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# Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Dyslexia Professional Development Training for Addressing the Social-Emotional Needs of Children With Dyslexia

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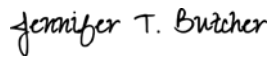**Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership**

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Dr. Joey Cope, Dean of the College
of Graduate and Professional Studies

Date 11/3/2020

Dissertation Committee:

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Dr. Jennifer Butcher, Chair

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Abilene Christian University

School of Educational Leadership

Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Dyslexia Professional Development Training for Addressing

the Social-Emotional Needs of Children With Dyslexia

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Darlene Elizabeth Breaux

November 2020

**Dedication**

This work is dedicated to those little girls and boys with dyslexia who just want to be seen, to be heard, and for people to understand they are capable, intelligent, and have the potential to become someone great. This work is dedicated to every teacher who has ever had a student with dyslexia in their classroom and knew they were more than their diagnosis. Finally, this work is dedicated to my husband Vincent, who never let me quit, who cheered me on when I grew tired, and believed in me even when I struggled to see my strength. To my children Paige, Joshua, and Haley, who are my heartbeat, my why, and the greatest gift I have ever received.

**Acknowledgments**

This journey began at my first breath of life. Being born with dyslexia and being the parent of a child with dyslexia has proven to be quite a journey in and of itself. One thing I know to be true is that your purpose will drive your passion. I must begin by thanking God for the purpose that He placed on my life and for seeing fit to entrust me with this vision.

I am truly grateful for my parents Marchell and Eunice Jones, who prayed that what God had placed in me would blossom. I thank each of my siblings, Judy, Frederick (Jock), Gina, Doris, Marcia, and Marchell (Pete), who always encouraged me and supported my dreams. To my wonderful friends Dr. Melissa Kates, Dr. Kelly Brown, and Dr. Andres Garcia, who answered phone calls, responded to texts, and just checked on me along the way. A special thank you to Dr. Kimberly McLeod, who wouldn't accept my reasons of why I was not in school and told me that when I got tired of making excuses, I would go back to school and get my doctorate.

Finally, a huge thank you to my committee, who were some of the best passengers on this wild and crazy journey and especially my chair Dr. Jennifer Butcher, who from the moment we met, made me feel as if I was intelligent and capable with the potential of producing something great. Thank you all for believing in me, and I hope that I have made you proud.

**Abstract**

Students with dyslexia simultaneously struggle with both literacy acquisition and poor self-esteem and undergo social-emotional learning difficulties. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore elementary general education teachers' perceptions regarding the dyslexia training they received for addressing the social and emotional learning (SEL) needs of children with dyslexia. The conceptual framework guiding this study was the five core competencies for SEL developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. The researcher used a qualitative description research design involving semistructured interviews. The population included 10 elementary general education teachers who taught in first through fourth-grade classrooms in the southeast region of Texas. The overarching themes were the following: (a) The dyslexia training is missing the five competencies: The participants reported that none of CASEL's five core competencies for SEL were addressed in their dyslexia training; (b) Used skills learned in other professional development to address the missing competencies: The participants reported using information from other professional development training to meet their students' needs; (c) The dyslexia training needs to be revamped: The participants explicitly said the dyslexia training needed to be changed. The participants confirmed the gap in the literature regarding their learning needs and dyslexia training provided. The researcher created a framework, based on the findings, to guide training that can effectively address CASEL's five core competencies within several modules. Finally, the results of this study revealed the need for further research with a focus on helping teachers understand how to develop SEL skills in their students with dyslexia.

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**Chapter 1: Introduction**

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that can affect 20% of the U.S. population as a whole and represents 80% to 90% of all those with a learning disability (Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity, 2017). The Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity also reported that of all neurocognitive disorders, dyslexia is the most common. The Texas Education Agency reported that 194,214 of the state's 5.4 million students have dyslexia, a learning disability. Most of the students with dyslexia in Texas attend both public and charter schools (Texas Education Agency, 2019a). In an average general education classroom in a Texas public school, the student-to-teacher ratio in kindergarten to fourth grade is 22:1. The general education teacher can expect to have between one to four students who are dyslexic, whether or not the students have been diagnosed with dyslexia (Texas Education Agency, 2017).

Dyslexia has been linked to depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and other mental health issues that persist even into adulthood (Siddique & Ventista, 2018). Although legislators in the state of Texas have found a renewed focus on the social-emotional well-being and safety of all students, it is critically important for legislators, policymakers, and educational leaders to further explore the psychological consequences of dyslexia and to determine how public-school leaders can better identify and support the mental health of dyslexic students and provide needed training and support to teachers. This chapter provides the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, theoretical/conceptual framework, and research questions. The first chapter closes with the significance of the study, a definition of key terms, and a summary.

**Background of the Study**

In recognition of the likelihood that up to 20% of the students in any elementary general education classroom might have dyslexia (Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity, 2017), the 86th Texas Legislature used House Bill 3 in 2019 to allocate funding for the identification and treatment of dyslexia for Texas students in both public and charter schools. House Bill 3 (86th Tex. Legis., 2019 Reg. Sess., 2019) was built upon the findings of the Interim Committee on Dyslexia and Related Disorders Working Group (2011) that called for professional development funding. This funding was estimated to top $100 million a year. Texas State Representative Dan Huberty, the chief architect of House Bill 3 (86th Tex. Legis., 2019 Reg. Sess., 2019), desired the new funding to be used for identifying dyslexic students and assisting students with dyslexia in learning coping skills to deal with their dyslexia (Montgomery, 2019).

Montgomery (2019) reported that both Texas State Representative Huberty and Texas State Representative Dennis Bonnen required many years of support to learn how to cope with dyslexia. Montgomery also noted that Bonnen was identified as dyslexic in kindergarten after Bonnen's teacher characterized him as not as smart as the other children in the classroom. Bonnen supported House Bill 3 (86th Tex. Legis., 2019 Reg. Sess., 2019) because of his personal experience when his mother had to remove him from public school in Angleton, Texas, and transport him daily into Houston to attend a private school for students with dyslexia (Montgomery, 2019). Montgomery further stated that Bonnen sought equal access to quality educational programs for students with dyslexia to ensure they learn literacy skills that enable them to be successful in school and life.

Students with dyslexia have been the recipient of negative attitudes from teachers who label them as lazy, bully them, and make these students believe they are not competent learners

(Burden, 2008; Doikou-Avlidou, 2015; McNulty, 2003; Pitt & Soni, 2018; Yildiz et al., 2012). Additionally, students with dyslexia undergo bullying and verbal abuse from peers (Pitt & Soni, 2018). Students with dyslexia simultaneously struggle with both literacy acquisition and poor self-esteem and undergo social-emotional difficulties in school (Cameron, 2016; Doikou-Avlidou, 2015; International Dyslexia Association, 2017a; Jordan & Dyer, 2017; Pitt & Soni, 2018; Schultz, 2013) that decrease the likelihood for experiencing academic successes such as attending and graduating from college (Siddique & Ventista, 2018). Consequently, students with dyslexia become more likely to engage in criminal activity and to have health problems, drug addiction, and mental health challenges (Siddique & Ventista, 2018).

General education teachers receive sporadic, and sometimes inaccurate, training and information for teaching students with dyslexia (Acheampong et al., 2019; Shoulders & Krei, 2016; Sicherer, 2014; Washburn et al., 2013; Worthy et al., 2016, 2018). As a result, teachers are inadequately prepared and have little efficacy to teach these students (Shoulders & Krei, 2016). The benefits of appropriate and effective professional development were highlighted by Scott-Beale (2016). Teachers who are competent in developing the social-emotional skills of students with dyslexia have been represented as: (a) committed, (b) facilitative of positive peer interaction, (c) behavior modelers, (d) collaborative with fellow teachers, (e) focused on students' strengths, and (f) producers of safe and supportive environments (Scott-Beale, 2016). Scott-Beale posited these processes benefitted students with dyslexia who were at higher risk of experiencing depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, and other mental health challenges. Dyslexia has historically been regarded as a cognitive deficit (International Dyslexia Association, 2017a). However, dyslexic students experience concurrent mental health symptoms that include anger, depression and anxiety, lack of motivation, or low self-esteem (Doikou-Avlidou, 2015; Pitt &

Soni, 2018; Siddique & Ventista, 2018). These symptoms of anxiety, depression, anger, and low self-esteem affect students' ability to benefit from educational interventions (Casserly, 2013; Ernst & Young LLP [EY], 2018; Ruzek et al., 2016). Therefore, the Texas Education Agency (2018) required education service centers and school districts to provide general education teachers with training about dyslexia and teachers to engage in ongoing professional development to meet the needs of students with dyslexia.

In 2018, the Texas Education Agency updated its Dyslexia Handbook. In this update, the Texas Education Agency (2018) recognized the need to support the secondary effects of dyslexia because "some, though not all, students with dyslexia may also experience symptoms such as anxiety, anger, depression, lack of motivation, or low self-esteem. In such instances, appropriate instructional/referral services need to be provided to ensure each student's needs are met" (p. 14). The Texas Education Code regarding educator preparation (2017) specified the elements of the dyslexia curriculum required for obtaining teacher certification (2 Tex. Ed. Code § 21.044, 2017). The curriculum must convey content about the characteristics of dyslexia and how to identify dyslexia's symptoms in children as well as offer multisensory strategies for teaching students with dyslexia effectively. The Texas Education Code stipulated that educators must receive training to teach students with dyslexia that includes recent research and best practices for educating students with dyslexia and that continuing education for dyslexia can be offered in an online course (2 Tex. Ed. Code § 21.054, 2019).

The Region 10 Education Service Center (ESC, 2020) designed the 3-hour online Dyslexia Identification Academy to satisfy the state's dyslexia training requirements. According to Region 10 ESC, the course contains the modules of foundations, dyslexia evaluation, consideration for English learners, interpreting scores, and report writing and case studies. The

Texas Gateway offers additional courses to satisfy the six hours of continuing education credits needed by Texas teachers. The course curriculum includes a chronicle of dyslexia; district requirements, procedures, and statistics; information about recognizing the signs of dyslexia along with intervention strategies; and information about options to share with parents of students with dyslexia (Region 10 ESC, 2020). The Region 10 course was designed to be offered by other regional educational service centers. Each regional service center offers additional ongoing dyslexia training for educators. For example, the Region 4 ESC (2019) listed 32 workshops for teachers but did not list any training that specifically explicates research findings or recommended practices for identifying and addressing the social-emotional needs of dyslexic students.

Many students with dyslexia reported experiencing embarrassment, frustration, and vulnerability and being viewed as different and less competent than their peers (Doikou-Avlidou, 2015; Grover et al., 2015; Schultz, 2013). These experiences might result in higher rates of depression, anxiety, and lower self-esteem that affect the level in which these students engage in instruction (Ruzek et al., 2016; Texas Education Agency, 2018). These factors might influence the effectiveness of the cognitive intervention provided to dyslexic students (Casserly, 2013). Both emotional and academic elements of learning must work in tandem for dyslexic students to believe they are understood and valued and to be able to fully engage in the curriculum (Casserly, 2013; EY, 2018; Ruzek et al., 2016; Texas Education Agency, 2018).

In a recent study, two reading specialists who worked with struggling readers and prepared reading teachers reported that although they had been trained in dyslexia, teachers did not find the training useful in their work with students or teachers (Worthy et al., 2018). Knight (2018) concurred with others (Sorano-Ferrer et al., 2016; Worthy et al., 2018) there is a

relationship between teachers' understanding of dyslexia and their training experiences and suggested and further study should be conducted in exploring general education's teacher knowledge of dyslexia and teacher practices. With the growing body of research connecting social and emotional supports to improved curriculum engagement, Texas teachers' understanding of and training experiences about dyslexia and their pedagogical practices with students with dyslexia needed exploration (Knight, 2018; Sorano-Ferrer et al., 2016; Worthy et al., 2018).

**Statement of Problem**

Decades' worth of research demonstrated the negative effect of dyslexia on children's self-concept and self-esteem (Carawan et al., 2016; Fives, 2016; Moin, 2017; Schultz, 2013). Additional research findings showed the longer-lasting impact that extends into adulthood (Doikou-Avlidou, 2015; IDA, 2017b; Pitt & Soni, 2018; Siddique & Ventista, 2018). Longitudinal research findings indicated that children having social-emotional difficulties in school are less likely to experience academic success; less likely to attend and graduate from a postsecondary institution; more likely to engage in criminal activity; and at a higher risk of health problems, such as drug addiction, depression and other mental health challenges (Siddique & Ventista, 2018).

Children with dyslexia who attend public school must be included in general education classrooms, yet these students need extra instructional assistance from teachers trained to meet their needs in order to benefit from inclusion (Mader, 2017). Even though general education teachers must attend professional development to learn how to meet the needs of children with dyslexia, there was a gap between the training provided about dyslexia to general education teachers and the teachers' learning needs (Knight, 2018; Sorano-Ferrer et al., 2016; Worthy et

al., 2018). Doikou-Avlidou, (2015), Jordan and Dyer (2017), and Knight called for conducting research with general education teachers to explore what these teachers know about dyslexia and the social and emotional implications of dyslexia among students, as well as their practices toward children with dyslexia in their classrooms. Social and emotional risk factors associated with dyslexia affect students and general education teachers in Texas. General education teachers in Texas need training to gain the knowledge and skills required to meet the social and emotional needs of students with dyslexia. Information about the benefits and outcomes of the training according to teachers who experience it was sought.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore elementary general education teachers' perceptions regarding the dyslexia training they received for addressing the social and emotional needs of children with dyslexia in their classrooms. The state of Texas requires general education teachers to receive training to meet children's cognitive needs, and teachers might need to address any number of social and emotional needs of all their students on a daily basis. The Region 10 ESC provides the 3-hour online Dyslexia Identification Academy to satisfy the state's dyslexia training requirements for teachers throughout the state (Region 10 ESC, 2020). The course, as provided, containes the modules of foundations, dyslexia evaluation, consideration for English learners, interpreting scores, and report writing and case studies (Region 10 ESC, 2020). Although the 3-hour online Dyslexia Identification Academy is offered, it is not required and is one option available to satisfy the training requirement. The description of the training states that the course could be taken for credit only one time, and the teacher would receive a certificate of completion once the training was completed. The components of the course outline include the following:

1. Understanding the importance of Dyslexia

   a. What is Dyslexia?

   b. Dyslexia Definition Sentence-by-Sentence

2. Reading Models and Elements of Reading

   a. The Science of Reading

   b. Reading Instruction: Decoding and Comprehension

3. Dyslexia Related Disorders

   a. Is it Dyslexia or Not? Who is at Risk?

   b. Supporting Students with Dyslexia

4. Dyslexia Assessment

   a. Assessment: What, Why, When, and How

   b. Instruction and Intervention

5. A Chronicle of the Term "Dyslexia"

The Region 10 ESC Dyslexia-Statewide homepage lists training support via an online course, face-to-face training events, conferences, and webinars. The page also lists the name of a state dyslexia consultant along with contact information as a resource (Region 10 ESC, 2020).

I applied a research design of qualitative descriptive and conduct interviews to collect information from elementary general education teachers about their perceptions about the dyslexia training they received for addressing the social and emotional needs of students with dyslexia. The elementary general education teachers represented the school districts located within the southeast region of Texas. The inclusion criteria were elementary general education teachers of students in Grades 1 through 4 who report having children with dyslexia in their classrooms. Elementary general education teachers in Grades 1 through 4 were recruited because

early identification and intervention had been linked to improved student social, emotional, and academic outcomes in later grades and the likelihood of decreasing the number of risks for school failure associated with dyslexia (Doikou-Avlidou, 2015; Goldberg et al., 2003; Jordan & Dyer, 2017).

**CASEL's Social and Emotional Learning Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework guiding this study was the five core competencies for social and emotional learning developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Social and emotional learning as defined by CASEL is "the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (CASEL, 2020b, para. 1). The five core competencies include the following: (a) self-management, (b) self-awareness, (c) relationship skills, (d) social awareness, and (e) responsible decision making. The two short term goals of social and emotional learning that CASEL has identified are: (a) to promote student's self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship, and responsible decision-making skills; (b) to improve students' attitudes and beliefs about themselves, others, and their schools (CASEL, 2020a). These skills provide a foundation for long-term successes, such as positive social behaviors, less emotional distress, improved peer relationships, fewer problems with conduct, and improved academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011).

**Research Questions**

The following questions guided the exploration of elementary general education teachers' perceptions about the training they received for addressing the social and emotional needs of children with dyslexia in their classrooms:

RQ1: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the self-awareness needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ2: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the self-management needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ3: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the social awareness needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ4: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the relationship skills needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ5: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the responsible decision-making needs of students with dyslexia?

**Significance of the Study**

Doikou-Avlidou (2015), Jordan and Dyer (2017), and Knight (2018) recognized the social and emotional impact that dyslexia has on the self-esteem and emotional well-being of dyslexic students. These researchers called for further investigation into teachers' knowledge about dyslexia and how they believe it affects classroom practices. Because students with dyslexia experience higher rates of low self-esteem, depression, anger, and anxiety (Ruzek et al., 2016), this research could highlight the disabling effects of dyslexia that teachers observe in classrooms.

Additionally, Conklin (2019) suggested that future researchers should explore associations between professional development and early reading interventions as well as early screening practices and multitiered interventions used to identify and instruct students with dyslexia. Knight (2018) called for results offering an in-depth understanding of educator training in the awareness of the social and emotional implications of dyslexia and how to address the

social and emotional implications of dyslexia through classroom practices. Depending on the elementary general education teachers' understanding of how the mental and emotional symptoms of dyslexia affect students' sense of belonging, self-esteem, and engagement in instruction, the findings could guide a directional shift regarding the professional development of general education teachers and preservice teachers that could improve the academic outcomes of students with dyslexia (Acheampong et al., 2019). Furthermore, changes to professional development that might occur from the results could have a positive long-term impact on students with dyslexia that leads to greater social-emotional competence, improvements in their college and career preparation, increased mental health, and more engagement as citizens (Greenberg et al., 2017).

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Child with a Disability.** The IDEIA (2004) defined the child with a disability as having "intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this chapter as "emotional disturbance"), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities" (Sec. 602 Definitions, p. 9).

**Dyslexia**. "A disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity" (Texas Education Agency, 2018, p. 1).

**Dyslexia-related disorders**. "Disorders similar to or related to dyslexia, such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability" (Texas Education Agency, 2018, p. 1).

**Emotional regulation**. "The ability of an individual to modulate an emotion or set of emotions. Explicit emotion regulation requires conscious monitoring, using techniques such as learning to construe situations differently in order to manage them better, changing the target of an emotion (e.g., anger) in a way likely to produce a more positive outcome, and recognizing how different behaviors can be used in the service of a given emotional state" (American Psychological Association, n.d., para. 1).

**General education continuing professional education**. General education teachers in Texas must renew their standard teaching certificate and earn 150 hours of continuing professional education hours every five years (Texas Education Agency, 2019b).

**General education teacher**. A professional educator in Texas certified to provide elementary or secondary classroom instruction after meeting the requirements outlined by the State Board of Educator Certification. This educator has obtained skills for ensuring content delivery and student development and an understanding of the exceptional qualities of students presenting with giftedness or disabilities (Texas Education Agency, 2019e).

**Professional development**. This term refers to "structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, para. 3).

**Psychosocial.** "The intersection and interaction of social, cultural, and environmental influences on the mind and behavior" (American Psychological Association, n.d., para. 1).

**Psychosocial Factors.** "Social, cultural, and environmental phenomena and influences that affect mental health and behavior. These influences include social situations, relationships, and pressures, such as competition for education, health care, and other social resources; rapid

technological change; work deadlines; and changes in social roles and status (e.g., of women and minority groups)" (American Psychological Association, n.d., para. 1).

**Psychosocial Stressor.** "A life situation that creates an unusual or intense level of stress that may contribute to the development or aggravation of mental disorder, illness, or maladaptive behavior. Examples of psychosocial stressors include divorce, the death of a child, prolonged illness, unwanted change of residence, a natural catastrophe, or a highly competitive work situation" (American Psychological Association, n.d., para. 1).

**Relationship skills.** "The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed" (CASEL, 2020b, para. 1).

**Resilience**. The American Psychological Association (n.d.) defined this term in the following statement:

> The process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands. A number of factors contribute to how well people adapt to adversities, predominant among them (a) the ways in which individuals view and engage with the world, (b) the availability and quality of social resources, and (c) specific coping strategies. Psychological research demonstrates that the resources and skills associated with more positive adaptation (i.e., greater resilience) can be cultivated and practiced. Also called psychological resilience. (para. 1)

**Resiliency**. A way an individual manages to adapt and "bounce back" from life challenges (Rajan-Rankin, 2014).

**Response to intervention**. This term represents a tiered approach to intervention in students at risk for failure; interventions may be used with all students in inclusive classrooms and may be used to meet specific students' needs via direct intervention. RTI operates according to a pyramid of three tiers. Tier 1 includes core classroom instruction aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and addresses the needs of approximately 80% of students. In Tier 2, identified students receive small group instruction along with core class instruction. Tier 2 meets the needs of 10% to 15% of the students. Students who have not responded to Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction receive custom interventions in small groups or individualized instruction in Tier 3. Tier 3 instruction allows for meeting the needs of approximately 5% to 10% of the students (Texas Education Agency, 2019d).

**Responsible decision-making.** "The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others" (CASEL, 2020b, para. 1).

**Self-awareness.** "The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism" (CASEL, 2020b, para. 1).

**Self-esteem**. This term represents how much individuals regard themselves as worthy and competent; low self-esteem means individuals regard themselves as inadequate, unworthy, and incapable (Carawan et al., 2016).

**Self-management.** "The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses,

motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals"
(CASEL, 2020b, para. 1).

**Social awareness.** "The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from
diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to
recognize family, school, and community resources and supports" (CASEL, 2020b, para. 1).

**Social-emotional learning**. "The process through which children and adults understand
and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish
and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (CASEL, 2020b, para. 1).

**Social needs.** Within Maslow's hierarchy of needs pyramid, social needs align with love
and belongingness in which individuals seek friendship, family, and social intimacy before they
can see to meet their self-esteem needs (Harrigan & Commons, 2015).

**Summary and Organization of the Study**

Dyslexia has historically been known as a cognitive difference that can impact literacy
skills and can affect up to 15% to 20% of the general population (International Dyslexia
Association, 2002). Students with dyslexia have higher risks for depression, anger, anxiety, and
low self-esteem (Texas Education Agency, 2018). However, teachers have reported being
inadequately trained to teach students with dyslexia in general education classrooms
(Acheampong et al., 2019; Sicherer, 2014; Washburn et al., 2013; Worthy et al., 2016, 2018).
Doikou-Avlidou (2015), Jordan and Dyer (2017), and Knight (2018) called for conducting
research with general education teachers to discern what these teachers know about dyslexia and
the social and emotional effects of dyslexia among students.

Therefore, this chapter introduced this study of elementary general education teachers'
perceptions about the training they received for addressing the social and emotional needs of

children with dyslexia in their classrooms. The chapter also contained the study's significance,

the definition of key terms, and conceptual framework. Chapter 2 presents search strategies and a

review of the literature that represents a comprehensive overview of the research supporting the

need for this study. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology, assumptions, delimitations, and

limitations as well as the procedures for sample selection, instrumentation, data collection, and

statistical analysis. Chapter 4 covers the results of the research, and Chapter 5 includes the

discussion, conclusion, and recommendations for future study.

**Chapter 2: Review of Literature**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore elementary general education teachers' perceptions regarding the dyslexia professional development training they received for addressing the social and emotional needs of children with dyslexia in their classrooms. This chapter includes a thorough investigation and analysis of relevant research studies that demonstrate the importance of this research. The chapter examines the importance of the professional development for general education teachers with a focus on the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning's (CASEL's) five core competencies and its implications for elementary general education teachers' perceptions of their training and experiences in inclusive classrooms containing students with dyslexia. This chapter explores the history of dyslexia and the evolution of its definition, along with misconceptions about dyslexia. The review of the literature highlighted the need for professional development to address the social and emotional needs of students with dyslexia and considers the legislation that provides guidance for education service centers, school districts, and teachers. Included in this chapter are the search strategies for collecting the literature. Finally, all information collected from the literature is recapitulated to provide conclusions and implications related to the need for this study.

**Search Strategies for Collecting Literature**

All information collected for the purpose of this literature review came from both academic and state policy sources. A majority of the sources were published within the last 6 to 8 years. The scholarly databases from which the publications were extracted included ERIC, SAGE, JSTOR, EBSCOHost, ProQuest, Questia, and ResearchGate. Additional sources include reports and data from government agencies, such as the Texas Education Agency and the U.S.

Department of Education, and educationally oriented organizations, such as Children's Learning

Institute and the International Dyslexia Association. Searched terms or phrases include

combinations of the following keywords: *dyslexia*, *dyslexic*, *social*, *emotional*, *psychosocial*,

*parents*, *anxiety*, *stress*, *bullying*, *depression*, *self-esteem*, *self-perception*, *self-concept*,

*experiences*, *coping*, *children*, *United States*, *US*, *teacher*, *educator*, *professional development*,

*or training*.

**CASEL's Five Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies**

CASEL (2020b) developed five social and emotional learning competencies: (a) self-

management, (b) self-awareness, (c) relationship skills, (d) social awareness, and (e) responsible

decision making. The use of this integrated framework encourages competence in interpersonal,

intrapersonal, and cognitive domains. CASEL supports addressing social and emotional learning

through a system-wide approach to ensure a caring, engaging, and equitable educational

environment through practices to engage students in not only academic, but also social and

emotional growth. CASEL also emphasizes that the success of an evidence-based social and

emotional learning program is determined by and high-quality implementation through school

and district-wide practices and professional development endorsed by administrators. CASEL

reports that two important predictors of a students' social and academic performance are the

interactions between the teacher and the student and instructional practices within the classroom.

By training teachers in a teacher-focused social and emotional learning program, teachers

become emotionally supportive and gain the capacity to utilize more positive and less punitive

discipline practices and respond to the students' needs. These practices also improve the

development of these skills in students.

*Self-Management*

Managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivation one's self to set and accomplish goals are skills of self-management (CASEL, 2020b). Six skills are applied during self-management: (a) stress management, (b) impulse control, (c) self-motivation, (d) self-discipline, (e) organizational skills, and (f) goal-setting. Developing these skills is accomplished through the management of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (CASEL, 2020b).

*Self-Awareness*

The core competency of self-awareness encompasses the skills listed by CASEL (2020b) as follows: (a) developing an accurate self-perception, (b) identifying emotions, (c) recognizing strengths, (d) building self-confidence, and (e) forming self-efficacy. Understanding how emotions, thoughts, and values influence behaviors to recognize strengths and limitations through a growth mindset while still being confident and optimistic represents self-awareness (CASEL, 2020b).

*Relationship Skills*

Building and maintaining appropriate relationships among diverse groups of people are important factors in relationships (CASEL, 2020b). Cooperation, collaboration, and negotiation are also a part of relationship skill-building. Along with these, CASEL (2020b) referred to four additional skills: (a) social engagement, (b) relationship-building, (c) communication, and (d) teamwork.

*Social Awareness*

Understanding social and ethical behavior norms along with being able to identify support systems all are part of being socially aware (CASEL, 2020b). Social awareness also means that an individual understands the perspective of others, even from those whose

background and culture vary from theirs. The four skills included in the social awareness competency include: (a) empathy, (b) perspective-taking, (c) respect for others, and (d) appreciating diversity (CASEL, 2020b).

### *Responsible Decision-Making*

Evaluating and making ethical choices regarding one's personal behavior and understand how the consequences of those actions may impact others are aspects of responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020b). The six key skills in responsible decision-making are: (a) identification of problems, (b) analysis of situations, (c) problem-solving skills, (d) ability to evaluate, (e) reflection skills, and (f) sense of ethical responsibility (CASEL, 2020b).

### Social and Emotional Impact of Dyslexia

Over time, children who experience social and emotional difficulties in school become less likely to experience academic success; less likely to attend and graduate from college; more likely to engage in criminal activity; and more likely to have health problems, drug addiction, depression, and other mental health challenges (Siddique & Ventista, 2018). These students' secondary symptoms of anger, low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression may impede the effectiveness of interventions (Casserly, 2013; EY, 2018; Ruzek et al., 2016). The long-term effects of self-doubt and blame include diminished self-esteem that reduces the ability of students with dyslexia to handle the daily stressors of school, work, and social interactions (Schultz, 2013). Thus, researchers showed evidence of the negative social and emotional consequences of dyslexia (Cameron, 2016; Doikou-Avlidou, 2015; International Dyslexia Association, 2017b; Jordan & Dyer, 2017; Pitt & Soni, 2018; Schultz, 2013).

Educational research has basically focused on improving academic skills because performance on skill-based assessments such as standardized tests can be measured and are

linked to academic performance and future pathways for occupational success (Siddique &

Ventista, 2018). One of the main reasons why this problem needed further study was the long-

lasting negative impact that the lack of social and emotional support structures for students with

dyslexia in educational settings are said to have on students' self-esteem and self-concept

(Cameron, 2016; Carawan et al., 2016; Doikou-Avlidou, 2015; Moin, 2017; Orth & Robins,

2014). Ignoring the social and emotional impacts of dyslexia represents a cause for concern due

to findings showing dyslexia as a condition with no "cure" that continues throughout adulthood

(Doikou-Avlidou, 2015; Moin, 2017; Pitt & Soni, 2018). Additional social and emotional

constructs that have received attention from researchers include self-esteem, self-concept, and

resiliency. Further, the psychosocial effects of dyslexia are discussed.

### *Self-Esteem*

Self-acceptance, self-confidence, social and physical self-acceptance, and academic self-

acceptance all fuel self-esteem (Bano et al., 2015). Self-esteem is the extent to which individuals

see themselves as worthy and capable, while low self-esteem leads to beliefs of inadequacy,

unworthiness, and insufficiency (Carawan et al., 2016). Children with dyslexia are at greater risk

of experiencing low self-esteem than children who are not dyslexic. Low self-esteem can

continue through adulthood, so it is essential to identify how self-esteem intersects with dyslexia

(Carawan et al., 2016; IDA, 2017b; Schultz, 2013; Siddique & Ventista, 2018).

Furthermore, Pitt and Soni (2018) explored the influence that both teachers and peers

have on the self-esteem and academic achievement of students with dyslexia. The participants

included both first-year university students and secondary school students who were dyslexic.

They revealed the key role that both teachers and students played in influencing the self-esteem

of students with dyslexia (Pitt & Soni, 2018). The findings revealed the students with dyslexia

experienced verbal abuse and teasing from their peers as well as negative attitudes from their teachers regarding their struggles with literacy. These experiences negatively affected the self-esteem of students with dyslexia (Pitt & Soni, 2018). Additionally, Pitt and Soni offered a call to action indicating an urgent need to identify specific interventions, which may include specific tools, counseling, or shifts in mindset for assisting young people in developing coping skills and resiliency in an effort to impact their self-esteem (Pitt & Soni, 2018). Furthermore, a case has been built for intervention supports alongside remedial reading intervention that would include counseling and working on self-esteem (Pitt & Soni, 2018). Pitt and Soni (2018) supported Armstrong and Squires' (2014) conclusion that counseling with a focus on improving self-esteem shows more efficacy for improvement of reading skills than spending the same amount of time in an intervention designed to focus only on developing a student's reading skills.

Researchers showed that self-esteem levels could be used to predict physical and mental health, nature of relationships with others, connections with a support network, and participation in the workforce (Carawan et al., 2016; Orth & Robins, 2014). Additionally, research findings indicated an incongruence exists between the self-concept of students with dyslexia and their ideal-self beliefs that affect self-esteem levels (Doikou-Avlidou, 2015). Decade's worth of research findings demonstrated the negative effect dyslexia has on children's self-esteem and self-concept (Carawan et al., 2016; Fives, 2016; Moin, 2017; Schultz, 2013) while additional research findings revealed the long-lasting impact of low self-esteem childhood affecting students with dyslexia into adulthood (Doikou-Avlidou, 2015; IDA, 2017b; Pitt & Soni, 2018; Siddique & Ventista, 2018).

*Self-Concept*

Self-concept refers to an individual's opinion of himself or herself and the abilities they have formed from their experiences with their environments (Marsh et al., 2018). It is the degree to which an individual has a self-belief about being capable and worthwhile. Individuals who experience low self-esteem believe themselves to be inadequate and allow their deficiencies to define them (Cameron, 2016; Moin, 2017; Orth & Robins, 2014). Carawan et al. (2016) found that children with a reading disability score lower on their perceptions of academic ability, experience a sense of self that has less value, and exhibit higher levels of stress. Schultz (2013) suggested that many individuals do not have a clear understanding of their learning disability, so they tend to internalize their problems as their own fault. When school experiences are affected by dyslexia, individuals might experience an erosion of self-image and a false notion of being incapable or inadequate (Doikou-Avlidou, 2015; International Dyslexia Association, 2017a, 2017b).

*Resiliency*

In seminal research, Luthar and Cicchetti (2000) characterized resiliency as a self-motivated process in which individuals positively adapt to their environments after having experiences of considerable trauma or adversity. More recently, Rajan-Rankin (2014) defined resiliency as the way an individual adapts to and *bounces back* from life challenges. Additionally, the American Psychological Association (2020) shared that resiliency, or psychosocial resilience, is the ability to be mentally and emotionally flexible and to adapt successfully to difficult or challenging life events while adjusting to external and internal demands. Resilience, as a protective factor, involves individuals producing a sense of well-being that includes a positive outlook, hope, optimism, self-assurance, as well as reduced stress (Rajan-

Rankin, 2014). However, the social and emotional development of resiliency does not happen naturally because resiliency develops by receiving support through interactions with caring adults and peers; therefore, these relationships are crucial in that developmental process (Rakap et al., 2018).

Children are said to demonstrate resilience when they have experienced supportive and encouraging individuals early in their lives and have identified areas in which they can succeed (International Dyslexia Association, 2017a, 2017b). Students are more engaged when they have positive relationships in emotionally supportive classrooms based on supportive teacher-student interactions (Martin & Collie, 2019; Ruzek et al., 2016). Teachers offer emotional support by showing genuine concern, care, and respect for their students and seeking to understand their students' perceptions about events and points of view (Ruzek et al., 2016). When teachers build relationships in and outside of the classroom, they promote their students' sense of support from others. Supportive teachers take the time to build on a student's strengths, respond to students' questions, avoid embarrassing or insulting students, and show care for students' well-being that enables students to build their resilience (Grover et al., 2015).

### Psychosocial Effects of Dyslexia

The American Psychological Association (n.d.) defined the term psychosocial as the point where the social, environmental, and cultural influences on the mind and behavior intersect. Also, psychosocial development occurs throughout childhood as children face life situations that create varying levels of stress that could influence the future development of maladaptive behavior or a mental disorder or illness. For some individuals with dyslexia, anxiety occurs as a reaction to stressors, such as the likelihood of an individual's dyslexia being publicly exposed. Behavior that could lead to exposure includes reading aloud in a classroom, during

which the individual could undergo a sense of humiliation should a mistake occur while reading before a classroom of peers (Schultz, 2013). Experiences with a high risk of exposure can lead to the self-belief of inferiority and increase the sensations of stress and anxiety because students in school care about how other people regard them (Doikou-Avlidou, 2015).

Students with dyslexia who are concerned about how they are perceived by their peers are at risk for lower self-esteem (Bano et al., 2015). Students' self-beliefs are affected by the treatment they received from peers and teachers. Cameron (2016) posited that the feedback loop involves the students using poor performance results to confirm their negative beliefs or challenge their positive beliefs about themselves and their intellectual ability, which impacts their academic engagement and ultimate success. Some students with dyslexia have shared they have been called lazy (McNulty, 2003), bullied by their teachers and peers, and manipulated into believing they were not as academically competent as other students (Burden, 2008; Doikou-Avlidou, 2015; Yildiz et al., 2012). Doikou-Avlidou (2015), Pitt and Soni (2018), and Siddique and Ventista (2018) found secondary symptoms that include anger, low self-esteem, lack of motivation, anxiety, and depression to affect students with dyslexia negatively.

Belonging to an emotionally supportive school community is critical for students gaining engagement, higher grades, and self-efficacy (Grover et al., 2015). This emotionally supportive school community also provides a place for students to take both personal and academic risks and lends itself to higher student engagement, which can lead to higher academic achievement (Grover et al., 2015; Roberts et al., 2008; Texas Education Agency, 2018). For students with a learning disability, educational environments may contain students' first opportunities to be perceived by their peers or teachers as different from others, which can lead to a sensation of disconnectedness (Grover et al., 2015). Again, Riddick (2010) reported that a positive self-

concept is confirmed by a sense of acceptance, competence, and worth that begins within the family, occurs at school, and then spreads to the community, therefore emphasizing the critical nature of supportive relationships in classrooms for students with dyslexia.

Siddique and Ventista (2018) conducted a systematic review of 13 studies involving interventions with students to improve their noncognitive social skills. Siddique and Ventista applied the term skills instead of traits because skills can be learned and improved, whereas the term trait implies a born, unchangeable, and stable characteristic of a person. The studies reviewed included interventions for social skills, grit/resilience, emotional wellbeing, motivation, locus of control, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-regulation. Enhancing children's social skills and connectedness early in their lives provide them with a foundation for the achievement of adult well-being. The findings from across the 13 studies suggested positive evidence for improving students' noncognitive skills through school-based interventions (Siddique & Ventista, 2018). These findings supported Casserly's (2013) in which students with dyslexia reported their teachers affected their self-esteem. Moreover, Pitt and Soni (2018) suggested teachers should respond to the personal and social, and emotional needs of students with dyslexia as well as to their academic needs. It is of importance to understand how professional development training helps teachers to create social and emotional support systems that can be used in order for the self-management, relationship skills, social awareness, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making abilities to thrive in students with dyslexia.

Researchers called for empirical inquiry into the social and emotional experiences of individuals with dyslexia (Carawan et al., 2016; Siddique et al., 2016; Ventista, 2018). Less knowledge has been generated about noncognitive outcomes, such as social and emotional stability, high self-esteem, and resiliency, compared to available knowledge about the

effectiveness of approaches used for improving the academic or cognitive outcomes among students with dyslexia. The knowledge gap may be due to the difficulty associated with measuring noncognitive outcomes through observation and self-report methods of data collection (Siddique & Ventista, 2018). Jordan and Dyer (2017) shared although studies have been conducted that indicate early intervention programs have proven successful in improving psychological well-being for students with special education needs (SEN) such as Autism and ADHD, further study needs to be done specifically with reference to dyslexia.

**Nature of Dyslexia**

Stein (2018) noted the long history of educators, physicians, and psychologists such as Adolf Kussmaul, Rudolf Berlin, Pringle Morgan, and Jean Piaget studying child development in an effort to better understand how children develop, how children learn, and how children's brains function. The early studies set the foundation for examining and addressing children's learning challenges and provided a framework for intervention strategies. Although the learning disability of dyslexia has been studied for decades, there seems to still be disagreement regarding what it is and how to define it (Cameron, 2016; Knight, 2018; Stein, 2018; Worthy et al., 2018). Some researchers questioned the label of dyslexia and suggested he way the label is interpreted can vary from district to district and even from campus to campus (Cameron, 2016; Stein, 2018; Worthy et al., 2018). In reviews of multiple definitions, two criteria consistently appeared across definitions of dyslexia (International Dyslexia Association, n.d.). The typical components of dyslexia include difficulty with literacy skills (Knight, 2018) and an unexpected difficulty based on age, intellect, and schooling (Sorano-Ferrer et al., 2016).

Stein (2018) discussed the history of dyslexia. Dyslexia was originally represented by a phenomenon known as *word blindness* in 1878 by Adolf Kussmaul in reference to stroke patients

who still had the ability to speak and reason, but had lost their ability to read (Stein, 2018). In 1884, the condition of word blindness was renamed by Rudolf Berlin as *dyslexia*. Later, according to Stein, the term changed to *developmental dyslexia* by Pringle Morgan. Pringle Morgan described a smart, young male named Percy who was unable to read, despite having high intelligence. Pringle Morgan was of the opinion that Percy suffered from *congenital word blindness* and described the condition as hereditary with this terminology (Stein, 2018).

The Texas Education Agency (2018) included two definitions in its guidance document. First, dyslexia is a "disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity" (Heath and Safety, 2019, 38.003[d][1]). Of constitutional origin means that it originated at birth. Second, the Texas Education Agency recognized the International Dyslexia Association's (2002) definition and criteria as follows:

> Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. (para. 1)

Moreover, the roles of the brain's anatomy, genetics, chemistry, and functioning have been included in studies of developmental dyslexia (Ozernov-Palchik & Gaab, 2016). Studies have been conducted in combination with reading interventions to gain information regarding the

influences of genetics (Eicher & Gruen, 2013; Ozernov-Palchik & Gaab, 2016; Protopapas & Parrila, 2018). In an effort to explain difficulties with processing written form (orthography) and sound structure (phonology), neuroimaging studies have been conducted to examine the brain anatomy and function of the brains of individuals with dyslexia (Eicher & Gruen, 2013; Protopapas & Parrila, 2018).

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a technique used to visualize both the anatomy of the brain as well as how it functions (Eicher & Gruen, 2013). The images produced by the MRI provides researchers with information about the amount of grey and white matter and the integrity of the white matter in the brain, the chemicals used to communicate between brain cells, and the location of active neurons (Eicher & Gruen, 2013). Eicher and Gruen also noted a functional MRI (fMRI) provides images of where the neurons are most active and show links to increased blood flow. Researchers inferred that more activity or blood flow to an area is connected to an activity of the participant, such as reading simple words (Eicher & Gruen, 2013).

Reading is a creation of human culture, therefore, there is no particular section of the brain considered the reading center (Protopapas & Parrila, 2018). With this understanding, researchers have hypothesized the regions of the brain that govern spoken language and object recognition are rerouted and networked by synapses firing to serve the purpose of comprehending written forms of communication (Horowitz-Kraus et al., 2016). A network of regions in the left hemisphere of the brain has been noted to support the function of reading (Horowitz-Kraus et al., 2016).

Horowitz-Kraus et al. (2016) stated that brain imaging revealed a connection between dyslexia and the structure of the brain. In the left hemisphere's temporal lobe, what is typically seen is the left-greater-than-the-right asymmetry; however, this asymmetry has not been

observed in the brains of deceased individuals with dyslexia (Horowitz-Kraus et al., 2016). Additionally, researchers found a shift of brain tissue to the surface of the brain (Horowitz-Kraus et al., 2016). In the results of a study conducted from different countries using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), Ziegler et al. (2003) concluded the altered left hemisphere areas of the brain observed throughout the world confirm that dyslexia is universal across all languages.

Ozernov-Palchik and Gaab (2016) observed anatomical and functional changes in the brains of individuals with dyslexia after receiving effective reading instruction. Ozernov-Palchik and Gaab further supported the notion of brain-based differences between individuals who benefit from effective reading intervention. Based on their findings, they concluded that effective reading instruction could actually change the anatomy and functioning of a dyslexic brain.

**Misconceptions About Dyslexia**

Common myths about dyslexia still exist (Acheampong et al., 2019; Echegaray-Bengoa et al., 2017; Knight, 2018; Thorwarth, 2014; Washburn et al., 2017). Some common misconceptions about dyslexia are: (a) reversal of letters and numbers, (b) color overlays or glasses should be used, (c) higher rates of dyslexia occurs in boys over girls, (d) dyslexia can be outgrown, (e) only English speakers can be dyslexic, (f) all dyslexic students qualify for special education, (g) dyslexic students never learn how to read, and (h) a specialized dyslexia font should be used with dyslexic students (Acheampong et al., 2019; Echegaray-Bengoa et al., 2017; Knight, 2018; Texas Education Agency, 2018; Washburn et al., 2017). Teachers practicing under these misconceptions may prevent students from receiving timely and appropriate identification of and intervention for dyslexia (Conklin, 2019).

In the state of Texas, dyslexia intervention was not funded until the 86th Texas legislative session of 2019 that passed House Bill 3 (86th Tex. Legis., 2019 Reg. Sess., 2019) to fund public-school districts with an allotment for intervening with students identified as having dyslexia or a related disorder. Texas Education Code's Allotment for Students with Dyslexia or Related Disorder (2109) stated that public-school districts are entitled to an annual allotment that equals the basic allotment multiplied times 0.1 or a greater amount provided by appropriation. This amount equals $616.00 per student (Texas Education Agency, 2019f).

Texas Education Agency's (2018) Dyslexia Handbook provides a flowchart which informs districts that when a student qualifies as dyslexic, they can receive services either through special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004), which is the most recent subsequent amendment to the original Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975; or through Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq., 1973), which was passed as an antidiscrimination statute to protect individuals against discrimination related to disability (Office of Civil Rights, 2013). Section 504 represented the United States' first civil rights law for persons with disabilities of all types and enrolled in public schools. Students who qualify for special education and are dyslexic are entitled to both the IDEA/IDEIA special education funds and dyslexia allotments (Texas Education Agency, 2019f).

**Dyslexia and State Law**

The Texas Education Agency (2019a) reported that 194,214 of the state's 5.4-million students have dyslexia as a learning disability and currently attend both traditional public schools and charter schools in the state of Texas. In an average elementary-level Texas general education classroom, the student to teacher ratio is 22 students per teacher (Texas Education Agency,

2017). A single general education classroom teacher can expect that one to four students in a classroom have dyslexia, whether or not it is diagnosed (Texas Education Agency, 2017).

Consequently, the 86th Texas Legislature, as one among several other states, recently passed House Bill 3 in 2019 to support students with dyslexia in public classrooms (86th Tex. Legis., 2019 Reg. Sess., 2019). School districts, or local education agencies, have an obligation to provide professional development to their educators in the identification and treatment of dyslexia (2 Tex. Ed. Code § 21.044, 2017). Teachers are required to have training to use valid and reliable assessment tools to screen students for dyslexia as well as about the use of evidence-based practices for the remediation of dyslexia (2 Tex. Ed. Code § 21.044, 2017).

In 1985, Texas required school districts to test students for dyslexia at appropriate times (2 Tex. Ed. Code § 38.003, 2017). At that time, the Texas Education Agency encouraged but did not require school districts to conduct early intervention testing for dyslexia with students. The code's language of appropriate times was vague and was interpreted differently by each school district and charter school, and many districts failed to adequately detect and treat students with dyslexia (Interim Committee on Dyslexia and Related Disorders Working Group, 2011). The vague language, coupled with additional factors of students' reading levels and involvement in response to intervention (RTI) programs and of teacher or parent input, presented challenges in ensuring statewide consistency for applying the appropriate time's language when testing students for dyslexia (Interim Committee on Dyslexia and Related Disorders Working Group, 2011).

In 2017, the Screening and Treatment for Dyslexia and Related Disorders was amended by the passage of House Bill 1886 (85th Tex. Legis., 2017 Reg. Sess., 2017). House Bill 1886 required early intervention and testing for dyslexia and related disorders to be conducted with all

students attending public schools during kindergarten and first grade (85th Tex. Legis., 2017 Reg. Sess., 2017). House Bill 3 (86th Tex. Legis., 2019 Reg. Sess., 2019) meant the state allocated funding for the identification and treatment of dyslexia for Texas students in both public and charter schools. This funding was estimated to top $100 million annually (Montgomery, 2019).

Based on the laws and the legislative actions of the 84th and 85th Texas Legislatures, updates to the Texas Education Code and the Texas Administrative Code have occurred. First, curriculum requirements for teacher preparation programs required curriculum to include the nature of dyslexia, identification of dyslexia, and the multisensory approaches know to be effective when teaching students with dyslexia (2 Tex. Ed. Code § 21.044, 2017). The systematic, multisensory strategies must include all learning pathways, such as the kinesthetic, tactile, auditory, and visual, to enhance memory and learning. The student advancement (2 Tex. Ed. Code § 28.021, 2011) and reading diagnosis codes (2 Tex. Ed. Code § 28.006, 2019) established guidelines for measuring academic achievement or proficiency for those students who have dyslexia. Additionally, the codes established timelines in which students must be screened for dyslexia. Finally, the Screening and Treatment for Dyslexia and Related Disorders code required the Texas Education Agency to publish an annual list of dyslexia training opportunities for teachers to satisfy their continuing education requirements (2 Tex. Ed. Code § 38.003, 2017).

The state added requirements for how districts must record and report the number of dyslexic students identified and served (2 Tex. Ed. Code § 38.003, 2017). The curriculum requirements for teachers found in the Texas Administrative Code mandated that any teacher providing reading instruction to a student with dyslexia must be highly trained to deliver

dyslexia-oriented instruction (19 Tex. Admin. Code § 74.28, 2019). Any teacher, whether a master reading teacher, reading specialist, special education teacher, or general education teacher, who provides instruction to students with dyslexia must have additional, documented dyslexia training aligned to the requirements outlined in the curriculum requirements (19 Tex. Admin. Code § 74.28, 2019). The Texas Administrative Code states that for students with dyslexia and related disorders, teachers responsible for screening for dyslexia and intervening with students with dyslexia and related disorders must have training for individualized, multisensory, intensive, and phonetic interventions as well as for the writing and spelling instruction strategies described in the Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders. The Texas Administrative Code further states that general education teachers' professional development activities must include these instructional strategies, and each open-enrollment charter school and public district have the responsibility for fulfilling this mandate.

Additionally, in the 86th legislative session in 2019, Texas Governor Abbot signed House Bill 3 into law to provide school districts with additional funds to be utilized for strengthening Texas school students' access to mental health services (86th Tex. Legis., 2019 Reg. Sess., 2019). Additionally, for the first time, the 86th Texas Legislature allocated funding through Texas Education Code Sec. 48.103 for supporting students with dyslexia. Texas public schools received an opportunity to support the mental health of dyslexic students and to provide training and support to the general education teachers serving dyslexic students in their classrooms (2 Tex. Ed. Code § 48.103, 2019).

**Dyslexia Identification and Accommodations**

Early identification and intervention for dyslexia are vital to building a strong literacy foundation for students and prevents the widening of the gap between students with dyslexia and

their peers (International Dyslexia Association, 2017a; Texas Education Agency, 2018). In 2017, a requirement of House Bill 1886 was the screening of all kindergarten and first-grade students for dyslexia and related disorders (85th Tex. Legis., 2017 Reg. Sess., 2017). An associated law also requires that students in kindergarten through second grade be given a screening to diagnose reading and comprehension level (19 Tex. Admin. Code § 232.11, 2018; Texas Education Agency, 2018). The data for Table 1 were compiled from the Texas Education Agency (2018, p. 12). Table 1 contains the skills that must be addressed in the instruments used to screen for dyslexia, regardless of the primary language of the student.

**Table 1**

*Criteria for English and Spanish Screening Instruments*

| Kindergarten | First Grade |
| --- | --- |
| Decoding Skills | Decoding Skills |
| Letter Knowledge | Letter Knowledge |
| Listening Comprehension | Listening Comprehension |
| Phonemic Awareness | Phonemic Awareness |
| Phonological Awareness | Phonological Awareness |
| Sound-Symbol Recognition | Reading Accuracy |
| Spelling | Reading Rate |
| | Sound-Symbol Recognition |
| | Spelling |

Furthermore, districts must administer a reading screening for any student entering seventh grade who was not successful on the sixth-grade state reading assessment (Texas

Education Agency, 2018). The Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency provided an

approved list for districts to use for screening purposes. In the state of Texas, there is no specific

screening instrument that districts are required to use; however, there are specific skills that the

screening instrument must address (Texas Education Agency, 2018). These skills could include

phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, sound-symbol recognition, and

a list of others based upon the grade level of the student (Texas Education Agency, 2018). Part of

the identification process is the initial referral from teachers or the student's parent (Texas

Education Agency, 2018). Figure 1 represents the flowchart that the Texas Education Agency

created for districts to use for Universal Screening and Data Review for Reading Risk.

**Figure 1**

*Universal Screening and Data Review Process for Reading Risk From the Texas Education*
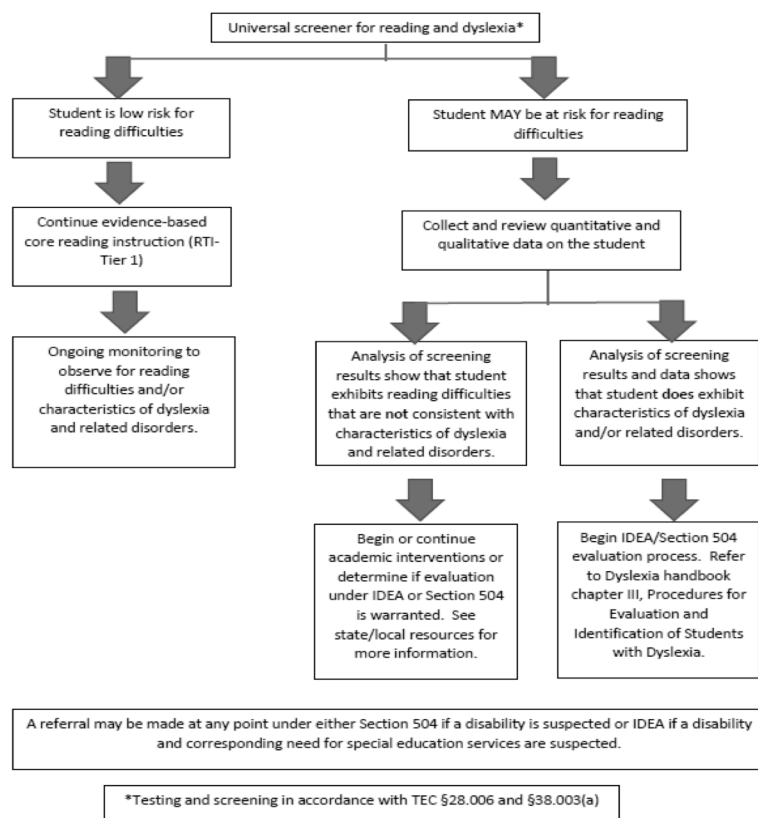
*Agency (2018)*

The student may exhibit some behaviors that are unexpected for their age, education level, or intellectual abilities (International Dyslexia Association, 2017b; Texas Education Agency, 2018; Washburn et al., 2017). The behaviors that may be observed include the following: (a) guessing, (b) difficulty sounding out words in the proper order, (c) avoidance behavior, (d) inability to focus when reading, (e) lack automaticity and self-correcting. Multiple risk factors that have been associated with dyslexia (International Dyslexia Association, 2017a).

Because this study pertained to Texas, the Texas Education Agency's (2018) list of dyslexia-related risk factors were relevant. The Texas Education Agency (2018) listed behaviors categorized from preschool to postsecondary and includes behaviors such as delayed speech, difficulty with rhyming words, phonemic awareness activities, word, and name retrieval, vocabulary acquisition, aversion or dislike of reading, note-taking, pronouncing words, and sequencing. However, the list was not exhaustive of all behaviors that leave students at risk, according to the Texas Education Agency (2018). Additionally, not all students with dyslexia exhibit these behaviors (International Dyslexia Association, 2017b), and there may be other behaviors that apply to students with dyslexia that the Texas Education Agency did not include. As previously mentioned, a student's parent may also request dyslexia testing for their child. A family history of dyslexia is a strong predictor of dyslexia in one or more children (International Dyslexia Association, 2017b; Texas Education Agency, 2018).

Once a student progresses through the dyslexia disability testing process and is identified with dyslexia, an intervention plan is created (Texas Education Agency, 2018). This plan includes entering a code for the student in the Texas State Data System (TSDS) Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), instructional interventions, and classroom and testing accommodations. The district is entitled to annual funding that is equal to the basic

allocation multiplied 0.10 times for each eligible student with dyslexia or a related disorder identified with a program intended code (PIC) 37 and receiving dyslexia services as coded in TSDS and PEIMS (Texas Education Agency, 2019f). The basic allotment per student with dyslexia is $616.00. The spending requirement for the allotment is under local control. No more than 20% of the funds can be spent on a private provider to provide additional services to supplement services received at the public-school campus (Texas Education Agency, 2019f).

The Texas Education Agency (2019f) applied four codes to report the level of need of the students identified as dyslexic. First, a code of 00 means the student has dyslexia but does not receive services for dyslexia or a related disorder. Second, a code of 01 means the student receives services for dyslexia or related disorder under special education through IDEA/IDEIA. Third, a code of 02 means the student receives instruction that meets the program standards established through the State Board of Education (SBOE) and is provided by a trained professional. Fourth, a code of 03 means the student is permitted to utilize classroom modifications and accommodations in the administration of assessments (Texas Education Agency, 2019f).

The Texas Education Agency (2018) provided resources for districts seeking to use acceptable accommodations considered to be the following:

- Copies of notes (e.g., teacher- or peer-provided)

- Note-taking assistance

- Additional time on class assignments and tests

- Reduced/shortened assignments (e.g., chunking assignments into manageable units, fewer items given on a classroom test or homework assignment without eliminating concepts, or student planner to assist with assignments)

- Alternative test location that provides a quiet environment and reduces distractions

- Priority seating assignment

- Oral reading of directions or written material

- Word banks

- Audiobooks

- Text to speech

- Speech to text

- Electronic spellers

- Electronic dictionaries

- Formula charts

- Adaptive learning tools and features in software programs. (p. 53)

These accommodations are assigned based upon each student's unique needs (Texas Education Agency, 2018). Additionally, the accommodations should be routinely offered both in the classroom and in testing situations (International Dyslexia Association, 2017a; Texas Education Agency, 2018).

**Teacher Training and Professional Development Requirements Related to Dyslexia**

Ongoing training and development are required for educators to receive continuing professional education credits (Texas Education Agency, 2019b). The Texas Education Agency (2019b) provided specific guidelines on the required training for individuals seeking a teaching certification. In 1999, the Requirement for Educator Preparation Programs Administrative Code mandated individuals seeking initial teacher certification in Texas must be trained to detect dyslexia in students and provide instruction to students with dyslexia (19 Tex. Admin. Code 228.30, 1999). The code further states that teachers must receive instruction about the nature of

dyslexia, how to identify dyslexia, and the use of effective, multisensory strategies for teaching students with dyslexia. Additionally, teachers need training in students' mental health and substance abuse as well as youth suicide. These requirements have evolved with the most regulatory amendments added in 2018 (Texas Education Agency, 2019c). To gain knowledge and skills for addressing students' mental health, training teaching, and intervention strategies for dealing with a student with mental or emotional disorders is necessary (Texas Education Agency, 2019c).

According to the Texas Education Agency (2015), early intervention is a critical factor in children's healthy social-emotional development. Social-emotional competence presents as the ability of an individual to care about self and others, manage the emotional aspects of their lives, and have a positive sense of self-worth (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017). According to the CASEL (2020b), the five social and emotional learning competencies include self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship skills. Early childhood teachers are provided guidelines to ensure the appropriate social and emotional competencies are in place for school readiness. The Texas Education Agency's (2015) prekindergarten guidelines included a domain for social and emotional development. They stated that when children develop strong personal and social skills, they gain a strengthened sense of who they are and what they can do. Even though the state of Texas' early childhood preschool curriculum includes a component for social-emotional competency development, the teachers did not find the training useful in their work with students (Worthy et al., 2016). Children's Learning Institute (2017) reported partnering with the Texas Education Agency to provide online training as a resource to assist teachers in navigating the prekindergarten curriculum requirements, which includes social and emotional development.

Additional continuing professional development as required by the Texas Education Agency (2019c) includes teachers learning to identify youth in need and address these youths' mental health issues and possible characteristics of dyslexia. An educator who teaches students with dyslexia must have received training about recent research and best practices for educating students with dyslexia. This training may be completed through an online course (2 Tex. Ed. Code § 21.054, 2019). Furthermore, the Continuing Education section stated in its requirements that classroom teachers must have the following:

At least 25 percent of the training required every five years must include instruction regarding: (1) collecting and analyzing information that will improve effectiveness in the classroom, (2) recognizing early warning indicators that a student may be at risk of dropping out of school, (3) digital learning, digital teaching, and integrating technology into classroom instruction, (4) educating diverse student populations, including: (a) students who are eligible to participate in special education programs, (b) students who are eligible to receive educational service required under Section 504. Rehabilitation Act of 1973, (c) students with mental health conditions or who engage in substance abuse, (d) students with intellectual or developmental disabilities, (e) students who are educationally disadvantaged, (f) students of limited English proficiency, (g) students at risk of dropping out of school, (h) understanding appropriate relationships, boundaries, and communications between educators and students, and (i) how mental health conditions, including grief and trauma, affect student learning and behavior and now evidence-based, grief-informed, and trauma-informed strategies support the academic success of students affected by grief and trauma. (2 Tex. Ed. Code § 21.054, 2019)

Educators in the state of Texas do not have to have any specific certifications to provide instruction or intervention to dyslexic students (Texas Education Agency, 2019c). However, IDEIA (2004) required states to ensure that their public-school educators are adequately prepared for teaching students who have disabilities in inclusive classrooms because up to 20% of the students in any schoolroom may have dyslexia (Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity, 2017). Additionally, dyslexia represents 80% to 90% of all learning disabilities (Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity, 2017). Furthermore, dyslexia represents the most common of all neurocognitive disorders (Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity, 2017).

Conklin (2019) stated that professional development provides educators with continuing education to increase their skills and networks and to participate in professional learning communities. Teachers who gain an understanding of dyslexia can provide higher quality instruction to all students, including students with dyslexia (Chetty et al., 2014; Conklin, 2019). As the quality of instruction improves, teachers can have a direct impact on student outcomes, particularly for students with dyslexia (Conklin, 2019). Examples of outcomes include a higher likelihood to attend college, to earn higher wages, and to be less likely to become a teenage parent (Chetty et al., 2014).

The Texas Education Agency's Dyslexia Handbook provides professional development information regarding dyslexia and related disorders (Texas Education Agency, 2018). The manual offers to public schools, charter schools, educators, and parents' information for the early identification of dyslexia as well as for accommodations benefitting students who have dyslexia (Texas Education Agency, 2018). While the manual contains the information regarding the Texas State Board of Education as the decision-making authority that adopts the rules and standards relating to the screening, testing, and serving students, each school district's board of

trustees must ensure the district complies with the state's requirements (19 Tex. Admin. Code §
74.28, 2019).

The training required by the Texas Education Agency must include the essential,
evidence-based multisensory aspects of dyslexia instruction such as orthography, morphology,
syntax, phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, reading
comprehension, and reading fluency (Texas Education Agency, 2018). The Texas Education
Agency (2018) also noted the instruction must be systematic and multisensory to ensure students
gain reading automaticity. Teachers providing instruction to students with dyslexia must have
explicit training for preventing and remediating students' language-based reading and writing
disorders (Texas Education Agency, 2018). Aarto-Pesonen and Tynjälä (2017) noted that
professional development offers an opportunity for adult learners to reflect on their learning and
collaborate with peers. By engaging in these activities, educators, as adult learners, increase their
knowledge, growth as a professional, and classroom practices (Aarto-Pesonen & Tynjälä, 2017).
Although no specific training was mentioned, Knight (2018) posited that when teachers receive
additional training in dyslexia beyond what they received in their teacher training coursework,
they have higher levels of confidence for working with students with dyslexia.

**Teacher Beliefs and Experiences With Dyslexia**

As practices of inclusion of students with special needs in the general education
classrooms increase, general education teachers are expected to accommodate the varying needs
of these students (Texas Education Agency, 2018). Padhy et al. (2015) conducted a study in
India and found teachers to be willing to intervene with students with learning disorders in
reading, but lacked confidence in their ability to be effective. In this study, two-fifths of the
teachers reported they were not aware of learning disorders, however, a majority of the teachers

were willing to participate in additional training. Additionally, most of the teachers surveyed by Padhy et al. (2015) thought students with learning disorders in reading would be better served in segregated schools so the students could receive specialized reading instruction. Although this study was conducted in India, the findings add value to the current study due to dyslexia being universal across all world languages, and teacher perceptions and beliefs may be similar (Ziegler et al., 2003). Rakap et al. (2018) made similar conclusions in a study of early childhood teachers who did not receive training and additional professional development support for developing social-emotional competencies in young children. Rakap et al. noted the teachers could only implement low levels of social and emotional development interventions. These findings appear again and again in the empirical literature regarding teachers and dyslexia. This empirical literature is presented in chronological order in the following paragraphs.

First, Worthy et al. (2016) interviewed 32 Texas public school teachers about their perspectives, beliefs, and understanding of dyslexia. The most notable theme identified by Worthy et al. (2016) was the teachers held a strong sense of responsibility for attending to the needs of their students, compliance with the laws and district regulations, and desire to seek additional professional development outside of the professional development provided by the district. Teachers' barriers included inadequate information about the characteristics of dyslexia and identification and intervention resources. The teachers expressed being under pressure to identify dyslexic students and provide interventions. The teachers reported mixed perceptions about their abilities to teach students identified as dyslexic (Worthy et al., 2016). Furthermore, the participating teachers reported the intervention training contained an overemphasis on skill work and phonics in isolation and offered limited information about the whole child and other

factors that could be impeding reading development. It is important to note that no specific dyslexia training or intervention training was noted in this study.

Shoulders and Krei (2016) examined the difference between special education and general education teachers' self-efficacies for teaching students with learning disabilities such as dyslexia in an inclusive classroom. The general education teachers had significantly lower self-efficacy for student engagement than the special education teachers had. Shoulders and Krei found the difference to be unexpected based on the amount of professional development both teacher groups reported receiving. According to Shoulders and Krei, teachers' genders, levels of education, years of teaching experience, or completed coursework in special education did not affect the teachers' self-efficacies for student engagement. The researchers indicated the increased efficacy in student engagement was influenced by teachers' number of professional development hours for collaborative work.

Scott-Beale (2016) sought to understand the process that teachers use to develop the social and emotional skills of students with dyslexia. Scott-Beale applied a grounded theory approach for using the findings to propose a model for teachers to follow when developing the social and emotional competencies of students with dyslexia. The model contained six elements as necessary: (a) teacher commitment, (b) facilitation of positive peer interaction, (c) behavior modeling, (d) teacher-to-teacher collaboration, (e) strengths of the student focus, and (f) safe and supportive environment. Scott-Beale posited that the application of these processes is beneficial to all students, even though students with dyslexia have higher risks for low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression, as well as other challenges. Essentially, Scott-Beale concluded that teachers need to provide safe, supportive environments to develop all their students' social and emotional competencies.

Knight (2018) examined the relationship between teacher's training experiences and the teacher's understanding of dyslexia. Knight's data revealed that a teacher's basic understanding of dyslexia is based solely on the behavioral issues associated with dyslexia, such as weak or labored reading and difficulty with spelling and writing. Furthermore, when the teachers were asked to define dyslexia in their own terms, the teachers mentioned the challenges associated with dyslexia but failed to mention any strengths associated with dyslexia (Knight, 2018).

Although the teachers in Knight's (2018) study did have a general or basic understanding of dyslexia, their knowledge was limited and did not include the biological, neurological, or cognitive aspects of dyslexia. The teachers understood the visual functioning factors such as letter reversals and distortions of print as characteristics of dyslexia, even though these factors have not been shown empirically to represent dyslexia. A majority of the teachers in Knight's (2018) study indicated their initial training courses did not cover dyslexia adequately. According to Knight, the teachers admitted to gaining confidence in teaching students with dyslexia and increased knowledge for addressing the cognitive aspects of dyslexia only after attending additional training about dyslexia. Knight did not provide further information about the actual effectiveness of the teachers as the focus of the study was the relationship between teachers' training experiences and understanding of dyslexia.

Cockburn et al. (2019) conducted a study to examine the impact of Groups for Rehabilitation and Inclusive Development (GRID) Network on its members. The GRID Network is a community of practice (COP) group in which individuals share similar passions and concerns about their field of interest, participate in collaborative learning, and search for ways to improve their practices through regular meetings and interactions among group members. Of the seven subgroups developed within the network, inclusive education and mental health and

rehabilitation were the primary focus of two of the subgroups (Cockburn et al., 2019). A COP is

described by the three key elements of domain, community, and practice. The domain is the

interest shared in common among the COP's members and to which each member is committed.

The community is represented in the discussions and activities in which the COP's members

interact and engage with one another. The last element of the GRID Network COP pertains to

improving practice (Cockburn et al., 2019). The COP accomplishes this element by creating

guidelines, sharing stories of experiences as well as the resources and tools that can be utilized,

discussing ways to problem solve, and making specific changes to current practices. The

practices of the GRID Network created a direct link between what the participants learned during

the COP and what actions they took in the classroom (Cockburn et al., 2019). A final aspect of a

COP involves it not being constrained by geographic boundaries, which allows for interactions to

occur across different organizations (Cockburn et al., 2019).

The group members in Cockburn et al.'s (2019) sample recognized their individual

expertise, expanded their professional knowledge, and improved their practices through explicit

discussions and knowledge sharing. Furthermore, the participants reported gaining new

knowledge as a result of the notes, articles, guidelines, and resources being shared within the

GRID Network. Cockburn et al. concluded the study by identifying the exciting role that social

media played in enabling the COP members to communicate professional learning and

information with one another in real-time. Although Cockburn et al. did not directly address

dyslexia or dyslexia training, it provides an overview of how teachers, through participation in a

COP, perceive it aided in the development of new knowledge and knowledge sharing about their

topic of interest. Cockburn et al. provided useful information about an alternative professional

learning environment and its usefulness in supporting teachers who seek to acquire additional knowledge about a topic of interest.

A consistent finding in the literature was teachers lack a perception of preparedness for addressing the needs of dyslexic students in the general education classroom (Knight, 2018; Shoulders & Krei, 2016; Worthy et al., 2016). Teachers' low efficacy is due to a lack of training and not having appropriate information about dyslexia identification and intervention strategies (Padhy et al., 2015; Rakap et al., 2018). However, both the academic and emotional elements of learning must work in tandem for dyslexic students to know they are understood and valued and to fully engage in the curriculum (Casserly, 2013; EY, 2018; Ruzek et al., 2016; Texas Education Agency, 2018). Worthy et al. (2016) conducted their interviews with Texas teachers but did not follow a conceptual framework founded on social and emotional learning, suggesting the current study would enrich the body of knowledge.

**Summary and Preview of Chapter 3**

This chapter reviewed the literature regarding the conceptual framework and various aspects of dyslexia. Legal issues were identified and explained in the chapter. The complexities of training general education teachers and ensuring professional development appeared in the chapter. Additionally, studies of teachers' experiences and perceptions about addressing the social, emotional, and cognitive needs of students with dyslexia were conveyed. Finally, the importance of teachers providing safe and secure environments for students with dyslexia, as found in the research, was shared. Chapter 3 provides the details about how this study exploring general education teachers' perceptions about the training they received for meeting the social and emotional needs of children with dyslexia in their classrooms and about the general education teachers' classroom experiences when working with children with dyslexia was

conducted. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research design, the population and

participants, and data collection. Additionally, Chapter 3 contains information about the

instrumentation, the researcher's role, and procedures for conducting data analysis.

**Chapter 3: Method**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore elementary general education teachers' perceptions regarding the dyslexia training they received for meeting the social and emotional needs of children with dyslexia in their classrooms. The following five research questions guided the study:

RQ1: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the self-awareness needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ2: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the self-management needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ3: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the social awareness needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ4: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the relationship skills needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ5: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the responsible decision-making needs of students with dyslexia?
I applied a research design of qualitative description and conducted interviews to collect information from elementary general education teachers about their understanding of dyslexia, and the influence dyslexia has on classroom practices. This chapter contains information about the participants, data collection, instrumentation, and data analysis used for completing the study.

**Research Design**

To better understand elementary general education teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding their training for dyslexia, a qualitative descriptive design was used because of the depth of understanding needed to explore the subjective research questions (Yin, 2011). Almost

all qualitative research involves presenting the meaning of participants' social reality from their perspectives (Yin, 2011). Five features of qualitative research include studying the following: (a) providing the meaning of people's lives within their everyday roles regardless of any research inquiry, (b) conveying the views and perspectives of the people in the study, (c) presenting the contexts of the conditions of individuals' environments, (d) developing insights about existing or emerging concepts for potentially explaining human social behavior, and (e) collecting data from multiple sources of evidence, such as interviews with several individuals (Yin, 2011).

Basic qualitative descriptive study presentations remain close to the data to reflect the words of the participants and to present the facts of the event in the participants' everyday language and terms (Sandelowski, 2000). The qualitative descriptive design allows for synthesizing the teachers' perceptions of their shared experiences after conducting their interviews and analyzing the data to determine common themes (Willis et al., 2016).

Through the analysis process, the teachers' experiences with this phenomenon, I hoped to add a deeper level of understanding of their perspectives (Willis et al., 2016). Qualitative description captured the information in a straight-forward manner that could be useful to practitioners and policymakers (Sandelowski, 2000). The qualitative descriptive design was particularly appropriate for sharing the perspectives and experiences of the elementary general education educators expected to address and provide support for the cognitive, social, and emotional needs of the dyslexic students in their inclusive classrooms.

**Recruitment Procedures**

After the receipt of approval to conduct the study from the Abilene Christian University Institutional Review Board (IRB; see Appendix A), an email was sent to share the purpose of the study and requesting permission to conduct the study to the director of the southeast Texas

region's education educator certification and advancement department for alternative teacher

certification and the president and CEO of the independent educator training agency (see

Appendix B). By requesting teacher contact information from both organizations, I ensured

access both to traditionally and alternatively certified teachers; however, I did not seek to

develop equal numbers of traditional and alternatively certified teachers. After permission was

granted, the next step in the process was to contact each of the prospective participants of the

study. Each participant was carefully selected based on the inclusion criteria of the study.

Participants needed to be a general education teacher of Grade 1, 2, 3, or 4 in the southeast

region of Texas and to have participated in dyslexia professional development training. The

inclusion criteria used for the purposeful sampling was carefully designed to capture participants

able to provide rich insight and reflection in response to the research questions.

**Population and Selection of Participants**

The participants of the study were selected from a population of elementary general

education teachers who teach in first through fourth-grade classrooms located in the southeast

region of Texas who report having participated in dyslexia professional development training. I

used purposeful sampling to seek out teachers directly. Based on Yin (2011), the goal or purpose

of deliberately selecting a specific study participant was to ensure that the individuals chosen

might yield the most relevant and abundant data. Yin also noted the selection criteria of the

participants allow for obtaining the broadest range of information and perspectives on the

phenomenon of interest. To avoid any bias or perception of bias in the study, it was equally

important to include participants that offer contrary viewpoints (Yin, 2011).

Potential participants' email addresses were obtained from the directory database of one

educator certification program as well as from a nonprofit organization that provided training

and support to teachers of students with reading challenges and dyslexia. Finally, snowball sampling was planned but was not used because there was no need to ask the participants to recommend teachers whom they believed meet the selection criteria. The recruitment email generated enough participants for saturation. However, if snowball sampling had been used, it would have been a process of selecting new participants through the connections of existing participants (Yin, 2011). Yin reiterated that snowballing needed to be purposeful and not done simply out of convenience. If the participants shared the email addresses of their colleagues, I sent the recruitment email to the recommended elementary general education teachers of students in Grades 1 through 4 who had participated in dyslexia professional development training and reported having students with dyslexia in their classroom.

**Sample**

Because this research was qualitative, the critical concern for sample selection involved the target population of teachers meeting the criteria to ensure the participants represented the phenomenon of interest (Willis et al., 2016; Yin, 2011). The participants for this study were 10 certified teachers who were currently teaching in Texas' southeastern region and in elementary-level general education classrooms. The inclusion criteria required recruiting elementary general education teachers of students in Grades 1 through 4 who reported having participated in dyslexia professional development training.

**Data Collection**

I used a qualitative one-on-one semistructured interview method conducted virtually through Zoom, a web conferencing software, and audio recorded via a cell phone or audio recorder to gather data from educators to determine their knowledge about dyslexia and current classroom practices. I did not approach any potential participants until after the Institutional

Review Board at Abilene Christian University provided permission to conduct the study. Once the approval was granted, I sought out elementary general education teachers who met the criteria for inclusion, as discussed in the selection of participants.

The interviews were audio-recorded on the Zoom web conferencing platform in which the interview was conducted. As a secondary measure, a cellular device and audio recorder were used to record the interview. The interview questions were open-ended to allow the participants to reflect on their beliefs, experiences, and practices in the classroom. The protocol for the interview is located in Appendix D. The reflective nature of the questions enabled the participants to contemplate their experiences and provide full explanations related to their perceptions and experiences. I continued to interview participants until data saturation was reached. Saldaña and Omasta (2018) stated that data saturation has occurred once the major trends have been determined by the researcher, and no new data have added any further learning.

The interview process followed a protocol. First, the informed consent form was sent to participants to sign via Adobe Sign (see Appendix C), and I read the information to the participants on the Zoom platform prior to the beginning of the interview. The informed consent form explained the voluntary nature of participation and the procedures for ensuring confidentiality. The informed consent form indicated that the interview would be audio recorded. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. A copy of the signed form was returned to me via Adobe Sign, and I provided a copy of the signed form to each participant. I separated and maintained the signed original informed consent form for each participant away from the data.

Next, each participant was issued a pseudonym with a number, such as Participant 1, Participant 2, etc. No participant names were recorded at any time, but the warmup questions for

the beginning of each interview were about demographic data. The demographic items were designed to reveal the following: (a) previous dyslexia training (when, how often, face-to-face, online modules, power-point); (b) the district's expectation for participation in professional development training for dyslexia (when, how often); (c) the position of the person whom the participant seeks out at the campus, district, or elsewhere for information and/or assistance regarding assisting students with dyslexia (i.e., campus, district, colleagues, professional resource); (d) the approximate number of dyslexic students they have taught and what those experiences have been like; and (e) the number of years of experience teaching.

Following receiving answers to the warmup questions, I asked the questions designed to achieve the purpose of the study. I asked follow-up questions as needed to ensure the data were clear and understandable for coding purposes. I conducted all interviews and followed the guided interview protocol located in Appendix D. Thus, in fulfilling the role of interviewer, I was responsible for guiding the interview, taking notes, asking follow-up questions, and seeking clarifications.

**Instrumentation**

According to Terrell (2016), interview protocols can be unstructured, semistructured, or structured. An unstructured interview contains a broad, open-ended approach, such as following a topical outline rather than direct questions, and allows the participant to have freedom in answering the questions and how they believe their answers relate to the topic. A semistructured interview approach includes asking initial questions along with follow up questions, such as having 10 specific questions aligned to research questions. The third approach is a structured interview. As Terrell (2016) stated, the interviewer follows a specific protocol and only asks

specific questions designed to elicit specific, targeted responses on the topic by the participant. The standardized structured approach does not allow for deviation from the planned questions.

Thus, each interview protocol follows a different design and goal. The interview protocol used for this study was semistructured. I used the semistructured approach to create the opportunity to expand the type and amount of information that I could collect, to ask spontaneous follow-up questions, and to obtain in-depth and rich data for analysis (Terrell, 2016).

### *Interview Guide*

I used qualitative data collection and analysis procedures for this study. A qualitative semistructured interview protocol was used with each participant. The guided protocol was developed to answer each of the research questions. The interview questions allowed for obtaining data from elementary general education teachers teaching in Grades 1 through 4 regarding how elementary general education teachers perceived the following: (a) the dyslexia professional development training for addressing the self-awareness needs of students with dyslexia, (b) the dyslexia training they received for addressing the self-management needs of students with dyslexia, (c) the dyslexia training they received for addressing the social awareness needs of students with dyslexia, (d) the dyslexia training they received for addressing the relationship skills needs of students with dyslexia, and (e) the dyslexia training they received for addressing the responsible decision-making needs of students with dyslexia. The guided protocol is included in Appendix D and displays the interview questions and their alignment to each research question. The interview guide shaped the conduct of each interview.

**Data Analysis**

The outcome desired was for the data to yield new knowledge about educators who experienced the same phenomenon (Yin, 2011). To facilitate the organization of the coding process, I used Dedoose, a computer-assisted cross-platform software tool designed to use for organizing qualitative research with voluminous amounts of textual data. The data analysis procedure was performed to produce specific themes or quotes and to develop both textural and structural descriptions (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). The qualitative analysis was an iterative process. The initial rounds of coding involved Level 1 or open coding (Yin, 2011) to understand the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives. The codes used were closely linked and even repeated versions of the original item, also known as *in vivo* codes (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Yin, 2011). As the open codes revealed patterns, then axial coding, known as Level 2 or category coding, was performed. The axial coding revealed the common themes among the participants and ensured the findings would represent the collective themes and the common ideas derived from the individual participants' data (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Willis et al., 2016; Yin, 2011). Once the themes were identified, I assessed the overall essence of the perceived experience (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). The thematic descriptions provided the manifest nature of what the participants experienced (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Willis et al., 2016; Yin, 2011).

*Provisions of Trustworthiness*

To ensure trustworthiness and credibility, I understood that the qualitative descriptive design was not focused on a life course, suggesting the deeply rooted biases a researcher may hold were not likely to affect the data analysis. I performed a field test of the interview questions with a couple of members from the target population who were not recruited for serving as members of the study sample. Finally, I sought out peer reviewers to verify the legitimacy of the

identified themes and codes (Willis et al., 2016). A percentage of agreement and specific outcomes were included in the review of the study design.

Another way of strengthening the credibility of the study was by the strategy of triangulation. Triangulation involved the use of at least three different sources to ensure dimension or multiple perspectives to the data (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018) and to verify or corroborate an event, description, or fact reported in a study (Yin, 2011). Saldaña and Omasta (2018) and Yin (2011) suggested that triangulation could be achieved by interviewing at least three different individuals about the same phenomenon, the same person at three different points in time, or comparing interview data with empirical materials such as observations, and artifacts (i.e., published documents, minutes of meetings, website content, etc.).

Triangulation was ensured through reviews of state policy and the Texas Education Agency's (2018) Dyslexia Handbook, interviews with the Grades 1 through 4 elementary general education teachers, and a prestudy conversation with a Region 10 dyslexia consultant who has the knowledge to guide me toward appropriate policy statements and other artifacts. I used the Rev transcription service to transcribe all audio recordings. I reviewed and listened to the recordings and cross-checked recordings against the transcripts to check transcript accuracy and further ensure trustworthiness. I used member checking by sharing the transcriptions with the participants so they could judge the accuracy of the text. I collaboratively coded the data to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the analysis and to make certain the findings align with the information that the participants provided (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Yin, 2011). I discussed the emerging codes with a peer reviewer, such as the Region 10 dyslexia consultant or other colleagues, to reduce the biases that could affect the coding process when a researcher works alone (Yin, 2011).

*Researcher's Role*

In descriptive qualitative research, the researcher is a human instrument through which data are mediated (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Yin, 2011). By sharing relevant aspects of my life and information about my experiences, both personal and professional, I now present my qualifications to collect and interpret the data. My educational background included a bachelor's degree in psychology, a master's degree in educational leadership, and 23 years of experience in education. My certifications included Elementary Self-Contained (PK-6), English as a Second Language (ESL – EC-12), Special Education (EC-12), and the principal certificate (EC-12). I held the educator positions of general education teacher, reading specialist; district intervention coordinator responsible for the response to intervention (RTI), dyslexia, and 504 programs; campus principal; and a director of special populations in Houston. I currently hold the position of Director of the Research and Evaluation Institute for the Harris County Department of Education.

I had professional knowledge about dyslexia by obtaining more than 300 hours of training for dyslexia. The dyslexia training prepared me to serve in the role of dyslexia interventionist on the campus and as a district dyslexia coordinator. I strategically obtained professional expertise in dyslexia based on in-depth personal experiences. My father and several siblings also struggled with reading and literacy skills their entire lives. More importantly, I was identified as having a reading disability of dyslexia in elementary school and am the mother of a daughter who has dyslexia. These professional and personal experiences informed me about the effects of dyslexia in classrooms and the value that researching the topic with elementary general education teachers could bring to school districts' leaders and the state's policymakers.

**Ethical Considerations**

According to Creswell (2007), Saldaña and Omasta (2018), and Yin (2011), ethical issues must be addressed before, throughout, and when sharing the results of the study. As required by Abilene Christian University, I obtained approval from the Abilene Christian University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to collecting any data from participants. The review and evaluation of all research proposals and dissertations was the responsibility of the Abilene Christian University's IRB. The primary purpose of the review conducted by the IRB committee was to protect all participants from undue risk or harm. Additional measures were included to ensure the participants were treated with dignity and their safety, welfare, and rights were protected.

The researchers also mentioned in order to protect the identity of the participants. A researcher should consider using an alternative identification process. This process would protect the identity of the participants by not collecting or sharing any specific demographics that could be used to identify the participant. For this study, each participant was issued a pseudonym with a number, such as Participant 1, Participant 2, and so on. No participant names were recorded at any time. I had participants sign an informed consent form that describes the purpose of the study and the participants' activities with the study. The informed consent form indicated the interview would be audio recorded within the web conferencing platform and via a cell phone or separate audio recording device. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. A copy of the signed form was provided to each participant. I maintained the signed original informed consent form for each participant in a separate data folder. In addition, the informed consent included a written assurance the participant could choose not to answer a question or end the interview at any time.

All data, recordings, and notes were held safely in my private office while conducting the data collection and analysis. The electronic data were warehoused on a password-protected external hard-drive and accessible only to me until the final report of the results was generated. At the conclusion of the study, all data were de-identified. I filed the data collection inactivation form with Abilene Christian University (ACU) and uploaded it along with my raw data in the ACU Canvas Raw Data Storage course. The raw data were destroyed no earlier than three years after the study to comply with federal regulation for protecting the rights of the human participants. No data were shared with any officials of any school or district. The participants were not asked to reveal the schools or school districts for which they worked during their interviews.

The research was based on in-depth, one-on-one interviews designed to investigate each teacher's perceived knowledge and understandings of the social and emotional impact of dyslexia and their perceptions and opinions about the dyslexia professional development they received. Asking these questions did not cause any stress or harm to any participants different from what they could experience in daily life. This study posed minimal risk to the participants because they asked only to reflect on previous professional development and knowledge of the phenomenon. For these reasons, the participants' ethical protections were safeguarded.

**Assumptions**

The scope of the study was governed by the assumptions and delimitations listed in this section, but readers would determine whether or not the findings transfer to their classrooms or school districts. I assumed the elementary general education teachers would be honest, candid, and willing to describe their experiences with depth and richness. I assumed the participating elementary general education teachers had the training for dyslexia as required by the state. I

assumed the teachers, districts, and TEA followed the initial certification and continuing

education credit requirements, so this potential threat to trustworthiness could be dismissed. I

assumed each participant received the training and could accurately describe details from the

training. I assumed each participant would describe their personal and unique experiences in

relation to the dyslexia training they received. With the above assumptions being met in a

reliable and credible manner, the results might be transferrable beyond the participants of the

study to other elementary general education teachers teaching in Grades 1 through 4 and to other

school districts located in the boundaries of the southeast region of Texas. I conducted

synchronous interviews with each participant as the primary source for data collection. I assumed

the interview recordings were accurately transcribed, and the transcriptions would contain useful

and meaningful data to support fulfilling the purpose of the study.

**Delimitations**

The study was bounded by delimitations (Willis et al., 2016). The sample was a

purposeful sample of elementary general education teachers of students in Grades 1 through 4.

The teachers were recruited from the Southeast region of Texas.

**Limitations**

The study's findings were limited in their transferability because the sample was small

(Willis et al., 2016). The sample's data might not represent the views of general education

teachers of grades other than Grades 1 through 4. The sample might represent only elementary

general education teachers in one region of a large state, so the findings might not be viewed as

transferable to other regions of the state or to other states governed by different state laws.

**Summary and Preview of Chapter 4**

This chapter contained information about how the proposed study was conducted. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore general education teachers' perceptions regarding the dyslexia identification training they received for identifying the social and emotional needs of children with dyslexia in their classrooms. I applied a research design of qualitative description and conduct interviews to collect information from teachers about their knowledge of dyslexia and how this knowledge influenced classroom practices. The participants for this study were 10 certified teachers who were currently teaching in the southeast region of Texas in an elementary general education classroom. The inclusion criteria were elementary general education teachers of students in Grades 1, 2, 3, or 4. I used purposive sampling for this study to seek out teachers directly. I conducted one-on-one interviews with the participants. The data analysis yielded thematic descriptions that provided the manifest nature of the participants' perceived experiences (Willis et al., 2016). Chapter 4 presents the findings that emerged from the data analysis. Chapter 5 contains the discussion, conclusion, and recommendation.

**Chapter 4: Findings**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore elementary general education teachers' perceptions regarding the dyslexia training they received for meeting the social and emotional needs of children with dyslexia in their classrooms. The following five research questions guided the study:

RQ1: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the self-awareness needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ2: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the self-management needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ3: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the social awareness needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ4: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the relationship skills needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ5: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the responsible decision-making needs of students with dyslexia?

I applied a qualitative descriptive research design to ensure an accurate reflection of the words of the participants in their everyday language that appeared in the thematic findings. The qualitative descriptive design method allowed me to synthesize the participants' perceptions of their shared experiences. I used interviews to collect information from elementary general education teachers about their perception regarding dyslexia professional development training for addressing the social-emotional needs of children with dyslexia. This chapter contains information about the participants, the development of the themes, and the findings for the research questions.

**Description of the Participants**

The participants of the study were selected from a population of elementary general education teachers who teach in first through fourth-grade classrooms located in the southeast region of Texas who report having participated in dyslexia professional development training. I used purposeful sampling to seek out teachers directly. Participants' email addresses were obtained from the directory database of one educator certification program as well as from a nonprofit organization that provided training and support to teachers of students with reading challenges and dyslexia. I sent the recruitment email to 22 elementary general education teachers of students in Grades 1 through 4 who had participated in dyslexia professional development training. If they met the criteria for the study, they moved to the interview process. Eleven teachers responded to this recruitment email as believing they met the criteria for participation. Of the 11, 10 met the criteria for the study. The person who did not meet the criteria was rejected for participation because of a lack of memory about when this person would have attended any dyslexia training.

The 10 participants who replied to the recruitment email and met the criteria for the study were contacted to schedule a date and time for the interview. A consent form was sent to the participants via Adobe Sign, and an email was sent prior to the interview with the interview questions for them to preview. An invite was sent from the researcher's Zoom web conferencing platform account that contained the link for the scheduled date and time of the interview. Each participant was issued a pseudonym (i.e., Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.) for confidentiality. All interviews were recorded on Zoom's web conferencing platform and with a secondary audio recorder.

Finally, snowball sampling had been planned for ensuring the recruitment of enough participants for saturation by asking the participants to recommend teachers whom they believed meet the selection criteria. Any teacher recommended by the participants would have been sent the same recruitment email. However, the initial recruitment email sent to 22 potential participants generated enough participants achieving saturation.

The final sample of participants for this study were 10 certified teachers who were currently teaching in Texas' southeastern region and in elementary-level general education classrooms with students in their classrooms who reported participating in dyslexia professional development. All of the participants shared they have taught students who either had been diagnosed with dyslexia or who needed assessments for dyslexia.

The participants' demographic information was collected by asking the introductory questions included in the interview protocol (see Appendix D). The participants' demographic information was collected by asking the introductory questions included in the interview protocol (see Appendix D). The introductory questions allowed for gaining general information from the participants about their certifications, additional endorsements, years of teaching experience, grades taught, and specific dyslexia training received. Table 2 provides an introduction to the participants' overall demographic information collected during the interview.

**Table 2**

*Participants Demographic Data*

| Participant | Certifications | Additional Hours | *n* Years Teaching | Grades Taught | Dyslexia Training Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Generalist EC-8 | GT | 15 | Pk-3, Pk-4, $1^{st}$, $2^{nd}$, $3^{rd}$, $4^{th}$, $5^{th}$ | READ Grant Program |
| 2 | Generalist EC-6, ESL | | 17 | $2^{nd}$, $3^{rd}$, $4^{th}$ | Region 10 & Region 4 |
| 3 | Generalist EC-6, ESL | Independent Educator Training Agency | 6 (5 public, 1 charter) | $5^{th}$, $4^{th}$, $3^{rd}$, | Independent Educator Training Agency |
| 4 | Generalist EC-6, ESL | GT | 14 | $4^{th}$, $3^{rd}$, $2^{nd}$, K | District |
| 5 | Generalist EC-6, ESL | GT (missing 1 class for cert.) | 4 | $3^{rd,}$ $4^{th}$ | District |
| 6 | Generalist EC-6, ESL | GT | 14 | $1^{st}$, $2^{nd}$, | District |
| 7 | Generalist EC-6, ESL | | 4.5 | $4^{th,}$ $1^{st}$ | District |
| 8 | Generalist EC-6, ESL | | 14 | $4^{th,}$ $3^{rd}$, 2nd | District |
| 9 | EC-$6^{th}$, Bilingual | GT | 7 | $2^{nd}$ | District |
| 10 | EC-$6^{th}$, Bilingual, | GT | 8 | $6^{th}$, $5^{th}$, $4^{th}$ | READ Grant Program |

*Note.* GT = Gifted and Talented; EC = Early Childhood; ESL = English as a Second Language;

READ = Reading Excellence and Academies Development.

The detailed information gathered about the participants' areas of certification is represented in Figure 2. Seven of the 10 participants had an Early Childhood (EC)-6 Generalist certification, and one had a Generalist EC-8. Two participants had both their Generalist EC-6 and Bilingual certifications, and seven out of the 10 participants also have their certification in English as a Second Language (ESL). Figure 3 shows the additional endorsements reported by the participants. Six of the 10 participants reported having taken the 30 hours of professional development to receive a Gifted and Talented (GT) endorsement. Participant 5 reported needing

only one more class to receive the GT endorsement, and Participant 3 reported having several professional development hours at the independent educator training agency and was lacking only a few hours of being a dyslexia interventionists level, according to the independent educator training agency's curriculum.

**Figure 2**

*A Pie Chart Illustrating Educators' Certifications*



**EDUCATOR CERTIFICATIONS**

Generalist EC-6 & Bilingual, 2
Generalist EC-8, 1
Generalist EC-6 & ESL, 7
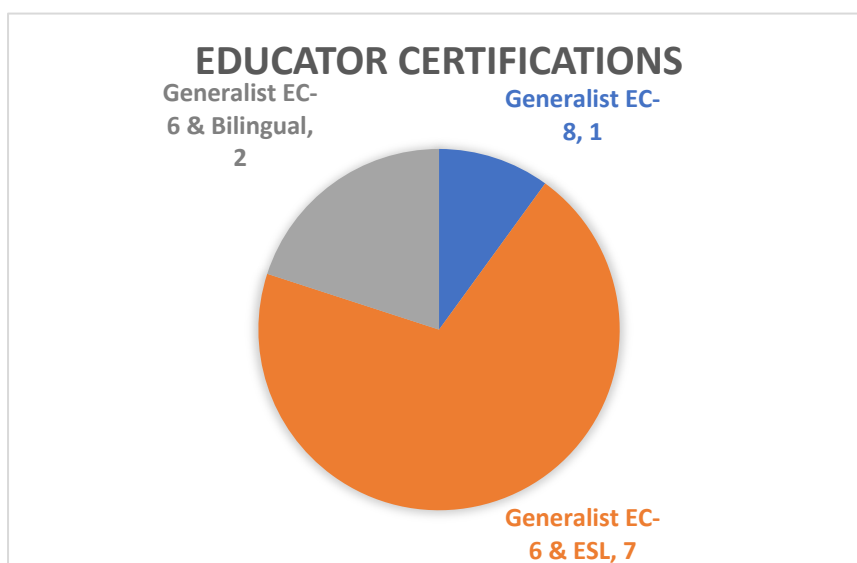
**Figure 3**

*A Pie Chart Illustrating the 10 Educators' Additional Endorsements*



**ENDORSEMENTS**

None, 4
Gifted and Talented (GT), 5
Neuhaus hours, 1
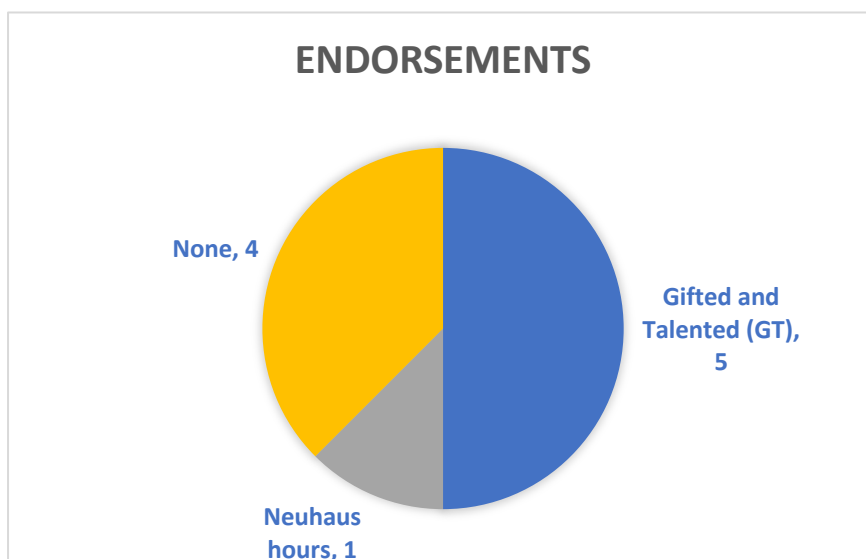
Additional information collected from the participants during the introductory questions was years of experience, and grades they have taught are seen in aggregate form in Figure 4. The participants' years of experience ranged from 4 to 17 years. I chose to group the participant's years of experience in 5-year ranges beginning with 0 to 4 years, then 5 to 9 years, and finally 10 years and up. Participant 5 taught 4 years, and Participant 7 taught 4.5 years. Participant 3 taught 6 years, Participant 9 taught 7 years, and Participant 10 taught 8 years. Participants 4 and 8 both had 14 years of teaching experience, while Participant 1 has taught for 15 years. Participant 2 had the most years of teaching experience with 17. Five of the 10 participants had 14 years or more of experience.

**Figure 4**

*A Bar Graph Illustrating the 10 Educators' Years of Experience*
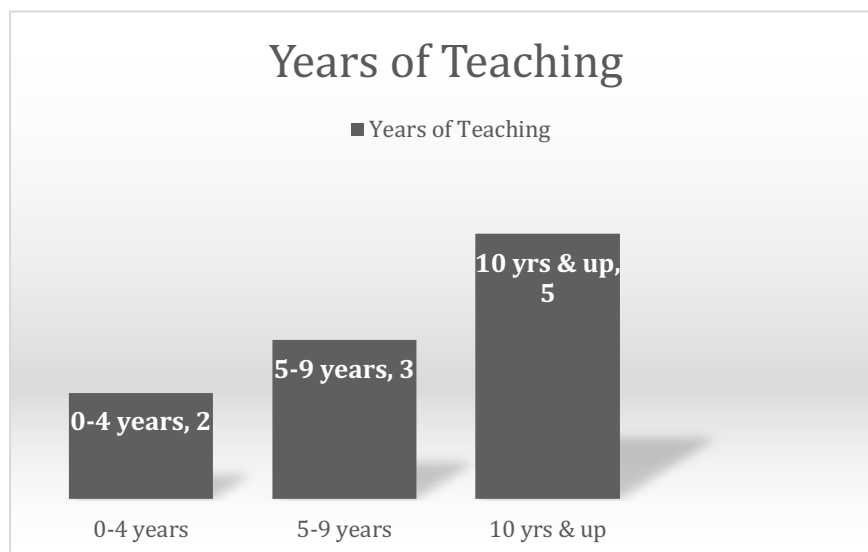


The grades the participants have taught ranged from PK-3 to Grade 6 are seen in Figure 5. The graph represents the total accumulation of all grades taught by participants; therefore, the total reflects teachers having taught more than one grade. All 10 of the participants have taught either second, third, or fourth grades. Three of the participants have taught fifth grade, three

participants have taught first grade, and three participants have taught either Prekindergarten (PK), Kindergarten, or sixth grade.

**Figure 5**

*A Bar Graph Illustrating the Total Accumulation of the Grades Taught by the 10 Educators*
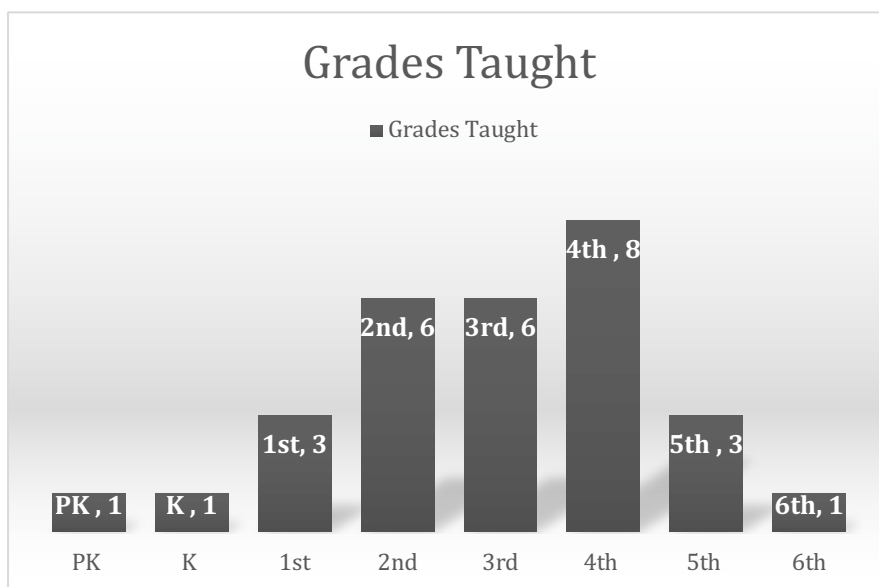


The final piece of data collected through the introductory questions was the dyslexia professional development training the teachers attended. Figure 6 summarizes this information. Participants 1 and 10 attended TEA's Read Grant Program training, Participant 2 attended a dyslexia training through the Region 10 and Region 4 Education Service Centers, Participant 3 attended training at the independent educator training agency, and the remaining six participants all attended some type of dyslexia training in their districts.

**Figure 6**

*A Bar Graph Illustrating the 10 Educators' Dyslexia Training Providers*
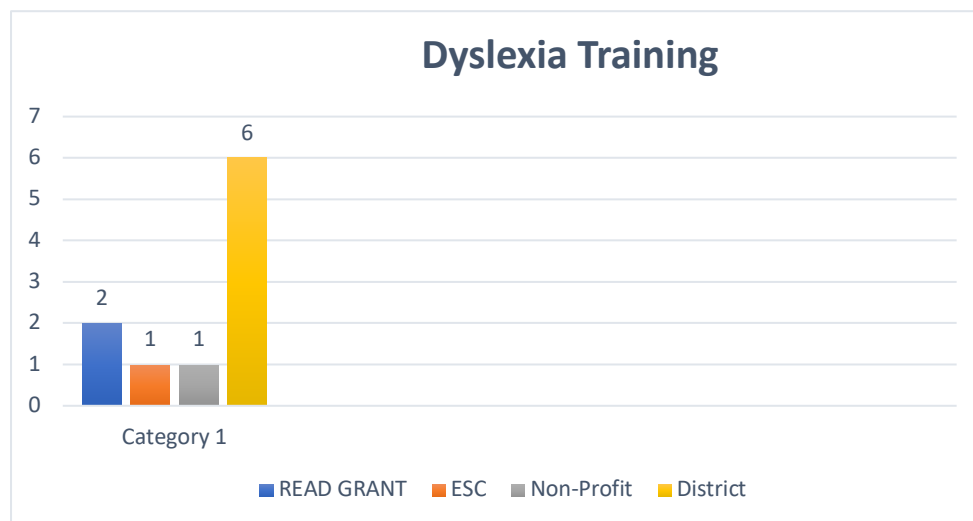


The interview protocol used predesigned questions and follow up questions and followed a semistructured interview protocol (see Appendix D). Follow-up questions were used to probe to clarify statements and to gain a better understanding of the participants' statements. All interviews were audio-recorded on the Zoom platform, and an additional audio recorder was used as back up. The interview questions focused on the participants' perceptions regarding the dyslexia training they received for meeting the social and emotional needs of children with dyslexia in their classrooms.

**Development of the Themes**

The recordings of the participants' interviews were transcribed by REV.com, which is an audio transcription service. Once transcripts were received, each recording was cross-checked with its respective transcription. Cross-checking allowed for clarifying wording, editing transcription errors, and becoming more familiar with each participants' data. As part of the trustworthiness member checking, each participant had an opportunity to review and provide

feedback on the accuracy of their transcription's text. No feedback for edits was received from the participants.

The data analysis included the steps suggested by Yin (2011) to use open and axial coding for identifying the salient themes that emerged from the interviews. I performed the coding process. To organize the data while coding it, I reviewed and developed codes for all transcripts and determined themes. Therefore, I used Dedoose for organizational purposes only.

The initial round of coding involved Level 1 or open coding to understand the phenomenon from each participant's perspective. The data in each transcript was openly coded individually. I had the opportunity to read and reread each participant's data multiple times in the process of determining the initial codes. To facilitate the organization of the coding process, I viewed the data within the emerging codes in the Dedoose database so that I could see all the participant data within each code. The review of the data selections applying to the code allowed for determining how many participants contributed to each code and whether a pattern or theme could be emerging between codes (see Appendix G).

All data, whether from introductory questions, planned questions, or follow-up questions, were coded. The data were grouped together within their common codes for ease of understanding the data, as presented by all participants. Additionally, I sorted between responses by interview questions for examining each participant's statement within the context of a specific question I had asked. These descriptions ranged from words or phrases to sentences that communicated or summarized the statements from the participants. This data-in-context understanding enabled me to ascertain the answers to the research questions as I moved codes as part of axial coding into the categories that were based on the open codes (see Appendix F).

Axial coding represented Level 2 coding. Axial coding led to common themes among the participants' data for forming collective themes that were common across all participants. I examined each participant's responses across all CASEL's five core competencies to determine how many of the core competencies aligned to each of the research questions designed for addressing the dyslexia professional development training the participants attended. Table 3 represents the culmination of this examination of the data. Each participant's data were coded a Y for yes if the core competency could be shown as addressed by dyslexia training in their data, or N for no if the core competency was not addressed in training. All codes allowed for cross-referencing between and understanding the themes that emerged as part of the open and axial coding. Using the framework of CASEL's five core competencies for social and emotional learning, the goal was to determine how the competencies were addressed in the dyslexia professional development training from the perspective of the teachers. All 10 of the participants interviewed made statements that indicated the dyslexia professional development training did not meet their needs in addressing CASEL's five core competencies for social and emotional learning. No participant reported the training providing a direct link between a core competency and how to meet the students' needs for that competency.

**Table 3**

*CASEL Core Competency Coverage in Dyslexia Training by Training Provider and Participant*

| Participant | Provider | RQ 1 Self-awareness | RQ 2 Self-management | RQ 3 Social awareness | RQ 4 Relationship skills | RQ 5 Responsible decision making |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | READ Grant | N | N | N | N | N |
| 2 | Regions 10 & 4 | N | N | N | N | N |
| 3 | Independent Educator Training Agency | N | N | N | N | N |
| 4 | District | N | N | N | N | N |
| 5 | District | N | N | N | N | N |
| 6 | District | N | N | N | N | N |
| 7 | District | N | N | N | N | N |
| 8 | District | N | N | N | N | N |
| 9 | District | N | N | N | N | N |
| 10 | READ Grant | N | N | N | N | N |

Once the themes were created, I shared the codes, patterns, and associated data with two peer reviewers to verify the legitimacy of the emerging themes. Each reviewer received the coding matrix, which included the codes and associated data, and spent time reviewing the codes prior to each conversation. During the peer-review conversation, each reviewer asked questions for clarification and provided feedback to clarify further or define the codes and themes. I used the feedback from each peer reviewer to refine the codes, categories, and themes. The final document of findings was presented to the two peer-reviewers for a final review. Both peer reviewers agreed the finalized themes appropriately represented the data. This effort to attain agreement from peer reviewers represented a strategy for trustworthiness.

Themes for answering each research question emerged and categorized by self-awareness (RQ1), self-management (RQ2), social awareness (RQ3), relationship skills (RQ4), and responsible decision making (RQ5) based on the respective five research questions. The themes seen in Table 4 were developed after several iterations after reviewing the participant-interview data.

**Table 4**

*Emerged Themes for Participant Interviewees*

| CASEL Competencies | Themes |
|---|---|
| RQ1: Self-Awareness | • Self-awareness was not addressed<br>• Used skills learned in other professional development to address self-awareness competency |
| RQ2: Self-Management | • Self-management was not addressed<br>• Used skills learned in other professional development to address the self-management competency |
| RQ3: Social Awareness | • Social awareness was not fully addressed<br>• Used skills learned in other professional development to address the social awareness competency |
| RQ4: Relationship Skills | • Relationship skills were not addressed<br>• Used skills learned in other professional development to address the relationship skills competency |
| RQ5: Responsible Decision Making | • Responsible decision-making was not addressed<br>• Used skills learned in other professional development to address the responsible decision-making competency |

**Findings for the Research Questions**

The findings from the data analysis are organized by the five research questions. An overarching finding emerged in the data as part of the open coding process and is presented following the research questions' findings. Research Question 1 finding begins the presentation.

***Research Question 1 Finding***

The first research question addressed how elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the self-awareness needs of students with

dyslexia. Self-awareness is the ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. The participants indicated that the self-awareness needs of students with dyslexia were not identified or addressed in a meaningful way in the training they received. Two teachers reported they only gained an understanding of the struggles of students with dyslexia, but received no guidance for enabling students to develop self-awareness. The themes for answering this research question were the following: (a) self-awareness was not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the self-awareness competency.

**Self-Awareness was not Addressed**. From the onset, the 10 participants consistently articulated that addressing the self-awareness needs of students with dyslexia was not included in their dyslexia training. The sentiments from the participants involved, simply stating that self-awareness was not addressed. Two of the participants indicated that in the training they received, not only was self-awareness not addressed, but also the term self-awareness was never mentioned. Participant 1 reported receiving "a lot of different websites to go to, to have resources to help us learn more and how to address students with different types of dyslexia they have. Because I didn't know there was so many different ones." The only benefit of the list of websites for Participant 1 was understanding "a little bit better to how to go about and trying to identify what type of dyslexia that child was having." Participant 4 discussed the construct of a student having self-awareness in reading as being called metacognition. Participant 4 referred to metacognition as about "teaching students how to recognize when the reading breaks down, when it doesn't make sense and how to go back and correct the reading." The term metacognition was the closest any of the participants came to identifying any concept that could be vaguely construed as self-awareness being included in the dyslexia training.

**Used Skills Learned in Other Professional Development to Address the Self-Awareness Competency**. Six of the 10 participants indicated they were able to use skills learned in other professional development training to address the self-awareness needs of their students (see Appendix E). Although the dyslexia training did not directly address the self-awareness needs of students with dyslexia, Participant 1 stated she understood she should assist the student in gaining ways to develop self-awareness. Some of the other professional development training the participants believed to be effective for self-awareness in students were Fuel Ed, The Leader in Me, CHAMPS, Get Your Teach On, Gifted and Talented (GT), and Project CRISS.

Participant 3 attended Fuel Ed and believed it allowed for "getting to the basic SEL [social and emotional learning] principles with our students, building empathy and rapport." Participant 3 also applied lessons from other professional development experiences:

> Another program, Segway us to is the Leader in Me program. We've taken some of those principles and applied them to instruction in general, which is siphoned over or seep over into our dyslexia review. But nothing specifically saying this is dyslexia. This is how SEL [social and emotional learning] can play a part in dyslexia intervention.

Participant 3 did not receive any training that addressed self-awareness skills; however, this participant chose to engage in independent reading that was helpful for helping students with dyslexia gain self-awareness skills.

### *Research Question 2 Finding*

The second research question addressed how elementary general education teachers perceived the dyslexia training they received for addressing the self-management needs of students with dyslexia. Self-management is the student's ability to regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This skill includes managing stress,

controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal goals. Again, the 10-participant consensus about the dyslexia training was it did not address the self-management needs of students directly or did not show them how to teach students how to self-manage. The themes for answering this research question were the following: (a) self-management was not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the self-management competency.

**Self-Management was not Addressed**. After a review and analysis of the participants' data, the theme that emerged for this competency was the dyslexia professional development training they attended did not teach them about the self-management needs of students with dyslexia. The 10 participants indicated that nothing in the training they received enabled them to teach self-management skills to their students with dyslexia. Participant 3 referred to the dyslexia training as "pretty generic stuff" that conveyed to teachers to give "kids opportunity to cool down" and to use "basic communication with the kids. It was nothing in-depth that was groundbreaking. There was a lot of discussion around empathy, but it was nothing just groundbreaking that gave the teachers an opportunity to latch on to."

Participant 4 discussed learning to recognize when students with dyslexia were becoming agitated or upset and reported receiving some suggestions for things she could do to help them during the dyslexia training. Participant 4 said:

the trainer gave us some triggers and then what we can do, such as ask them to take a break, give them like a task to run something to the office or to another teacher to give them a break, build in some time where they can get extra.

Participant 4 was told, "If they do something they can get and if they complete a task, then they get a reward, such as extra computer time." However, this guidance was not couched

under the category of building students' self-management skills. Participant 1 said the closest to self-management skill building for students they were taught was "not to push their students with dyslexia so hard and to give them an opportunity to figure it out." Participant 1 was discouraged against any activity that would "over push them" because teachers needed to give students "plenty of time to try to work it out themselves," such as by modifying the lesson "to where they're capable of least trying to finish, and not put it all out at one time so that they could feel that they are accomplishing something little by little."

**Used Skills Learned in Other Professional Development to Address the Self-Management Competency**. This theme emerged after five participants shared they were able to use skills and strategies they had learned in other professional development training to teach students self-management skills (see Appendix E). Participants 1, 2, 5, 7, and 10 all reported they had not taken any other training that addressed CASEL's self-management competency. Participant 3 reported using Stephen Covey's (2020) The Leader in Me training as the only training that covered any material concerning social and emotional learning. Participant 3 added, "A lot of SEL [social and emotional learning] training that I received, it hasn't truly been SEL. It's just been a Band-Aid," and the training was only somewhat effective for addressing students' need for self-management. Participant 4 reported receiving training from the behavior specialist who provided some strategies to help students that struggle with controlling their anger or their outbursts. Participant 4 stated the training was effective because "the students had a way to tell her that they were having a difficult time before it actually exploded into something big." Participant 6 stated the campus followed CHAMPS even though CHAMPS "does not specifically address dyslexia students." Participant 8 shared she used a color chart with all the emotions on it so "every morning they [students] would come in, and in the afternoon, we

[teachers] would make sure that everybody's name is on happy." Participant 6 was not sure of the name of the other professional development training that caused her to transfer knowledge but thought it was called Restorative Practices. Participant 6 stated "it was amazing." Participant 9 used GT training and Project CLASS to build the self-management skills of the students with dyslexia because Project CLASS was inclusive and "school-wide, and it really helped behavior enormously."

### *Research Question 3 Finding*

The third research question was how elementary general education teachers perceived the dyslexia training they received for addressing the social awareness needs of students with dyslexia. CASEL's definition of social awareness includes the student's ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and to understand the cultural norms for behavior and who in the family, school, or community is a resource for support. Overall, the participants said their dyslexia training did not address how to develop this core competency in students. Some participants believed the dyslexia training contained a few mentions of teachers needing to be aware of and sensitive to their students' challenges with reading. The themes for answering this research question were the following: (a) social awareness was not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the social awareness competency.

**Social Awareness was not Addressed**. After reviewing the participants' data, the same theme emerged as in the previous two research questions. The skill of social awareness was not specifically or fully addressed in the dyslexia professional development training that the 10 participants attended. The participants reported being more cognizant of not calling students out, or giving them adequate time to respond to questions, or not embarrassing them. Two of the

participants responded they gained some basic information about dyslexia from the training but did not gain the ability to promote the development of social-awareness skills in their students with dyslexia. Participant 2 shared gaining facts about dyslexic students' social experiences rather than about developing students' social awareness:

> They did let us know some of the things that affect students who are dyslexic, their social awareness. Some of them are not that sociable. Some of them have low self-esteem, and you will find they sometimes have issues with their siblings at home, and it can come over into school to the peers in school. Their right-left hand coordination is a little bit off at times. With that now, when they're in socialize situations, they may seem awkward, not because they are anything dumb, it's just how the situation works with them. We were taught that they could be naturally withdrawn or depressed, so you have to sort of understand that that child is not trying not to have social dialog or communication with their peers but is part of the symptoms of the medical condition they are in. With that knowledge, then I was aware that their social awareness is impeded because of what is happening and how to find ways to sort of engage them.

Participant 4 reported participating in activities to understand what students with dyslexia experience and why the students might hide their struggles with reading. However, Participant 4 did not gain the ability to meet students' social awareness needs on a practical level. Participant 7 reported gaining an understanding that teachers should remain calm when discussing the topic of dyslexia with parents and reassure parents that "dyslexia is not a bad thing." Participant 7 emphasized being taught how teachers should communicate with parents more than being taught strategies for meeting students' social awareness needs. Participant 9 mentioned being made aware of the students' backgrounds, such as whether they were African American or Hispanic,

but not gaining the ability to help students have social awareness about differences between people of different backgrounds. Participant 10 shared that characteristics of the students' social behavior were mentioned in the training, but nothing about addressing the social awareness needs of students with dyslexia was provided.

**Used Skills Learned in Other Professional Development to Address the Social Awareness Competency**. Participants 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10 all reported they had not received any other training that addressed social awareness skills (see Appendix E). Participant 3 reported the Leader in Me was not effective for addressing the social awareness needs of students with dyslexia and reported receiving "mostly generalizations" in the training. However, Participant 3 applied concepts gleaned in independent learning efforts rather than any training programs with students. Participant 5 did not recall particular terms being mentioned in the dyslexia training that she attended. Participant 8 reported she used material from Restorative Practices as tying into addressing the social awareness needs of students. Participant 8 mentioned having the restorative circles talks with students and asking students about their cultural backgrounds to "make the circles fun like a game." Participant 9 reported using the GT training techniques to understand students' backgrounds. Participant 9 noted that children of higher socioeconomic statuses attend "better schools" and are "going to do a little bit better" than children attending "a Title I school and have huge gaps. I just feel like that you can see the differences, and you just have to make up that gap."

### *Research Question 4 Finding*

The fourth research question addressed how the elementary general education teachers perceived the dyslexia training they received for addressing the relationship skills needs of students with dyslexia. CASEL defined relationship skills as the student's ability to establish and

maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This skill set includes students being able to communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed. Although all of the participants responded that the training did not provide guidance for addressing the relationship skills of students with dyslexia, a few participants reported being told about the importance of teachers listening and understanding why students with dyslexia may behave the way they do and not to give up on their students with dyslexia. The themes for answering this research question were the following: (a) relationship skills were not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the relationship skills competency.

**Relationship Skills Were not Addressed**. After interviewing all of the participants' data, it was evident that the teachers understood having good relationships with their students is as important as students having good relationships with their peers. However, the participants were not provided with specific strategies to use to develop the relationship skills of their students. Participant 3 shared that the dyslexia trainers generally discussed some students with dyslexia might not be confident readers. Hence, teachers needed to avoid embarrassing students with dyslexia by asking them to read out loud. Participant 3 did not find this recommendation to be effective and expressed dissatisfaction because:

> it didn't give me strategies. It didn't give me reasoning. It didn't give me the logic behind what I should do. It didn't give me an alternative to … the process of round-robin, calling between students to read out loud.

Participant 8 shared that "the more you [the interviewer] ask about CASEL's core competencies, the farther away we were getting from the dyslexia training I received," because

the dyslexia training Participant 8 attended did not include any information related to the CASEL framework. Participant 2 shared she was told about how to actively listen to her students so they knew she was really listening to them; however, this strategy was not couched as a way to build students' relationship skills. The training Participant 2 attended was focused on teaching teachers how to behave with students with dyslexia, such as "how to negotiate with a student to de-escalate a situation before it got out of hand."

Finally, Participant 7 gained a better understanding of why some students with dyslexia exhibit certain behaviors from the dyslexia training. The training, said Participant 7:

Was addressed in more trying not to see it as a behavior problem and seeing it as a way to not … to just not write students with dyslexia off as a behavior problem. I think that's more how the relationship aspect was addressed. Because it can be where when you see students, not really I see here with they're listening actively when you see them not listening actively, it's not necessary that they're not listening because they don't want to, it's because they don't understand really. They might be intimidated by the lesson. But I don't think that this one was really fully addressed to the extent of the definition.

**Used Skills Learned in Other Professional Development to Address the Relationship Skills Competency**. Participants 1, 2, and 3 did not report using any other professional development training to fill in the gap. Participant 4 reported using Capturing Kids' Hearts as an effective substitute for information. Participant 5 reported attending a training on how to help students with emotional issues but could not remember what the training was called. Participant 5 stated that the other training for emotional issues "actually came in handy with one of the heavy hitters," which Participant 5 defined as a student who makes "poor decisions on a regular basis." Participant 6 used CHAMPS and reported "it has been very effective for me personally."

Participant 6 further stated that "in order for me to build up the community in my classroom, that is the first thing that helps, because it is more like you can see it." Participant 7 reported that relationship skills were addressed through a school-wide, inclusive mental health initiative that was started by the school counselor. Participant 7 shared that she perceived the school counselor's initiative as "a positive thing" because her students needed to have space in the classroom to be by themselves and away from others.

Participant 8 referred to a program called Super Friends was used to teach all students how to be a good friend. Super Friends was reported as being useful because there were specific terms included in the Super Friends vocabulary that taught teachers how to correct students' behaviors. Participant 8 was impressed that the students began using the Super Friends terminology on their own when talking to each other.

Participant 9 reported that Project CLASS helped with addressing relationship skills by enabling students to be kind to each other. The teacher reported seeing some children being very mindful about being kind and helpful, especially during recess. Participant 10 had not received any other effective training to teach students about relationship skills but shared "at the beginning of the year, the counselors spoke for about 30 minutes to an hour" about how all students relate to each other, and "they addressed a lot of things, and it was interesting."

### Research Question 5 Finding

How elementary general education teachers perceived the dyslexia training they received for addressing the responsible decision-making needs of students with dyslexia was the final research question in this research. The question aligned with CASEL's definition of responsible decision making, which is about students making appropriate choices about behavior and social interactions with others. Additionally, the definition mentions that students can make a realistic

evaluation of the consequences of their actions. The themes for answering this research question were the following: (a) responsible decision making was not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the responsible decision-making competency.

**Responsible Decision-Making was not Addressed**. According to the participants, the responsible decision-making needs of students with dyslexia were not addressed in any of their dyslexia training. The participants said one of three things: (a) it was not addressed, (b) they did not believe it was addressed, or (c) they could not remember it being addressed. Participant 4 mentioned she was made aware of making proper decisions "The only thing I think of is just making sure that the students' information wasn't shared with people who didn't need to know, so maintaining confidentiality."

Participant 1 discussed being shown videos about how some students with dyslexia would act out and have poor behavior, while others would withdraw as follows:

They stated a lot of students did have behavior problems. They said how they would act out. They showed videos to show different scenarios. They talked about a lot of ways that some students, just how they withdraw or just wouldn't talk or they just try to stay quiet just to stay under the radar. The ones that with behavior, they would just throw fits, throw stuff in the room. They showed a scenario with that. And then that was just mind-blowing too. But yeah, they just talked about different ways that kids respond to not be able to read or understand what is going on with themselves.

Two other participants shared an increase in awareness of student behaviors and how the classroom and management of the classroom operate as reflections of the teacher's behavior. As an example, Participant 2 shared:

The teacher was looked at in the training, and the classroom reflected the teacher. That

was an "ah-ha" moment for me because if the classroom reflects the teacher, and looks

like the teacher, what message is the teacher saying. I realized that even more so when

you're dealing with children with multiple learning differences and styles and cultural

backgrounds, your classroom must be culturally responsive. Your classroom should work

for all students.

**Used Skills Learned in Other Professional Development to Address the Responsible**

**Decision-Making Competency**. Six of the 10 participants shared they used utilized strategies

and skills learned in other professional development training to promote responsible decision

making among all their students (see Appendix E). These six participants reported using different

professional development training experiences for promoting the decision-making competency

with varying levels of effectiveness. Participant 3 mentioned using Steven Covey's (2020) The

Leader in Me Training; however, it was only somewhat effective. Participant 5 discussed being

in a 3-year new teacher cohort that involved taking additional professional development training

"to support new teachers to the school district" in which how "how to help students" was

addressed in the training experiences because "this is my second complete year in the school

district, so we are required to take trainings that support teachers that are new to the school

district, that's all part of it."

The participants reported they appreciated training experiences that gave them strategies

to apply in their classrooms. Participant 6 mentioned using CHAMPS to address the responsible

decision-making skills with all students in the classroom. Participant 6 noted the M in CHAMPS

stood for movement because moving from one activity to another or from one place to another

enabled students to recognize what things they should be doing or what choices they should be

making at a particular time. Participant 6 said that CHAMPS was very effective because the students knew they were responsible not pushing or shoving. This strategy of emphasizing movement applied even when the students were sitting.

Participant 7 indicated the training the school counselor gave was helpful to help develop responsible decision-making skills in all students. Participant 7 stated both she and her students "saw responsible decision-making in a new light" when it was applied in the classroom. Participant 9 used Project CLASS and stated this program came with a lot of posters as a school-wide initiative, and "there were posters on the walls in the classrooms and in the hallways" to remind students about their behavior. Participant 9 said when she had to address an issue, she did not need to say anything to the students and could just point at the poster. Lastly, Participant 10 did not view "those 30 minutes with the counselor every year" as effective because trainers cannot "make a whole bunch of things in just, I don't know, 30 minutes, one hour. That's not effective."

### *Overarching Finding*

The theme of *dyslexia training needs to be revamped* emerged during data analysis. The 10 teachers offered information regarding what changes they thought were needed to improve the professional development training they received for addressing the social and emotional needs of their students with dyslexia. All 10 participants reported they did not receive training that would enable them to develop any one of the five CASEL (2020b) core competencies in their students with dyslexia. The teachers recommended the training needs to be changed, reformulated, or "revamped" (Participant 5) so they could more effectively meet the needs of students with dyslexia (see Appendix F).

Participant 1 "would have had loved to be able to go to a school and watch it being implemented a little bit more, more of a face-to-face type of scenario to see how different people handle it." Participant 2 explained, "every teacher should be trained" and "should be expected to hold classes that appeal to the socially emotional learning for our students." Participant 2 suggested training teachers "to apply some of the techniques that are taught" within the district so "that the skills could be honed and practiced in the classes and that everybody should be doing it." Participant 2 suggested providing "compensation for those who have made an effort for their classes to look the way we want it to be." Participant 2 recommended involving "the parents, who I know are having it hard," with their "children who are dyslexic in the classroom" so that "the parents and the teachers to be on one page." Participant 2 reasoned:

> Their child is being accommodated for with sensitivity and respect, and the dignity of the child is maintained. Because one of the sad things I would think is if child with a dyslexic outburst is having a meltdown and sometimes can be a little bit, really, soul bearing. That the children's feelings are not hurt and guilt and shame to come under when certain things happen, and they have to come back to class tomorrow.

Participant 2 added the need for the training to focus on "sensitivity, and the awareness, and the kindness and being creative in ways to make it not look too bad." By training every teacher to know "all of that," teachers "could make the school life better for the dyslexic child who may not like school and are depressed when they come." Revamping training could enable teachers to handle students who have a meltdown effectively, and "everybody goes on, and the child doesn't feel worse in coming back to school."

Participant 3 referred to "more application" being needed in the training because receiving theory "which is good" and "a lot of reasoning, a lot of strategies, but the application,

what that looks like in the classroom, identification, we need more of those things to help get us to that point that we need to be at." Participant 4 believed "the training needs to be longer than just giving the basics of dyslexia, but actually going into what to do in the classroom with dyslexic students and not just how to identify." Participant 5 suggested the following:

> The training for dyslexia really needs to be revamped because I don't remember the training. If I can't remember it, then it was not something that I could apply it in the classroom. For example, the definition that you were going over, I don't remember those definitions at all. I barely remember the training. I know that I did a lot of clicking so that I could quickly get through the online training. It wasn't anything that I was able to internalize because I don't remember them. So, I think the training needs to be revamped because every year, I had at least one student that was dyslexic. And I need to know how to better serve those students so that they can learn because I don't feel that I have been equipped with the right tools to help my students. I don't feel like I've been able to help them to the best of my ability because I have not had that training so that I can help them.

Participant 5 clarified with the following:

> I'm able to recognize. Anybody can recognize when you see a student that writes their letters backwards, but for me to be able to really help them and figure out how I can help them to be more successful. How does dyslexia affect their learning? I have no idea because the trainings have not taught me how to do that effectively. And if I can't remember the training, then that means that I was just doing a whole bunch of clicks just to hurry up and get through it and get my certificate. I would need more training so that I can help those students, because just from my experience working with them, I notice there's a pattern. And the pattern that I notice is that they are disorganized, they have a

hard time focusing. I noticed that some of them are really impulsive. They have very poor emotional control. That has got to be connected with dyslexia because I noticed in those students they exhibited all of those. What is the effect on their learning when it comes to dyslexia? I know that's tied together in some type of way; I just don't know what.

Participant 6 noted the training "talks basically just about what is dyslexia and the screening. They should be screened early. And some resources and they tell us what to look for in a kid." However, Participant 6 critiqued the training as not addressing "the social-emotional part to it" because "these dyslexia kids, they feel anxiety." Participant 6 was concerned that students with dyslexia could not "communicate with their peers as they would like to. So, probably they are more confused and frustrated, but then what does the teacher need to do to help these kids?" Participant 6 was "sure their behaviors are not related to that they want to be bad. It's just their anxiety." Participant 6 explained further about behavior and the need for training teachers to build students social and emotional learning skills:

They're not able to communicate socially with their peers, or they feel like they are a little slow, or they're made fun of because not everybody, they are kids. They don't understand each other that much, that this one has a problem. How does the teacher, at that point, intervenes, or how does she talk to, without making that kid feel like, "Oh, I am so slow, or I am not like the others, I'm a little kid or something like that." And that's the hard part for a teacher when you are in a whole group situation and kids with different mindsets.

Participant 7 said the training "needs to be more realistic" because teachers need to "hear from students directly" and understand the students. By doing so, Participant 7 said, "I want to

know what it is that [the student] feel[s] and how we can help [the student]. Because I don't think we really know in-depth how a student feels, and that's so important."

Participant 8 offered the following revelation about what changes are needed for the dyslexia training:

I think there needs to be a lot of changes after talking this out with you. I feel like, sorry, my training was very generic, and it basically gave me a micro-synopsis of what dyslexia might be and what to do if I think I suspected. I don't think that it helped me really deal with any child who has dyslexia because I've come to learn there's so many different variations of dyslexia, and just because you teach one of them, those strategies are not going to work for the next one. So, I would just like more information on how to help the child who's diagnosed with dyslexia."

Participant 9 stated, "I think we need to have it because we did not get that." Participant 10 provided examples of how to revamp the training:

Well, maybe not just give definitions and characteristics, but then actually teach you how to help the students. Because it's not just that they have a hard time reading, it's also helped them how to make this, not make it seem like it's not a torture for them, but it's something that they could, they could do it, how to teach you to help them do it. To change their attitude toward reading.

The participants stated the dyslexia professional development training they received was generic, surface level, and not in-depth. Multiple participants stated they want to know how to serve their students better so they can learn and be more successful. Essentially, all five research questions were answered similarly with the first theme of dyslexia training is missing the five competencies and the second theme of the participants using skills learned in other professional

development to address the missing competencies. Nine of the teachers said they transferred the knowledge they gained in other professional development opportunities to their efforts to meet the social and emotional learning needs of the students with dyslexia. The findings for the research questions suggest the need for further research and for change. These implications are discussed in Chapter 5.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I described the research participants, presented the recruitment process that was used, followed by the results of this research study. The first research question's themes were (a) self-awareness was not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the self-awareness competency. The second research question's themes were (a) self-management was not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the self-management competency. The third research question's themes were (a) social awareness was not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the social awareness competency. The fourth research question's themes were (a) relationship skills were not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the relationship skills competency. The fifth research question's themes were (a) responsible decision making was not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the responsible decision-making competency. The final overarching theme was that the training for dyslexia needs to be revamped to be applicable and realistic for the general education teachers. The participants perceived the training they received as surface level, generic, and did not teach them how to teach the social and emotional learning skills to their students with dyslexia. Participant 7 summarized the thematic findings of attending a dyslexia professional development training in their district in which none of CASEL's five core

competencies were addressed as dyslexia training she attended did not necessarily show her how to meet students' needs but told teachers simply what "emotions and behaviors to look for, to bring them up for RTI [response to intervention], but not really for them [the students] to really be aware of that [skill]" because the training was "more for what we should look for and not really how to help the child."

**Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore elementary general education teachers' perceptions regarding the dyslexia training they received for addressing the social and emotional needs of children with dyslexia in their classrooms. This chapter includes discussion and interpretation of the findings as well as suggested improvements to the dyslexia professional development training and recommendations for future research. This study provides an avenue by which teachers provide their perceptions of how the dyslexia professional development training they received addressed the social and emotional needs of students with dyslexia and their suggestions for improvement to the professional development training.

This chapter contains discussion and further recommendations to help answer the following five research questions:

RQ1: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the self-awareness needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ2: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the self-management needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ3: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the social awareness needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ4: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the relationship skills needs of students with dyslexia?

RQ5: How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the responsible decision-making needs of students with dyslexia?

**Summary of the Findings**

All 10 participants in the study reported having students identified as dyslexic, some going through the identification process, as well as some students who are suspected of having dyslexia. One participant reported having taught 25 students with dyslexia, while another mentioned having a total of 30 students who were identified and unidentified. The overall study findings showed the participants were not sure of district or state expectations for dyslexia training. The participants reported being required to view slideshow presentations or an online module at the beginning of the year alongside several other presentations to satisfy their beginning of the year training requirements. Others reported attending the training in their professional learning community (PLC) meetings. However, they reported their training mainly covered what to do if suspecting a student may have dyslexia, reviewed the referral process, and did not provide the participants with any strategies to use in the classroom.

The data produced themes that answered the research questions concerning teachers' perceptions regarding dyslexia professional development training for addressing the social and emotional needs of children with dyslexia. The first research question's themes were (a) self-awareness was not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the self-awareness competency. The second research question's themes were (a) self-management was not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the self-management competency. The third research question's themes were (a) social awareness was not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the social awareness competency. The fourth research question's themes were (a) relationship skills were not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the relationship skills competency. The fifth research question's themes

were (a) responsible decision making was not addressed, and (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the responsible decision making competency. The overarching finding was dyslexia training needs to be revamped.

The answers to the research questions were consolidated into overarching themes for discussion. The five themes of self-awareness were not addressed, self-management was not addressed, social awareness was not fully addressed, relationship skills were not addressed, and responsible decision-making was not addressed were consolidated into a single overarching theme of the dyslexia training is missing the five competencies. None of the 10 teachers received dyslexia training specifically designed for directly assisting students with dyslexia in the classroom. They had only received training that allowed them to have some knowledge about identifying dyslexia behaviors in students who might not have been diagnosed with dyslexia. Thus, the first overarching theme was a result of the participants' perceptions that none of CASEL's five core competencies for social and emotional learning were addressed.

The second overarching theme emerged as used skills learned in other professional development to address the missing competencies. A document was created which includes all of the professional development training that the participants mentioned using (see Appendix E). This theme emerged because of the five themes used for answering the research questions that were the following: (a) used skills learned in other professional development to address self-awareness competency, (b) used skills learned in other professional development to address the self-management competency, (c) used skills learned in other professional development to address the social awareness competency, (d) used skills learned in other professional development to address the relationship skills competency, and (e) used skills learned in other professional development to address the responsible decision making competency. Eight

participants explicitly discussed transferring knowledge learned in other professional development training, and one participant mentioned reading independently to fill in the training gap for addressing dyslexic students' needs for social and emotional learning. However, the participants noted the training they applied to work with students with dyslexia had been designed for meeting the needs of all students and were not specifically designed for students with dyslexia. The five research question themes and the overarching theme were directly related to participants' statements of using other professional development training to fill in the gap where the dyslexia professional development training did not address any of the five core competencies.

The last overarching theme of dyslexia training needs to be revamped emerged during open coding to obtain the emic perspectives of the participants who had undergone the dyslexia training and reflected upon it during their interviews. The data from all 10 participants included quotes about how the training needed to be changed. The teachers recommended that the training needs to be changed, reformulated, or "revamped" (Participant 5) so they could more effectively meet the needs of students with dyslexia (see Appendix F).

**Discussion and Interpretation of the Findings**

The findings are discussed in this section. Because of the emergence of the overarching themes in addition to the answers to the research questions, both are discussed. First, the overarching themes are discussed. The discussion of the findings for the research questions follows.

***Discussion of the Theme for Dyslexia Training is Missing the Five Competencies***

The participants' collective responses revealed that CASEL's Five Core Competencies of Social and Emotional Learning were not addressed in the dyslexia professional development

training that the participants attended. The data reflected the dyslexia professional development training mainly focused on identifying characteristics of dyslexia and the referral process. Participant 9 reported that after the mid-year Measurement of Academic Performance (MAP) test, "district people came to the campus to review the data" because they wanted to identify students whose scores indicated a need to be tested for dyslexia. The participant also mentioned the people from the district were going to begin training kindergarten and first-grade teachers on testing for dyslexia.

These findings support the research of Worthey et al. (2016), where teachers expressed being under pressure to identify dyslexic students and provide interventions. Additionally, the participating teachers in Worthy et al.'s study reported the intervention training contained an overemphasis on skill work and phonics in isolation and offered limited information about the whole child and other factors that could be impeding reading development. The results of this study are similar to Worthy et al.'s research. Participant 3, who attended dyslexia professional development training at the independent educator training agency, reported the structure of the training included phonetic development, phoneme repetition and recognition of letters, and basic reading strategies rather than strategies for ensuring students' social-emotional learning. Participant 10 reported learning about teaching students to recognize sounds and blend them together and to use rhyming words and sight words instead of strategies for ensuring students' social-emotional learning.

***Discussion of the Theme of Used Skills Learned in Other Professional Development to Address the Missing Competencies***

Cockburn et al. (2019) observed that teachers recognized their individual expertise, expanded their professional knowledge, and improved their practices through explicit

discussions and knowledge sharing within a community of practice (COP). The COP allowed the teachers to share similar passions and concerns about their field of interest, participate in collaborative learning, and search for ways to improve their practices through regular meetings and interactions (Cockburn et al., 2019). Although Cockburn et al. did not directly address dyslexia training or CASEL's five core competencies of social and emotional learning, the findings provided an overview of how teachers participating in a COP transferred knowledge from one experience through knowledge sharing to another topic of interest.

Another relatable finding was identified by Worthy et al. (2016), in which teachers held a strong sense of responsibility for attending to the needs of their students, maintained compliance with the laws and district regulations, and desired to seek additional professional development outside of the professional development provided by the district. There is an alignment with the findings of this current study with Worth et al.'s conclusions. Nine of the 10 participants in this study mentioned using skills learned in other professional development to address the social and emotional learning competencies identified by CASEL. Participant 3 mentioned using Covey's (2020) Leader in Me professional development content to address the self-awareness needs, self-management needs, social awareness needs, and the responsible decision-making needs of his students. He reported the training was somewhat effective. Participant 6 reported using CHAMPS for addressing the self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making needs of students in her classroom. She found that CHAMPS was very effective. She liked that CHAMPS has posters she can use to post on her walls, which remind the students of expectations for their behavior.

Restorative Practices was a professional development training mentioned by Participant 8 as being good for teaching social-awareness skills. She mentioned learning how to use

restorative circles to discuss different backgrounds and cultures and make it more like a game and not so boring. Through the circles, she learned that five of her students only lived with their dad, which she mentioned was different than the students she had in the past. She saw the other students were more empathetic, as an example of social-emotional learning, towards the students who only lived with their dads and were cautious about saying things like "your mom can do that." This observation enabled her to transfer the restorative circle's knowledge to her classroom for serving dyslexic students. Even though several of the participants mentioned using strategies learned in other professional development training, they still reported they struggled with knowing how to address the social and emotional learning needs of their students with dyslexia.

In contrast to the findings by Worthy et al. (2016), whose teachers mentioned an obligation to comply with the law and district expectations, the participants in this study seemed unaware of any district expectations for dyslexia professional development training other than the required training at the beginning of the year. Furthermore, none of the participants mentioned the continuing education requirement for Texas teachers to obtain six hours of dyslexia training every 5 years. The finding suggests teachers might miss opportunities to gain training that could enable them to better meet students' social and emotional learning needs.

### *Discussion of the Theme of Dyslexia Training Needs to be Revamped*

The participants said the dyslexia professional development training they received needs to be revamped to include more application and not just theory. Participants 6 and 10 mentioned the training they received was generic by only describing the characteristics of dyslexia and the screening process. The training did not address the social-emotional part of dyslexia and did not teach them how to help the students. Participant 6 also mentioned knowing students with dyslexia experience anxiety and are confused and frustrated. However, Participant 6 also left the

training still confused about what teachers need to do to help their students. Participant 7 stated the dyslexia professional development training needs to be more realistic, and the teachers need to empathize with their students to be able to help them. Finally, Participant 4 felt the training should include what to do in the classroom and not just how to identify if a student may be dyslexic or not. These findings align with earlier research by Knight (2018), Sorano-Ferrer et al. (2016), and Worthy et al. (2018). The findings suggest that even though general education teachers must attend professional development to learn how to meet the needs of children with dyslexia, the gap found by other researchers (e.g., Knight, 2018; Sorano-Ferrer et al., 2016; Worthy et al., 2018) continues to exist between the training provided about dyslexia to general education teachers and the teachers' learning needs.

Several participants mentioned they believed scenario-based real-life examples to be very effective. Participant 1 mentioned she would "love to go to a school to observe" strategies being implemented and to see how different teachers address the social and emotional needs of students with dyslexia. Participant 7 said the training needs to be more realistic and it would be important to hear from the students with dyslexia about their experiences in general education classrooms. She said hearing from students could help teachers gain an in-depth understanding of dyslexic students' experiences in the general education classrooms and ideas about how teachers can help them. Participant 2 suggested every teacher should be trained on how to appeal to the social and emotional learning needs of students and be required to apply the skills learned in the course and be compensated if they are consistently implementing those skills. The participants also mentioned that dyslexia training should be offered to both teachers and parents so they have the same understanding and skills to deal with the students with sensitivity and respect so the dignity of the child is maintained. Several of the participants mentioned the training should be

longer and on-going so teachers have time to practice implementing the skills learned. Having students that have dyslexia come and speak to the participants was noted as a way for teachers to gain a better understanding of what the students are going through and what they would like for their teachers to do to help them.

*Discussion of the Findings for the Five Research Questions*

The participants stated the dyslexia professional development training they received was generic, surface level, and not in-depth. Even though the research questions had been designed to assess the knowledge gained in the dyslexia training by the general education teachers, no participant reported receiving training that provided social and emotional learning guidance based on CASEL's framework. Multiple participants stated they wanted to know how to serve their students better so the students could learn and become academically more successful. The five research questions were developed to apply the conceptual framework of the five core competencies for social and emotional learning developed by CASEL. Essentially, all five research questions were answered similarly with two respective themes. First, each research question's findings contained a theme of not addressing the specific CASEL competency. Second, each research question's findings contained a theme about the participants using skills learned in other professional development to address the missing competency in meeting their students' needs. All five research questions have similar discussions.

**Research Question 1 Discussion**. The first research question addressed within this study investigated how elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the self-awareness needs of students with dyslexia. The core competency of self-awareness encompasses the skills listed by CASEL (2020b) as: (a) developing an accurate self-perception, (b) identifying emotions, (c) recognizing strengths, (d) building self-confidence,

and (e) forming self-efficacy. Understanding how emotions, thoughts, and values influence behaviors to recognize strengths and limitations through a growth mindset while still being confident and optimistic represents self-awareness (CASEL, 2020b).

The responses from the participants indicated the self-awareness needs of students with dyslexia were not identified or addressed in a meaningful way in any of the training they received. The participants mentioned an emphasis on the referral process but not on developing the skills in students. This finding supports previous conclusions that general education teachers only receive sporadic, and sometimes inaccurate training and information for addressing the self-awareness needs of students with dyslexia (Acheampong et al., 2019; Shoulders & Krei, 2016; Sicherer, 2014; Washburn et al., 2013; Worthy et al., 2016, 2018). This question's finding supports the call from Pitt and Soni (2018) for remedial reading interventions to include counseling students and working on improving students' self-esteem.

**Research Question 2 Discussion**. The second research question addressed how elementary general education teachers perceived the dyslexia training they received for addressing the self-management needs of students with dyslexia. Managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself to set and accomplish goals are skills of self-management (CASEL, 2020b). The skills applied during self-management are: (a) stress management, (b) impulse control, (c) self-motivation, (d) self-discipline, (e) organizational skills, and (f) goal-setting. Developing these skills is accomplished through the management of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (CASEL, 2020b).

Again, the overall consensus is some of the training did inform teachers of strategies to use or actions to take when trying to manage student behavior in the classroom. However, the training the teachers attended did not address how they can teach students the skills to self-

manage in the classroom. By not developing the psychosocial skills of resilience and emotional regulation, students experience varying levels of stress that could influence the future development of maladaptive behavior or a mental disorder or illness (Doikou-Avlidou, 2015; IDA, 2017b; Pitt & Soni, 2018; Rajan-Rankin, 2014; Siddique & Ventista, 2018). Again, this finding supports the call by Pitt and Soni (2018) for providing both academic and social and emotional support for students to develop coping and resiliency skills.

**Research Question 3 Discussion**. The third question was about how elementary general education teachers perceived the dyslexia training they received for addressing the social awareness needs of students with dyslexia. CASEL's definition of social awareness includes the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds, to understand the cultural norms for behavior and who in the family, school, or community is a resource for support. Grover et al. (2015) posited that supportive teachers take the time to build on a student's strengths and show care for students' well-being that enables them to build their resilience. Giving students the tools to understand how society, environment, and culture influences the mind and behavior enables them to gain a better understanding of themselves and others (Carawan et al., 2016; Orth & Robins, 2014; Pitt & Soni, 2018; Rajan-Rankin, 2014). Teachers offer emotional support by showing genuine concern, care, and respect for their students and seeking to understand their students' perceptions about experiences and points of view (Ruzek et al., 2016).

Again, the overall indicator or theme presented by the participants was this core competency was not addressed in any of the dyslexia training they attended. This finding does not suggest the teachers were not supportive of their students or do not create a supportive environment in their classrooms. The findings indicate only the training provided to the

participants did not include explicit strategies for teachers to develop these skills in their students. Earlier research supports the idea that students should not only be proficient in core subjects, but should also possess the skills to collaborate with others from diverse backgrounds and behave responsibly and respectfully (Pitt & Soni, 2018). Furthermore, this finding aligns with the conclusion from Worthey et al. (2016) in which understanding the background and culture of students aids teachers in developing caring relationships as teachers understand what factors could be impeding their students' reading development. Therefore, supporting the need for a professional development training framework is inclusive of specific strategies that teachers can use to develop the social awareness skills in their students.

**Research Question 4 Discussion**. The fourth research question addressed how the elementary general education teachers perceived the dyslexia training they received for addressing the relationship skills needs of students with dyslexia. CASEL (2020b) shares that building and maintaining appropriate relationships among diverse groups of people are important factors in relationships. Cooperation, collaboration, and negotiation are also a part of relationship skill-building. Four additional skills include: (a) social engagement, (b) relationship-building, (c) communication, and (d) teamwork (CASEL, 2020b).

All of the participants responded that the relationship skills needs of students with dyslexia were not addressed in the dyslexia training they attended. However, some participants reported an understanding that building appropriate relationships with students is important. Again, what was reportedly absent from the training was how to teach the students to utilize skills independently to develop and maintain appropriate relationships with one another. This finding supports previous conclusions that there is a gap between the training provided about dyslexia to general education teachers and the teachers' learning needs (Knight, 2018; Sorano-

Ferrer et al., 2016; Worthy et al., 2018). The finding further supports the need for a professional development framework that specifically addresses teaching students the skills to develop and maintain healthy relationships.

**Research Question 5 Discussion**. Finally, how elementary general education teachers perceived the dyslexia training they received for addressing the responsible decision-making needs of students with dyslexia was the final research question in this research. The question aligned with CASEL's definition of responsible decision making, which is about making appropriate choices about one's behavior and social interactions with others. Evaluating and making ethical choices regarding one's personal behavior and understanding how the consequences of those actions may impact others are aspects of responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020b). The six key skills in responsible decision-making are: (a) identification of problems, (b) analysis of situations, (c) problem-solving skills, (d) ability to evaluate, (e) reflection skills, and (f) sense of ethical responsibility (CASEL, 2020b).

According to the participants, the responsible decision-making needs of students with dyslexia were not addressed in the training they attended. When the responsible decision-making needs of students with dyslexia are not addressed by teachers, children having social-emotional difficulties in school are more likely to engage in criminal activity and have a higher risk of drug addiction, depression, and other mental health challenges (Siddique & Ventista, 2018). Providing teachers with the skills needed to develop responsible decision-making skills in students with dyslexia might have long-term influence on students' lives beyond the classroom (Siddique & Ventista, 2018).

Again, the participants report being aware of the importance of how their decisions, such as maintaining confidentiality regarding the students' records and information, affect their

students. Although maintaining confidentiality is important, this awareness does not provide teachers with the tools to teach their students how to make responsible decisions themselves. This finding further confirms prior researchers' conclusions there is a gap between the training provided about dyslexia to general education teachers and teachers' learning needs regarding how they might meet the social and emotional needs of students with dyslexia (Knight, 2018; Sorano-Ferrer et al., 2016; Worthy et al., 2018). The dyslexia professional development training framework referenced above would ensure the skills that support building responsible decision-making skills with students are addressed.

### *Conclusion to the Discussion and Interpretation of Findings*

In sum, each of the five research questions yielded the same finding, which was the social and emotional learning competency identified in that research question was not addressed in the dyslexia training any of the 10 participants attended. The findings for all five research questions support previous conclusions that general education teachers only receive sporadic, and sometimes inaccurate training and information for teaching students with dyslexia (Acheampong et al., 2019; Shoulders & Krei, 2016; Sicherer, 2014; Washburn et al., 2013; Worthy et al., 2016, 2018). Nine of the teachers reported transferring the knowledge they gained in other professional development opportunities to their efforts to meet the social and emotional learning needs of students with dyslexia.

As a result, participants reported they "would need more training so that I can help those students" (Participant 5) with dyslexia. Participants wanted to gain more information about "what to do in the classroom with dyslexic students and not just how to identify" (Participant 4). Participant 5 specifically clarified that the training did not equip teachers "with the right tools to help my students. I don't feel like I've been able to help them to the best of my ability because I

have not had that training so that I can help them." These concerns by the participants support

the finding by Shoulders and Krei (2016). Their teachers reported being inadequately prepared

by the dyslexia training they received and lacked confidence in their ability to teach students

with dyslexia.

Teachers who are competent in developing the social-emotional skills of students with

dyslexia have been represented as: (a) committed, (b) facilitative of positive peer interaction, (c)

behavior modelers, (d) collaborative with fellow teachers, (e) focused on students' strengths, and

(f) producers of safe and supportive environments (Scott-Beale, 2016). Unfortunately, the

teachers participating in this study did not specifically indicate they had those characteristics.

Based on the responses of the participants of this study, none of CASEL's five core

competencies of social and emotional learning were used as a framework for any of the dyslexia

professional development training they attended. The general education teachers must attend

professional development to learn how to meet the needs of children with dyslexia, as others

have found. However, the findings suggest the general education teachers in this study did not

receive adequate training for dyslexia and for meeting their students' learning needs (Doikou-

Avlidou, 2015; Jordan & Dyer, 2017; Knight, 2018; Sorano-Ferrer et al., 2016; Worthy et al.,

2018).

Children with dyslexia who attend public school must be included in general education

classrooms. Yet, these students need extra instructional assistance from teachers trained to meet

their needs in order to benefit from inclusion (Mader, 2017). The results of this study support

Worthy et al. (2016), who also noted that teachers use transfer knowledge and skills learned in

other professional development training to fill in the gap the dyslexia professional development

training did not address. The participants did mention although they were able to utilize other

training designed for teaching all students and not specifically designed for students with dyslexia, they lacked the needed training for meeting the social and emotional learning needs of students with dyslexia.

**Implications for Policy and Practice**

The findings have implications for examining Texas policy and practice in professional development training. The state is encouraged to evaluate current dyslexia policy and determine if mentioning the social and emotional learning needs of students with dyslexia is adequate for training general education teachers who need to meet those needs in their students. The state may choose to redesign the dyslexia training requirements for general education teachers to provide them with specific skills and strategies to meet the social and emotional learning needs of students with dyslexia. Each type of implication is discussed in this section.

The Texas Education Agency (2018) required ESCs and school districts to provide general education teachers with training about dyslexia and teachers to engage in ongoing professional development to meet the needs of students with dyslexia. Both 2 Tex. Ed. Code § 21.044 (2017) and 2 Tex. Ed. Code § 21.054 (2019) specify the dyslexia training requirements. However, the teachers participating in this study indicated the dyslexia training did not enable them to meet their dyslexic students' social and emotional learning needs.

Without a dyslexia policy that requires teachers to benefit from the integration of social and emotional learning curriculum components within dyslexia professional development training, general education teachers may be unlikely to have the skills to meet their dyslexic students' social and emotional needs. The Dyslexia Handbook is used as a guidance document for districts; however, it only includes a general statement that "some, though not all, students with dyslexia may also experience symptoms such as anxiety, anger, depression, lack of

motivation, or low self-esteem. In such instances, appropriate instructional/referral services need to be provided to ensure each student's needs are met" (p. 14). A recommendation for practice involves updating the Dyslexia Handbook (2018) to include an explicit framework for dyslexia professional development training that aligns with current policy requirements and is inclusive of meeting dyslexic students' social and emotional learning needs.

The following framework has emerged from the findings. Each of CASEL's five core competencies of social and emotional learning could be used as anchors for the dyslexia training curriculum. The framework is presented according to each CASEL core competency. Each competency could represent a single training session module. There would be a total of six training sessions that could occur over a multiday training event or with each competency presented in a separate module that could be delivered online with teachers at their convenience. Each module could be presented factually, and then application opportunities could be incorporated through activities, coaching, and constructive feedback. Module content could be reinforced on an ongoing basis with teachers through instructional coaching that involved opportunities to observe teachers who have created socially and emotionally supportive classrooms. It is important to note the principles and procedures mentioned in this framework would need further study to determine its level of effectiveness.

### *Module 1: Learner Development*

This module offers the basic information about dyslexia.

1.1 What is Dyslexia

1.2 The History of Dyslexia

1.3 The Evolution of the Definition of Dyslexia

1.4 The Social and Emotional Learning Needs of Students with Dyslexia

1.5 State Law and Training Requirements

*Module 2: Identification and Screening*

This module provides more in-depth information about dyslexia and the social-emotional needs of students.

2.1 Characteristics of Dyslexia

2.2 Examining the Social and Emotional Needs of Students with Dyslexia

2.3 Review of the Identification, Intervention, and Support of Students at Risk of

Dyslexia as Outlined in the Dyslexia Handbook

2.4 Testing Timeline

2.5 504 and Special Education

*Module 3: Content*

This module delves more fully into the core competencies by CASEL for providing opportunities for general education teachers to practice the new learning in simulated exercises and receive feedback from coaches about their actions during the simulations.

3.1 Pre-Service and Continuing Education Credit Requirements

3.2 CASEL's Five Core Competencies of Social and Emotional Learning

3.3 Social and Emotional Learning Exemplar Lessons with Exercises

3.3 Student Self-Advocacy Skills

*Module 4: Instruction and Support*

This module involves aligning multi-sensory instruction with the Section 504 and special education procedures included in dyslexia policy for how to teach and apply accommodations and support with students.

4.1 Multi-sensory instruction

4.2 504 Service (accommodations, modification, and dyslexia intervention)

4.3 Special Education services

## *Module 5: Engaging Parents*

This module provides guidance to teachers who need to empower parents and provide support to them for their students with dyslexia.

5.1 Parent Dyslexia Awareness Training

5.2 Parent Communication and Building Supportive and Collaborative Relationships

5.3 Parent Awareness Training Regarding the Social and Emotional Needs of Children with Dyslexia

5.4 How to Support Self Advocacy Skills

## *Module 6: Student Reflections*

This module provides added guidance from students' perspectives to provide teachers with the opportunity to empathize with students in addition to providing further hands-on applications of the strategies taught in the previous modules.

6.1 Dyslexia Simulation Activities

6.2 Social and Emotional Learning Needs Based on the Perspectives of Students with Dyslexia

Nine of the 10 participants reported they were currently utilizing training that had not been specifically directed at meeting the social and emotional needs of students with dyslexia within their general education classrooms. Some of the general education teacher participants mentioned seeing dyslexia training being offered by their districts, but stated the training was geared to dyslexia specialists and special education teachers. Consequently, a training program

that follows a multimodule framework could reduce general education teachers' need to find other avenues of information for supporting their students with dyslexia.

Therefore, a multimodule framework that focuses on how to meet the social and emotional needs of students with dyslexia could enable general education teachers to gain confidence. Moreover, this framework could provide professional development providers with a road map to ensure teachers' needs are met when addressing social and emotional learning in students with dyslexia. Once properly evaluated for its effectiveness, this framework could be used for designing dyslexia professional development or be embedded within other professional development opportunities, including preservice general education training and certification programs.

The findings of this study demonstrate the disconnect between the available dyslexia training experienced by 10 general education teachers in Texas and CASEL's five core competencies of social and emotional learning. Additionally, the findings of this study may have implications for a directional shift in the way that dyslexia professional development training is offered. The data suggest a disconnect between dyslexia policy and the practice of training general education teachers about how to address the social and emotional needs of students with dyslexia in their classrooms. Policymakers need to understand the benefit of all general education teachers being trained in social and emotional learning so both the emotional and academic elements of learning can happen in tandem for dyslexic students who need to know they are understood and valued and want to fully engage in the curriculum (Casserly, 2013; EY, 2018; Ruzek et al., 2016; Texas Education Agency, 2018). Furthermore, the findings of this study can be used to show the benefit of embedding dyslexia professional development training within core content, classroom management, and even gifted and talented training as these

trainings sessions were specifically mentioned by some of the participants. Such embedding of dyslexia information may represent an opportunity to support general education teachers by providing them with specific strategies to use in the classroom to build social and emotional learning capacity within their students with dyslexia.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

I conducted a single study that focused on general education teachers who taught in first through fourth-grade classrooms located in the southeast region of Texas and had reported participating in dyslexia professional development training. Due to the small number of participants, I recommend the replication of this research in other regions or multiple regions of the state of Texas. I suggest including general education teachers from urban, rural, and suburban areas and in other states governed by different dyslexia laws. Additionally, I would suggest conducting this study with general education teachers in grade levels other than the ones included in my study and compare the perceived experiences. Lastly, obtaining the perspective of special education coordinators from school districts and regional special education and dyslexia administrators would add value to this study.

A future study could include interviews with dyslexic students who are in classrooms of teachers who have and have not had been trained in CASEL's five core competencies of social and emotional learning. It would be interesting to understand from the student perspective if and to what extent their social and emotional learning needs are being addressed in general education classrooms. For those teachers not trained in CASEL's five core competencies, interviews could include items about how they use other professional development training to address the social and emotional learning needs of their students could shed new light on professional development transfer. Also, a case study at the state level regarding why these competencies are not

emphasized within existing state training could be used to influence the development of effective training for developing social and emotional learning skills in students with dyslexia.

The results of this study revealed the need for further research on how to develop and deliver dyslexia training that incorporates CASEL's five core competencies of social and emotional learning that has a strong focus on helping teachers understand how to develop those skills in the students. A needs assessment with teachers could offer a formative opportunity to improve future training. Additionally, future researchers may consider utilizing a survey methodology incorporating items measured by a Likert scale to determine to what extent the dyslexia professional development they received addresses CASEL's five core competencies and to affirm the findings of this study related to their agreement with aspects of each theme. Finally, research with professional development planners could reveal new information for improving the application of state policy in dyslexia professional development for teachers seeking to meet the social and emotional learning needs of their students.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings, efforts should be made by the developers of dyslexia professional development training to: (a) ensure the social and emotional learning needs of students with dyslexia are addressed in the training; (b) offer teachers the skills and strategies needed to develop the social and emotional learning skills of their students, and (c) consider integrating dyslexia topics within the professional development training used in other content areas rather than in isolation so all teachers have ongoing access to the information. This change could provide a positive impact for teachers and ultimately students because teachers who are competent in developing the social-emotional skills of students with dyslexia are committed, facilitative of positive peer interaction, likely to model behavior, collaborative with fellow

teachers, focused on students' strengths, and producers of safe and supportive environments (Scott-Beale, 2016).

In conclusion, the participants in this study did report a willingness to support the social and emotional learning needs of their students with dyslexia. Still, they admitted they lacked the knowledge and skills to do so. I will use the information from this study to contribute to and improve current Texas dyslexia policy reforms and to suggest a framework for integrating dyslexia within other professional development topics.

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**Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter**

**ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**
*Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World*

**Office of Research and Sponsored Programs**
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885

May 19, 2020

Darlene Breaux
Department of Organizational Leadership
Abilene Christian University

Dear Darlene,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Dyslexia Professional Development Training for Addressing the Social-Emotional Needs of Children with Dyslexia",

(IRB# 20-074     )is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

*Megan Roth*

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

**Appendix B: Initial Contact Recruitment Email Content**

Dear Educator,

As a doctoral candidate at Abilene Christian University, I have designed a study to general education teachers' perceptions regarding the dyslexia identification training they received for identifying the social and emotional needs of children with dyslexia in their classrooms. I designed this study because most students with dyslexia in Texas attend both traditional public schools and charter schools. Researchers have shown that students with dyslexia experience concurrent mental health symptoms that include anxiety, anger, depression, lack of motivation, or low self-esteem.

This study consists of a personal interview with me that will be administered by way of video conferencing. Although the semi-structured interview will be audio taped and transcribed for accuracy in the data analysis, the information you provide for this study will be kept confidential by use of pseudonyms, and no identifying information will be reported. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Even if you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

If you have questions or concerns about the study or would like to volunteer, you may reply to this email from Darlene Breaux at xxxxxxx@acu.edu. Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,
Darlene Breaux

## Appendix C: Consent Form

Letter of Consent and Confidentiality

I_____ voluntarily agree to in the following dissertation study conducted by Darlene Breaux of Abilene Christian University.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted._____

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. _____

I understand that the participation involves a semi-structured interview regarding dyslexia training that I have received. _____

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research._____

I understand the interview will be audio recorded._____

I understand that all information will be kept confidential and the information I share will be stored and kept in an external hard drive stored in a raw data storage course at Abilene Christian University for up to three years._____

I understand that I will not be identified in the study with any identifying information. My name will not be used or any identifying information changed concerning me, or others I speak about during the interview._____

I understand some exact quotes may be used in the data or quoted without identifying me specifically. _____

I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else it at risk of harm they may have to report this to relevant authorities and may have to do so without my permission. _____

I understand there will be a transcribed record of my interview kept for up to three years._____

This research is being conducted by Darlene Breaux, M.Ed., a doctoral candidate at Abilene Christian University.

_____                    _____
Signature of research participant                                                            Date


_____ _                    _____
Signature of researcher                                                                        Date

**Appendix D: Guided Protocol**

**Introductory Questions**

1. How many years have you been teaching? Approximately how many students with dyslexia would you say that you have you taught? What have those experiences been like?

2. Tell me about what grade(s) you teach and any certifications you have (special education, ESL, Bilingual, GT, etc.)

3. Tell me about the professional development training that you have received regarding dyslexia (i.e., when, how often, face-to-face, online modules, power-point)?

4. What is your district's expectation for you to participate in professional development training for dyslexia (when, how often)?

5. Who at your campus, district or elsewhere do you contact for information and/or assistance regarding assisting your students with dyslexia (i.e., campus, district, colleague, professional resource)?

**Interview Questions Listed by Associated Semi-Structured Research Questions**

RQ 1. How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the self-awareness needs of students with dyslexia?

**Definition:** Self-awareness is the ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior.

1. How were the **self-awareness** needs of students with dyslexia addressed in the professional development training?
   a. Tell me what it looked like?
   b. How did you perceive the effectiveness?
   c. How do you know? Share any evidence you believe demonstrated its effectiveness?
2. If it was not addressed in the dyslexia training
   a. Have you had any other training that addressed these skills to help you fill in the gap?
   b. Tell me what it looked like?
   c. How did you perceive the effectiveness?
   d. How do you know? Share any evidence you believe demonstrated its effectiveness?

RQ 2. How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the **self-management** needs of students with dyslexia?

**Definition:** Self-management is the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal goals.

1. How were the self-management needs of students with dyslexia addressed in the professional development training?
    a. Tell me what it looked like?
    b. How did you perceive the effectiveness?
    c. How do you know? Share any evidence you believe demonstrated its effectiveness.
2. If it was not addressed in the dyslexia training
    a. Have you had any other training that addressed these skills to help you fill in the gap?
    b. Tell me what it looked like?
    c. How did you perceive the effectiveness?
    d. How do you know? Share any evidence you believe demonstrated its effectiveness.

RQ 3. How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the **social awareness** needs of students with dyslexia?

**Definition:** Social awareness is the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school and community resources and support.

1. How were the **social awareness** needs of students with dyslexia addressed in the professional development training?
    a. Tell me what it looked like?
    b. How did you perceive the effectiveness?
    c. How do you know? Share any evidence you believe demonstrated its effectiveness?
2. If it was not addressed in the dyslexia training
    a. Have you had any other training that addressed these skills to help you fill in the gap?
    b. Tell me what it looked like?
    c. How did you perceive the effectiveness?
    d. How do you know? Share any evidence you believe demonstrated its effectiveness.

RQ 4. How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the **relationship skills** of students with dyslexia?

**Definition:** Relationship skills is the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.

1. How were the **relationship skills** of students with dyslexia addressed in the professional development training?

      a. Tell me what it looked like?

      b. How did you perceive the effectiveness?

      c. How do you know? Share any evidence you believe demonstrates its effectiveness.

2. If it was not addressed in the dyslexia training

      a. Have you had any other training that addressed these skills to help you fill in the gap?

      b. Tell me what it looked like?

      c. How did you perceive the effectiveness?

      d. How do you know? Share any evidence you believe demonstrates its effectiveness.

RQ 5. How do elementary general education teachers perceive the dyslexia training they received for addressing the **responsible decision-making** needs of students with dyslexia?

> **Definition:** Responsible decision making is the ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

1. How were the **responsible decision-making** needs of students with dyslexia addressed in the professional development training?

      a. Tell me what it looked like?

      b. How did you perceive the effectiveness?

      c. How do you know? Share any evidence do you believe demonstrates its effectiveness.

2. If it was not addressed in the dyslexia training

      a. Have you had any other training that addressed these skills to help you fill in the gap?

      b. Tell me what it looked like?

      c. How did you perceive the effectiveness?

      d. How do you know? Share any evidence do you believe demonstrates its effectiveness.

**Wrap-Up Question**

What changes do you recommend for improving the professional development training that you received for addressing the social and emotional needs of your students with dyslexia?

Is there anything else you would like to add about the PD?

Is there anything else you would like to add about the knowledge you have gained through PD about the social and emotional need of students with dyslexia?

**Appendix E: Additional Professional Development Training**

Capturing Kids' Hearts

Capturing Kids' Hearts is an immersive, participatory experience. Teachers, staff, and administrators learn and practice skills they will use and model in their classrooms, schools, and districts, including: how to build meaningful, productive relationships with every student and every colleague, how to use the *EXCEL Model*™ of teaching to create a safe, effective environment for learning, how to develop self-managing, high-performing classrooms using team-building skills and a Social Contract, and high payoff techniques for dealing with conflict, negative behavior, and disrespect issues. https://flippengroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/CKH1_Flyer.pdf

CHAMPS

CHAMPS is used for class wide positive behavior support. The program is used to improve classroom behavior, establish clear classroom behavior expectations with logical and fair responses to misbehavior, motivate students to put forth their best efforts, reduce misbehavior, increase academic engagement, spend less time disciplining students and more time teaching them, teach student to behave respectfully and to value diversity, to enable empowerment and happiness in the classroom, to develop a common language about behaviors among all staff, create a plan for orienting and supporting new staff, and reduce staff burnout. https://www.safeandcivilschools.com/services/classroom_management.php

Franklin Covey: The Leader in Me

The Leader in Me is a whole-school transformation model that acts like the operating system of a computer—it improves performance of all other programs. Based on The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People®, The Leader in Me produces transformational results such as higher

academic achievement, fewer discipline problems, and increased engagement among teachers and parents. The Leader in Me equips students with the self-confidence and skills they need to thrive in the 21st century economy. https://www.leaderinme.org/what-is-leader-in-me/

FuelEd prepares educators with the science, skills, and self-awareness necessary to put relationships at the center of every school in America. FuelEd develops emotionally-intelligent educators who create relationships-driven schools. https://www.fueledschools.org/

Get Your Teach On

The Get Your Teach On conference– is a one-of-a-kind experience for K-8th grade teachers where they spend time with Team Get Your Teach On as they share their passion and enthusiasm for education and give teachers their tips, tricks, best practices, and teacher secrets to building a successful, engaging and rigorous classroom. https://www.getyourteachon.com/about-us/

Gifted and Talented (GT)

Texas law requires teachers receive 30 hours of training in gifted education to be eligible to teach gifted; in addition, teachers must receive six hours of training yearly to maintain that eligibility. The Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented has established core areas for G/T training that are based on state standards but are slightly more expansive: Nature and Needs of Gifted Students, Identification and Assessment, Social and Emotional Needs, Creativity and Instructional Strategies, and Differentiated Curriculum. https://www.txgifted.org/professional-development

Project CLASS

Project CLASS is a comprehensive social skills training and behavior improvement program. Its purposes are to improve children's behavior and learning readiness, to equip

children with core -foundation social skills, and to strengthen the capabilities of teachers, parents, and other caring adults to teach core skills to children. https://projectclass.org/what-is-project-class/

Project Criss

Project CRISS® (CReating Independence through Student-owned Strategies) is a professional development program for teachers2 that aims to improve reading, writing, and learning for 3rd- through 12th-grade students. The implementation of Project CRISS® does not require a change in the curriculum or materials being used in the classroom, but instead calls for a change in teaching style to focus on three primary concepts derived from cognitive psychology and brain research. These three concepts include students (1) monitoring their learning to assess when they have understood content, (2) integrating new information with prior knowledge, and (3) being actively involved in the learning process through discussing, writing, organizing information, and analyzing the structure of text to help improve comprehension. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/InterventionReports/wwc_projectcriss_061510.pdf

Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices is a system of formal and informal processes that build and sustain a culture of kindness, respect, responsibility and justice. This is achieved through emphasizing the importance of trusting relationships as central to building community and repairing relationships when harm has occurred. The fundamental premise of restorative practices is that people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them. Restorative practices cultivate a culture in which everyone has a sensation of belonging. They build a particular sense of community in which every member-- students, teacher, parent volunteers,

aides—shares the sensation of being seen, heard, and respected. Restorative practices promote inclusiveness, relationship-building and problem solving, through such restorative methods as circles for teaching and conflict resolution to conferences that bring victims, offenders and their supporters together to address wrongdoing. Instead of punishment, students are encouraged to reflect on and take responsibility for their actions and come up with plans to repair harm. https://www.restorativeresources.org/uploads/5/6/1/4/56143033/restorative_practices_parent_handbook_pdf.pdf

Super Friends

The I Can Be a Super Friend is a social story adapted from a Center of the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning social story by Kelly Leonhardt that talks about friendship. http://www.hdesd.org/files/2017/05/I-Can-Be-A-Super-Friend-Social-Story.pdf

**Appendix F: Coding Matrix**

| Themes | Categories | Description | Evidence & Subcategories |
|---|---|---|---|
| CASEL's five core competencies were not fully or substantially addressed | Training was surface level, generic, not in-depth | Mentioned but not trained | **Self Awareness** |
|  |  |  | #2 - I <u>don't think it was all that identified and discussed</u>, it was mentioned but we were not really trained, I was not really trained of how to be cognizant of the awareness and needs of the child or student with dyslexia needs. |
|  | Described characteristics of students | Wish we had gone more in-depth |  |
|  | Teacher responsibilities / strategies |  | #7 - I <u>wish we would have gone more in-depth</u> with actually seeing examples and maybe hearing from maybe an adult who went through this as a child, and them sharing their experiences to be able to build more of a connection, and be able to understand more of what to look for, and being able to |
|  | Lack of specific training for dyslexia students |  |  |
|  |  |  | **Self Management** |
|  |  | Generic stuff | #3 - It's <u>pretty generic stuff</u>. It was giving kids opportunity to cool down, basic communication with the kids. It was <u>nothing in-depth that was groundbreaking</u> |
|  | Teacher strategies | Helpful in knowing what to say | <u>[Other training] helps</u> because <u>sometimes </u>you might, instead of saying, "Oh, you're not following directions," I might just say, "Oh, I see that this particular kid" or, name, Tom, "I see Tom is getting ready to do some good work and starting to start writing, and he's getting ready to do the work. |
|  |  | Not fully addressed | **Social Awareness** |
|  | Improved understanding | Teacher has a better understanding of student struggles | #3 - <u>They weren't</u>. I think it was just being more cognizant of not calling students out, or giving them the proper response time, |

| Themes | Categories | Description | Evidence & Subcategories |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | or not embarrassing them. It wasn't really fully addressed. |
| | | | #4 – [Showing an example of dyslexic student trying to read] <u>was effective</u> because it let me know that why some of the students were taking longer to read or why they did not like to read, because it was such a struggle for them. |
| | | General discussion | Relationship Skills |
| | | | #3 - <u>They were not</u>, besides the general discussion of embarrassment. |
| | | Semi-addressed | #7 - I think they were semi-addressed. I think it was <u>addressed in more trying not to see it as a behavior problem</u> and seeing it as a way to not… I guess, to just not write students with dyslexia off as a behavior problem. |
| | | | Responsible Decision Making |
| | Characteristics of students | Students have behavior problems | They stated a <u>lot of students did have a behavior problems</u>. They said how they would act out. |
| | | Classroom reflects the teacher | <u>Part of the training looked at the teacher</u>. The teacher was looked at in the training and the classroom reflects the teacher. |
| | Teacher responsibilities | Maintain confidentiality | The only thing I think of is <u>just making sure that the students' information wasn't shared with people who didn't need to know</u>, so maintaining confidentiality. |
| Professional Development Transfer | Transferring training from other PD | other sources of information | #2—some reading that helped to address the skills |
| | | transferring learning from other training programs | #3—strategies from Fuel Ed and the Franklin Covey Leader in Me professional development |

| Themes | Categories | Description | Evidence & Subcategories |
|--------|-----------|-------------|--------------------------|
| | | | #6—CHAMPS |
| | | | #7—Get Your Teach On |
| | | | #8—Super Friends |
| | | | #9—GT training and "Project CLASS was great because it was school-wide, and it really helped behavior enormously" |
| | | | #10—Project CRISS |
| Revamp Training | improve the professional development training | provide examples of how to help students<br><br>model ways to help students read | #1—"I <u>would have had loved to be able to go to a school and watch it being implemented</u> a little bit more, more of a face-to-face type of scenario to see how different people handle it." |
| | | | #2—"I believe <u>every teacher should be trained</u>. I believe <u>every teacher should be expected to hold classes that appeal to the socially emotional learning for our students</u>. To <u>apply some the techniques that are taught in that course</u>. The <u>district should all have that as part of our professional development</u>, that the skills could be honed and practiced in the classes and that everybody should be doing it." |
| | | address the social and emotional needs of their students with dyslexia | #6—"They <u>don't address the social emotional part to it</u>. I feel like that I'm sure these dyslexia kids, they feel anxiety." |
| | | | #2—"The <u>sensitivity, and the awareness, and the kindness and being creative in ways to make it not look too bad</u>. <u>Every teacher being trained and knowing all of that</u>, could make the school life better for the dyslexic child who may not like school and are depressed when they come." |

| Themes | Categories | Description | Evidence & Subcategories |
|--------|-----------|-------------|--------------------------|
| | | | #9--"I think <u>we need to have it, because we did not get that</u>." |
| | | provide strategies in-depth | #3—"We get a lot of theory, which is good. A lot of reasoning, a lot of strategies, but the application, what that looks like in the classroom, identification, <u>we need more of those things to help get us to that point that we need to be at</u>." |
| | | | #8—" I think there <u>needs to be a lot of changes</u> after talking this out with you. I feel like, sorry, <u>my training was very generic</u>" |
| | | | #10—"Well, maybe <u>not just give definitions and characteristics</u>, but then actually <u>teach you how to help the students</u>." |
| | | provide more training over longer period | #4—"the <u>training needs to be longer than just giving the basics of dyslexia</u>, but actually going into what to do in the classroom with dyslexic students and not just how to identify" |
| | | revamped | #5—"The <u>training for dyslexia really needs to be revamped</u>, because I don't remember the training. If I can't remember it then it was not something that I could apply it in the classroom." |
| | | training should be realistic and in-depth | #7--"<u>needs to be more realistic</u>"; "I think we actually need to... I know we can't necessarily hear from students directly from the school, but to, I guess feel more, what are they feeling? Here, <u>I want to know what it is that you feel and how we can help them. Because I don't think we really know in-depth how a student feels</u>, and that's so important" |

**Appendix G: Code Matrix: No. of Times a Participant Provided Info. About a Code**

| Code | Participant | | | | | | | | | | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Additional information about the PD | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| Barriers | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Certifications | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 13 |
| Diagnosed as dyslexic | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 17 |
| District Expectations for Dyslexia Training | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 18 |
| Emotions or Feelings | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Student's feelings or emotions | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 13 |
| Teacher's feelings or emotions | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| Great Quotes | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 16 |
| Knowledge Gained | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 11 |
| Location of training | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Mode of delivery | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Face-to-face | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Online Modules | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Power-point | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Webinar | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Name of Dyslexia Training | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 11 |
| What the dyslexia training covered | 6 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 30 |
| Other PD | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Capturing Kids Hearts | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Champs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| Counselor - Mental Health Initiative | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 17 |
| Fuel Ed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| GT Training | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Get Your Teach On | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Leader in Me | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Love and Logic | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| PLC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| Personal Research | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Project CRISS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Project Class | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 14 |
| Restorative Practices | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Super Friends | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Resource for support | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 17 |
| Suggested Changes to the PD | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 14 |
| Suspected as dyslexic | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 16 |
| Teacher Motivation | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Teacher's experiences with students with dyslexia | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 15 |
| Training Provider | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 17 |
| When the training occurred | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 12 |
| Years of experience | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 12 |
| RQ 1 - Self-awareness | 7 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 32 |
| RQ 2 - Self-management | 6 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 38 |
| RQ 3 - Social-awareness | 5 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 36 |
| RQ 4 - Relationship skills | 6 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 50 |
| RQ 5 - Responsible decision-making | 7 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 43 |
| Totals | 61 | 56 | 58 | 42 | 45 | 49 | 91 | 58 | 86 | 46 | 592 |