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I See You, I Feel Me: Journaling for Confidence, Value, and Collective Efficacy Among Partner Teachers

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I See You, I Feel Me:

Journaling for Confidence, Value, and Collective Efficacy Among Partner Teachers

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Abstract

This action research sought to determine whether implementing a journaling practice that combined observation with self-reflection would improve the collective efficacy of an educational team. The research took place over one month in the single, early childhood classroom of a private Montessori school in the Midwest. Four partner teachers participated in the study: owner, director, and assistants. The project began with team-building exercises emphasizing open communication. The intervention required participants to record daily observations of partner teachers with corresponding reactions into personal *I See You, I Feel Me* journals. Data was collected through weekly attitude assessments, pre- and post-intervention focus group sessions, and artifacts. Using the benchmarks of confidence in roles, feelings of value, and perceptions of effectiveness, findings suggested journaling improved collective efficacy. This success recommends journaling as a useful tool for nurturing partner teaching relationships and evaluating collective efficacy. Continued research could examine widespread applicability and long-term effects.

Keywords: education, partner teacher, administrator, team, collective efficacy, journal

Introduction to the Action Research Project

A school is more than a building, more than a tax district, more than a daycare. A school is a community of people who come together to facilitate learning for the betterment of our society. Teachers, administrators, and staff coordinate to create a fertile educational environment for students. Sharing skills and responsibilities among this network balances the capacity of an individual with the needs of the group. How does a school create that balance?

As a teacher, I focused primarily on the growth of the children in my classroom. When I took on the additional duties of director, I became keenly aware of the importance of the relationships between the adults in my school. I have worked in the same single classroom, private Montessori school in the Midwest for sixteen years, serving children from about ages three through six years old. Like many early childhood settings, my school employed multiple adults in one classroom to meet childcare requirements. I noticed that sometimes these adults sometimes cooperated well together, but sometimes these relationships were acrimonious. Maybe one teacher perceived themself as working harder than another, someone didn't like the policies set forth by an administrator, or people's personalities simply conflicted. This discord distracted our attention from the children and resulted in turnover of our employees. In the hope of reconciling these interpersonal issues, I shifted my focus toward team building among the adults in my school.

At the time of this research project in the fall of 2021, the educational team consisted of the owner of the school, me, and two assistants. The owner, whom I have called "Kathy," founded the school in 1975. Kathy was a white woman in her late 70's with a melodic voice and open smile. She discovered Montessori many decades ago for her own son, took Montessori training via correspondence, and dedicated her life to teaching children. I found the school as a

young mother, when I fell in love with the Montessori philosophy and took the training. I have

been a teacher at Kathy's school since 2005, and I have been the director since 2018. Our first

assistant, whom I have named "Shannon," volunteered with us for one month then took the job

for the next school year. Shannon had her master's degree in social work, taught corporate yoga,

and loved preschool aged children. About to become a grandmother, Shannon hoped to take the

Montessori training eventually. Our second assistant, whom I called "Stacy," was a professional

dancer, instructor, and soon-to-be mother who was brand new to Montessori and early childhood

in general. Stacy looked forward to moving to California with her family. Kathy, Shannon, and

I were white, and Stacy was black. We were different ages with different backgrounds. We had

varying levels of experience in Montessori and held disparate power within the school. We were

all women. We were all mothers.

How could I embrace the unique gifts of each individual and create a unified educational

team for my school? Pursuing my master's degree offered me the opportunity to explore

strategies for building success among my partner teachers. The literature recommended that

schools implement a positive, inclusive, communications-based structure with administrative

support for partner teachers (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013; La Paro et al., 2015; Marshall,

2017). The psychological theory of collective efficacy from Albert Bandura (2000) provided the

framework for the action research. From there, I utilized the fundamental Montessori practice of

observation to shape the project. Montessori teachers observe their students to better know them,

to assess their readiness, and to note their progress. For the three weeks of the *I See You, I Feel

Me* action research project, my Montessori team applied this technique of observation to their

partner teachers and considered their own internal responses. Would keeping a daily journal of

partner teachers' observations of one another, along with their corresponding self-reflections,

influence their sense of confidence in their roles, their perceived value for their contributions, and their feelings of collective efficacy? By tracking the benchmarks of confidence in roles, feelings of value, and perceptions of team efficacy through attitude assessments, focus group discussions, and journal artifacts, the action research project found that collective efficacy increased over the course of the *I See You, I Feel Me* journal intervention.

Fostering a Collaborative Team of Partner Teachers: A Literature Review

While images of schools commonly present one teacher in front of a classroom of children, some schools feature multiple teachers collaborating in the education of their students. This review of literature examines ways that schools can support partner teachers to develop effective educational teams. The literature review informs the action research project of an administrator/partner teacher in a single-classroom, early childhood, Montessori school. An array of nine peer-reviewed journal articles, four doctoral dissertations, and one foundational book corroborates the review. The review begins by examining different scenarios for teacher collaboration and notes the benefits and challenges of partner teaching. It continues by investigating strategies of effective partner teachers and administrators. The literature review reveals that by adopting a framework of team-building practices, schools can create collaborative environments in which partner teachers feel confident in their roles, valued in their contributions, and effective as an educational collective.

Research Question

This literature review aims to answer how I, an administrator of a small Montessori school, can foster a collaborative educational team that supports my partner teachers in feeling confident in their roles and valued in their contributions within our shared early childhood classroom.

What Is Partner Teaching?

The literature utilizes a variety of labels for the practice of teachers working together. These labels include: co-teaching, practicums, professional learning communities, team teaching, and partner teaching (Bronson & Dentith, 2014; Brown et al., 2013; Fitzerald & Theilheimer, 2013; Hallam et al., 2015; La Paro et al., 2015; Masterson, 2015; Sanders-Smith et al., 2021; Sileo, 2011; Sun et al., 2017). At times, these labels may indicate a particular teaching structure. For example, within the special education community, the term co-teaching usually identifies a traditional teacher working in tandem with a special education teacher in a traditional classroom that includes children with special needs (Brown et al., 2013; Masterson, 2015; Sileo, 2011). Multilingual classrooms may similarly apply the term co-teaching for teachers who speak different languages working with corresponding students (Sanders-Smith et al., 2021). Practicums are another instance of teachers working together, where student teachers train under veteran teachers as part of their certification requirements (La Paro et al., 2015). In professional learning communities, teachers from different schools come together to engage in development (Hallam et al., 2015). The phrase team teaching may similarly represent cross-classroom teacher engagement (Sun et al., 2017).

The literature does apply some of these labels more generally. A teaching team, for instance, can more broadly represent a combination of lead and assistant teachers in the classroom, in conjunction with their relationship to school administrators (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013). Partner teaching may refer simply to colleagues working in the same classroom (Bronson & Dentith, 2014). This review utilizes the term partner teaching, as it most closely describes the research scenario: multiple, non-specialized teachers coming together in mutual understanding and purpose to guide the same group of students within a single classroom.

The review also uses the phrase educational team to illustrate the group dynamic of teachers, owner, and administrator working together in the school.

Why Practice Partner Teaching?

Each of these scenarios of teachers working together offers insights for educators. This body of literature showcases many benefits of partner teaching. The most widespread benefit is sharing professional knowledge (Bronson & Dentith, 2014; Fitzerald & Theilheimer, 2013; Hallam et al., 2015; La Paro et al., 2015; Sanders-Smith et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2017). Improved teaching practice regularly accompanies that sharing of knowledge (Bronson & Dentith, 2014; Fitzerald & Theilheimer, 2013; Sanders-Smith et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2017). An aspect of that improvement is maximizing the strengths of partner teachers (Masterson, 2015). By extension, these improvements result in an enhanced learning experience for students (Bronson & Dentith, 2014; La Paro et al., 2015; Masterson, 2015; Sanders-Smith et al., 2021). Partner teachers are also able to share and assess students' performances (Fitzerald & Theilheimer, 2013; Hallam et al., 2015). Finally, partner teaching cultivates a positive, caring community (Masterson, 2015). All of these benefits recommend partner teaching as an ideal paradigm for schools.

Common Obstacles for Partner Teachers

At the same time that partner teaching offers benefits, the literature cautions that partner teaching also presents unique challenges. Whenever multiple people are working together, differences arise, making management of interpersonal conflict the most prevalent challenge for partner teachers (Marshall, 2017; Sileo, 2011; Sanders-Smith et al., 2021). Individuals may possess different views about teaching and learning, practice different management styles, or come from different cultures (Masterson, 2015; Sanders-Smith et al., 2021). Teachers may have different professional backgrounds and training (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013). They may

suffer from a lack of clarity of individual roles in the educational team (Fitzgerald &

Theilheimer, 2013; Marshall, 2017). In hierarchical relationships, whether the roles are clear or

confused, individual use of and resistance to power may challenge the educational team. In

consequence, people may feel the partnership threatens their personal and professional identities.

These problems fester when people avoid verbally communicating with each other (Marshall,

2017). As an unfortunate result, students may leverage these conflicts to manipulate adult

responses (Sileo, 2011).

While differences between individuals and the ensuing conflicts may be the most

acrimonious challenge to partner teaching, educational teams encounter other common obstacles.

Making time for collaboration can prove very difficult, especially on top of regular teaching,

childcare, and administrative duties (Fitzgerald-Theilheimer, 2013; Marshall, 2017; Sanders-

Smith et al., 2021). A lack of support from school leaders magnifies all of these challenges

(Fitzgerald-Theilheimer, 2013; Marshall, 2017). Educational teams must strive to overcome

these challenges to reap the benefits of partner teaching.

Strategies for Effective Partner Teaching

Open Communication

Fortunately, the literature offers many strategies for educational teams to cultivate partner

teaching successfully. First and foremost, effective educational teams establish patterns for open

communication (Brown et al., 2013; Fitzgerald-Theilheimer, 2013; La Paro et al., 2018; Sanders-

Smith et al., 2021; Sileo, 2011). By extension, effective educational teams develop an inclusive

process to mediate conflict and devise productive solutions (Brown et al., 2013; Marshall, 2017;

Masterson, 2015; Sileo, 2011). To facilitate this communication, educational teams need

dedicated time to meet, discuss, and plan (Bronson & Dentith, 2014; Brown et al., 2013;

Fitzgerald-Theilheimer, 2013; Masterson, 2015; Sanders-Smith et al., 2021). The quality of these meetings and the frequency of these meetings are equally important (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013). Open communication patterns, accompanied by processes for conflict resolution and dedicated group meetings, are the basic premises for educational teams to overcome challenges and achieve success.

Self-Reflection

To begin, effective teachers practice open communication with themselves. Self-reflection is an essential tool for transforming individuals into partners (La Paro et al., 2018; Marshall, 2017; Sanders-Smith et al., 2021). One aspect of self-reflection is personal identity (Marshall, 2017). Another aspect is professional trajectory: where people have been in their careers, where they are currently, and where they are going (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013). This self-reflection also includes views about partner teaching (Sileo, 2011). Collaborative journaling, the shared process of recording reflections, improves teacher practice (Zohar, 2009). Effective educational teams not only engage in self-reflection but also communicate these insights to their team members.

Shared Beliefs

Through this process of reflection and communication, educational teams acknowledge their shared values (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013; La Paro et al., 2018; Sanders-Smith et al., 2021). Partner teachers may subscribe to the same curriculum or pedagogy, such as the Montessori method (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013; Sanders-Smith et al., 2021). The educational team may also hold a mutual vision for the school (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013; Masterson, 2015). Partner teachers may even find they have similar classroom styles and

preferences for the environment (Sileo, 2011). Effective educational teams find common

ground.

Clear Organization

A critical element for agreement is the organization of the educational team. Any

hierarchy within the team must be identified and defined, such as between a lead teacher and an

assistant or between an administrator and a teacher. Within that structure, individuals must

understand their own roles and duties. They must also understand the roles and duties of their

teammates (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013; Marshall, 2017; Sileo, 2011). Effective educational

teams provide partner teachers the opportunity to engage in substantive instruction, allowing

each teacher to interact meaningfully with students (Brown et al., 2013; Sanders-Smith et al.,

2021). The educational team must communicate its organization clearly to enable individuals to

work effectively together.

Positive Relationships

For educational teams to work effectively together, they must cultivate positive

interpersonal relationships with each other (La Paro et al., 2018). The literature offers two

communication-based vehicles for positive relationships. First, create trust (Fitzgerald &

Theilheimer, 2013; Hallam et al., 2015; Sanders-Smith et al., 2021). Trust ensues when a few

things happen. Individuals fulfill their responsibilities, which demonstrates their competence to

their teammates (Hallam et al., 2015). In relation, individuals also feel a sense of self-efficacy

within the educational team when they fulfill their duties (Marshall, 2017). Trust also develops

when people share personal information with the team (Hallam et al., 2015). Of course,

teammates must keep discussions confidential to continue to build this trust (Masterson, 2015).

Along with trust, the literature highlights respect as a vehicle for positive interpersonal

relationships (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013; Sanders-Smith et al., 2021). Partners show they

respect each other by exhibiting kindness and patience (Hallam et al., 2015). This can be as easy

as sharing a smile (Masterson, 2015). Respecting each other means allowing each other to make

mistakes and learn from them (Hallam et al., 2015). As people learn from their mistakes, the

educational team normalizes both conflict and problem-solving (Marshall, 2017). Kind and

patient teams also provide validation (Marshall, 2017; Masterson, 2015). Validation includes

giving sincere and affirming feedback, expressing gratitude, and celebrating successes. Finding

ways to relieve stress also demonstrates respect for the efforts of the educational team. Creating

areas for quiet reflection, playing soothing music, and maintaining a sense of humor supports the

well-being of the adults as well as the students (Masterson, 2015). These respectful practices

encourage positive interpersonal relationships among the educational team.

Supportive Administration

An inclusive and responsive relationship between administrators and teachers is a key

component of success for an educational team. These administrators engage in team-building

activities with both new and returning teachers (Marshall, 2017). These activities guide the

educational team to grow professionally together (Masterson, 2015). This administrative faith

and teacher empowerment is an outcome of a clear organizational structure (Fitzgerald &

Theilheimer, 2013).

Inclusive and responsive administrators encourage the involvement of their teachers. The

literature makes several recommendations to this end. Administrators trust their teachers and

give them autonomy to fulfill their duties. For example, teachers can help in the initial planning

and organization of the educational team, encouraging involvement (Hallam et al., 2015).

Teachers working within the team can provide feedback for improvement, facilitating buy-in to the concept of team involvement (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013; Marshall, 2017). Teachers can create their own job descriptions and re-evaluate them throughout the school year, instilling a sense of self-efficacy (Marshall, 2017). Administrators can ask teachers to submit requests for issues to discuss in team meetings, so that these meetings become both interactive and purposeful (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013; Masterson, 2015). Likewise, administrators can ask teachers what sort of professional development they need, then provide the supporting opportunities (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013). By opening communication in ways like these, teachers and administrators work together to build an effective educational team.

Peer Observation

Effective educational teams are open to observation. Montessori teachers assess students, and ultimately affect change, by engaging in the process of observation (1918). Yet the application of observation need not be limited to students. While administrators may observe teachers as a professional evaluation, peer observation has more impact on teachers' skills (Munson, 1998). In peer observation, one teacher watches another give a lesson and provides objective, rather than judgmental, feedback. Peer observation benefits both the observing and observed teachers in this framework of professional development (Vincent, 2018). Moreover, peer observation improves the efficacy of the educational team as a whole (Rasmussen, 2015). Peer observation is therefore a valuable tool for partner teachers.

Team Identity

Finally, identifying as an educational team and prioritizing the educational team, rather than the individual, are signs of success (Bronson & Dentith, 2014; Hallam et al., 2015; Marshall, 2017; Sanders-Smith et al., 2021). The literature offers a few supportive strategies.

First, know the people in the educational team, their names and personalities as well as their roles and responsibilities (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013). Feelings of consistency, meaning, and belonging foster a strong team identity (Marshall, 2017). These feelings indicate that individuals are a good fit for the educational team (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013; La Paro et al., 2018). Language choice can also have a significant impact on feelings of belonging. Using we-pronoun language attests that the educational team is the priority (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013). Feedback and problem-solving communication, particularly from administrators, should also use team-supporting language (Marshall, 2017).

Conclusions from the Literature

The purpose of this literature review is to discover ways to foster a collaborative educational team of school leaders and partner teachers who feel confident and valued working together in their shared, early childhood classroom. This body of literature contributes to the field of education by identifying strategies for building effective educational teams with administrators and partner teachers. The literature reveals several weaknesses of partner teaching, particularly management of individual differences and management of time. The literature also describes the advantages of partner teaching in various settings, especially the sharing of professional knowledge. The literature demonstrates that schools can create thriving educational teams by implementing a positive, inclusive, communications-based structure for partner teachers with administrative support.

Recommendations for Further Research

The literature does leave a few gaps in the research for fostering collaboration among partner teachers. First, the literature frames partner teaching as a specialized scenario. This limited view fails to envision creating educational teams across many diverse learning

environments. Second, there is a paucity of research regarding partner teaching relationships in a

Montessori school setting. Third, the literature only addresses peer observation in multi-

classroom settings. While traditional Montessori practice emphasizes the observation of students

to affect change, observation could likewise be applied to partner teachers. Fourth, the literature

offers little perspective from teachers on the effectiveness of the developmental strategies

outlined. Fifth, the literature contributes little information about the impact of journaling on

partner teachers. This study seeks to contribute to the body of research by incorporating peer

observing, self-reflecting journaling to increase perceptions of confidence, value, and efficacy

within the context of an educational team of Montessori school leaders and partner teachers.

Collaborating for Collective Efficacy Among Partner Teachers: A Theoretical Framework

This action research project utilizes the theory of collective efficacy by psychologist

Albert Bandura as its framework. Collective efficacy is a social cognitive theory rooted in

agency: particular actions produce particular outcomes (Bandura, 2000). While self-efficacy is

an individual belief that a personal action can produce an intended outcome, collective efficacy

is a shared group belief that, together, their collaborative actions can produce desired outcomes

(Bandura, 2000). Collective efficacy recognizes that a group is more than the sum of its parts; a

group can achieve more acting together than individuals acting in isolation (Bandura, 2000).

This belief develops motivation, commitment to goals, the ability to overcome obstacles, and the

successful achievement of goals for the group (Bandura, 2000).

Bandura (1997) stated, "Perceived collective efficacy is defined as a group's shared belief

in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce

given levels of attainments" (p. 477). For many reasons, Bandura's theory of collective efficacy

provides an applicable framework for analyzing this action research project. The research

concerns a group of people, comprised of school leaders and partner teachers. The group unites

under a shared belief in the Montessori philosophy of education and practices conjoint

capabilities by collaborating in a single classroom to attain the school vision of providing an

authentic Montessori education to every student. This operational framework coincides with

Bandura's structure of collective efficacy.

Assessing perceptions of collective efficacy involves a combination of critiquing one's

own performance within the group and critiquing the performances of others (Bandura, 2000).

This research project asks what effect will keeping a daily journal of partner teachers'

observations of one another and corresponding self-reflections have on their sense of confidence

in their roles, their perceived value for their contributions, and their feelings of collective

efficacy within an educational team. Attitude assessments that measure confidence in individual

roles highlight the effectiveness of the organization of the educational team. The *I See You, I*

Feel Me journal entries both critique the performance of others by recording observations and

critique one's own performance by writing self-reflections at the same time. Attitude

assessments of perceived value for contributions offer insight into the critical feedback partner

teachers feel they receive from the educational team. In these combined ways, this action

research corresponds with Bandura's guideline for assessing collective efficacy.

This action research project examines how individuals relate to the group itself.

Ramazan and Hanifi found that collective teacher efficacy increased as teacher self-efficacy

increased, that strong school leadership predicted strong collective teacher beliefs and efficacy,

and that supporting individual teachers will strengthen beliefs in the school (2018). By

providing a journal to facilitate assessment, this action research project attempts to improve

collective efficacy among an educational team of school leaders and partner teachers. By

improving collective efficacy, this research hopes to grow the school vision of authentic

Montessori education.

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The *I See You, I Feel Me* Journal: A Methodology

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The *I See You, I Feel Me* action research project took place in September through the

beginning of October, 2021. The target population of the study were the teachers of my single

classroom Montessori school: Kathy, Shannon, Stacy, and me. Kathy, the owner of the school,

was 78, white, and female. Shannon, a classroom assistant, was 52, white, and female. Stacy,

also a classroom assistant, was 31, black, and female. I was the school director, 41 years old,

white, and female. I began by obtaining permission from Kathy to conduct the action research

project. In late summer, I initiated interest in my action research project by e-mailing an

invitation to my fellow teachers to participate (Appendix A). I followed up this invitation with

active consent forms for the partner teachers (Appendix B). I fielded any questions the teachers

asked. Aware of the position of authority I held as director, I assured my educational team that

participation in the action research project was voluntary, confidential, and would not affect their

employment. All three of my partner teachers agreed to join me for the *I See You, I Feel Me*

journey. As an active participant in the research project, I completed the same activities as my

partner teachers.

Building the Foundation for Open Communication

As director of my school, I have always opened the school year with an orientation

program for my staff. This year, my literature review inspired me to adapt my agenda. In

addition to reviewing the day-to-day operations of the school, I facilitated a series of team

building exercises with an emphasis on open communication (Appendix C). As part of our

introductions, each teacher shared her top core values with the group to deepen our knowledge of

each other. I outlined the hierarchy of our roles within the school and highlighted the

responsibilities of each team member. We recognized the Montessori pedagogy as our shared

belief system. Each person shared her personal narrative of her attraction to Montessori, and we

followed this with a discussion of Montessori ideals. Our educational team came to the

consensus that an atmosphere of respect was the foremost quality of an authentic Montessori

environment. We united in our shared goals by reviewing the school vision, and we divulged our

personal hopes for the school year to come. To develop a system of conflict mediation, each

teacher shared her preferences for giving and receiving professional feedback. We

collaboratively created a written document to help solve problems between the adults in our

classroom. Through this process, we established our identity as an educational team of partner

teachers.

Part of this orientation program included a one-hour focus group session to discuss our

perceptions of partner teaching (Appendix D). I asked a series of open-ended questions to

encourage self-reflection and dialogue within the group. I obtained permission from my fellow

teachers to make an A/V recording of the session (Appendix E). This enabled me to participate

freely in the conversation at the moment. I later utilized the recording to establish a qualitative

baseline of preliminary attitudes about partner teaching for this action research project.

After the orientation, staff enjoyed their last week of summer vacation. We then

welcomed students to our classroom for a gentle phase-in to our classroom with small, shortened

sessions. Our first full week of school followed, with partner teachers engaging in their

classroom duties without intervention. At the end of that first week of sessions, I administered a

three-question attitude assessment to gauge partner teachers' feelings of confidence in their roles,

perceived value for their contributions to the school, and sense of efficacy as an educational team

(Appendix F). I delivered the assessment via Google Forms and kept the responses anonymous.

This assessment served as a prefatory baseline for the action research project.

Keeping an *I See You, I Feel Me* Journal

The Saturday before the second full week of classes, I hosted a thirty-minute introductory

meeting on Zoom to give the directions of the intervention (Appendix G). This meeting offered

partner teachers the opportunity to take ownership of their *I See You, I Feel Me* journals and

personalize their designs. Each partner teacher received a simple, handmade notebook covered

in the color of their choosing. We wrote our names and doodled on the cover. We inscribed the

first pages with the school vision and our mutual ideal of respect. I provided several examples of

journal entries: positive, critical, neutral, and hopeful in tone. I went over the privacy policy and

fielded questions.

After the introductory meeting, I implemented my intervention. I asked each partner

teacher to keep an *I See You, I Feel Me* journal as an artifact. At the end of every school day,

each partner teacher on duty made a two-part journal entry. Part one of the entry recorded "I see

you," an objective observation of their partner teacher.   Part two recorded "I feel me," a

corresponding self-reflection. Each of these parts could have been as short as a single sentence,

though participants were free to write as much as they like. Participants used a checklist to keep

track of the days they made journal entries. Participants kept their own journals secure at school.

The *I See You, I Feel Me* journaling intervention continued for three weeks, during which

I kept field notes of teacher interactions (Appendix H). On each Friday afternoon during the

intervention, I delivered the same three-question attitude assessment to the partner teachers

(Appendix F). The purpose of these assessments was to measure any change in their feelings of

confidence, value, and efficacy. At the end of the intervention, participants could choose to keep

their journals private or to submit their journal to me for research purposes (Appendix J). This

project was more concerned with the effect of the process of journaling than the content of the

journals themselves, so I maintained a neutral position with these options. All participants chose

to submit their journals, which I digitally scanned and returned the next school day. I later

analyzed these artifacts for patterns according to themes of the research, types of interactions,

subjects of observation, and general character. Teachers could continue to journal or stop at will.

Coming to Completion

After the intervention concluded, I hosted another one-hour focus group session for participants.

For convenience, this focus group took place over Zoom the weekend after the intervention

ended. With permission, I recorded the focus group session for my future reference (Appendix

E). This focus group included the identical open-ended questions from the session during our

staff orientation. I also gave partner teachers the opportunity to reflect on their experience

keeping the *I See You, I Feel Me* journals (Appendix I). Holding a focus group both before and

after my intervention allowed me to note any changes that had evolved during that period. The

discussion also provided insight into the perceived value of the journaling process.

<div align="center">Analysis of the Data</div>

The purpose of this study was to determine to what degree implementing a daily journal

to encourage observation and reflection among partner teachers would improve the collective

efficacy of the educational team. The key themes of the research were the individual teachers'

confidence in their roles and responsibilities, their feeling of being valued for their contributions,

and their perception of the effectiveness of their educational team. Focus groups at the

beginning and end of the project asked a series of open-ended questions to gather information

about teachers' thoughts on these themes. The correlational research design utilized an *I See*

You, I Feel Me partner teaching journal intervention accompanied by weekly attitude

assessments of these themes.

Demographics of Participants

Table 1

Subjects of the Study

Teacher	Gender	Race	Age (as of 9/21)	Years of Montessori Teaching Experience
Kathy	F	White	78	46
L. (Researcher)	F	White	41	16
Shannon	F	White	52	0
Stacy	F	African American	31	0

The participants of the study were the four teachers working in my single classroom

Montessori school in a midsize, midwestern, American city during the fall term of 2021. While

the study did not exclude male and non-binary participants, 100% of the teachers at the school

were female. 75% of the teachers were white, while 25% were African American. Participants

were over thirty and under eighty years old. Participants were each ten years or more apart in

age, with a range of forty-seven years between the youngest and oldest participants. Two of the

participants had more than fifteen years of Montessori teaching experience, while the other two

participants had none. Participant age did not necessarily correlate with Montessori experience.

Attitude Assessments

        Each Friday during the study, for a total of four consecutive weeks, participants

submitted an attitude assessment via Google Forms (Appendix F). These assessments were

identical. Every assessment asked the same three questions to gauge participants' confidence in

their roles and responsibilities, feelings of being valued for their contributions, and effectiveness

of their educational team. Participants responded using a Likert scale ranging from zero to ten,

with zero being completely negative and ten being entirely positive. The first assessment took

place after the first full week of school sessions for the term, before the intervention began. The

following three assessments took place during the *I See You, You Feel Me* journaling

intervention. Considering my position of authority within the school, and to encourage honest

response, I chose not to collect email addresses for the assessments. Responses remained

anonymous.

Figure 1

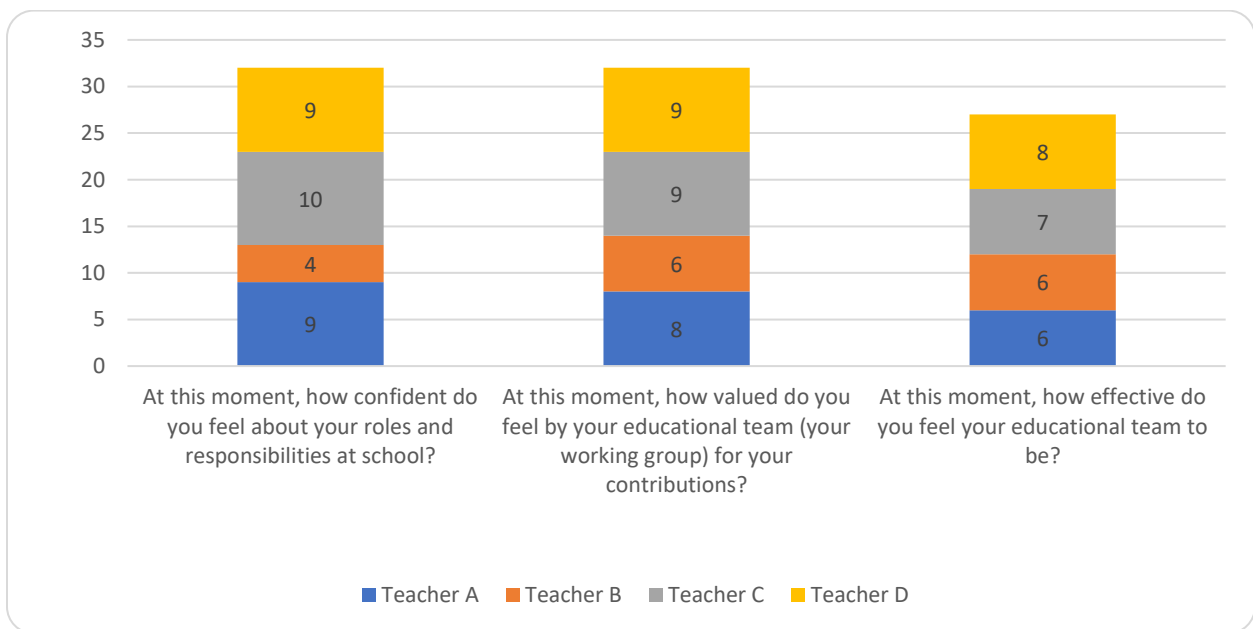*Attitude Assessment: Pre-Intervention*

Figure 1 serves as a baseline for attitudes prior to the *I See You, I Feel Me* journaling intervention. In addition to individual responses, Figures 1-3 show the total point value teachers assigned to each question in the assessment. Overall, teachers ranked their confidence and their value equally with a score of 32 at this time. The difference in individual confidence between Teacher B and Teacher C spanned six points, the widest range in the course of assessments. The total perceived effectiveness of the team measured five points less than the first two categories, at 27.

**Figure 2**

Attitude Assessment: Week 1 of Intervention
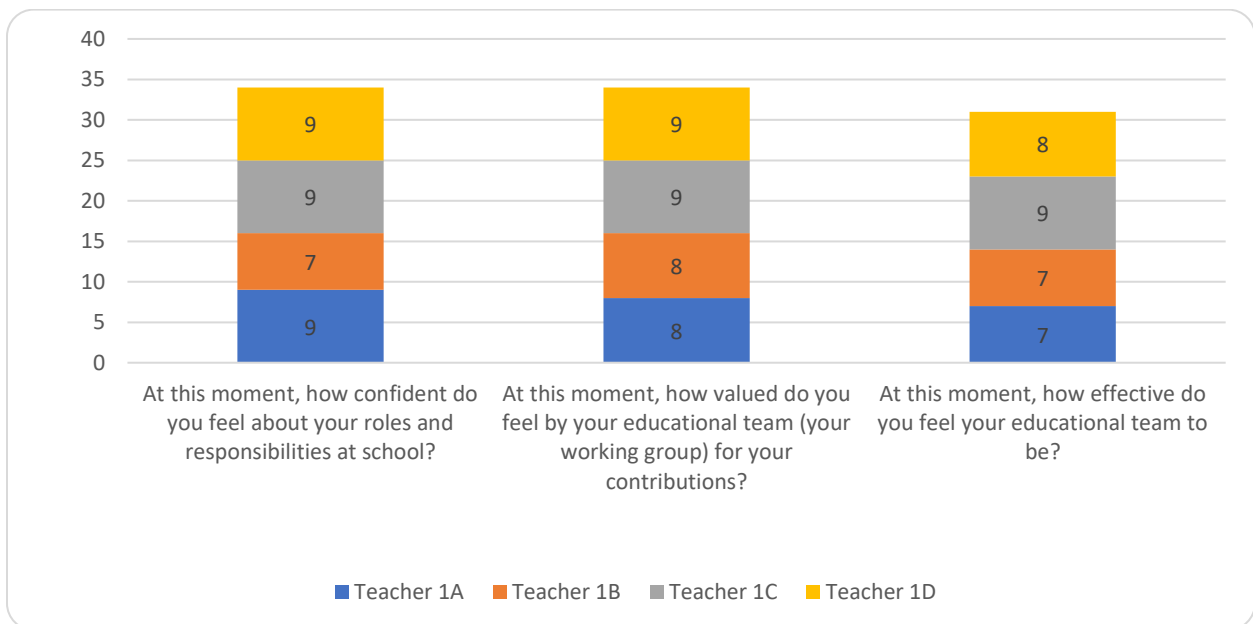
Because assessment submissions were anonymous, Figures 1-4 display a random array of participant responses. For example, "Teacher 1A" in Figure 1 was not necessarily the same individual as "Teacher 2A" in Figure 2. While anonymity makes individual progress difficult to track, total point values provide a general overview for comparison. After one week of journaling, the overall confidence and value of the partner teachers again added up to the same

total, 34. This was a two-point increase over the pre-intervention assessment for each category.

The perceived effectiveness of the team measured 31, a four-point increase.

Figure 3

Attitude Assessment: Week 2 of Intervention
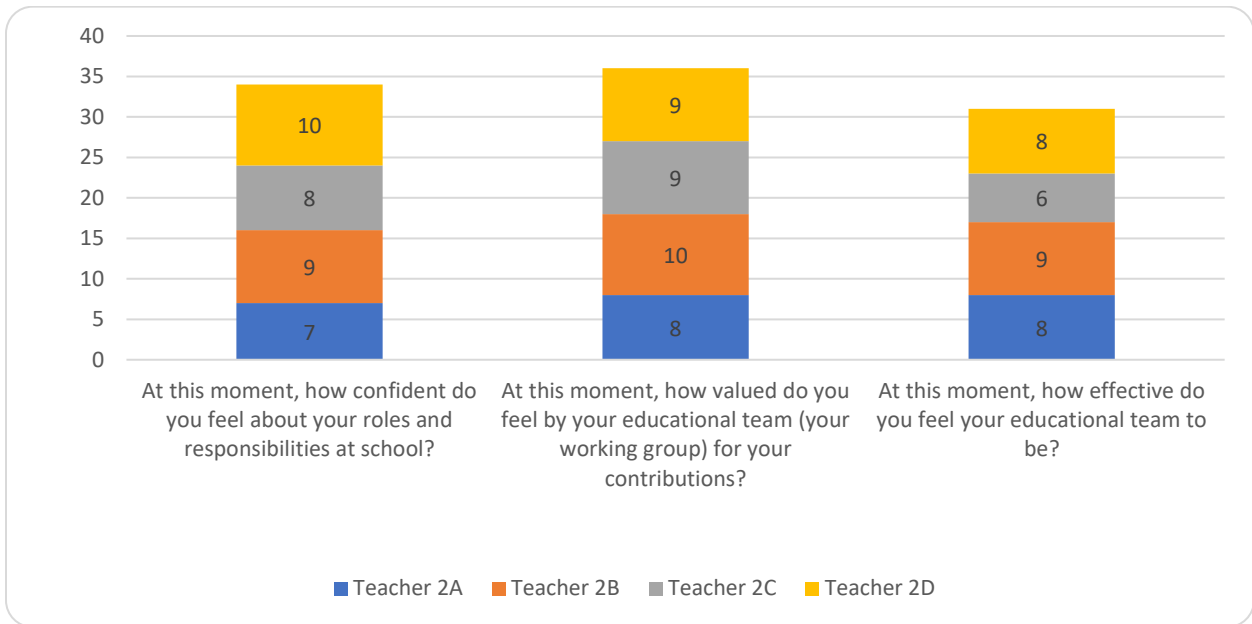
After the second week of journaling, the overall confidence of partner teachers in their

roles and responsibilities remained unchanged at 34, despite some minor fluctuations in

individual responses. Likewise, the total perceived effectiveness of the team held steady at 31.

Collective feelings of value, however, grew another two points to 36.

Figure 4

Attitude Assessment: Week 3 of Intervention
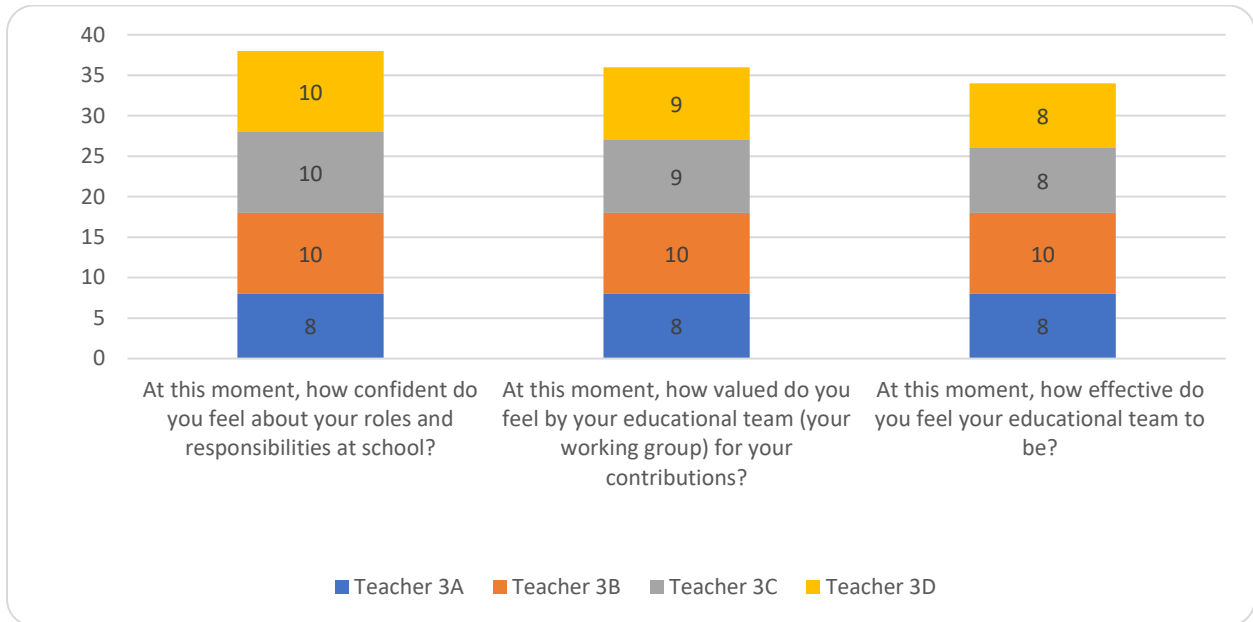
After the third week of journaling, feelings of value stayed stable for the group at 36.

The effectiveness of the team as a whole rose three points to 34. The overall confidence of

partner teachers in their roles and responsibilities swelled four points to 38. 75% of participants

rated their confidence level at 10, "completely confident." One participant, Teacher 3B,

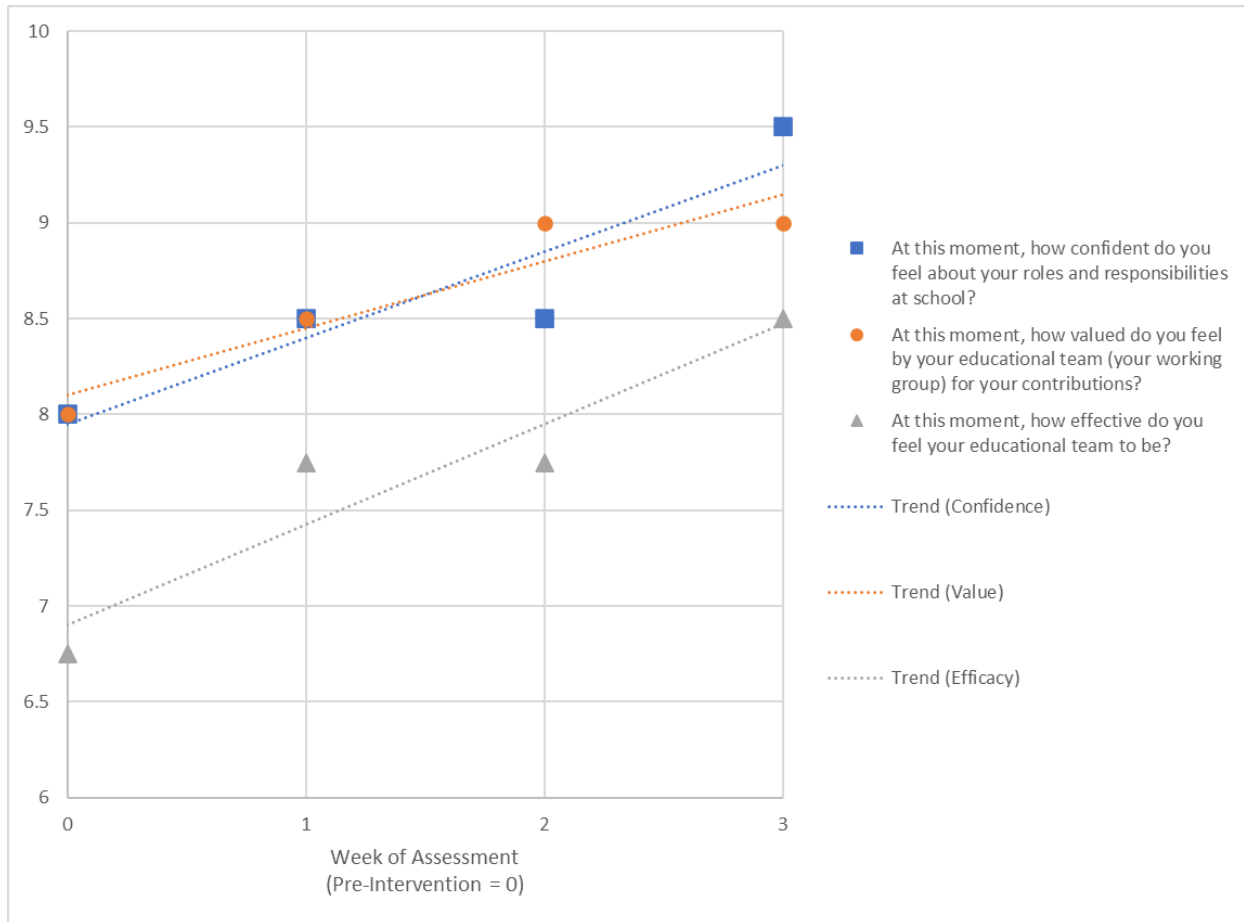assigned a 10 to all three categories.

Figure 5

Average of Attitudes Over Time

Figure 5 plots the average attitude score for each question over time, highlighting the

linear trend of these averages. On average, beliefs about confidence, value, and team efficacy all

trended upward during the *I See You, I Feel Me* journaling intervention. Average confidence

increased from 8 to 9.5, an improvement of 18.75%. Average feelings of value were a little less

changed, yet still increased one point from 8 to 9, a rise of 12.5%. The average perception of

team efficacy changed the most during the intervention, growing from 6.75 before it started to

8.5 when it concluded, a growth of 25.93%. The upward trend of weekly attitude assessments

suggests that collective efficacy improved during the intervention. This data suggests that keeping a partner teaching journal may improve collective efficacy.

Focus Group Discussions

The study included two one-hour focus group discussions. The first discussion took place before the intervention, during the staff orientation program, accompanying a series of team building exercises (Appendix C). The second focus group discussion took place after the final week of the *I See You, I Feel Me* journal intervention. Both focus groups encouraged participants to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, and experiences with partner teaching. The same, semi-structured questions asked about their sense of confidence in their roles and responsibilities at school, their feelings of being valued for their contributions to the school, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of educational teams (Appendix D). Additionally, the second focus group allowed participants to provide feedback on the *I See You, I Feel Me* journaling experience, including the effect journaling may or may not have had on partner teaching and feelings of confidence, value, and efficacy. This continued semi-structured format also questioned the likelihood of participants keeping this sort of journal in the future (Appendix I). I obtained permission from participants to make an A/V recording of each focus group discussion (Appendix E). I utilized these recordings to compile the data in this subsection.

Figure 6

Statements Made by Individuals in Focus Group, Pre-Intervention
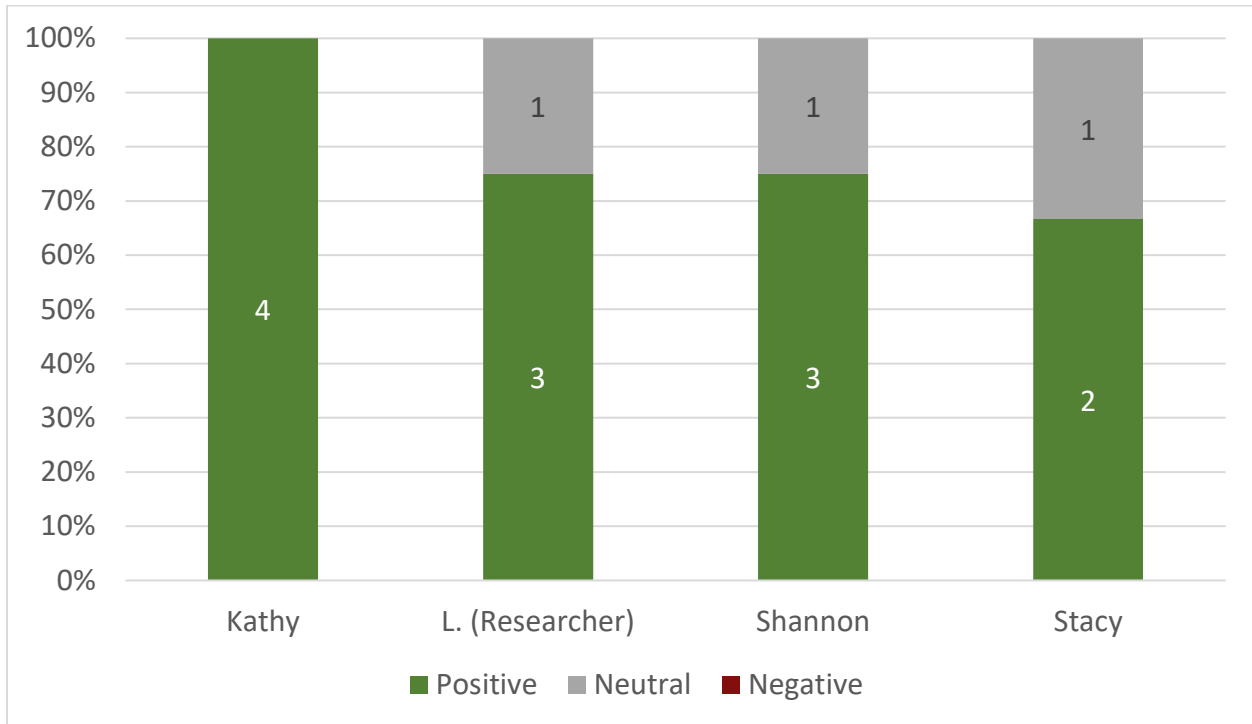

Figure 6 illustrates the number of statements made by participants during the first focus group session, the general character of those statements as positive, negative, or neutral, and the distribution of those characteristics. Positive statements included words like "love," "supported," or "good." Negative statements included feelings such as "don't like," "frustrated," or "confused." Neutral statements "didn't notice," "managed," or were "fine." A statement represents the number of times a participant initiated a narrative during the discussion, no matter the length or extent of the narrative. Three teachers made the same number of statements, answering each question, with Stacy making one less than her peers. Kathy made all positive statements, while the other teachers each made one neutral statement. No statements were generally negative.

Figure 7

Statements Made by Individuals in Focus Group, Post-Intervention
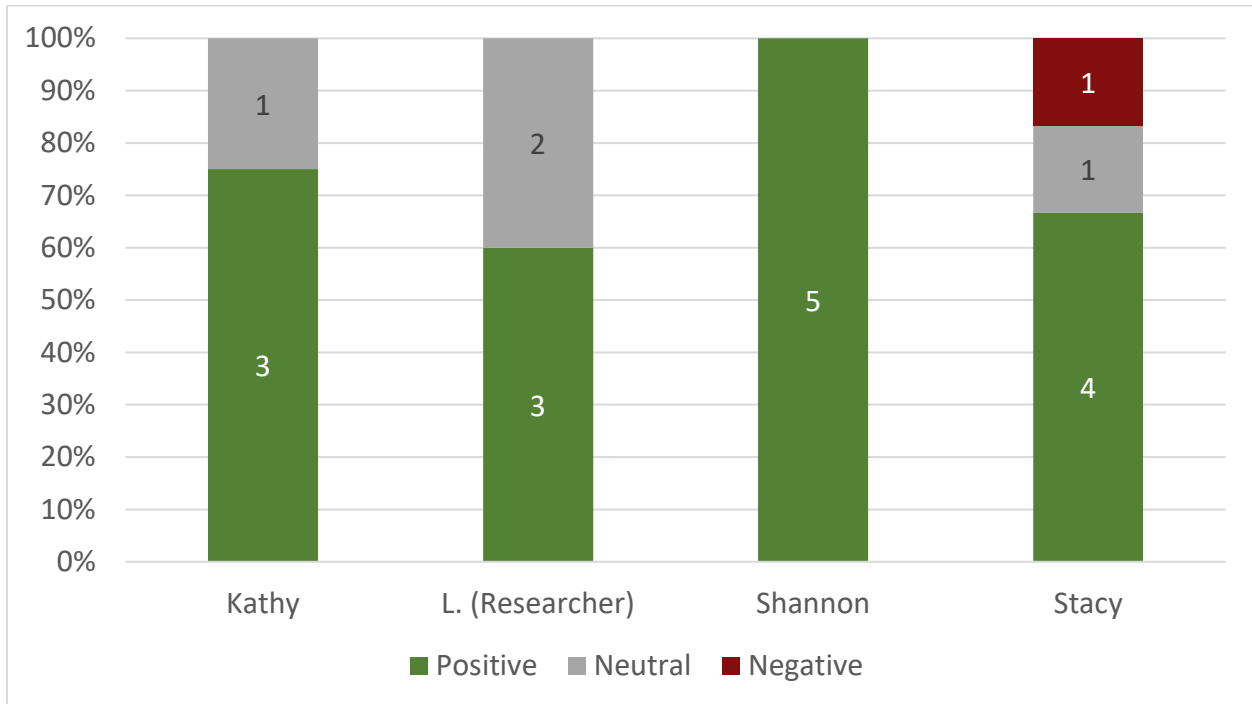

Figure 7 illustrates the number of statements made by participants during the second focus group session, the general character of those statements as positive, negative, or neutral, and the distribution of those characteristics. Number of statements increased for most teachers, with more variety (Figure 6). There were a couple more neutral and negative statements the second time around, though Shannon only had positive things to say. Shannon and I each made an additional statement. Stacy made six statements, doubling her participation from the first focus group. These findings could indicate that staff feel more comfortable communicating with each other after keeping the partner-teaching journals.
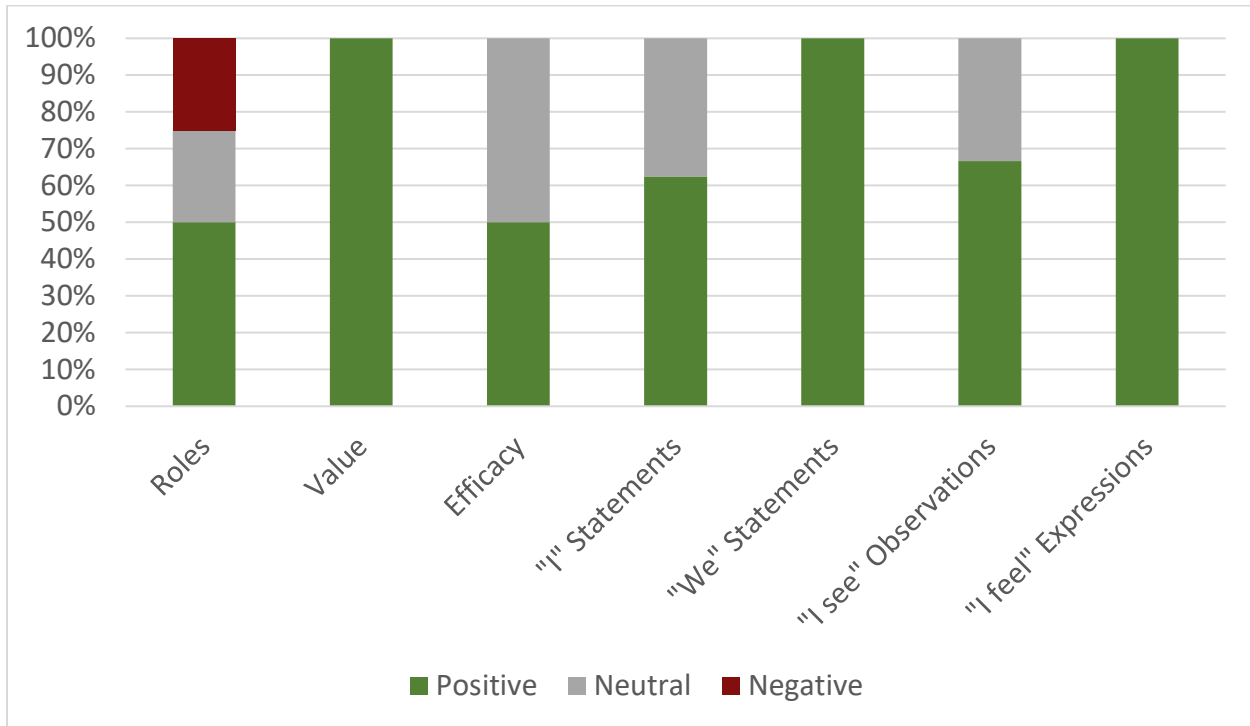
Figure 8

Types of Comments in Focus Group, Pre-Intervention

Figure 8 further magnifies the types of comments made within the general statements of

the first focus group (Figure 6). I made tallies each time participants commented specifically

about confidence in their roles, feelings of being valued for their contributions, or perceptions of

efficacy of their educational team. I made tallies each time participants made statements

centered around "I" or statements centered around "we." I also made tallies each time

participants shared their observations of other teachers, "I see," or expressed their own emotions,

"I feel." This figure shows the distribution of the character of these comments as positive, neutral

or negative. The greatest divergence occurred in roles: Kathy expressed confidence in her place

at the school as both owner and Montessori teacher. Shannon also felt positive about her job

description. Stacy felt more uncertain of her position, as she had no experience with partner

teaching nor with Montessori. I fell somewhere in the middle: believing in my capacity as

teacher and director, but unsure of accomplishing my goals.

Figure 9

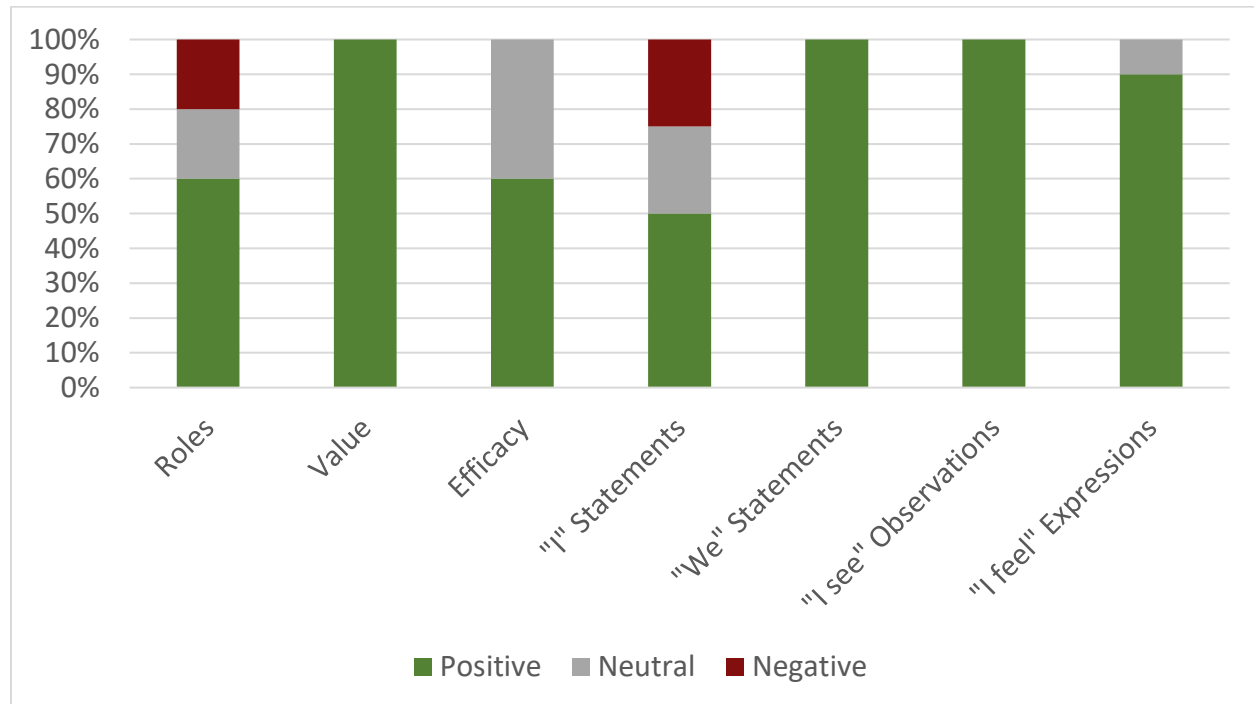*Types of Comments in Focus Group, Post-Intervention*

Figure 9 highlights the types of comments made within the general statements of the

second focus group (Figure 7). This figure shows the distribution of the character of those

comments as positive, neutral or negative. Comparing the data with the first focus group reveals

several findings (Figure 8). And any time participants used "we" language, they spoke

positively. According to the literature, use of we-pronoun language demonstrates a prioritization

of the educational team (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013). In both the first and second focus

groups, all comments about value were 100% positive. Comments about roles and efficacy were

both 10% more positive after the journaling intervention. These findings suggest that the journal

intervention supported collective efficacy among the educational team.

Figure 10

Total Focus Group Responses
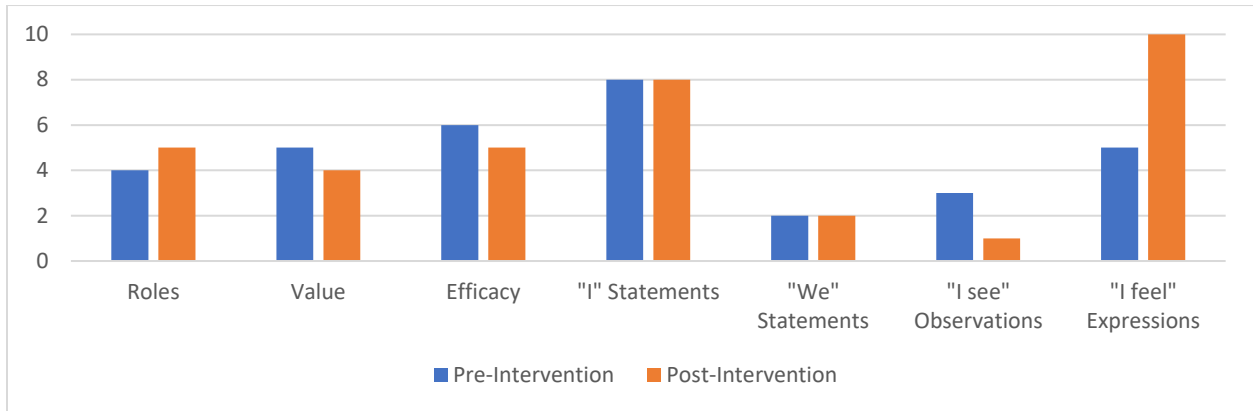
Figure 10 provides the number of responses participants made for each category,

comparing both the first and second focus groups. While most of the responses remained fairly

close in number, "I feel" expressions doubled from five to ten statements. This sharp increase in

the number of "I feel" statements could suggest that keeping the *I See You, I Feel Me* partner

journal encouraged participants to identify and express emotions about partner teaching.

Figure 11

Feedback for Journal Intervention
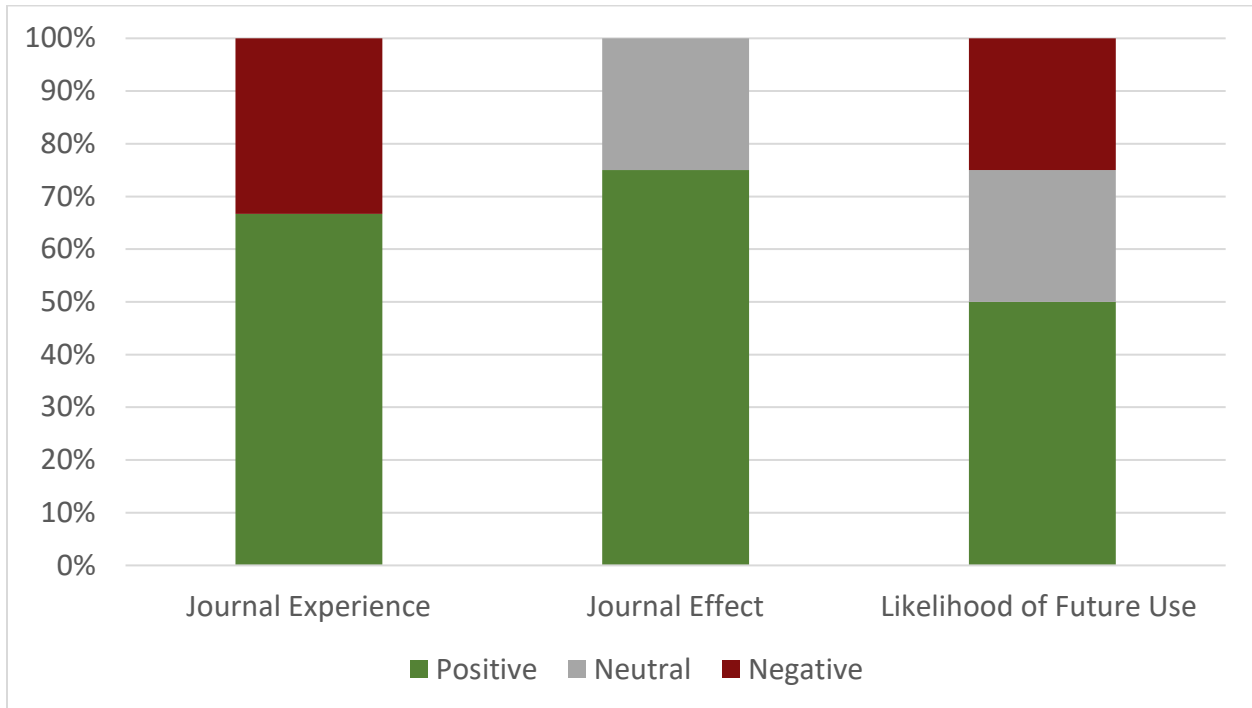
Taken from the feedback portion of the second focus group, Figure 11 provides an overview of how participants characterized their experience with the *I See You, I Feel Me* journal intervention, the effect of the intervention on their teaching, and their likelihood to continue using the *I See You, I Feel Me* journal after the intervention ended as positive, neutral or negative. Two-thirds of reflections on the journaling experience were positive, with 75% indicating that the intervention had a positive effect on partner teaching. Half of the participants intended to continue keeping an *I See You, I Feel Me* journal in the future.

Figure 12

Total Statements Regarding the Journal Intervention
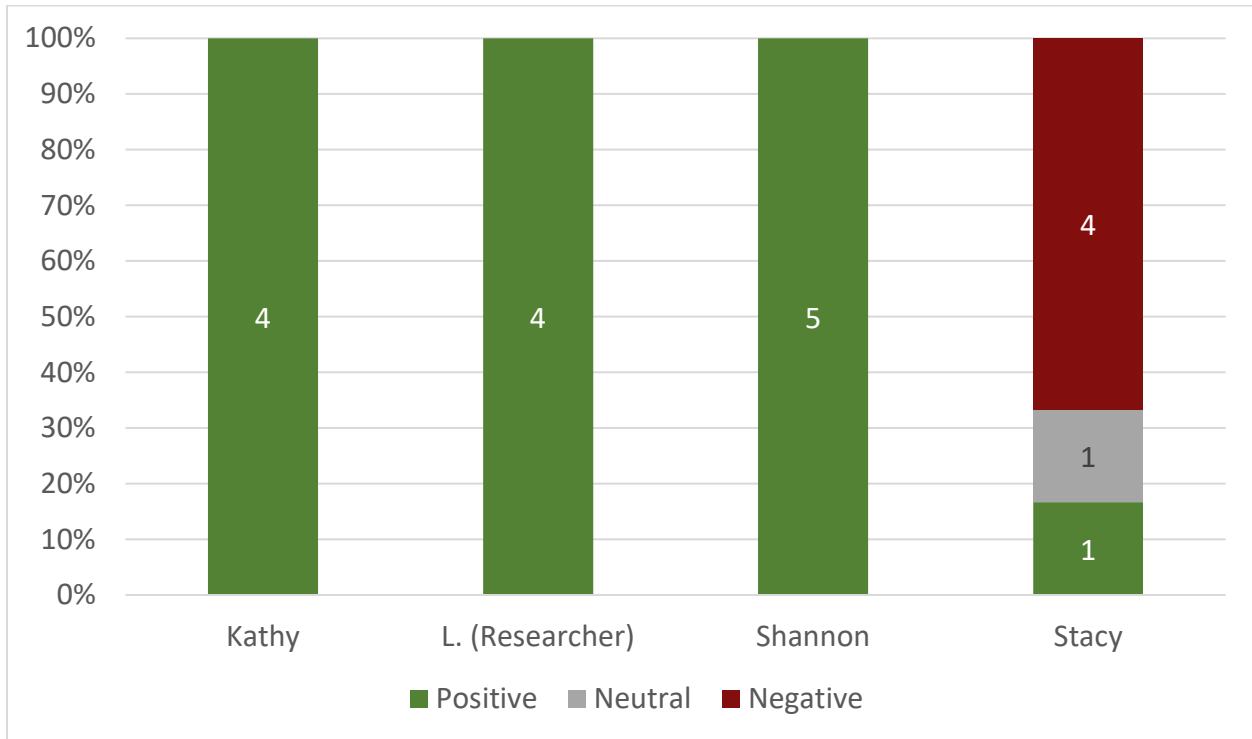
Figure 12 illustrates the number of statements made by participants during the feedback

portion of the second focus group session, as well as the general character of those statements as

positive, negative, or neutral, and the distribution of those characteristics. Again, a statement

represents the number of times a participant initiated a narrative during the discussion, no matter

the length or extent of the narrative. Three of the four participants made completely positive

statements about the journal intervention. Stacy, who had the most to say, expressed primarily

negative statements. She explained that while she understood the potential benefits of keeping a

journal, journaling didn't fit her personal processing style. On the other hand, Kathy

acknowledged that the effects of journaling could be unconscious.

Journal Artifacts

For three weeks during the research project, participants kept an *I See You, I Feel Me* journal (Appendix G). Every day they were at school, participants recorded a two-part journal entry: an "I see," observation of their partner teacher and an "I feel" reflection of their own internal response. I gave participants the option to keep their journals private for several reasons. Most importantly, I wanted teachers to be able to write openly and authentically. I recognized that my reading the journals could influence journal entries, especially considering my position of authority at the school. I had also chosen to focus my research on the effects of keeping a journal, rather than the content of the journals themselves. Nevertheless, all the participants opted to submit their journals for analysis after the intervention concluded. Coding the data of the journals, multiple categories emerged (Appendix J). I first coded each journal entry by general character: positive, neutral, and negative. I further coded the details of the data by type of observation, subject of observation, and research theme.

Figure 13

Journal Entries by Individuals
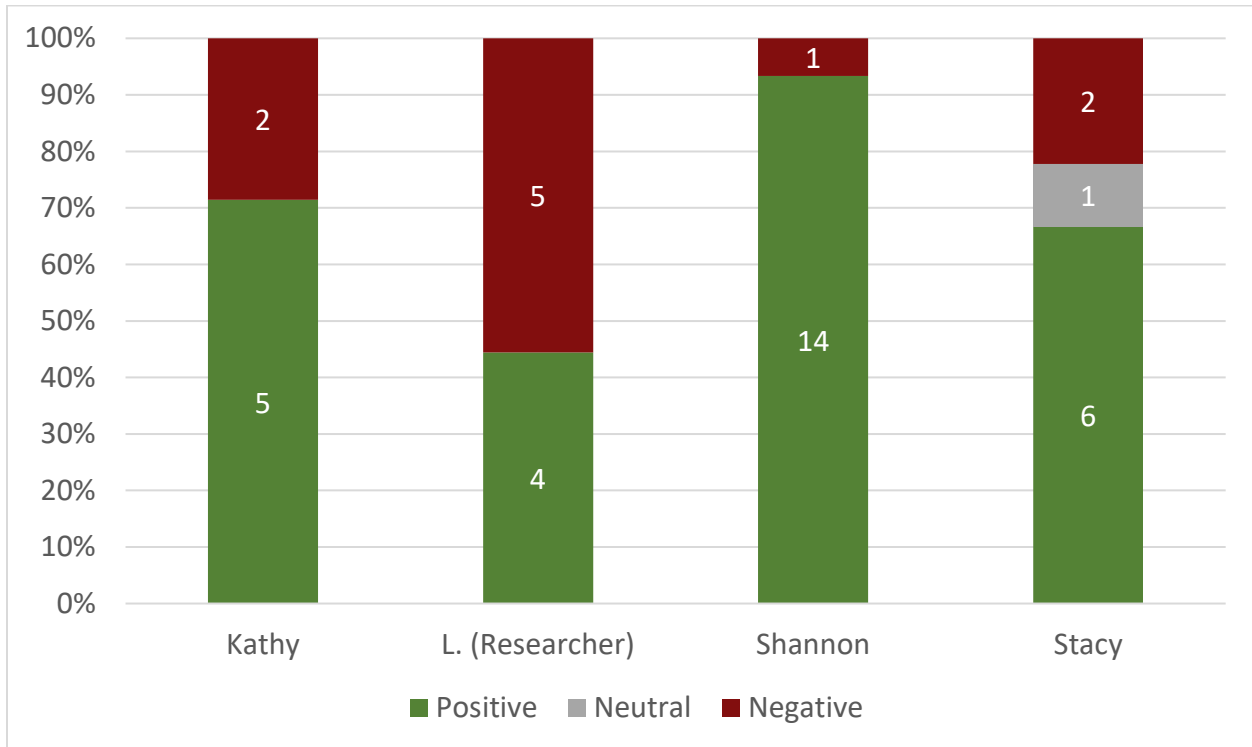
Figure 13 shows the distribution of positive, neutral, and negative journal entries made by each participant during the intervention. It also shows the total number of entries made by individuals. These numbers vary greatly because each teacher works part-time at the school. For this reason, viewing the data in percentage format helps compare results more evenly. Kathy and Stacy's journals were both comprised of about 70% positive entries, while Shannon's journal was nearly completely positive. My own journal was about half and half. The character of the journal entries did not correspond with feedback about the journals (Figure 11). For example, my statements about the journaling intervention were entirely positive, but more than half of my journal entries were negative. Conversely, less than 20% of Stacy's statements about the journaling intervention were positive, though more than 60% of her journal entries were positive. These findings suggest that participants were able to utilize the *I See You, I Feel Me* journal to

reflect on both the trials and successes of partner teaching, regardless of how they felt about the

intervention process.

Figure 14

Kathy's Journal Entries, Detail
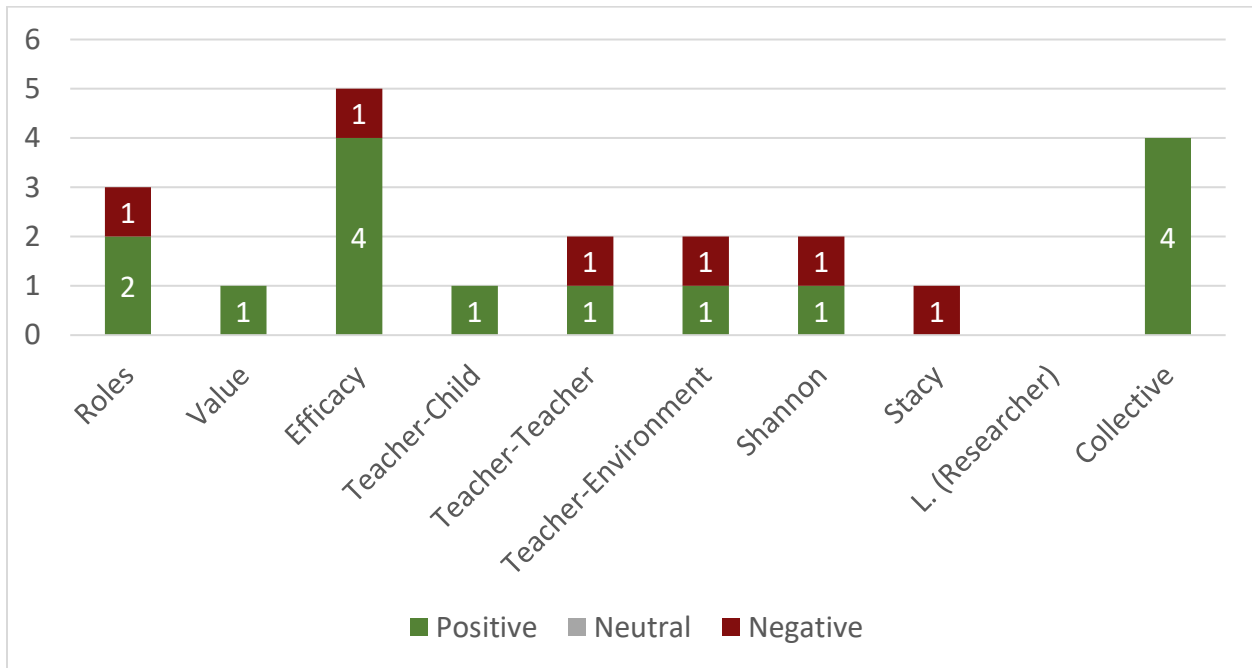
Figure 15

L. (Researcher)'s Journal Entries, Detail
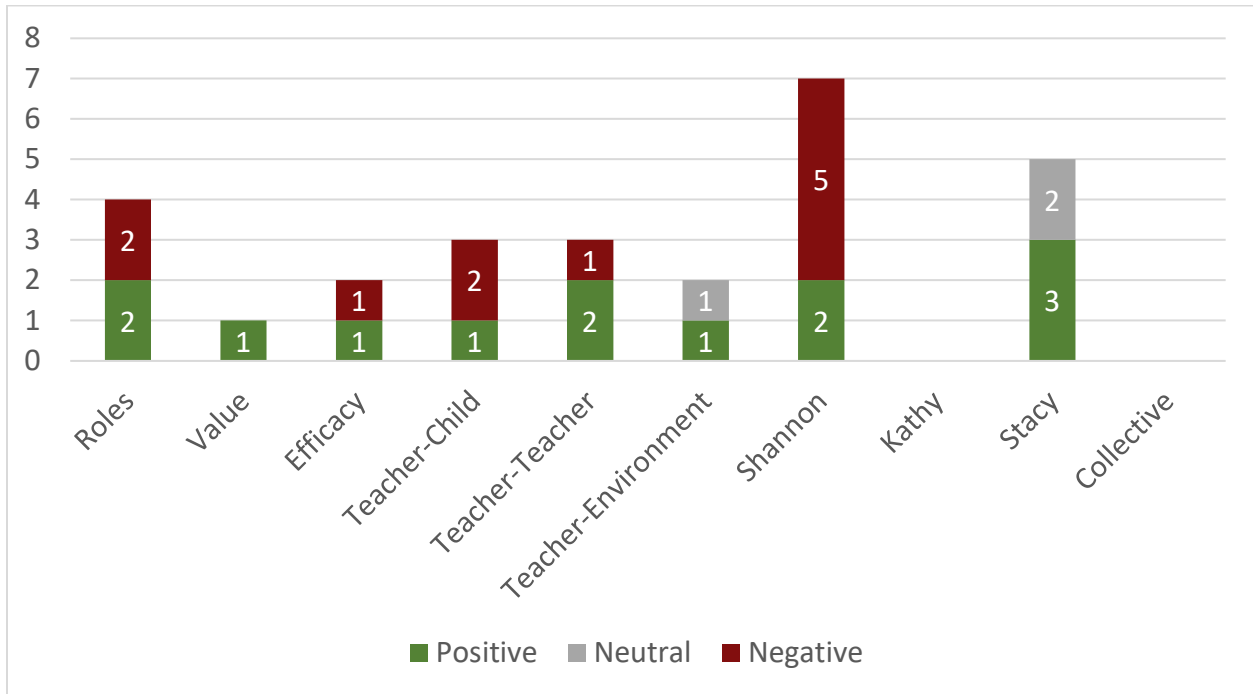
Figure 16

Shannon's Journal Entries, Detail
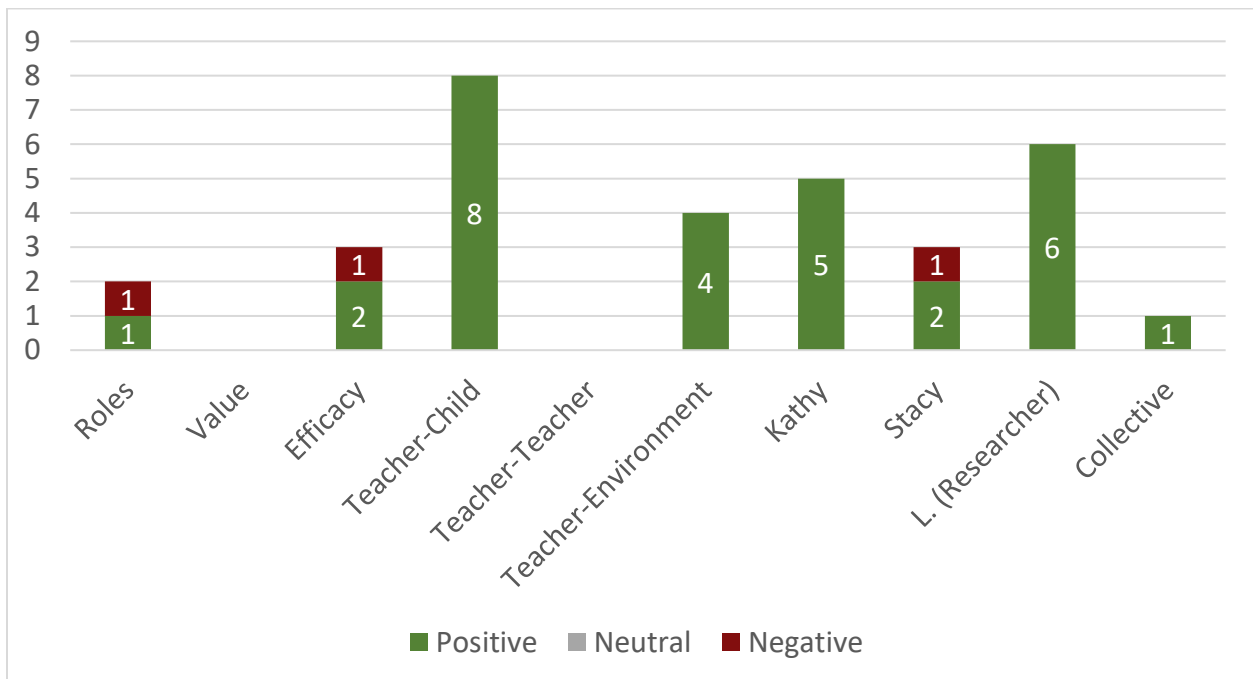
Figure 17

Stacy's Journal Entries, Detail
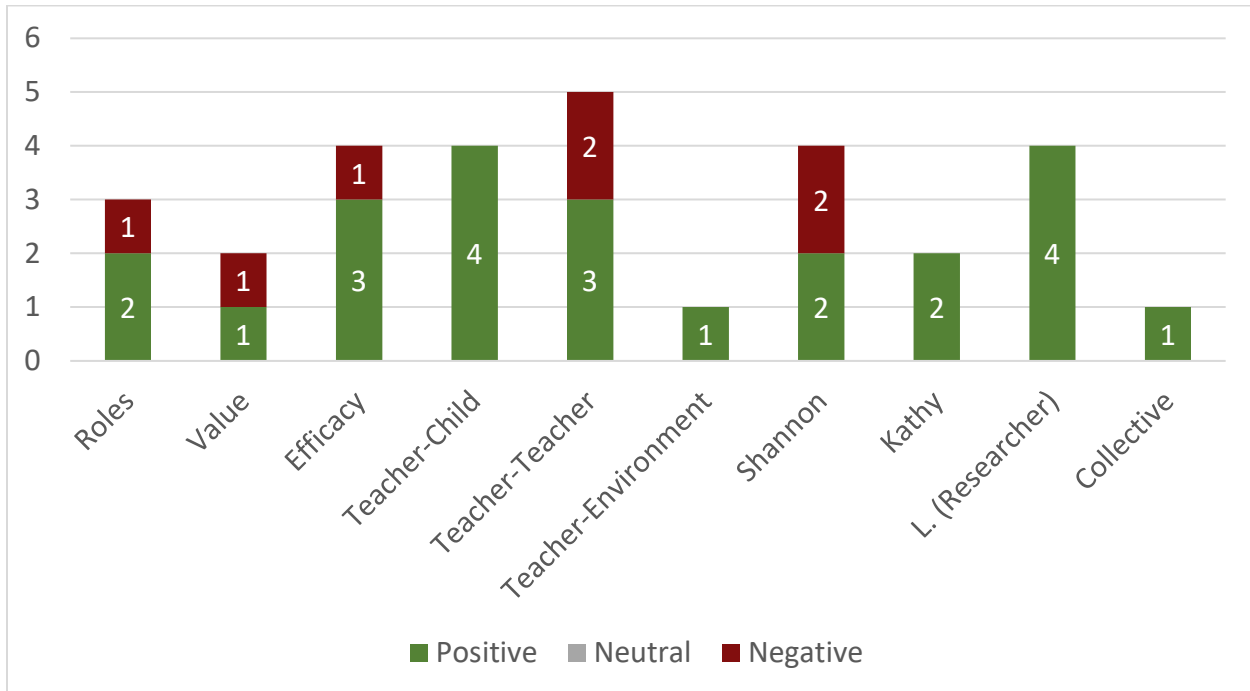
Figures 14-17 magnify the contents of each participant's *I See You, I Feel Me* journal, showing the number of entries in each category along with their character of positive, neutral, or negative. The first category includes themes of the research: roles, value, and efficacy. The second category includes types of observation: teacher-child, teacher-teacher, and teacher-environment. The last category includes the subjects of observation, whether that be an individual partner teacher or the general collective of the educational team. Sometimes journal entries touched several of these categories, sometimes they touched none. The figures illustrate what sorts of events drew the attention of each participant. For example, Shannon wrote mostly about teacher-child interactions, but recorded no teacher-teacher interactions. Stacy, on the other hand, recorded more teacher-teacher interactions. I focused exclusively on individuals in my journal entries, while Kathy wrote more about the collective of teachers. While each participant

had a unique perspective on school interactions, this information suggests that the open-ended

structure of the *I See You, I Feel Me* journal allowed all participants to successfully express their

variety of experience.

Figure 18

Research Themes in Journal Entries
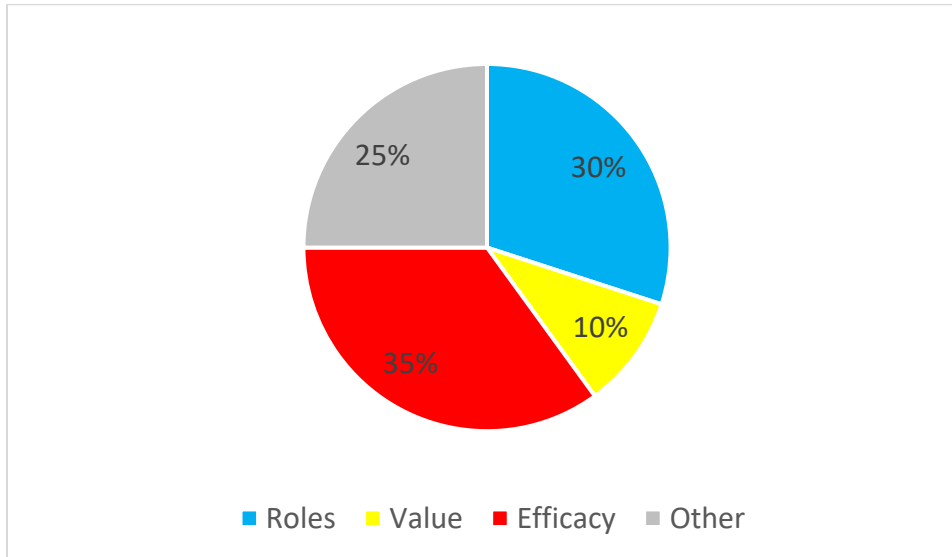
Figure 18 displays what portion of all journal entries dealt with the themes of the research

project: roles, value, and efficacy. Compiling all journal entries by all participants, 75%

addressed the themes of the research project. 65% of all journal entries dealt with roles or

efficacy. A smaller portion, just 10%, addressed value. Value may not be contentious for this

particular educational team, as focus group statements about value were entirely positive both

before and after the intervention (Figures 8 and 9). Kathy noted that keeping the partner

teaching journal encouraged reflecting on and expressing gratitude to her educational team,

which supports feelings of value. This data validates the research themes as major issues for

partner teachers.

Action Plan for the Research Project

As an early childhood educator, coordinating multiple adults in a single classroom presented challenges, especially when teachers held different professional backgrounds, different levels of teaching experience, and different levels of school authority. As director of our small Montessori school, I wanted to foster a collaborative educational team that supported my partner teachers to feel confident in their roles and valued in their contributions in our shared early childhood classroom. The purpose of the *I See You, I Feel Me* action research project was to determine whether implementing daily journaling that included observation of partner teachers and personal reflection would improve collective efficacy within the educational team. Tracking the benchmarks of confidence in roles, feelings of value, and perceptions of team efficacy through attitude assessments, focus group discussions, and journal artifacts, findings suggested that collective efficacy increased over the course of the *I See You, I Feel Me* journal intervention.

Drawing Conclusions from the Research

The review of literature recommended several strategies for effective partner teaching: open communication, self-reflection, shared beliefs, clear organization, positive relationships, supportive administration, peer observation, and team identity (Fitzgerald & Theilheimer, 2013; La Paro et al., 2018; Rasmussen, 2015). Using these strategies as a springboard for our staff orientation program, I started our school year actively building our team (Appendix D). These exercises may be the reason the educational team began with a fairly high level of collective efficacy. The focus group held in conjunction with that orientation program produced a discussion that was 79% positive (Figure 6). The baseline attitude assessment average for all participants over all categories ranked 7.58 out of 10 (Figure 1). This initial data characterized the collective efficacy of the educational team as starting strong after the research-based

orientation program. The team-building exercises laid the base for the action research project

and created a foundation of success for our educational team.

The goal of this action research project was to improve collective efficacy among partner

teachers at my school. Social psychologist Albert Bandura (2000) suggested that perceptions of

collective efficacy could be assessed by combining a critique of one's own performance with a

critique of the performances of others within the group. The *I See You, I Feel Me* journal

critiqued the performance of others through observations and critiqued one's own performance

through self-reflections. 75% of journal entries revolved around the primary research themes of

roles, value, and efficacy, affirming that these topics dominated partner teaching interactions

(Figure 18). Weekly attitude assessments on these topics showed an upward trend of confidence

in roles, feelings of value, and perceptions of efficacy by the educational team. Even though

participants began with a high average baseline over all categories before the intervention,

average assessments over all categories increased throughout the intervention (Figure 5). These

findings demonstrate that this action research project increased collective efficacy for the

educational team at my school.

The *I See You, I Feel Me* journaling intervention provided participants with a successful

tool for evaluating partner teacher interactions. Whether these interactions were teacher-child,

teacher-teacher, or teacher-environment, keeping the journal established a pattern for examining

these events. Participants honed their abilities to make an impartial observation of their partner

teachers and to express their feelings in response. Focus group sessions encouraged participants

to share their experiences within an atmosphere of respect, the foremost Montessori quality for

this educational team, both before and after the journaling intervention. Journaling resulted in

more open communication, as evidenced by the increased number and variety of statements

made by participants between the first and second focus groups (Figures 6 & 7). The number of

"I feel" statements also doubled between these focus groups, suggesting that keeping the partner

journal increased comfort in communicating their self-reflections. In both focus groups, all "we"

statements were positive, demonstrating positive perceptions of team identity (Figures 9 & 10).

Moving forward, participants may utilize this pattern to help identify and resolve conflict in the

classroom and beyond. Half of the participants intended to use their *I See You, I Feel Me*

journals in the future (Figure 12).

Recommendations for Further Research

As qualitative research, this action research project explored themes of partner teaching,

peer observation, journaling, and collective efficacy in a Montessori classroom with the intention

of gathering more information about these issues. A paucity existed in the literature about these

specific topics. In this project, partner teachers were non-specialized, with everyone teaching the

same group of general students. The project examined partner teacher relationships within a

Montessori school setting. It flipped the Montessori practice of assessing students through

observation and applied it to partner teachers. This peer observation took place within a single

classroom. The intervention investigated the impact of journaling on partner teachers. Finally,

the action research project provided multiple platforms for teachers to provide feedback about

this developmental strategy. This action research contributed to the body of literature for

education by helping fill the gaps in these areas, finding that keeping a partner teaching journal

based on observation and self-reflection improved collective efficacy among partner teachers in a

single Montessori classroom.

At the same time that the action research project was successful in its initial scenario, it

also opened the door for more exploration. Reflecting on the findings of the project, I made

several recommendations for future action. I would assess the impact of the team building

orientation by administering an initial attitude assessment before the program. I would repeat the

research project later in the school year, when partner teachers are fully accustomed to school

routines, to continue to explore collective efficacy among seasoned partner teachers. Because

the data set was small, with all trends falling within the margin of error, I would like to repeat the

action research project with more participants to verify results. I would also consider

alternatives to journaling for individuals who do not like to write to express themselves. Later, I

would review to what degree the project may have impacted staff retention.

Significance for the Researcher

This action research project cultivated my knowledge and skill as a school leader. I

developed research-based strategies to support effective partner teaching. I learned about the

theory of collective efficacy to articulate and assess the innerworkings of our educational team. I

identified three key issues for partner teachers that could also be used to evaluate our success:

feelings of being confident, valued, and effective. The *I See You, I Feel Me* journal intervention

created an outlet for partner teachers to assess adult interactions and express their emotions.

Finding that the action research improved collective efficacy, I would return to this method again

to help partner teachers work through problems, express gratitude, and grow as an educational

team.

My educational team benefited mutually from the project. I felt motivated to initiate this

action research when I realized that interpersonal conflict had become an obstacle for our school

success. Over the course of the project, I observed positive outcomes in sharing professional

knowledge, improving teaching practice, and maximizing one another's strengths. Ultimately,

the *I See You, I Feel Me* action research supported the teachers at my school to feel confident in

their roles, valued in their contributions, and effective as an educational team. Through this

project, our shared vision of authentic Montessori education flourished.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Letter

I See You, I Feel Me:
Journaling for Confidence, Value, and
Collective Efficacy Among Partner Teachers

PARTNER
TEACHER
INVITATION

This fall, I will be conducting an Action Research project about partner teaching for my Master of Arts in Education degree through St. Catherine University. *You are invited to join the study!* For 3 weeks, participants will keep a daily journal with simple observations and reflections of partner teaching. We will also have 1 one-hour introduction, join 2 one-hour group discussions, and complete 5 three-question feedback forms. Participation is entirely voluntary. More details to come! Questions? Please email me:

Laura Asher

llasher027@stkate.edu

Appendix B

Active Consent Form

Dear _____ ,

As you may know, I am a St. Catherine University student pursuing a Masters of Education degree. An important part of my program is the Action Research project.

As Director and Montessori teacher at _____ School, I have chosen to learn about partner teaching because I want to foster a positive climate of collaboration among the educational team. I am working with a faculty member at St. Catherine University and an advisor to complete this particular project.

I will be writing about the results that I get from this research, however none of the writing that I do will include the name of this school, the names of any staff or students, or any references that would make it possible to identify outcomes connected to a particular student. Only my advisor and I will have access to the identifiable data for this study; I will keep it confidential.

When I am done, my work will be electronically available online at the St. Kate's library in a system called SOPHIA, which holds published reports written by faculty and graduate students at St. Catherine University. The goal of sharing my final research study report is to help other teachers who are also trying to improve the effectiveness of their teaching.

There are minimal risks to teachers involved in this study. Participants will be asked to reflect on their professional experiences. Participants will also be asked to share their feelings with the educational team. People may feel sensitive about these topics and situations. As a precaution, I will make every effort to offer a safe emotional environment for open communication. I will maintain a calm and respectful tone during discussions. I will allow participants to control how much personal information they want to share. I will ask that conversations remain private.

Loss of confidentiality is also a risk. I will take multiple precautions to keep the data secure, and I will destroy the data after completing my analysis.

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, I will minimize transmission risk by following all local guidelines, as applicable to the school setting.

Participants may benefit from this study by growing professionally as partner teachers. They may become more confident in their roles in the school, feel more valued for their contributions to the school, and have greater efficacy as an educational team. Participants may also benefit by deepening their relationships with their partner teachers, enriching their understanding of their own practice, and developing patterns of open communication.

Participating in the study may indirectly benefit the students, the school, and the field of education.

Due to the low potential of risks in this study, the benefits of team building practices for partner teachers outweigh the risks.

Procedures:

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete several activities beyond your normal school practices:

- Attend 2 focus group sessions to discuss partner teaching (1 hour each)
- Complete an identical, three-question attitude scale 5 times (approximately 3 minutes each).
- Attend 1 introductory group meeting to take ownership of your *I See You, I Feel Me* journal (1 hour).
- Record a two-sentence observation and reflection of your partner teacher in your journal, to be done daily for three weeks (approximately 5 minutes each).

These 23 activities for the study will take approximately 4 hours and 30 minutes over the course of 5 weeks.

Participants can choose to submit their *I See You, I Feel Me* journals as part of my data collection, or they may be kept private. Participants may wait until the three week journaling process is complete to make that decision. Any journals submitted for collection will be returned to participants by the end of the next school day.

I may make A/V recordings of the group sessions for my reference in the study. I will alert participants and request permission before making any recordings.

All data will be destroyed by May 27, 2022.

This study is voluntary. If you decide you do want to be a participant and/or have data of self-assessment forms, attitude scales, and daily journals included in my study, you need to check the appropriate box(es), sign this form, and return it by September 1, 2021. If at any time you decide you do not want to continue participation and/or allow your data to be included in the study, you can notify me and I will remove included data to the best of my ability.

If you decide you do not want to participate and/or have your data included in my study, you do not need to do anything. There is no penalty for not participating or having your data involved in the study.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Laura Asher. You may ask questions now, or if you have any additional questions later, you can ask me or my advisor Emily Leutgeb at esleutgeb@stkate.edu who will be happy to answer them. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Opt In

Please check all that apply. I DO want to:

☐ participate in this study.

☐ have my data included in this study.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date

Please respond by 9/1/21.

Appendix C

Team Building Orientation Exercises

A Foundation of Open Communication

1. Personal Identifiers

   a. Name/Pronouns/Place

   b. Hobby/Fun fact

   c. Top core values

2. Hierarchy of Roles

   a. Identify each position within the school (i.e. owner/director/teacher/assistant)

   b. Review responsibilities of each role (shared/unique)

3. Montessori Pedagogy – A Shared Belief System

   a. What attracts you to Montessori?

   b. What are our top Montessori ideals?

4. Shared Educational Vision

   a. Read the vision of the school together

   b. Discuss our own goals for the school year

      i. How do you hope to contribute to the school?

      ii. How do you hope to grow as an educator?

5. Conflict Mediation

   a. How do you prefer to give/receive feedback?

   b. Build a concrete, written template together for identifying and resolving conflict

   c. Highlight my "open door" policy for discussing any and all school issues

6. Recognize Our 2021-2022 Partner Teaching Team

Appendix D

Focus Group #1 and #2

Categories of Statements:

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Roles			
Value			
Efficacy			
"I" statements			
"We" statements			
"I see" observations			
"I feel" expressions			

Statements Made by Individuals:

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Partner Teacher A			
Partner Teacher B			
Partner Teacher C			
Partner Teacher D			

Semi-Structured Questions:

1) Share some of your thoughts, feelings, and experiences about partner teaching.

2) Talk about your sense of confidence in your roles and responsibilities at school.

3) Tell us about your feelings of being valued for your contributions to the school.

4) Describe your perceptions of the effectiveness of educational teams.

Appendix E

Focus Group Privacy Statement

Participation in the *I See You, I Feel Me* study is voluntary and confidential. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable, and only pseudonyms will be used. So that I may actively participate in the discussion, I request your permission to make an A/V recording of the session for later review. These recordings will be used solely for transcription and analysis. No one other than my advisor and myself will hear/see the recording.

All data, including any A/V recordings, will be kept secure on a password protected computer. Only my advisor and I will have access to the data.

All original data and identifying information will be destroyed on May 27, 2022.

Check the box most appropriate for your situation:

☐ I would like to continue, but I do not give permission to have my voice/likeness recorded.

☐ I would like to continue, and I am comfortable having my voice/likeness recorded.

Signature of Participant in Research _____   Date _____

Signature of Researcher _____   Date _____

Participant and Researcher will each keep a copy of this consent form.

Appendix F

Attitude Assessment

I See You, I Feel Me: Thermometer #1

Completion of this form is voluntary and confidential.

Personal identifiers and e-mails will not be collected.

I would like to continue, and I am comfortable allowing my responses to be included in the study. *

◯ Yes

◯ No

At this moment, how confident do you feel about your roles and responsibilities at school? *

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not at All Confident	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Completely Confident

---

At this moment, how valued do you feel by your educational team (your working group) for your contributions? *

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not at All Valued	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Fully Valued

At this moment, how effective do you feel your educational team to be? *

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not at All Effective	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Entirely Effective

Appendix G

Introduction to the Intervention

*I See You, I Feel Me***: A Partner Teacher Journal**

Record one journal entry *every day* that you teach for the three weeks of the study.

Make a habit of writing before you leave school each afternoon.

Use the checklist to indicate you completed the journal entry for the day.

Each journal entry contains two parts. An entry may be as short as two sentences, though you are free to elaborate as much as you like!

Part 1: I See You

Make one observation of your partner teacher today.

Write down an objective, factual statement of what occurred.

i.e. When Little Suzy was making noise during story time, "Anna" quietly took her across the room to help fold towels.

Part 2: I Feel Me

Record your own thoughts or feelings about that observation.

i.e. I feel supported as a leader when Anna manages misbehaviors.

Journal entries may be affirming, as indicated in the examples above.

Journal entries may be critical:

1) When I was reading the story today, Anna loudly corrected wiggly children.
2) I feel distracted when I am trying to lead and the other adult talks over me.

Journal entries may be neutral:

1) Anna wiped all the tables while I read the story today.
2) I feel appreciative that we divided our tasks so that we could get everything done.

Journals may include a hope for the future:

1) Anna kept her voice soft and gentle, even as the classroom erupted into chaos.
2) I wish that I could always maintain such an even temper.

This is **your** *I See You, I Feel Me* journal!

All your observations and feelings are valid.

I See You, I Feel Me: **Daily Journal Entry Checklist**

Instructions:

For each day that you make a journal entry, make a checkmark in the box.

This data will be kept confidential in the research analysis.

Week 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Week 2

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Week 3

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

I See You, I Feel Me: **Journal Privacy Statement**

Participation in the *I See You, I Feel Me* study is voluntary and confidential. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable, and only pseudonyms will be used. Data will be kept secure on a password protected computer. Only my advisor and I will have access to the data. All data will be destroyed on May 27, 2022.

During the three-week journaling period, you are responsible for keeping your journal secure.

At the end of the two-week journaling period, you may choose to keep your journal private or submit it to the study. If you do choose to submit your journal for use in the study, I will digitally scan your journal and return it to you by the end of the next school day.

After the three-week period is over, you may choose whether to continue the process of journaling, without further requirement.

Check the box most appropriate for your situation:

☐ I would like to continue, but I prefer not to submit my journal to the study.

☐ I would like to continue, and I am comfortable submitting my journal to the study.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant in Research   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Researcher   Date

Participant and Researcher will each keep a copy of this consent form.

Appendix H

Field Notes

Example of A Field Notes Entry

Date: October 4, 2021

Time: 10:45 AM

Occurrence: Little Suzie asked Partner Teacher A. for a lesson with the continent map. A. agreed, and they began the work together with smiles. While Little Suzie punched out North America, A. stepped away to assist another child with the hundred board. Partner Teacher B. sat down with Little Suzie and began engaging with the materials. A.'s face fell when she returned and saw B. with Little Suzie. A. turned away and went to clean the snack area.

Appendix I

Intervention Feedback, Focus Group #2

Categories of Statements:

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Roles			
Value			
Efficacy			
Experience			
Effect			
Future Use			

Statements Made by Individuals:

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Kathy			
L. (Researcher)			
Shannon			
Stacy			

Semi-Structured Questions:

1) Talk about your experience keeping the *I See You, I Feel Me* journal.

2) How did keeping the journal affect your experience partner teaching, if at all?

3) How did keeping the journal affect your sense of confidence, your feeling of being valued, and/or your belief in our educational team, if at all?

4) How likely are you to keep an *I See You, I Feel Me* style journal in the future? Why?

Appendix J

Journal Artifact Tally Sheet

Total Entries Made by Individuals:

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Kathy			
L. (Researcher)			
Shannon			
Me			

Categories of Entries Per Participant:

Participant Name	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Roles			
Value			
Efficacy			
Teacher-Child			
Teacher-Teacher			
Teacher-Environment			
Partner Teacher A			
Partner Teacher B			
Partner Teacher C			
Collective			