and associations to give

attention to the need for character education, The Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development and the Johnson Foundation created the Wingspread Conference in Racine, Wisconsin, in March 1992. In July 1992, The Josephson Institute of Ethics along with leaders of youth organizations and education experts assembled in Aspen, Colorado in order to draft a statement on character education. The leaders promoted “six pillars” of character (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship). In 1997, President Bill Clinton addressed character education in his State of the Union Address, stating “Character education must be taught in our schools. We must teach our children to be good citizens” (para. 32).

The boundaries of character education are not strictly defined. By 2002, approximately 75% of states were encouraging their own variant of character education programs (Schwartz, Beatty & Dachnowicz, 2006). Today, effective character education involves more than just the student. It involves multiple stakeholders: staff, parents, caregivers, and community members. It provides opportunities for service learning and relationship building (Matula, 2004). Lickona (1997) identified a longitudinal study completed by the Child Development Project (CDP) as the best research evidence that all-inclusive character education makes a constructive difference. Lickona (1997) described the CDP elementary-level program as follows:

The program has five interlocking components: (1) a reading and language arts curriculum that uses children’s literature to reflect on core values; (2) cooperative learning, giving students regular practice in learning to work with others; (3) discipline that involves students actively in creating a classroom that respects others and supports learning; (4) school service programs, such as cross-age tutoring and “buddy classes” that enable older kids to help younger ones; and (5)

home-based family activities that provide parents with ways to foster their children's character development. (p. 22)

Students in three CDP elementary schools, compared to students in matched control schools, were found to be more considerate and cooperative in their classrooms; more likely to feel accepted by their peers; more skilled at solving interpersonal problems; and more strongly committed to democratic values such as including all members of a group in a decision. In a follow-up study in eighth grade, students who had the CDP program showed stronger conflict resolution skills, had greater self-esteem, were involved in more extracurricular activities, and were less likely to use marijuana or alcohol (Lickona, 1997).

Berkowitz and Bier (2005) identified and examined 109 research studies on character education programs. They found that 69 of the studies provided sound scientific evidence, and 33 of the programs examined were effective. Berkowitz and Bier concluded that character education programs of various kinds can have a measurable positive influence on students, and the effects are extensive and prolonged. The features identified from the effective programs were ongoing professional development, peer interaction, direct teaching and skill training, explicit agendas, community involvement, models and mentors, and integration into academic curricula.

Bohlin and Ryan (1999) successfully advanced five arguments for character education: (a) argument from intellectual authorities such as Aristotle, Dewey, Confucius, Buddha, Plato, and Kant who give strong conscious attention to the development of character; (b) argument from the founding fathers of America such as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Benjamin Franklin, all of whom called for schools to teach civic virtue and that democracy depended on a moral citizenry; (c)

argument from the law in which most states legislate that there be some form of core values taught to students; (d) argument from the public which is traced back 2 decades revealing that a vast majority of the public supports schools teaching character education; and (e) argument of inevitability which states that students are a part of the system for 12 years and cannot help but have their values intensely affected by the experience.

Despite overwhelming evidence for the support of the implementation of effective character education programs, there are still critics. According to Black (1996), the majority of school activities created to establish positive character have a very small effect on how students actually behave outside or inside the school. Black also expressed her reservations as to whether schools have the right to teach character at all. She went on to argue that teachers are not properly trained to teach character skills, and they should not have to try and force another subject into the curriculum. Leming (1993) stated that outside of the school-designed character building activities, student practice was the same as before. Lasley (1997) believed that character education is just another “cure-all” and actually points to parents who want the schools to accomplish what should be done at home. Kohn (1997) argued that the character education movement is a political indoctrination effort. He concluded that character education is composed of three ideologies: behaviorism, religion, and conservatism.

SEL

SEL is “the process through which people learn to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviors” (Fredericks, 2003, p. 4). “Social emotional learning is described as having a capacity to define and regulate one’s own emotions accurately, improve problem-solving skills, and a skill to establishing good

relationships with the people around” (Aslan & Demirtas, 2016, p. 276). In many cases, the term “character education” is used undifferentiated with SEL. They are both consistent in the fact that they promote values such as honesty and respect; however, they differ in the fact that social and emotional learning incorporates a broader spectrum of skill integration such as decision-making, problem-solving, active learning techniques, and the creation of nurturing environments (Elias et al., 1997; Fonzi & Ritchie, 2011).

Fredericks (2003) asserted that implementing social and emotional learning in a school requires a school-wide change and “involves altering school in a very fundamental way, not just instituting small, superficial changes” (p. 10). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is an organization founded in 1994 by Daniel Goleman and Eileen Rockefeller Growald. Using research and initiatives as a vehicle, CASEL promotes social and emotional learning across the U.S. CASEL (2013) recognized five core essential skills and competencies that can be achieved through effective school-wide social and emotional learning integration. The essential skills are

1. Self-awareness: recognizing and labeling one’s feelings and accurately assessing one’s strengths and limitations.
2. Self-management: regulating emotions, delaying gratification, managing stress, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving goals.
3. Social awareness: showing empathy, taking others’ perspectives, and recognizing and mobilizing diverse and available supports.
4. Relationship skills: clear communication, accurate listening, cooperation, nonviolent and constructive conflict resolution, and knowing when and how to be a good team player and a leader.
5. Responsible decision-making: making ethical choices based on consideration

of feelings, goals, alternatives and outcomes, and planning and enacting solutions with potential obstacles anticipated.

SEL has become increasingly popular among educational leaders. A multitude of schools have recognized that SEL can not only improve the learning environment and overall school climate but also have a positive impact on the academic success of its students. Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg (2004) assembled a massive amount of research to drive home multiple compelling conclusions with regard to implementing SEL into the school environment. Zins et al. argued that the implementation of SEL should not be another ancillary service provided to students but, instead, should be the centerpiece when educating students. Academic success cannot be simply defined by testing; instead it includes one's attitude, academic performance, and behaviors.

Zins et al. (2004) further suggested that achievement is greatest impacted if SEL and academic learning are infused in such a way that they reinforce one another. In their research on SEL, McCormick, Cappella, O'Connor, and McClowry (2015) cited a meta-analysis of 213 programs completed by Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011). The study found that across all participants, students who participated in SEL saw an 11 percentile point increase in academic achievement postintervention when compared to those students in the control group. Adelman and Taylor (2000) asserted that if schools solely focus on academic instruction in their efforts to improve the academic success of students, they will most likely fall short of their goals. CASEL (2003) reviewed 80 nationally available programs; 34% of those programs reviewed made use of the integration of SEL with the academic curricula and instructional practices. Wilson, Gottfredson, and Najaka (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 165 published studies on the outcomes of school-based prevention programs.

Included in their findings was that programs that focused on SEL resulted in an improvement in delinquency and substance abuse and a decrease in the dropout rate and nonattendance.

There is evidence that students who are born into and grow up in poverty are more likely to start school with decreased levels of social-emotional skills (Ursache, Blair, & Raver, 2012). Schools play a key role in the shaping of a child's psychological development. The influence that schools have on the social and emotional development cannot be overstated (Richardson & Evans, 1997). There are many early social-emotional skills that researchers have identified as critical to a child's academic success such as attention skills, regulation of behaviors, and the ability to solve problems (Blair, 2002). Bernard (2004) found that social-emotional competence was an important predictor of a child's level of reading achievement. These findings are driving many school districts to implement SEL programs designed specifically to improve academic skills by supporting the social-emotional development of children.

SEL in early childhood can set the stage for the future behaviors of students in school (Schultz, Richardson, Barber, & Wilcox, 2011). Most educators would agree that it is extremely important to invest in the emotional capital of young students. Educators today work to not only instill interpersonal skills but also work to create in students intrinsic motivations to succeed within the academic realm. Joseph and Strain (2003) reviewed the effectiveness of eight SEL curricula for young children and found that the most successful approaches focused on emotional development and social skills on a daily basis. Nelson, Westhues, and MacLeod (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 34 preschool prevention programs. They found that SEL programs had a positive effect on both the academic and intellectual results in the preschool and primary school. The study

also revealed that SEL programs that contained direct instruction with explicit lesson from a teacher had a larger positive outcome (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011).

Researchers are investigating the effect that SEL has on long-term outcomes. Citizenship in the 21st century will require the ability to reason; problem-solve; communicate effectively; and more importantly, practice self-direction, continuous improvement, and teamwork (Wagner, 2008). While interviewing two top senior executives for his book *The Global Achievement Gap*, Wagner (2008) discovered that today's top employee training programs focus on thinking skills and the development of emotional intelligence. TLIM identifies "three evolving challenges" facing all schools today: academics, school culture, and life skills. While none of these challenges are entirely new, they are now being met with an increasingly urgent call to readiness. Implemented with fidelity, SEL provides students with the ability to adapt in today's globalization and equips them with lifelong learning skills (Lindsay, 2013).

SEL is important for young adults. The 21st century workplace is mobile, collaborative, globally diverse, distributive, and ever changing. In a 1997 survey, The American Society of Training and Development found that 80% of companies were actively trying to promote emotional intelligence with their employees (Goleman, 1998). There is compelling evidence that SEL programs can improve a child's success in school but also increase positive outcomes later in life. The most effective SEL programs that accomplish this are grounded in both theory and research and are both comprehensive and multi-year programs (Opengart, 2007).

While many SEL programs were not specifically developed with the workplace in mind, they do effectively teach and enhance skills that will carry over into adulthood. Many educational leaders would agree that there is an implied relationship between work

and school. Moving from school to work is a major transition; schools should prepare students to be successful employees. A successful transition can mean stability, organizational productivity, and self-efficacy (Ng & Feldman, 2007).

Regardless of the age group or what emotional and character enhancements are being targeted, SEL programs will fail if they are not implemented properly. If a school's learning environment is fractured or teachers and school leaders do not share a common vision and mission, any SEL program being implemented is likely to be rejected (Elias & Leverett, 2011; Fonzi & Ritchie, 2011). SEL programs are most successful when implemented with a broad range of application in mind, with daily practice available to students. Elias et al. (1997) found that SEL programs that targeted singular issues were actually found to increase the undesired behaviors. As a result of these and many other shortcomings, CASEL (2003) has identified guidelines for effective social and emotional learning programs to follow:

1. Grounded in theory and research.
2. Teaches children to apply social and emotional learning skills and ethical values in daily life.
3. Build connections to school through caring, engaging classroom and school practices.
4. Provide developmentally and culturally appropriate instruction.
5. Help schools coordinate and unify programs that are often fragmented.
6. Enhances school performance by addressing the affective and social dimensions of academic learning.
7. Involves families and communities as partners.
8. Establishes organizational supports and policies that foster success.

9. Provides high-quality staff development and support.
10. Incorporates continuing evaluation and improvement. (p. 16)

21st Century Skills

The world has transitioned from the Industrial Age of the 20th century into the Information Age of the 21st century. The skills that allowed professionals to be successful in the 20th century are no longer sufficient for most 21st century careers. In the Industrial Age workplace, specialization meant that professionals could amplify their contributions to an employer by becoming experts in their singular role (Kivunja, 2015). In the 21st century workplace, working conditions are altered at an extremely fast pace. Today, executives and managers alike are seeking professionals who are highly self-reliant and ready to use their initiative to get the job done (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). The 21st century workplace is driven by information and fueled by technology. Work environments in the globally competitive information age require professionals to possess the ability to be adaptable, flexible, self-directed, practice strong social and cross-cultural skills, and develop responsibility and leadership (P21, 2015).

P21 is a national organization comprised of business leaders, education leaders, private organizations, and public organizations. Founded in the USA in 2002, P21 operates under the explicit mission of becoming “a catalyst to infuse 21st century skills throughout primary and secondary schools by building collaborative partnerships among education, business, community and government leaders” (P21, 2008, p. 4). Beyond the three Rs of traditional academics, P21 has developed an overarching framework for 21st century learning that has been implemented by 20 states and used by more than 30 high-profile organizations including the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Pearson, and the National Educators Association. The framework includes the four Cs of

learning and innovation: communication, critical-thinking, collaboration, and creativity (P21, 2015). These “soft skills” are to be infused into core academics preparing students for a 21st century workplace that requires professionals to develop both career skills and life skills.

According to Friedman (2005), “right around the year 2000 we entered a whole new era: Globalization 3.0” (p. 10). Through a convergence of the personal computer, fiber-optic cable, and the rise of workflow software, this era is unique because it is characterized by *individuals* now having a newfound power to collaborate and compete globally. Friedman contended that today’s work demands high-tech skills (hard skills) and an increasing amount of teaming, collaboration, and communication (soft skills). According to Mitchell, Skinner, and White (2010), “employers rate soft skills highest in importance for entry-level success in the workplace” (p. 44).

Twenty-first century skills can easily be taught and embedded into any core curriculum (Jacobson-Lundeberg, 2016). Jacobson-Lundeberg (2016) found that by embedding 21st century skills such as communication and collaboration into Common Core Essential Standards (CCSO) schools can have a positive effect on students, especially the socioeconomically disadvantaged student (SED) subgroups. Students were found to feel a sense of self-empowerment and an increased sense of credibility when communicating and managing teams.

School Culture

A school is a lot more than a building that houses instructors motivated to increase student learning. It is a self-contained culture with a set of unique demographics, traditions, expectations, and school mission. According to Deal and Peterson (1994), “culture is the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions,

and rituals that built up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges” (p. 267). Culture is a school’s personality. It takes years to evolve, is based on values and beliefs, provides a limited way of thinking, and determines whether or not improvement is possible (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). Deal and Kennedy (1982) described culture as “the way we do things around here” (p. 4). Culture is the day-to-day routines of the school. It represents the unwritten mission of the school, guiding students and staff members and informing them why they are there (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). There is a strong correlation between certain aspects of a school’s culture and student performance (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004). According to Deal and Peterson (2009), research suggests that a positive culture serves several beneficial functions, including the following:

- Fostering effort and productivity.
- Improving collegial and collaborative activities that in turn promote better communication and problem-solving.
- Supporting successful change and improvement efforts.
- Building commitment and helping students and teachers identify with the school.
- Amplifying energy and motivation of staff members and students.
- Focusing attention and daily behavior on what is important and valued (Fisher, Pumpian, & Frey, 2012).

School culture is the shared experiences both inside the school and in the community. Shaped by administration, teachers, and students, a school’s culture defines the level of expectation and demand that will be placed on both students and staff.

Improving a school’s culture can be a slow process, sometimes taking between 5-

15 years; however, there are other researchers who believe that cultural change can be expedited through purposeful leadership (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). Deal and Peterson (1990) revealed that by introducing new rituals, symbols, language, and action, an organization's culture can be gradually changed. Wagner (2008) concluded that the following factors must also be in place for reform of school culture to be effective:

- The culture must be assessed, and participants must feel they have efficacy and self-determination around the reform process.
- Analysis of the needs of the school must occur.
- Only a few areas should be targeted for improvement at a time; not all change can occur at once.
- The process should be closely monitored and adjusted if not successful.

Overview of Covey's 7 Habits and TLIM

Based on *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Covey (1989), TLIM develops children and staff members using a combination of whole child education and the implementation of proven leadership principles. Covey (1989) defined a habit as “the intersection of knowledge, skill, and desire” (p. 55). *The 7 Habits* is a synthesis of universal, timeless principles of personal and interpersonal effectiveness such as responsibility, vision, integrity, teamwork, collaboration, and renewal, which are secular in nature and common to all people and cultures (Covey, 1989).

Habits 1, 2, and 3 focus on self-mastery. They are intended to move people from being dependent to being more independent. Covey (1989) called these first three habits the “Private Victories.” Habits 4, 5, and 6 are “Public Victories” and effectively focus on teamwork, cooperation, and communication. Habit 7 is that of renewal, focusing on the continuous improvement process that leads to personal growth and new levels of

apprehension (Covey, 1989). TLIM adapts the 7 Habits as follows:

Habit 1: Be Proactive

- I am a responsible person. I take initiative. I choose my actions, attitudes, and moods. I do not blame others for my wrong actions. I do the right thing without being asked, even when no one is looking.
- Principles: Initiative, Responsibility, Choice, Accountability

Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind

- I plan ahead and set goals. I do things that have meaning and make a difference. I am an important part of my classroom and contribute to my school's mission and vision. I look for ways to be a good citizen.
- Principles: Vision, Planning, Purpose

Habit 3: Put First Things First

- I spend my time on things that are most important. This means I say no to things I know I should not do. I set priorities, make a schedule, and follow my plan. I am disciplined and organized
- Principles: Prioritization, Organization, Discipline

Habit 4: Think Win-Win

- I balance courage for getting what I want with consideration for what others want. I make deposits in others' emotional bank Accounts. When conflicts arise, I look for third alternatives.
- Principles: Consideration, Fairness, Courage, Mutual Benefit

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, then to Be Understood

- I listen to other people's ideas and feelings. I try to see things from their

viewpoints. I listen to others without interrupting. I am confident in voicing my ideas. I look people in the eyes when talking.

- Principles: Respect, Mutual Understanding, Empathy

Habit 6: Synergize

- I value other people's strengths and learn from them. I get along well with others, even people who are different than me. I work well in groups. I seek out other people's ideas to solve problems because I know that by teaming with others we can create better solutions than anyone of us can alone. I am humble.
- Principle: Creativity, Cooperation, Diversity, Humility

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw

- I take care of my body by eating right, exercising, and getting sleep. I spend time with family and friends. I learn in lots of ways and lots of places, not just at school. I find meaningful ways to help others.
- Principles: Renewal, Health and Wellness, Balance

The 7 Habits are habits of effectiveness and are based on principles, leading to an extended period of well-being (Covey, 1989). Correct principles are valid and applicable in a variety of life's circumstances. The habits become the foundation of a person's character, empowering a person to effectively learn, solve problems, maximize opportunities, and integrate other principles in order to continually grow (Covey, 1989).

According to the FranklinCovey Corporation TLIM is initiated in three sequential phases and is designed to take 3 years with continuous training for all staff members throughout each phase.

Phase 1: Establishing a Culture of Leadership

- Calls for the establishing of a “Lighthouse Team,” 7 Habits training for all staff members, and Vision Day that launches the program with involvement from parents, district administrators, and community members.

Phase 2: Applying the Tools of Leadership

- Calls for Level 2 training for all staff members and Lighthouse members. The training covers goal setting, leadership tools, and how to involve parents and community members.

Phase 3: Maximizing Results

- Calls for an assessment of current needs and goals. Phase 3 is meant to be customized to meet individual school needs.

Research on TLIM

An intensive interview study completed by the FranklinCovey Center for Advanced Research revealed that *The 7 Habits* has a measurable impact on the organization as whole when analyzing schools and colleges (Baile & Collinwood, 2008). Over 140 educational faculty interviews took place for this study and revealed there were six common impacts of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* training course, which teachers go through. These impacts include increases in workplace satisfaction, communication, and collaboration as well as improvements in organizational conflict management, goal setting, and resilience.

In April 2015, the Lighthouse Research and Development group prepared a study for FranklinCovey: “The Leader in Me Parent Perceptions Survey Report” consisted of an online survey designed to gather information from parents of students attending five

elementary schools who have fully implemented TLIM. Over 248 surveys were completed with 79% of respondents being White/Caucasian and 82% being women. Over 60% of respondents claimed to have a household income between \$55,000 and \$124,000.

Data analysis from the survey revealed many details, four of which stand out: 73% of parents would highly recommend the program to other schools and parents; 78% of respondents were highly satisfied with how TLIM encouraged “character building and development in students”; 75% of respondents said they were highly satisfied with the “leadership qualities emerging in their students”; and 73% of respondents were highly satisfied with the “academic improvements made by their students.”

The ROI Institute (2014) was commissioned by FranklinCovey to independently measure the impact of TLIM within two school districts. “The Leader in Me District Evaluation Report,” written in 2014 studied a total of eight TLIM schools, four from each district. Each school had implemented the program, with full utilization over 2 years. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and public record. One school district was located in South Carolina, and the other district was located in Florida. According to the executive summary of the report, “the results are not intended to reflect findings of all Leader In Me participating schools, but rather a sampling of the participation population” (ROI, 2014, p. 2).

Results of the ROI Institute (2014) study are somewhat vague but are applicable to this review: 90% of those questioned and interviewed responded that students had acquired new knowledge and skills to be better leaders; and 87% agreed or strongly agreed that teachers acquired new knowledge and skills to empower their students. Frequency charts from the study resulted in a strong indication that significant application

and behavior changes resulted from TLIM. Academic data analyzed and collected revealed that TLIM schools in South Carolina did not outperform “like” schools on the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards. According to the study, data were not available for comparison to “like” schools in the Florida school districts. The study instead analyzed 3 consecutive years of academic results from TLIM schools in Florida and found that “there were no significant findings from the analysis” (ROI, 2014, p. 6).

Stella (2013) completed a program evaluation of TLIM at an elementary school. The urban elementary school had a 67% free and reduced lunch population; 81% of the students were White, and only 7% were Hispanic. The chosen school did not have a reported migrant student population, and only 4% of the students were ELLs. Stella concluded that TLIM had a positive impact on the chosen school with regard to school culture and academics. Her research revealed that TLIM allowed students to progress within the structure and common language that TLIM provided. “The Leader in Me program equipped students with self-confidence and the skills to be prepared for the workplace and society. The program provided tools for teachers to teach and develop character and leadership through existing core curriculum” (Stella, 2013, p. 98).

Hispanic and ELLs

The 2013 American Community Survey defined individuals who are Hispanic or Latino as

those whose origin or ancestry is Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, from other Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean or Central or South America, or from Spain. People who identify their origin as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. (U.S. Department of Education, 2015, para. 2)

In the 2015-2016 school year, there were 250,233 Hispanic students in the North

Carolina Public School System (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). In the 2014-2015 school year, there were 4,806,662 ELLs in the United States, comprising 9.6% of all students in Grades K-12 (U.S. Department of Education, 2018),

Seventy-seven percent of ELL students who are Hispanic/Latino were born in the United States. Between the 2009-2010 and 2014-2015 school years, the population of students who were classified ELL increased by over 40% in Louisiana (42.7%), Wyoming (48.1%), Rhode Island (48.8%), Mississippi (50.6%), and West Virginia (83.5%; (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

In 2016-2017, the Hispanic student drop-out rate in North Carolina was 3.70% (NCDPI, 2016-2017). ELL students continue to have disproportionately high drop-out rates, low college-completion rates, and lower graduation rates (Olsen, 2014). In the 2013-2014 school year, 11% of ELLs were chronically absent (absent 15 or more school days during the school year) compared to 14% of non-ELLs (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

According to Olsen (2014),

Long Term English Language Learners are students who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for six years or more, are stalled in progressing towards English proficiency without having yet reached a threshold of adequate English skills, and are struggling academically. (p. 4)

These academic and social struggles often leave ELL students to become passive participants in their education leading to habits of non-engagement. In many cases, ELL students are not being taught academic study skills or SEL skills, leaving them ill equipped (Olsen, 2014).

In their Human and Civil Rights publication “Focus on What Works: Learning

While Hispanic,” the National Education Association (NEA, 2009-2010) made an argument for three strategies that schools can develop in order to see improvement in their Hispanic students’ academic success. The first strategy is to directly reach out to Hispanic families and offer planned community conversations that promote the importance of high education, address required coursework for graduation, and meet the needs of Hispanic students and families. The second strategy is to develop newcomer programs to help students adapt socially and academically. These programs can offer counseling, reach out to students and family members in their own language, provide individual academic attention, and even make referrals to needed community services. The third strategy advises school systems to develop targeted instruction and interventions. The interventions include increase planning time for teachers, individual consultations with students, and improved professional development for staff members (NEA, 2009-2010).

Gandara (2010) promoted multiple strategies that can help in closing the achievement gap between Hispanic students and their peers. She argued that creating magnet schools that promote dual language programs for inner city neighborhoods can help close the gap. Furthermore, Gandara promoted that working with parents in culturally appropriate ways and advising families on health and human service agencies can stabilize the home and lead to long-term benefits for Latino students.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This program evaluation was designed with the purpose of determining the effectiveness of TLIM on student conduct, school culture, and student performance on achievement exams. This chapter details the procedures and mixed-method research used in the investigation. The researcher analyzed 3 consecutive years of scores from the North Carolina EOG exams in reading and math, results from NCTWCS, discipline data collected by the school, and results from a focus group of staff members. NCDPI begins testing students in the third grade and continues until students graduate after the completion of the twelfth grade.

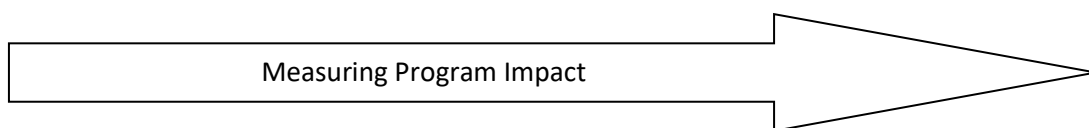
The researcher used a logic model, otherwise known as a logical framework, theory of change, or program matrix to evaluate the program. The logic model is universally used to elucidate a program within any number of organizations. The model is a systematic way to assemble, examine, and provide visual depiction of data. As a tool, the logic model works to create links among short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes that have specifically been identified. The model was initially created for identifying performance measurement but is also a valuable tool when it comes to project planning, documentation, implementation, monitoring, and reporting (McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999).

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2004) provided extensive literature that examined the purpose and use of multiple types of logic models. Each logic model may vary, depending on program needs. One of the greatest strengths to the logic model is its flexibility and adaptability (McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999). Evaluators may choose to stick with one type of logic model or merge multiple models to fit the needs of the study (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Figure 1 illustrates the logic model framework for the

researcher's outcome measurement evaluation.

Evaluation can mean different things to different people. For the purpose of this study, evaluation is defined as “the systematic collection and analysis of information to determine the worth of a curriculum, program, or activity” (Carvalho, 2013, p. 13). This model provides logical links between the problems (needs), the program (outputs), and the outcomes (impact). In this study the problem is a rural elementary school that suffered from a disjointed school culture, declining academic achievement, and student conduct issues. The evaluated outcomes were concentrated in three areas of change: learning (cultural change), action (behavioral change), and impact (academic change). The research questions of the study have been placed in the model to show how each outcome evaluated corresponds to the stated overall needs of the program. External factors are the context and external conditions in which the program exists. These factors can influence the success of the program on the evaluated outcomes. The assumptions are the beliefs about the program, the principles that are guiding the program.

Needs	Outputs		Outcomes -- Impact		
	Activities	Participation	Learning	Action	Impact
-Disjointed school culture -Inconsistent student discipline -Lack of school wide common mission and vision -Declining student academic performance and participation	-Phase 1-3 training and implementation -Full implementation of Leader in Me Program	-All staff members -School and district administration -Parents and community members -All students	*Cultural Changes -Establish a common school mission and vision -Environmental changes (physical) -Phase 1 professional development	*Behavioral Changes -Teacher application of 7 Habits -Student application of 7 Habits -Incorporate parents and community members	*Academic Changes -Increased academic achievement -All students acquire and practice leadership and social-emotional skills.
			<i>Research Question (1)</i>	<i>Research Question (2)</i>	<i>Research Question (3)</i>



Assumptions
-Internalizing the 7 habits and implementing The Leader in Me will create a positive school culture. -A positive school culture will lead to increased academic achievement and participation. -Students will internalize and apply SEL and leadership skills, thus driving them towards positive behaviors.

External Factors
-Personnel: Administrative and Teacher Turn-Over.

Figure 1. Logic Model – TLIM.

Figure 2 identifies the indicators and data sources for each outcome evaluated. The indicators determined how the evaluator knew the outcome had been achieved. The data sources provide both qualitative and quantitative data, addressing the research

questions of this program evaluation.

Outcome Indicator Sheet

Name of Program: Leader in Me

OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE
Learning *Cultural Changes	-Changes in school mission and vision -Increased positive feedback from teachers on school climate and working conditions	-School Improvement Plan -NCTWCS -Staff focus group feedback/evaluation
Action *Behavioral Changes	-Number and percent of students administratively disciplined -Increased positive feedback from teachers on school leadership -Changes in students SEL skills -Increase in students leading school related events/activities	-ODR data as provided by school administration and Power School -NCTWS -Staff focus group feedback/evaluation
Impact *Academic Changes	-Percent of students improved on EOG exams	-Analysis North Carolina School Report Card Data and EOG results.

Figure 2. Outcome Indicators.

In order to increase the validity of the program evaluation data and findings, the researcher triangulated data or combined multiple methods to gather data. Collecting data from multiple sources by using a variety of techniques can confirm findings (Zohrabi, 2013). Combining multiple methods to gather data such as the focus group interview, the NCTWCS, student conduct data sets, and student achievement data sets allowed the researcher to cross verify, thus increasing the validity and credibility of the program evaluation.

According to Johnson and Turner (2003, p. 308), the following are strengths of a focus group interview: provide in-depth information, allow good interpretative validity, and allow probing for information. Flick (2006) added that the purpose of an interview “is to reveal existing knowledge in a way that can be expressed in the form of answers

and so become accessible to interpretation” (p. 160). The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide approach. The semi-structured interview is the most preferred type allowing for flexibility, eliciting more information than other types (Zohrabi, 2013). The questions for the focus group interview were prepared and used as a guide, according to the focus of the study in order to obtain more relevant data.

Surveys are a great way to gather large amounts of information from many people. The researcher analyzed the results of NCTWCS, which is administered to all teachers across North Carolina every 2 years. The survey allowed the researcher to gain a representative picture of the attitudes and characteristics of school X’s faculty. The well-constructed questions and the questionnaire design of NCTWCS had the potential to produce reliable results. The researcher was able to compare responses on the same questions from the year before the program was initiated and from the year the program was fully implemented. Any data mined from this strategy were triangulated with other data to draw conclusions for the researcher’s guiding questions and the effectiveness of the program.

The researcher examined the third through fifth grade office discipline referrals (ODRs) from each academic year since TLIM was implemented. This quantitative data analysis shows the total number of referrals, expulsions, and suspensions. The data were collected from the school’s principal and organized into tables to reveal any correlations between TLIM and student conduct.

NCDPI begins testing students in the third grade and continues until students graduate after the completion of the twelfth grade. The researcher analyzed the North Carolina reading and mathematics EOG exam scores for Grades 3-5. The quantitative data were obtained from each academic year since TLIM was implemented. The data

were organized and displayed in tables in order to draw any conclusions about the effects of TLIM on academic achievement. According to NCDPI (2017-2018), the EOG English language arts/reading assessments and the EOG mathematics assessments are aligned to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCS) for language arts/reading and mathematics. All assessment items for the summative exams are multiple choice, except for the gridded-response items on the fifth-grade mathematics EOG.

Published in 2014, the NCDPI testing program technical information notes established,

There are three broad categories of reliability coefficients that are recognized as appropriate indices for establishing reliability in tests: (a) coefficients derived from the administration of parallel forms in independent testing sessions (alternate-form coefficients); (b) coefficients obtained by administration of the same instrument on separate occasions (test-retest coefficients); and (c) coefficients based on the relationships among scores derived from individual items or subsets of the items within a test, all data accruing from a single administration of the test (internal consistency coefficients). (p. 1)

Test scores must be valid if any inferences are to be drawn from examinees. The tables in Figure 3 were taken directly from the NCDPI testing program technical notes for 2014 and are measures of internal consistency as calculated by Cronbach Coefficient Alpha.

EOG English Language Arts/Reading Reliabilities (Edition 4)

Grade	Form		
	A	B	C
3	0.91	0.92	0.91
4	0.89	0.90	0.88
5	0.90	0.88	0.89
6	0.89	0.91	0.89
7	0.89	0.90	0.89
8	0.88	0.88	0.88

EOG Mathematics Reliabilities (Edition 4)

Grade	Form		
	A	B	C
3	0.91	0.92	0.91
4	0.92	0.92	0.92
5	0.91	0.92	0.91
6	0.93	0.93	0.93
7	0.93	0.93	0.93
8	0.92	0.92	0.92

Figure 3. NCDPI: EOG Testing Program Notes.

As a secondary focus and to extend the reach of the program evaluation, the researcher studied the academic and behavioral impact on Hispanic students. School X contains a diverse group of students. The students were placed at School X through a system redistricting process to relieve overcrowding at three other elementary schools. The school's demographic reports reveal that 46% of the student population is Hispanic and 41% is White. There are 18 countries of origin represented in the student population, leading to 27% of the students being classified as LEP. As a subset of data, the researcher analyzed and drilled down into the EOG scores and the discipline data for the Hispanic students at School X. The data were organized in the same tables as the rest of the academic and discipline data in order to draw any positive or negative correlations between TLIM and the Hispanic population of students at the school.

Components of Program

TLIM is a school-wide transformational process that seeks to develop the character and leadership skills of both students and staff members. Using Covey's (1989) *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, TLIM seeks to promote success through the development of essential life skills (Covey, 2008). The school-wide process calls for students and teachers to internalize leadership principles, leading to a synergistic school culture that is focused on student empowerment (Covey, 2008). TLIM sees all students as having strengths and sees all staff members as being contributors. Using a ubiquitous, integrated approach, TLIM seeks to improve the culture, academics, and leadership within the school. By improving one area, the others will be positively affected (Covey, 2008).

School X suffered from a disjointed culture, an extreme lack of school pride, constant teacher turnover, high discipline rate among students, a high principal turnover rate, and a lack of a common vision or goals (personal communication, December 2016). In the 2011-2012 school year, a group of third-grade teachers started their own book study, seeking to fully understand *The 7 Habits* and the TLIM philosophy. They then started to teach *The 7 Habits* within the confinements of their classroom and curriculum. At the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, the same teachers led a school-wide book study where every teacher sought to fully understand *The 7 Habits* and the TLIM philosophy.

A new principal was hired, and School X officially adopted TLIM in July 2013. The entire staff participated in 4 full days of training for TLIM: 3 days in July 2013 and the other on a required teacher workday of the 2013-2014 school year. The staff and administration used "The Leader in Me Playbook" as a school-wide material resource

through this process. The first 2 days were spent examining, embracing, and internalizing *The 7 Habits*. The third day allowed the entire staff to list what they saw as both the positives and negatives of the school in its current state. After conducting a plus/delta, the entire staff provided input on a new school mission, vision, and motto. The teachers then drafted a new set of core values based on the idea of pride.

A SIT was voted on by the teachers, and committees were altered by administration so to refine the school's focus on the TLIM process. The entirety of the implementation training focused on the school's culture and environment. Schein (2010) conveyed that culture is learned by members of an organization, evolves through multiple experiences, and can be altered. Throughout the implementation year, staff members implemented the following initiatives: Mountain Lion Time (Direct Instruction of 7 Habits), Change the Environment (Murals, Quotes, Music, Pride Boards), Further Develop Core Values and a School Wide Pledge, School Wide Behavior Expectations Based on "PRIDE," Pride Points (given to students for practicing the habits), After School Clubs, Pep Rallies (celebrations), Leadership Roles in Class, and conducted the first Leadership Showcase.

Throughout the second year of the TLIM process, School X focused on refining the program to match a grade-level template. Laub (2004) stated that leadership is an "intentional change process through which leaders and followers, joined by a shared purpose, initiate action to pursue a common vision" (p. 5). Second year initiatives for TLIM began with every staff member drafting their own personal mission statement. Subsequently, each teacher then had their classes draft mission statements. Teachers led students to create leadership notebooks based on grade-level criteria and gave each student a leadership role within the classroom. A student leadership team was created,

consisting of students from Grades 2-5. This team met with the principal and called itself the “Lighthouse Team.” The principal of School X extended this initiative by conducting student-led conferences with each one of her students. Kouzes and Posner (1995) stated that “leadership is a team effort” (p. 11). Effective leaders collaborate with all those who are impacted by the results of their actions.

The third full year of implementation built upon the preexisting foundation and allowed students to continue their learning of the 7 Habits and practice their relevance. Students participated in clubs once each week, team time, modeling of skills with targeted leadership roles in class, and celebrated accomplishments at multiple school-wide pep rallies throughout the year. Community members and parents were able to partner with the school and partake in leadership application by participating in a school-wide Leadership Showcase that drew over 200 visitors. The student Lighthouse Team also grew to include students from across the entire school (K-5).

Participants

Participants in the study included all the teachers and teacher assistants who had been using TLIM since its implementation in the 2013-2014 school year as well as students with EOG testing data. This equated to eight staff members from first grade to fifth grade.

Instruments

Data were gathered from the last 3 consecutive years of North Carolina state EOG scores in reading and math. School X’s principal provided the researcher with student conduct data, which can also partially be found on the North Carolina School Report for School X, provided by NCDPI. The data that were collected and analyzed from the NCTWCS are available to the public.

The focus group component consisted of questions that were developed by the researcher to prompt discussion about TLIM and the practices that may or may not have changed in School X. The researcher conducted the focus-group interview and recorded the discussions for analysis. The focus group interview was guided by the following questions.

1. Explain the conditions and environment that prompted this school to select and embrace TLIM at this school.
2. What have been the most significant struggles with the implementation of TLIM?
3. What components of the program are the most effective?
4. What components of the program are the most ineffective?
5. Explain how the TLIM process has affected your school's culture.
6. Explain how TLIM has affected student conduct in your school.
7. Explain how TLIM has affected your Hispanic students with regard to academics and discipline.
8. Do you believe TLIM has impacted student performance on EOGs? If so, how?
9. Should the TLIM process be continued at your school? Why or why not?

The discussion was collected with a digital recording device and accurately transcribed. The written transcripts were verified by the staff members who participated in the focus group interview and a former educator who listened to the audio recording and checked the transcript for errors. Once verified, the researcher analyzed the interview data and completed the initial coding process, identifying any recurring patterns, language, ideas, or salient themes. After initial coding was complete, the

researcher's analysis was refined by sorting the codes into groups and combined to form overarching thematic categories. A theme acts as a way to categorize a set of data into "an implicit topic that organizes a group of repeating ideas" (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 38). Saldana (2009) recommended qualitative methodologists "label and thus analyze portions of an extended thematic statement rather than a shorter code" (p. 139). The researcher then created frequency tables based on the analysis of themes.

Limitations

There are three predominant limitations to the researcher's evaluation of TLIM at School X. The first is simply that the study took place over a brief period of time and only gathered data from one specific school. The second is that any teacher or administrator may not have followed the guidelines of the program thus affecting the impact or subsequent results of the program being implemented. The last limitation is the external factor of teacher and administrative turnover.

Delimitations

There are 12 staff members who are still employed at the school who were originally trained by the FranklinCovey representatives. These staff members are the only school personnel members who participated in the focus group interview.

Significance of the Study

This program evaluation will be used to inform school officials regarding the educational and monetary value of TLIM. As school board and education foundation officials search for new ways to prepare students for the 21st century workplace and postsecondary institution, they will look to this type of research to make informed decisions with their limited finances. The information produced from this study will be a critical part of the strategic decision-making of any school official seeking to adopt a

character education program or SEL curriculum.

The acquisition of 21st century soft skills is an important part of today's educational curriculum. Evaluating this character education program will allow school based and district based instructional leaders to see if the current practices are indeed providing high-yield results for the students and staff members participating. The study will also allow other schools and systems with similar problems and demographics to see if it would be beneficial to adopt a school wide transformational character education program.

This study took place on an elementary school in a rural setting: 46% of the students in the school are Hispanic, representing 18 different countries of origin, a growing trend in many rural farming areas of the southeast United States. This study built upon the existing knowledge of character education and SEL, with a specific focus the Hispanic students. There is limited knowledge of how TLIM affects Hispanic students and families. This study can be used to help program developers, school leaders, and other decision makers as they make investments in our students' futures.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to analyze the effects of the TLIM program and philosophy on the chosen elementary school in North Carolina. The school has fully adopted and implemented TLIM. This program evaluation assessed whether TLIM has met the school's goals with regard to producing measurable differences in the school's culture, student performance on achievement exams, and student behavior. As a secondary focus and to extend the reach of the program evaluation, the researcher studied the academic and behavioral impact on Hispanic students. The research questions were

1. What impact did TLIM have on the school's culture?
2. To what extent was student conduct impacted by TLIM, with specific focus on Hispanic students.
3. To what extent was the reading and math proficiency of the school's students impacted by TLIM, with specific focus on Hispanic students?

The researcher analyzed testing data from the North Carolina EOG exams in reading and math, results from the NCTWCS, discipline data collected by the school, and results from a focus group of staff members. The researcher used a logic model, otherwise known as a logical framework, theory of change, or program matrix to evaluate the program. The logic model is universally used to elucidate a program within any number of organizations. The model is a systematic way to assemble, examine, and provide visual depiction of data. This chapter details the data analysis procedures and reports the results of the study.

Data Analysis: Summary of Findings

Research Question 1: What impact did TLIM have on the school's culture?

The researcher collected data from the NCTWC website for 2012 and 2016. The

researcher collected the survey results for School X for each of the following survey items that focused on school culture:

- Q 4.1 f “Parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students” (NCTWCS, n.d., Community Support and Involvement).
- Q 4.1 g “Community members support teachers, contributing to their success with students” (NCTWCS, n.d., Community Support and Involvement)
- Q 5.1 a “Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct” (NCTWCS, n.d., Managing Student Conduct).
- Q 5.1c “Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty” (NCTWCS, n.d., Managing Student Conduct).
- Q 5.1 d “School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct” (NCTWCS, n.d., Managing Student Conduct).
- Q 5.1 e “School administrators support teachers’ efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom” (NCTWCS, n.d., Managing Student Conduct).
- Q 6.1 d “Teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles” (NCTWCS, n.d., Teacher Leadership).
- Q 6.1 g “Teachers are effective leaders in this school” (NCTWCS, n.d., Teacher Leadership).
- Q 7.1 a “The faculty and staff have a shared vision” (NCTWCS, n.d., School Leadership).
- Q 7.1 b “There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school” (NCTWCS, n.d., School Leadership).
- Q 10.6 “Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn” (NCTWCS, n.d., Overall).

The researcher used paired sample t tests to determine whether there were statistically significant ($p < .05$) mean differences between NCTWCS school culture items for School X from 2012 to 2016. There were no outliers in the data, as assessed by inspection of a box plot (see Figure 4). The difference scores for the NCTWCS school culture items for School X from 2012 and 2016 were normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p = .480$; see Figure 4). NCTWCS school culture item scores for School X were higher in 2016 ($M = 90.57$, $SD = 7.49$) than in 2012 ($M = 73.50$, $SD = 12.69$); a statistically significant mean increase of 16.99 ($SE = 3.39$), $t(10) = 5.011$, $p = .001$, $d = 1.51$ was observed in the NCTWCS school culture items from 2012 to 2016 in School X (see Figure 6).

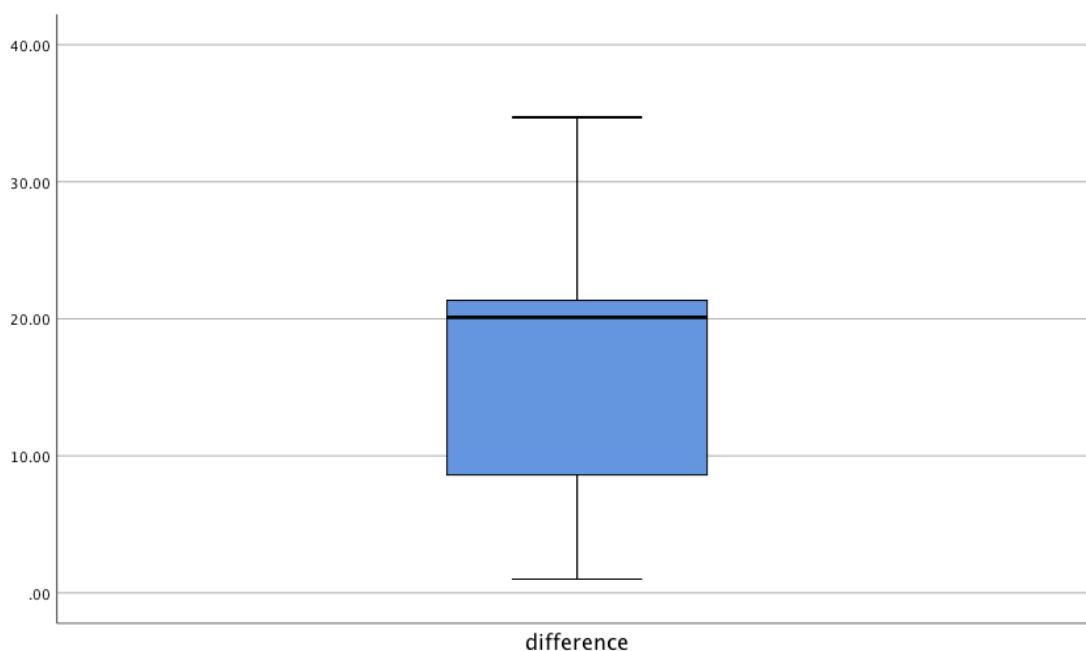


Figure 4. Paired Sample t -test Box Plot for NCTWCS School Culture Items for School X from 2012 to 2016.

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov–Smirnov ^a			Shapiro–Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
difference	.159	11	.200*	.936	11	.480

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Figure 5. Paired Sample *t*-test Tests of Normality for NCTWCS School Culture Items for School X from 2012 to 2016.

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	TWCS2016	90.5727	11	7.49147	2.25876
	TWCS2012	73.5818	11	12.69928	3.82898

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	TWCS2016 & TWCS2012	11	.478	.137

Paired Samples Test

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	TWCS2016 - TWCS2012	16.99091	11.24664	3.39099	9.43531	24.54650	5.011	10	.001

Figure 6. Paired Sample *t*-test Results for NCTWCS School Culture Items for School X from 2012 to 2016.

The researcher conducted a semi-structured focus group interview with 12 staff members from School X. These staff members were either teachers or teacher assistants and were employed at School X before the implementation of TLIM and are currently still on staff. A priori coding was used to organize the themes in the focus group

interview with the aim to align the findings to the research questions in order to draw conclusions and report findings. A priori codes were derived from the TLIM conceptual framework, the researcher's prior knowledge, the researcher's subject expertise, and the research questions themselves.

The researcher created a frequency table in order to analyze the themes. The frequency of the theme determined their strength as follows: weak, the theme was mentioned one time; moderate, the theme was mentioned two times; strong, the theme was mentioned three or more times; no relation, the theme was never mentioned (Stella, 2013). Table 4 reveals that the themes of student empowerment, positive learning environment, feeling valued, and mutual respect were all strongly measured (mentioned three or more times). These were followed up by a moderate strength code (mentioned two times) for parent support, high teacher morale, and high expectations. Student growth, vision, and mission were all measured to be weak (mentioned one time).

It was evident during the focus group interview that TLIM had a substantial and measurably positive impact on School X's culture. When asked "what impact did TLIM have on your school's culture," a few of the teachers responded as follows:

Teacher 1: "I think as in general it just creates a more family kind or team kind of atmosphere, like we're all in this together, you've got your accountability partner, you're helping each other, it's not just me standing up here teaching you and I'm doing this thing, you're helping each other, you're helping younger kids, you know, you're going into another class and helping kindergarteners or first graders learn to do the right thing."

Teacher 2: "In general I would say respect, because when teachers started speaking differently to students in a more empowering way versus negative, they

felt respected, like they were saying earlier about having a voice and being able to speak to adults, they felt like somebody was listening and they felt like they were being respected and in turn they became more respectable. It was easier to stop a child who wasn't in your class and say we need to think about this habit as you're having this conflict, how can you resolve it, and it just, a much better atmosphere, mutual respect."

Teacher 3: "With this program we all believe in the student, it's not just one teacher believing in them, the whole school."

Teacher 4: "I think there are probably children that feel more empowered to be vocal that would not have been otherwise."

Teacher 5: "I think they feel strong because with this program they know we value them. They know that we care about them and we care about their future and that's why we're putting this into them, because we value them. I think part of that comes with them getting leadership roles and them being a part of our school and being leaders and not expecting for the adults to make all the decisions and do all the work."

Table 4

Frequency Measurement: Focus Group Interview

<u>Key Words and Phrases</u>	
<u>School Culture (Research Question 1)</u>	<u>Strength Code</u>
Student Empowerment	Strong
Parent Support	Moderate
High Teacher Morale	Moderate
Positive Learning Environment	Strong
Feeling Valued	Strong
Mutual Respect	Strong
High Expectations	Moderate
Student Growth	Weak
Vision and Mission	Weak
<u>Student Conduct (Research Question 2)</u>	<u>Strength Code</u>
Structure	Strong
Common Language	Strong
Mutual Respect	Strong
Student Accountability	Moderate
High Expectations	Moderate
Conflict Resolution	No Relation
Empathy	No Relation
Humility	No Relation
<u>Student Academic Achievement (Research Question 3)</u>	<u>Strength Code</u>
Student Empowerment	Strong
Accountability	Moderate
Proactive	Strong
Growth Mindset	Strong
Learning Goals	Strong
Learning Focused	Weak
Collaborative	No Relation
Rigor	No Relation
Structure	Weak

According to the qualitative and quantitative data examined, TLIM positively impacted the culture of School X. There was a statistically significant mean increase in NCTWCS school culture items from 2012 to 2016. In addition, the themes of mutual respect, student empowerment, feeling valued, and positive learning environment were

strongly evident in the focus group interview.

Research Question 2: To what extent was student conduct impacted by TLIM, with specific focus on Hispanic students? The researcher collected data from the NCTWC website for 2012 and 2016. The researcher collected the survey results for School X for each of the following survey items that focused on student conduct:

- Q 5.1 a “Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct” (NCTWCS, n.d., Managing Student Conduct).
- Q 5.1 b “Students at this school follow rules of conduct” (NCTWCS, n.d., Managing Student Conduct).
- Q 5.1c “Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty” (NCTWCS, n.d., Managing Student Conduct).
- Q 5.1 d “School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct” (NCTWCS, n.d., Managing Student Conduct).
- Q 5.1 e “School administrators support teachers’ efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom” (NCTWCS, n.d., Managing Student Conduct).
- Q 5.1 f “Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct” (NCTWCS, n.d., Managing Student Conduct).
- Q 5.1 g “The faculty works in a school environment that is safe” (NCTWCS, n.d., Managing Student Conduct).

The researcher used paired sample *t* tests to determine whether there were statistically significant ($p < .05$) mean differences between NCTWCS student conduct items for School X from 2012 to 2016. There were no outliers in the data, as assessed by inspection of a box plot (see Figure 7). The difference scores for the NCTWCS student conduct items for School X from 2012 and 2016 were normally distributed, as assessed

by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p = .115$; see Figure 8). NCTWCS student conduct item scores for School X were higher in 2016 ($M = 95.85$, $SD = 3.35$) than in 2012 ($M = 72.82$, $SD = 14.12$); a statistically significant mean increase of 23.02 ($SE = 4.33$), $t(6) = 5.307$, $p = .002$, $d = 2.00$ was observed in the NCTWCS student conduct items from 2012 to 2016 in School X (see Figure 9).

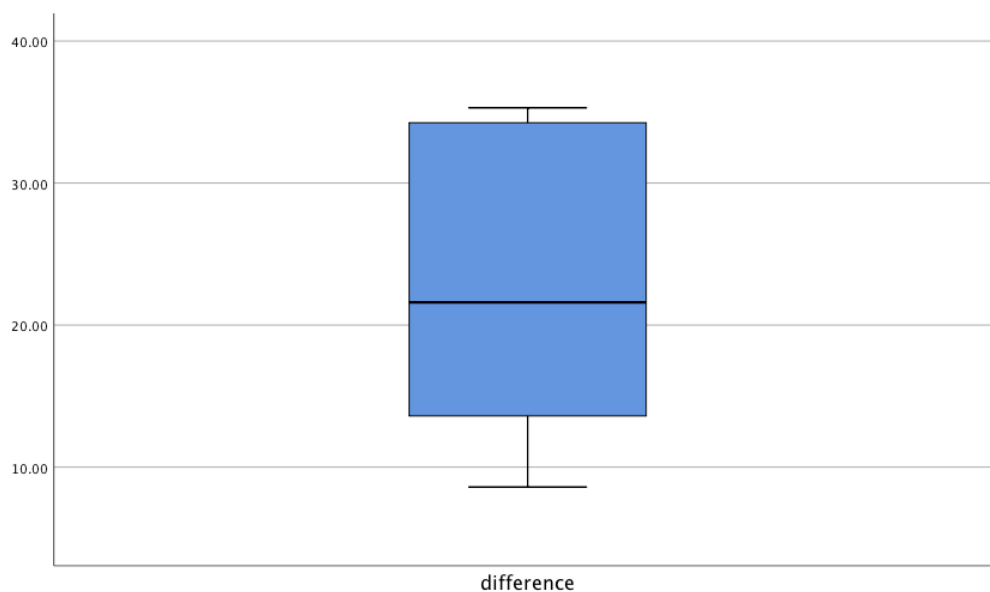


Figure 7. Paired Sample t -test Box Plot for NCTWCS Student Conduct Items from 2012 to 2016.

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
difference	.255	7	.190	.847	7	.115

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Figure 8. Paired Sample t -test Tests of Normality for NCTWCS Student Conduct Items from 2012 to 2016.

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	TWCSConduct2016	95.8571	7	3.35701	1.26883
	TWCSConduct2012	72.8286	7	14.12618	5.33920

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	TWCSConduct2016 & TWCSConduct2012	7	.833	.020

Paired Samples Test

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	TWCSConduct2016 - TWCSConduct2012	23.02857	11.48081	4.33934	12.41059	33.64655	5.307	6	.002

Figure 9. Paired Sample *t*-test Results for NCTWCS Student Conduct Items from 2012 to 2016.

The researcher collected ODR data from School X and the district office. The researcher analyzed the data to reveal the number of discipline referrals that were made for in-school suspensions (ISS), out-of-school suspension (OSS), and bus suspensions for 2012 and 2016. The researcher used a paired sample *t* test to determine whether there was a statistically significant ($p < .05$) mean difference between the ODR reports for School X from 2012 and 2016. There were no outliers in the data, as assessed by inspection of a box plot (see Figure 10). The difference scores for the ODR report for School X from 2012 and 2016 were normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p = .688$; see Figure 11). The ODR reports for School X were higher in 2016 ($M = 38.00$, $SD = 8.18$) than in 2012 ($M = 16.66$, $SD = 6.02$); a mean increase of 21.33 ($SE = 8.19$), $t(2) = 2.604$, $p = .121$, $d = 1.50$ was observed for the ODR reports for School X

from 2012 to 2016 (see Figure 12).

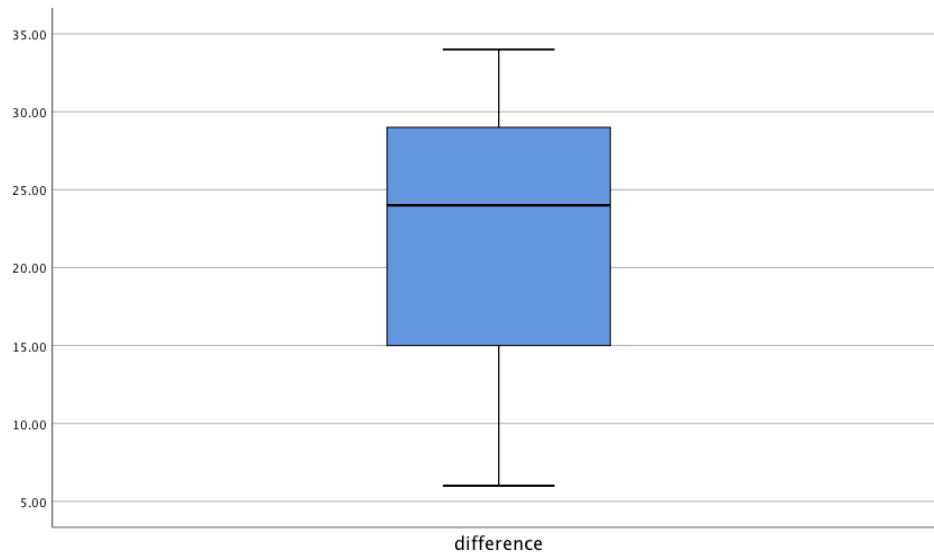


Figure 10. Paired Sample t -test Box Plot for ODR Reports for School X from 2012 to 2016.

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
difference	.241	3	.	.974	3	.688

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Figure 11. Paired Sample t -test Tests of Normality for ODR Reports for School X from 2012 to 2016.

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	ODR2016	38.0000	3	8.18535	4.72582
	ODR2012	16.6667	3	6.02771	3.48010

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	ODR2016 & ODR2012	3	-.993	.075

Paired Samples Test

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Paired Differences		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	ODR2016 - ODR2012	21.33333	14.18920	8.19214	-13.91459	56.58125	2.604	2	.121

Figure 12. Paired Sample *t*-test Results for ODR Reports for School X from 2012 to 2016.

The researcher further disaggregated the data in order to examine the ODR reports for Hispanic students at School X from 2012 and 2016. The researcher used a paired sample *t* test to determine whether there was a statistically significant ($p < .05$) mean difference between the ODR reports for Hispanic students at School X from 2012 and 2016. There were no outliers in the data, as assessed by inspection of a box plot (see Figure 13). The difference scores for the ODR report for Hispanic students for School X from 2012 and 2016 were normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p = .915$; see Figure 14). The ODR reports for Hispanic students for School X were higher in 2016 ($M = 7.33$, $SD = 3.05$) than in 2012 ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 3.51$); a mean increase of 2.667 ($SE = 3.75$), $t(2) = .710$, $p = .551$, $d = .409$ was observed for the ODR reports for Hispanic students at School X from 2012 to 2016 (see Figure 15).

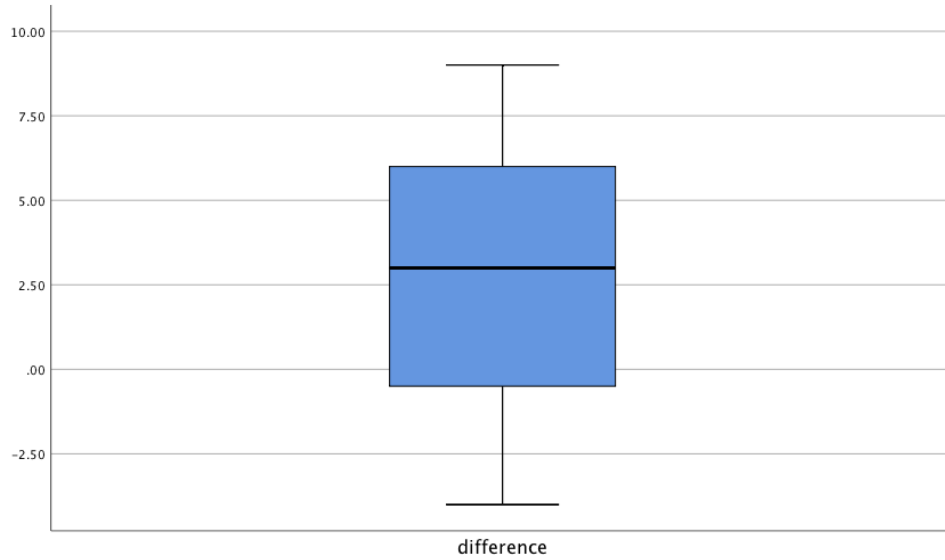


Figure 13. Paired Sample t -test Box Plot for ODR Reports for Hispanic Students at School X for 2012 and 2016.

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
difference	.187	3	.	.998	3	.915

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Figure 14. Paired Sample t -test Tests of Normality for ODR Reports for Hispanic Students at School X for 2012 and 2016.

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	ODRHisp2016	7.3333	3	3.05505	1.76383
	ODRHisp2012	4.6667	3	3.51188	2.02759

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	ODRHisp2016 & ODRHisp2012	3	-.963	.173

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	ODRHisp2016 - ODRHisp2012	2.66667	6.50641	3.75648	-13.49614	18.82948	.710	2	.551

Figure 15. Paired Sample *t*-test Results for ODR Reports for Hispanic Students at School X for 2012 and 2016.

It was evident during the focus group interview that TLIM had a measurably positive impact on School X's student conduct. When asked, "What impact did TLIM have on your students conduct," a few of the teachers responded as follows:

Teacher 7: "Along with the expectations, they're universal across the school. I expect the kindergartener to be doing the same thing I expect the fifth graders to be doing when it comes to those habits and being those leaders that as a teacher I feel like I can talk to a kindergarten, first, second grader in the hallway and they would understand and know my expectation when I say, are you following habits four? Are you doing habit five right now? And they respond to you instead of looking at you and going, why are you talking to me? You're not my teacher?"

Teacher 3: "There is that uniform, the language, the uniform language helps with

the continuing ... I don't know, growth of the children, to where they're not sliding back with their behavior, they're growing with it every time they encounter an adult in the school building.”

Teacher 10: “Yeah, when they come to us from very chaotic home lives, which so many of our kids do, the structure at school is so important, and when they're getting that structure not just in their class, but also at specials and also when they're going to ESL or EC classes. Wherever they go in the school it's the same structure, and I think it gives them such opportunity to thrive, because it's safe for them, they know exactly what to expect and everywhere they go and there's no big surprise, when I get to the media center, it's not going to be a big surprise, because it's the same rules there as it is in the class.”

Table 4 reveals that the themes of structure, common language, and mutual respect were all strongly measured (mentioned three or more times). They were followed up by a moderate strength code (mentioned two times) for student accountability and high expectations. Conflict resolution, empathy, and humility were never mentioned, showing as no relation (never mentioned) on the frequency table.

The focus group participants specifically discussed how TLIM impacted the conduct of the Hispanic students. The teachers revealed that the structure of the program and the use of common language and high expectations across the school had a positive effect on the Hispanic students especially its migrant student population. When asked “explain how TLIM has impacted the Hispanic students conduct,” the teachers responded as follows:

Teacher 3: “Especially with our Hispanic boys, what I found over the years is that by fourth or fifth grade the boys are treated more like young men and given

responsibilities at home or they go to work with their fathers and then they would come to school with a whole bunch of white women trying to boss them, and when we were switching over to TLIM, and asking them to set goals for themselves and making it more about their choices, they were having, I think they began to feel like they were being treated more like what they did at home, that they weren't being bossed all the time, and that that changed a lot of attitudes also."

Teacher 7: "Going off what she said, for the Hispanic girls, I think it's empowered them to know, you can graduate and go to college and do something. Like it's okay for you to be successful also. You know what I mean? Them realizing, well I can do it too. I can be successful and do things. I can play sports and I can do all these things also, and I think that's kind of been empowering."

Teacher 1: "It enabled them to, again, have conversations with you, rather than feel like they were being given orders all the time. That choice kind of freed them up. They didn't feel like they were always having to save face with their peers and it relieved that behavior issue, because it did become about their choice, and kind of gave them a voice in it.

Teacher 10: "Yeah, going along with [Teacher 1] and [Teacher 2], letting the students take ownership of their future is very powerful, they're setting goals, they're planning for a future and they can believe that they do own their future. I think that's especially important to our migrant students, because we have migrant students that come in here and when they first get here they think their only future will be to be migrant students, but after they've been with us for a few months you can see a change in their demeanor from the time they first get here until a

few months in.”

Teacher 3, referring to another teacher’s comments on their migrant students:

“They came in and they wanted to goof off, they wanted to play and they didn’t think they could do anything, it’s not important, I’m only going to be here for a few weeks, but [student name], especially, I saw the change in him, within a few weeks they’re saying, wait, I can apply for a job here? I can have a job? I can be important? To the point that it becomes very important to them to come back to the school.

Teacher 1: “That’s unusual for migrants, they usually land in a different place every year, but in our school, we have families that make it a point to get into this district so that they can be here. We’ve got one family that’s had a student here from kindergarten through fifth grade, every year, and that’s very unusual for migrants in most schools, it is not unusual for us, it’s almost the norm for us. The parents see the change in behavior and the voice their child has. The parents want to know how it all works for their child.”

According to the qualitative and the quantitative data examined, TLIM positively impacted the student conduct of School X. There was a statistically significant mean increase in NCTWCS student conduct items from 2012 to 2016, $p < .05$ (see Figure 9). A mean increase was also observed between the ODR reports from 2012 to 2016. While the researcher acknowledges the increase in the ODR reports, it was not deemed statistically significant, $p > .05$ (see Figure 12). In addition, the themes of mutual respect, common language, and structure were all measured to be strong themes (mentioned three or more times) during the focus group interview.

With regard to Hispanic student conduct at School X, the quantitative data

examined reveals a mean increase for ODR reports for Hispanic students from 2012 to 2016; however, the mean increase was not deemed statistically significant, $p > .05$ (see Figure 15). The qualitative data reveal that the Hispanic students at School X were impacted by TLIM. The focus group interview shows that TLIM helped Hispanic students display mutual respect, leadership, and accountability. The teachers positively expressed how the structure and common language used throughout the school due to TLIM has greatly impacted the Hispanic students, especially the migrant population.

Research Question 3: To what extent was the reading and math proficiency of the school's students impacted by TLIM, with specific focus on Hispanic students? The researcher collected academic achievement data for School X. The math and reading EOG exams for all third- through fifth-grade students at School X from 2013 to 2017 were analyzed individually, math and reading separate, and then as a whole data set. All of the data collected was from the 2012 and 2016 school years except the EOG data. NCDPI implemented Common Core in 2012, and the researcher believes the evaluation of EOG data from 2012 would be tainted due to the implementation and testing of a brand new set of standards. Therefore, the researcher chose to collect and analyze EOG data from the 2013-2014 school year and the 2016-2017 school year. The results of the paired sample t tests for School X are presented below. Paired sample t tests were used to determine whether there were statistically significant ($p < .05$) mean differences between the EOG scores for School X from 2013 to 2017.

There were no outliers in the data, as assessed by inspection of a box plot (see Figure 16). The difference scores for the EOG reading exam reports for School X from 2013 and 2017 were normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p = .588$; see Figure 17). The EOG reading exam reports for School X were higher in 2017 ($M =$

55.86, SD =10.26) than in 2013 (M = 53.50, SD = 6.45); a mean increase of 2.36 (SE = 8.56), $t(2) = .276$, $p = .808$, $d = .067$ was observed for the EOG reading exam reports for School X from 2013 to 2017 (see Figure 18).

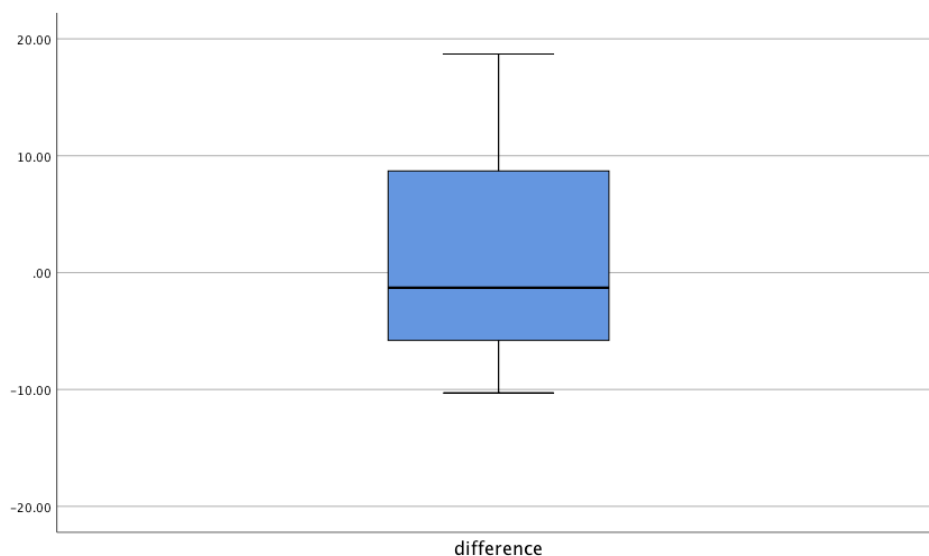


Figure 16. Paired Sample t -test Box Plot for EOG Reading Exam Reports for School X from 2013 and 2017.

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov–Smirnov ^a			Shapiro–Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
difference	.264	3	.	.954	3	.588

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Figure 17. Paired Sample t -test Tests of Normality for EOG Reading Exam Reports for School X from 2013 and 2017.

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	AR1617	55.8667	3	10.26856	5.92856
	AR1314	53.5000	3	6.45833	3.72872

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	AR1617 & AR1314	3	-.552	.628

Paired Samples Test

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Paired Differences					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	AR1617 - AR1314	2.36667	14.84363	8.56997	-34.50695	39.24029	.276	2	.808

Figure 18. Paired Sample *t*-test Results for EOG Reading Exam Reports for School X from 2013 and 2017.

There were no outliers in the data, as assessed by inspection of a box plot (see Figure 19). The difference scores for the EOG math exam reports for School X from 2013 and 2017 were not normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p = .026$; see Figure 20). The EOG math exam reports for School X were higher in 2017 ($M = 70.20$, $SD = 7.37$) than in 2013 ($M = 51.23$, $SD = 4.04$); a mean increase of 18.96 ($SE = 6.31$), $t(2) = 3.00$, $p = .095$, $d = 1.73$ was observed for the EOG exam reports for School X from 2013 to 2017 (see Figure 21).

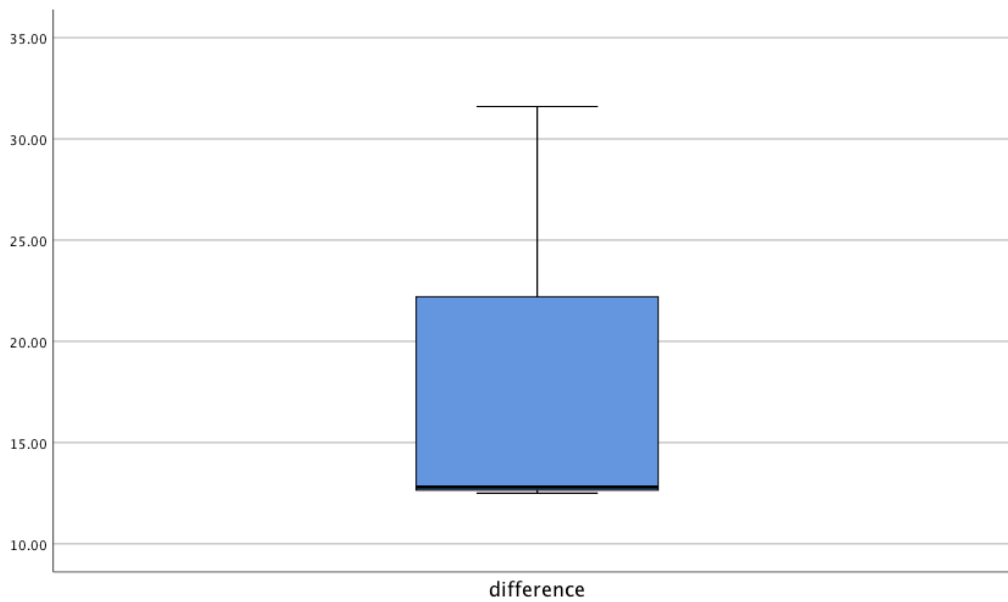


Figure 19. Paired Sample t -test Box Plot for EOG Math Exam Reports for School X from 2013 and 2017.

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
difference	.380	3	.	.762	3	.026

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Figure 20. Paired Sample t -test Tests of Normality for EOG Math Exam Reports for School X from 2013 and 2017.

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	AM1617	70.2000	3	7.37496	4.25793
	AM1314	51.2333	3	4.04145	2.33333

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	AM1617 & AM1314	3	-.822	.386

Paired Samples Test

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	AM1617 - AM1314	18.96667	10.94182	6.31726	-8.21431	46.14764	3.002	2	.095

Figure 21. Paired Sample *t*-test Results for EOG Math Exam Reports for School X from 2013 and 2017.

There were no outliers in the data, as assessed by inspection of a box plot (see Figure 22). The difference scores for the EOG combined reading and math exam reports for School X from 2013 and 2017 were normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p = .898$; see Figure 23). The EOG combined reading and math exam report for School X were higher in 2017 ($M = 63.03$, $SD = 11.20$) than in 2013 ($M = 52.36$, $SD = 4.97$); a mean increase of 10.6 ($SE = 6.03$), $t(5) = 1.767$, $p = .138$, $d = .72$ was observed for the EOG combined reading and math exam reports for School X from 2013 to 2017 (see Figure 24).

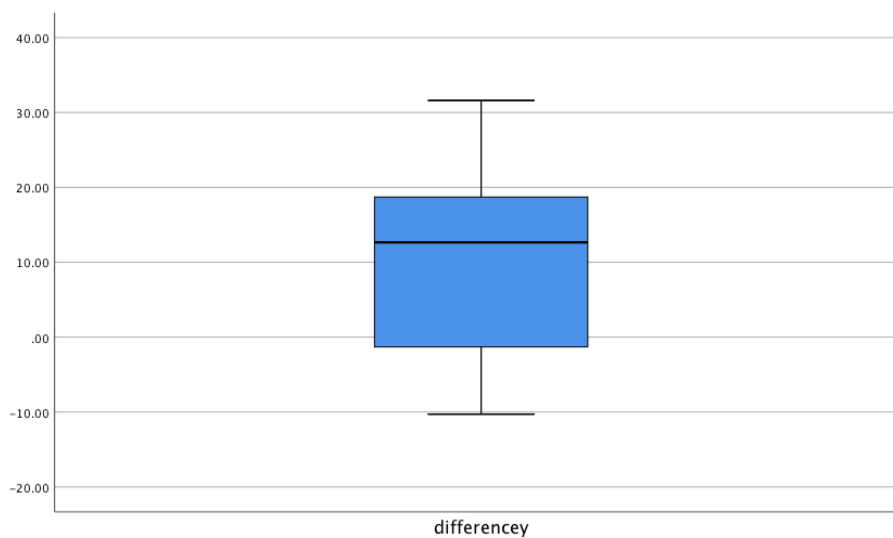


Figure 22. Paired Sample t -test Box Plot for the EOG Combined Reading and Math Exam Reports for School X from 2013 and 2017.

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
differencey	.216	6	.200*	.971	6	.898

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Figure 23. Paired Sample t -test Tests of Normality for the EOG Combined Reading and Math Exam Reports for School X from 2013 and 2017.

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Y20162017	63.0333	6	11.20565	4.57469
	Y20132014	52.3667	6	4.97581	2.03137

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Y20162017 & Y20132014	6	-.613	.196

Paired Samples Test

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Y20162017 - Y20132014	10.66667	14.78819	6.03725	-4.85259	26.18592	1.767	5	.138

Figure 24. Paired Sample t-test Results for the EOG Combined Reading and Math Exam Reports for School X from 2013 and 2017.

There was an outlier in the data, as assessed by inspection of a box plot; however, inspection of its value did not reveal it to be extreme, and it was kept in the analysis (see Figure 25). The difference scores for the EOG Hispanic student reading and math exam reports for School X from 2013 and 2017 were normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p = .529$; see Figure 26). The EOG Hispanic student reading and math exam report for School X were higher in 2017 ($M = 56.06$, $SD = 15.52$) than in 2013 ($M = 46.53$, $SD = 5.38$); a mean increase of 9.53 ($SE = 5.32$), $t(5) = 1.789$, $p = .134$, $d = .730$ was observed for the EOG Hispanic student reading and math exam reports for School X from 2013 to 2017 (see Figure 27).

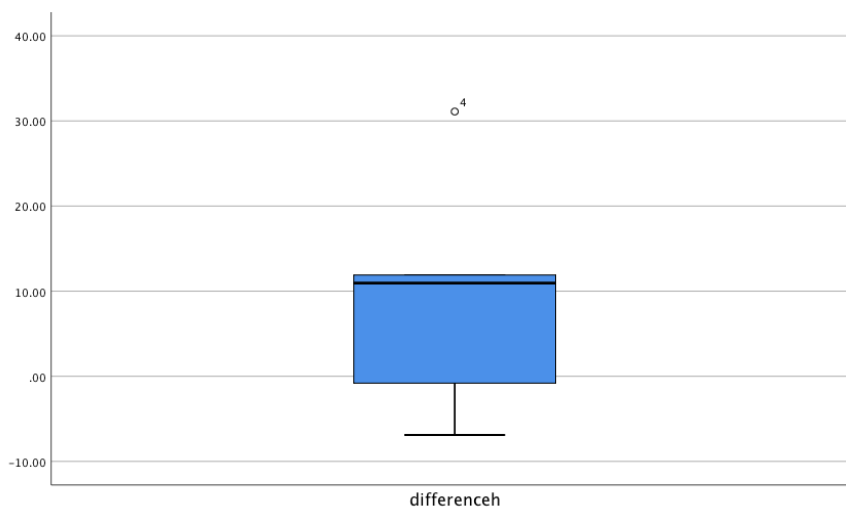


Figure 25. Paired Sample t -test Box Plot for the EOG Hispanic Student Reading and Math Exam Reports for School X from 2013 and 2017.

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
differenceh	.261	6	.200 [*]	.923	6	.529

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Figure 26. Paired Sample t -test Tests of Normality for the EOG Hispanic Student Reading and Math Exam Reports for School X from 2013 and 2017.

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	H20162017	56.0667	6	15.52465	6.33791
	H20132014	46.5333	6	5.38133	2.19692

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	H20162017 & H20132014	6	.596	.212

Paired Samples Test

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	H20162017 - H20132014	9.53333	13.05139	5.32821	-4.16326	23.22992	1.789	5	.134

Figure 27. Paired Sample *t*-test Results for the EOG Hispanic Student Reading and Math Exam Reports for School X from 2013 and 2017.

The focus group interview data revealed that the teachers saw that TLIM had a strong impact on student academics in the areas of student created learning goals, student empowerment, being proactive, and having a growth mindset. All of these themes were measured by the researcher to have a strong frequency (mentioned three or more times). The researcher also coded a moderate strength code (mentioned two times) for accountability, followed up by a weak strength code (mentioned once) for structure and learning focused. Rigor and collaboration were of no relation (never mentioned); however, not a single teacher stated they believed that TLIM has a directed impact on student reading or math proficiency.

All of the teachers stated in their own words that they observe only indirect impacts of TLIM on academic progress. When asked “What effects does TLIM have on the academic progress of your school, with specific focus on Hispanic students,” some of

the teachers responded as follows:

Teacher 1: “I think the largest effect is on the student’s behavior, but until the students ... Behaviors are in check, academics aren’t going to happen. Until kids are interested and want to be responsible, want to help each other and want to learn, I can stand up here and teach all day, but until they buy in or until I’m not having to deal with some behavior areas the academic part, I think, the academic part is just a natural thing that happens once you’ve been implementing Leader in Me, because if you’re not constantly having to deal with behaviors and you have kids who care about why they’re here, and want to learn, then that makes the academics so much better and easier.”

Teacher 2: “Our academics did go up in conjunction with some of the other changes making these, so it’s hard to say what did what, but the self-setting goals and things like that were definitely, you know, components to help with the other pieces of academic changes going on.”

Teacher 11: “She was seeking out the help, whether it was from me, whether it was from a tutor, her goal was, I will pass all of my EOGs and I will not attend summer school. The tutor that she went to went over and above, found work for her, would come in on Fridays and work with her, because she knew that she herself had bought in and wanted to be empowered, but I think all that’s due to the Leader in Me, because I don’t think she would have ever stepped up and found her voice and worked and been as proactive as she was if it wasn’t for the fact that she had been here from the beginning until her fifth grade yeah, and she passed all three EOGs. That had not been done for her third or fourth grade.

Teacher 5: “Also, they get to set their own goals; they get to choose academic

goals. When we first started there was a lot of guiding on their setting goals, but now as they get older they're able to set their own goals and they have different strategies they're going to use and they get to see that growth to reach those goals."

Teacher 7: "I wouldn't say Leader in Me directly impacts grades, but I would say I feel like Leader in Me plays a role, maybe indirectly, and because kids like [student name] was saying, it's their personal score, they could be the lowest kid in the class, but they're just trying to beat what they did yesterday, and as long as they're beating what they did yesterday they're doing better and that's what it's all about. It's not they're trying to meet 70% or they're trying to be better than this kid over here, they're just trying to be better than they were yesterday."

Teacher 4: "It allowed classroom teachers to get some control so that you can focus on the learning part of it."

Teacher 3: "I think I've seen in a lot of our Hispanic kids too, they know where they are, but they're okay if their accountability partner also knows where they are, because they're helping each other out. It's okay that you don't read on the same level as I do, because I'm going to help you. You know what I mean?

Creating that safe space and that it's okay that we're all different, because we're all here to help each other out and we're all going to work as a team and so it's okay that you don't read as well as me or can't do math as well as me, because I'm going to help you try to do better. I think that's been a really powerful part of the growth for all of our kids, but especially our Hispanic kids."

According to the qualitative and quantitative data examined, TLIM does have a positive indirect impact on the reading and math proficiency scores of the students at

School X. The entire paired sample *t*-test run measured a significant mean increase from 2013 to 2017; however, not a single mean increase was statistically significant ($p < .05$). The qualitative data from the focus group did reveal some strong correlations between TLIM and academic growth, especially with regard to creating students who were proactive, empowered, and having a growth mindset (see Table 4).

Summary

Data analysis and interview excerpts were presented and summarized in this chapter. Data collected through analysis of EOG results, ODR reports, NCTWCS results, and the focus group interview with staff members were used to answer the research questions. Of the constructs measured, the results indicate that TLIM had the greatest impact on student conduct and transforming the school culture of School X.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this evaluation was to analyze the effects of the TLIM program and philosophy on the chosen elementary school in rural North Carolina. School X has fully adopted and implemented TLIM. TLIM is a program for school-wide transformation that seeks to teach all students 21st century leadership and life skills. TLIM is based on *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Covey (1989).

School X suffered from a disjointed culture, an extreme lack of school pride, constant teacher turnover, high discipline rate among students, a high principal turnover rate, and a lack of a common vision or goals (personal communication, December 2016). School X contains a diverse group of students and was initially founded in 2008. The students were placed at School X through a system redistricting process to relieve overcrowding at three other elementary schools. School X's website shows that they have the highest impoverished student body in the system. The school's demographic report reveals that 46% of the student population is Hispanic, and 41% is White. There are 18 countries of origin represented in the student population, leading to 27% of the students being classified as LEP.

This program evaluation assessed whether TLIM has met the school's goals with regard to producing measurable differences in the school's culture, student performance on achievement exams, and student behavior. As a secondary focus and to extend the reach of the program evaluation, the researcher studied the academic and behavioral impact on Hispanic students.

The research questions were

1. What impact did TLIM have on the school's culture?
2. To what extent was student conduct impacted by TLIM, with specific focus

on Hispanic students?

3. To what extent was the reading and math proficiency of the school's students impacted by TLIM, with specific focus on Hispanic students?

The research questions were answered by collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data. The researcher analyzed student achievement data from the North Carolina EOG exams in reading and math, results from NCTWCS, discipline data (ODR) collected by the school, and results from a focus group of staff members. The researcher disaggregated the ODR reports and the EOG data to answer the secondary focus of the research questions, the impact on Hispanic students at School X.

The researcher used a logic model, otherwise known as a logical framework, theory of change, or program matrix to evaluate TLIM at School X. The logic model is universally used to elucidate a program within any number of organizations. The model is a systematic way to assemble, examine, and provide visual depiction of data. As a tool, the logic model works to create links among short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes that have specifically been identified. In this study, the evaluated outcomes were concentrated in three areas of change: learning (cultural change), action (behavioral change), and impact (academic change; see Figure 1).

Summary of Findings

In order to increase the validity of the program evaluation findings, the researcher combined multiple methods to gather data. Collecting data from multiple sources, by using a variety of techniques can confirm findings (Zohrabi, 2013).

1. What impact did TLIM have on the school's culture? Deal and Peterson (1990) revealed that by introducing new rituals, symbols, language and action, an organization's culture can be gradually changed. Both the qualitative and quantitative

data reveal that once TLIM was implemented fully, School X saw measurably positive impacts to their overall school culture. According to the data, these effects can be seen with students, teachers, and parents. The researcher observed a statistically significant mean increase on the NCTWCS school culture items from 2012 to 2016 (Figure 6). The overall mean increase was 16.99, and the effect size was strong ($d = 1.51$). There were 11 survey items measured, and eight of those items saw larger than a 10-point increase. Question 10.6 of the NCTWCS asks teachers to respond to the following prompt, “Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.” In 2012, only 68.4% of teachers agreed. After TLIM was fully implemented in 2016, this changed to 89.5% of teachers agreeing. The 2012 NCTWCS for School X indicated that teachers were distressed and frustrated due to inconsistent expectations and a lack of trust and mutual respect. The 2016 NCTWCS survey data revealed that the teachers shared a new found common vision, felt they were empowered to be leaders in the school, and knew that expectations for students were being clearly communicated in a common way across the school. The survey data clearly show that the teachers at School X saw that TLIM had a substantial positive impact on the overall culture.

The 12 teachers who were interviewed in the focus group all agreed that TLIM made a substantial impact on their school’s overall culture. The teachers shared more than three times that due to TLIM, the students were now more empowered, the learning environment was increasingly positive, the students felt valued, and everyone in the building felt a sense of mutual respect for one another (Table 4). The teachers also shared that TLIM increased their parent involvement and support for the school, which was seen as very important due to the fact that School X is relatively new and was created out of a system wide redistricting process.

2. To what extent was student conduct impacted by TLIM, with specific focus on Hispanic students? According to the qualitative and the quantitative data examined, TLIM positively impacted the student conduct of School X. The NCTWCS student conduct items that were measured in 2012 and 2016 saw a mean increase of 23.02, a mean increase that was observed to be statistically significant ($p = .002$; Figure 9). There were seven items measured in this section of the NCTWCS. Of the seven items, six saw an increase of 10 points or more. Question 5.1a asked teachers to respond to the following prompt: “Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.” In 2012, only 78.4% of teachers agreed. After the full implementation of TLIM, that increased to 100%. Question 5.1b asked teachers to respond to the following prompt: “Students at this school follow rules of conduct.” In 2012, only 56.8% of teachers agreed with this statement. After the full implementation of TLIM, that increased to 92.1% of teachers agreeing.

The ODR report *t* test were somewhat inconclusive. While the researcher observed an increase in mean of 21.33, the increase was not deemed to be statistically significant ($p = .121$; Figure 12). This mean increase could have been due to a student population increase from 2012 to 2016 or an alteration in how discipline data were reported to the district and state. The ODR reports for Hispanic students were likewise inconclusive. While there was a small mean increase of 2.66, this was not deemed to be statistically significant ($p = .551$; Figure 15); however, the teachers were clear in the focus group interview that the TLIM had the greatest impact on their students conduct. They partially attributed this to the structure that TLIM provides but mostly the student empowerment that is derived from TLIM (Table 4). The teachers spoke in detail about how their students were now seeing that they are accountable for their choices. This self-

accountability and the new found mutual respect allowed teachers to have meaningful conversations with any of the students in the school, not just their own. The teachers fully expressed how important the common language and common expectations were to the school's overall culture change when it came to student conduct. They expressed how the common language specifically benefited the Hispanic students. The teachers detailed how the Hispanic boys felt a sense of respect and responsibility, and the Hispanic girls found a voice and a hope for the future. To take a step further, the teachers shared specific examples about their migrant families. They shared how these migrant families would make sure they came back to this area just so they could put their children in TLIM at School X.

3. To what extent was the reading and math proficiency of the school's students impacted by TLIM, with specific focus on Hispanic students? According to the qualitative and the quantitative data examined, TLIM positively impacted the reading and math proficiency of the students at School X. The researcher observed a significant mean increase ranging from 2.36 to 18.96 when examining EOG exam reports from 2013 and 2017. The Hispanic student EOG exam reports revealed a significant mean increase of 9.53. While the mean increases are viewed by the researcher to be significant, they were not measured to be statistically significant. Additionally, each paired sample *t* test concluded a moderate to strong effect size.

The focus group interview data indicate that the teachers were reluctant to identify TLIM as having a direct impact on the proficiency scores of their students. Instead, the teachers concluded that TLIM once again empowered students to be proactive, helping them to see they had a voice in their learning and the success that could come from their hard work in the academic realm. The teachers indicated that the students and staff

members learned to have a growth mindset and to set academic goals for themselves. The teachers recognized that TLIM has taught the Hispanic boys to be leaders among their peers in the classroom and take pride in helping the younger students; comparing their actions to what they learn as young boys at home taking care of their siblings while their parents work many hours. Teachers continually revealed that the culture in the school was much more positive and structured, leading to a classroom environment that was built on good behavior, student leaders, mutual respect, and student accountability (Table 4). One teacher expressed that learning was the main thing in their school and that TLIM allowed her to “keep the main thing, the main thing.”

The researcher’s findings reinforce the research of Zins et al. (2004), which concluded that academic success cannot be simply defined by testing; instead, it includes one’s attitude, academic performance, and behaviors. The findings of this study further reinforce the research of Waters et al. (2004), which stated that there is a strong correlation between certain aspects of a school’s culture and student performance. Since School X implemented TLIM, student learning has increased, student conduct has improved, and the school’s culture has been transformed in a positive way.

Limitations

With any research design, there are limitations which must be addressed. This study was conducted at single elementary school over a brief period of time. Only 12 staff members participated in the study. These 12 staff members participated in the original training by the representatives of the FranklinCovey Corporation and continue to serve at the school. The researcher took great care to protect the identity of the teachers who participated in the focus group interview. Personnel and administrative changes have taken place at School X. These personnel changes could have affected the

implementation of the program as new staff members were only trained by their peers and not the FranklinCovey representatives.

Recommendations

Based on the data analyzed and the profundity of teacher messages during the focus group interview, the program should be continued at School X. There is evidence that students who are born into and grow up in poverty are more likely to start school with decreased levels of social-emotional skills (Ursache et al., 2012). SEL in early childhood can set the stage for student future behaviors in school (Schultz et al., 2011). Fredericks (2003) asserted that implementing social and emotional learning in a school requires a school-wide change and “involves altering school in a very fundamental way, not just instituting small, superficial changes” (p. 10). Encouraging students to be leaders and be responsible, having students engaged in projects, and supporting teamwork and student decision-making can diminish the effects of stress and increase student success (Jensen, 2013).

All new teachers and administrators should go through annual training. The teachers expressed that the strengths of TLIM were common language, internalizing the 7 Habits, and common expectations across the school. These strengths are negated if full and proper professional development is not completed by all new staff members.

The program should be monitored on an annual basis. There should be sufficient input by students, teachers, parents, and community members. All recommended changes should be investigated and implemented when applicable. As part of this program monitoring, the Lighthouse Team and SIT should set annual goals pertaining to the program itself and continued self-improvement.

Further research should be completed in order to measure the sustainability of

such a program and to also measure the longitudinal effects of early intervention social-emotional programs such as TLIM. In addition, research on middle schools or high schools that have implemented TLIM would benefit not only educational leaders but also program designers.

Conclusion

Research on the impact of SEL and character education programs is growing. Educational leaders and legislatures are actively seeking ways to support schools that are challenged by social diversity, ethnic diversity, and growing poverty rates. Passed program evaluations on TLIM have been completed at schools with far less racial diversity and socioeconomic diversity. This study reveals that TLIM impacts a school's culture regardless of race, economic status, or size. TLIM can be used to actively support educators at a school that has extremely high diversity and poverty rates. This study supports the FranklinCovey Corporation's assertions that *The 7 Habits* become the foundation of a person's character, empowering a person to effectively learn, solve problems, maximize opportunities, and integrate other principles in order to continually grow (Covey, 2008).

This research provides evidence that teaching students social-emotional skills and soft skills can impact the overall culture of a school and improve student conduct. There is also evidence provided that reveals that teaching principles of self-empowerment, self-accountability, and goal setting can positively impact the learning environment in the classroom. It is the recommendation of the researcher to adopt a school-wide SEL and character education curriculum. The implementation of TLIM had a measurable positive impact on a highly diverse rural elementary school in North Carolina.

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