AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS:
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS’ PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

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Abstract

The purpose of this Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study was to better understand how school administrators interpreted effective teaching based on their experience of supervising teachers through the lens of emotional intelligence (EI). Seven bilingual school administrators in Honduras participated in single, in-depth semi-structured interviews to discuss and make sense of their experience of hiring and supervising teachers. Specifically, they shared what they believed to be qualities that defined an effective teacher while the researcher probed their interpretation of these experiences to make an interpretation of what they were reflecting upon. This study applied an IPA methodology to examine the phenomenon of teacher supervision through the lens of EI. Results revealed three super-ordinate themes: soft skills of teaching, relationships in teaching, and emotions in teaching. Participants interpreted soft skills as being the decisive factor in effective teaching. They shared the importance of teachers building connections with their students through their positive relationships, which included the ability to recognize, understand, and manage their emotions and the students’ emotions for the benefit of student learning. According to the perspective of school administrators, a teacher’s EI played a potential role in effective teaching. Schools should consider applying EI assessments when hiring teachers as well as professional development programs geared toward improving the social and emotional skills of administrators, teachers, and students.

Keywords: bilingual education, emotional intelligence, broad intelligence, effective teaching, emotional labor, student-teacher relationships, interpretative phenomenological interpretation, qualitative researcher, Ibero-America.
Acknowledgement Page

Studying for my doctoral degree has been quite a unique experience, significantly different from my other academic experiences. It was truly a special journey and moved well beyond the academic sphere and more into personal growth. This program shaped the way I not only view my daily work in the field of education, but more about how I view life and interpret my perspective as well as that of others. This would not have been possible without the support of my wife, Ana Rocío Merriam, who had to make equal sacrifices of time and energy without receiving the “fancy title” I have earned. She encouraged me to believe in myself and did an amazing job helping care for our son when I was busy with my studies. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Quannah Parker-McGowan who gave me advice and constructive feedback to make this process a smooth and enjoyable one. She supported my goal of completing my study in an accelerated timeline. To Dr. Shannon Alpert and Dr. Ken Allen, thank you for contributing to this project as my second and third readers respectively; your advice helped me view this study from angles I originally had not considered.
Dedication Page

Throughout this doctoral journey, there were several difficulties, and, in many ways, this was a test of patience, discipline, perseverance, and courage. During this time, my nephew and sister-in-law passed away, too young to leave this world, reminding me that there is nothing more important in life than spending quality time and showing appreciation for those you love. When I began this program, my son was only a year old and already had complicated health issues. Throughout the initial two years of this program, my family and I found ourselves traveling back and forth between Boston and Honduras to get him the treatment he needed. I am grateful in the end that we have been blessed to persevere through this challenging time. I dedicate this entire effort to my nephew, my sister-in-law, my family and to my three-year old son that I may inspire him to always strive to be the best he can be.
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Chapter I: Introduction

The purpose of this Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study was to understand how school administrators interpreted effective teaching based on their experiences supervising teachers through the lens of emotional intelligence (EI). EI is defined as “the ability to reason validly with emotions and with emotion-related information, and to use emotions to enhance thought” (Mayer et al., 2016, p. 296). Research indicates that EI can be learned and a positive correlation exists between teacher level of EI and student learning (Jha & Singh, 2012). Since professional development shows promise of improving teacher EI (Castillo, Fernández-Berrocal, & Brackett, 2013; Karimzadeh, Salehi, Embi, Nasiri, & Shojaei, 2014; Kasler, Hen, & Nov, 2013), it is advantageous for school administrators to understand the EI construct and how it might contribute to effective teaching. This research benefits teachers, school supervisors, human resource departments at schools, policy makers, and certainly students. Specifically, the results of this study would support bilingual schools in Honduras in the development of hiring policies and supervision criteria. This chapter is divided into four sections: statement of the problem, significance of the research, research problem and the research question, and theoretical framework.

Statement of the Problem

Effective teaching must be defined given that teachers play a critical role in student achievement (Castillo et al., 2013; Liu, Wang, & Liang, 2015; Qureshi & Niazi, 2012; Sautelle, Arifin, & Bowles, 2015). For the purposes of this study, the act of effective teaching refers to the ability of teachers to maximize student learning (Qureshi & Niazi, 2012). However, considering the complexities of the practice of teaching and the number of variables involved in influencing student learning, what makes an effective teacher remains elusive (Belanger & Longden, 2009; Devine, Fahie, & McGillicuddy, 2013; Keeley, Ismail, & Buskist, 2016; Sautelle et al., 2015). Although there is no agreed upon definition, research indicates that university titles such as master’s degrees in
teaching do not necessarily make a difference in teacher effectiveness (Hanna & Gimbert, 2011; Shuls & Trivitt, 2015). In a comparative study of student achievement consisting of several countries, including Japan, China, and Singapore, the United States is the nation that has the higher percentage of teachers with graduate degrees; nonetheless, student achievement lags behind the other countries in the study (Ingersoll, 2007). Other statistics from world-wide exams such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) indicate that when it comes to excellence and education, the United States falls outside of the top ten highest performing nations (OECD, 2015). However, EI might play an important role in effective teaching, deeming it worthy of exploration. Thus, potentially supporting the US into moving into that top bracket.

Teaching and learning happen in a social context consisting of human interactions between teachers and students. Emotions play a significant role in this endeavor, but often lack recognition (Hargreaves, 1998). Teaching is high in emotional labor (Hargreaves, 1998), a term coined by the sociologist Hochschild (1979) to describe the emotional demand a job places on the worker, which can lead to teacher burnout and high turnover (Przybylska, 2016). However, teachers who have higher levels of EI demonstrate greater job satisfaction as established in the case of teachers who were implementing Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs; this study sought to measure teachers’ beliefs about implementing an SEL program (Brackett, Reyes, Rivers, Elbertson, & Salovey, 2012). Research in EI and its relationship to job satisfaction, leadership, and teaching has been on the rise (Anari, 2012; Goleman, 1998; Yin, Lee, Zhang, & Jin, 2013).

Honduras, a developing country of approximately 9 million people (The World Bank, 2016) with 47.2% of its population being children less than 18 years old (Estadística & UNICEF, 2010), needs to continue improving its education system (Secretaria de Educacion, 2016). Of 23,835 educational institutions, approximately seven percent (1,648) are bilingual schools, and around 22% (364) follow a U.S. traditional academic calendar (Educación, 2016) and teach both a United States
and Honduran curriculum. Hondurans who can afford private education make the financial sacrifices to enroll their children since they are higher performing institutions as indicated by the biannual standardized university entrance exam known as the Prueba de Aptitud Académica (PAA) (UNAH, 2014, 2016). This exam is comparable to the popular Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and is a product of the same parent company, CollegeBoard.

The Honduran Ministry of Education set a mandate that by 2018, all practicing teachers need to have fulfilled the certification requirements, which include the completion a bachelor’s degree in their teaching area of content. However, the Pedagogical University of Honduras (UPN), the designated institution for teacher preparation (Superior, 2002), has an English teacher preparation program (UPNFM, 2018) but is unable to meet the needs in the public schools (“El inglés sigue lejos de escuelas públicas de Honduras,” 2013). This is not uncommon, as there are schools in Latin American countries, such as Mexico, that are striving to increase more English instruction to all students, but finding, training, and retraining qualified teachers is a problem (Sayer & Sayer, 2015). Furthermore, the program description is just for teaching basic English and not a bilingual education where bilingual school students receive their core content classes such as math and science in English. Given the fact that only seven percent of Honduran schools are defined as bilingual schools (Educación, 2016), more than the majority of graduates that study at the UPN are probably not bilingual. Therefore, they are not linguistically prepared to instruct U.S. curriculum-oriented classes in the English language (“El inglés sigue lejos de escuelas públicas de Honduras,” 2013). Private bilingual schools have limited access to qualified teachers, so they may end up hiring teachers who do not meet the Ministry’s requirements, but usually have near-native English proficiency skills and some knowledge of the content area of instruction. On paper, these teachers appear to be unprepared to teach students, but many of them are effective and teach with great success, as indicated by bilingual schools’ performance on the PAA (UNAH, 2014, 2016). This warrants the question as to
what else makes teachers effective if credentials, such as college degrees in education, do not make the difference. It is possible that other teacher qualities, such as EI, play a significant role and have not been thoroughly explored.

**Significance of the Research Question**

Presently, there is limited research about Honduran education, especially in the private, bilingual sector, making this an exploratory study to learn about what makes effective teachers to help inform hiring, supervising, and training practices for school administrators to improve teaching quality. Past research conducted by the Secretaria de Educación (2014) was plagued by unscientific methods. For example, in 2012, the Ministry of Education began enforcing standardized exams to measure student progress in math and Spanish, the official language of the country (El Presidente de la República en Consejo de Ministros, 2012). The exam protocol consisted of a four page document with some instructions on exam administration (Secretaria de Educación, 2014). School administrators had to pick up a copy of the exam from the Education Department, bring it to their schools, photocopy, administer, and return the exams. Given the fact that exams are photocopied at the school, which might involve other test handlers, leaves a potential breach in security, which can lead to cheating (Rukundo & Magambo, 2010). Furthermore, the examination is restricted to a representative sample of schools, but there is no disaggregated data in their report that suggests a representative sample of private bilingual schools was accounted for (Secretaria de Educacion, 2016). To the Ministry of Education’s credit, there has been a movement toward organizing country-wide statistics on data collected via an online portal known as Sistema de Administración de Centros Educativos (SACE) (Secretaria de Educacion, 2016). Policy requires schools to input school data ranging from enrollment to teacher class schedules and quarterly grades. Conducting a formal research study was beneficial to Honduran education as it is a nation beginning to collect and analyze data to make informed decisions.
There is a lack of adequate research about administrator perception of teacher effectiveness as viewed through the lens of EI. Given the important role teachers play in student achievement and the lack of adequate teacher preparation in countries like Honduras, this knowledge can help administrators make better hiring decisions. Furthermore, since research demonstrates that EI can be learned as demonstrated by professional development or university programs geared toward SEL or EI competencies there is potential in improving teacher EI skills and thereby improving effective practice (Castillo et al., 2013; Kasler et al., 2013; Pérez-Escoda, Filella, Alegre, & Bisquerra, 2012).

**Improving Policy**

This current research study may help contribute to knowledge in the field of education to eventually reshape policy to define and better prepare teachers. Effective policy should be designed and implemented based on valid and reliable research studies. Research as to what makes an effective teacher and how to prepare and measure that effectiveness is helpful for any nation. In the United States, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 included policy for teacher preparedness, which used the term, “highly qualified”. Usually a teacher who was considered highly qualified had a degree in the content area of instruction (Congress, 2002). However, this terminology was removed from policy with the passage of Every Student Succeeds Act of 2012, demonstrating either the ineffectiveness of the previous definition or the continued debate about what makes an effective teacher (Sawchuck, 2016). Countries like Japan, where students are outperforming the United States in international assessments, did not have the master’s requirement for teachers that the U.S. does (Ingersoll, 2007). Time and resources have been spent on a policy requirement that has not proven its worth. Honduran law (Honduras, 2011) is similar in the sense that teachers need to meet the bachelor’s degree requirement in the content area as well, but this does not explain why students who receive instruction from “unqualified teachers” are still outperforming those who receive instruction from “qualified teachers” (Heraldo, 2015).
**Improving Practice**

The new knowledge generated from this study may allow schools to begin to make considerations of EI levels of teachers in the hiring process and perhaps, government policy can create alternative certification programs that include this element. Furthermore, they can begin implementing EI training at the school level for teacher education programs, teachers, administrators, and students. These improvements in practice span beyond Honduras and can be implemented globally because EI is a common language and may help improve teaching.

**Research Problem and Research Question**

Given the fact that bilingual schools in Honduras have limited access to licensed teachers who are near-native or native English speakers, the purpose of this study was to answer the following question: Reflecting on their experience of supervising teachers, what role does teacher EI play in effective teaching according to school administrators?

**Definition of Key Terminology**

**Bilingual Education**- An educational program in which at least 50% or more of the academic program is taught in a second language. In the case of this research, bilingual schools teach a U.S. curriculum in English in addition to the Honduran courses, which are taught in Spanish.

**Emotional Intelligence**- EI is “the ability to reason validly with emotions and with emotion-related information, and to use emotions to enhance thought” (Mayer et al., 2016, p. 296). This includes the ability for people to understand and interpret their emotions and those of others to facilitate thinking.

**EI as a Broad Intelligence**- Mayer et al. (2016) define EI as being part of one of the eight to 15 broad intelligences, which they consider to be a hot intelligence, defined “as involving reasoning with information of significance to an individual- matters that may chill our hearts or make our blood boil” (p. 292).
Effective Teaching- Effective teaching refers to the ability of teachers to maximize student learning (Qureshi & Niazi, 2012).

Emotional Labor- The work that is involved in regulating, suppressing, or displaying emotions according to a standard set of rules (Hochschild, 1979, 2012; Wharton, 2009).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis- A method of qualitative analysis that includes three components: (1) the researcher’s interpretation of a (2) participant’s experience of a phenomenon and (3) great attention is paid to the idiographic nature of the study; in other words, a small sample size and emphasis on the individual’s experience matters just as much as the sample’s collective experience (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

Teachers have a strong impact on student learning (Castillo et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2015; Qureshi & Niazi, 2012; Sautelle et al., 2015). The important role teachers play in students’ educational experiences merits the analysis of what makes a teacher effective, excellent, outstanding; whichever word one chooses to describe a teacher, it merits asking what makes a teacher special.

The goal of this research was to learn about the role EI plays in effective teaching. According the Secretary of Education, teachers are required to have an undergraduate degree in education, but bilingual schools in Honduras have limited access to teachers who are certified because they are not bilingual (Honduras, 2011). Most graduates from those programs are Spanish-speakers only (Educación, 2016). Teacher preparation programs for bilingual education in Latin America are in their early years (Truscott De Mejía, 2016), making it challenging to hire qualified teachers. In the ten years of work this researcher has had in Honduras, bilingual school teachers tend to be career changers and they have the content knowledge and bilingual skills, but not the formal credentials. The researcher has personally come to know teachers who are exceptional but lack formal educational credentials. Additionally, the researcher identified many educators who have the
degree but lack exceptionality. Therefore, it is possible that effective teaching may be related to non-academic traits in addition to formal credentialing and it is possible that EI is related to their success.

The macro audience of this study relates to teacher credentialing worldwide. For example, states in the U.S. often require teachers to pass content and pedagogy tests, earn a degree from a university or alternative program, and complete teacher supervised practicums (DESE, 2017; Hanna & Gimbert, 2011). However, there is no mention of nonacademic traits such as EI. Nonetheless, other countries that have shown success in student learning such as Finland have different vetting techniques for teacher selection, including nonacademic traits and only the top candidates are chosen for the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Research shows that EI can be learned and therefore, trainings can improve one’s EI (Castillo et al., 2013; Dolev & Leshem, 2016; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014).

The theory of EI is gaining stature in the academic world and, in recent years, has been referred to with greater frequency. As researchers such as Goleman (2006) and Bar-On (2006) bring it to the mainstream, the idea that it may have a greater impact on success compared to the traditional IQ dictates the importance of including it in the conversation of teacher training.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) created an EI framework, originally identifying three key components, later modified to four (Mayer & Salovey, 1997):

1. the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion;
2. the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought;
3. the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and,
4. the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

Prior to their elaboration of the construct, there were preceding theorists who laid some of the foundation for the evolution of the term EI as it currently is, including the work of Gardner (1987) who stressed the importance of recognizing more intelligences than the traditional intelligence IQ.
and including a subset of interpersonal intelligence. Additionally, Gardner (1987) intentionally chose to label these abilities as intelligences versus talents. Subsequently, Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2000) provided empirical evidence for the existence of EI as an intelligence such as IQ since it meets three criteria for a standard intelligence. Standard intelligence consists of mental abilities, these abilities correlate with one another, and they improve with age.

Building upon this original research, Bar-On (2006) and Goleman (2006) refined versions of the EI framework. The major difference between the three is whether they are defined as ability versus trait models with Salovey and Mayer’s version being labeled as an ability and Bar-On and Goleman’s being termed trait or mixed theories (Muyia, 2009).

Table 1

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<th>Models of Emotional Intelligence</th>
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<td><strong>Types</strong></td>
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*Note.* This table was created with information from Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios (2001) and Muyia (2009).

Bar-On (2006) also chose to label his model as emotional-social intelligence because his definition includes intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies. There is still debate and disagreement as to how to define and measure EI, including whether there is a relationship between cognitive ability and ability EI (Warwick & Nettelbeck, 2004), so there are numerous instruments to measure the construct developed by theorists (e.g. Bar-On, 2006; Schutte et al., 1998).
Goleman (1995) popularized the term EI with the publication of the first edition of his book, *Emotional Intelligence* (1995, 2006). There was an longstanding paradigm that separated emotion from rational thought (Goleman, 2006). However, the EI movement has begun to bring emotions to the conversation in a research-based and acceptable manner. Over the last few decades, researchers have drawn our attention to the significance of emotions in education and how they play an important role (Brackett et al., 2012; Hargreaves, 1998; Yin & Lee, 2012). The next three sections discuss the criticisms of EI, why this framework fits with the current study, and how its will be used.

**Criticisms of EI**

The view of EI as a standard intelligence has been debated. Often, the term that comes to mind when engaging the word “intelligence” is IQ. Although IQ might be subject of debate as whether it is an unbiased and reliable measure of intelligence, it still holds a golden standard for standard intelligences. Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, and Sitarenios (2001) wrote a rebuttal to a published research article (Roberts, Zeidner, & Matthews, 2001) disclaiming their labeling of EI as a standard ability. In their words, Roberts et al. (2001) concluded “there may be no objective answers to EI tests, and because correct answers are scored on the basis of group consensus, EI does not qualify as an intelligence. Perhaps, the authors suggest, EI actually measures some form of conformity in relation to the group” (p. 233). However, Mayer et al. (2001) claim that the disconformity is more a result of measuring EI and the lack of high reliability of scoring these assessments, which should not be associated with a lack of the EI construct, but rather the yougness of the concept and the needed evolution of improved measurements.

The research continues to evolve as interest in emotions has grown. Recently, Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2016) reflected on their definition of EI and discussed a series of principles that guide their thinking about EI, including the continued belief that EI is best defined and measured as an ability. They admit that their instrument may not be the most accurate indicator for measuring EI.
Furthermore, they define EI as a broad intelligence in that it falls under the main heading of general intelligence. Finally, they discussed EI alongside social and personal intelligences. The researchers concluded there is a possibility that EI may be a sub-intelligence of the other two, but without conclusive evidence and much to be researched, they maintain the view that it is still its own broad intelligence.

There is a growing body of research around effective teaching, which has been a quite elusive term, and emotions in the classroom. Much of the research appears to be internationally conducted, especially in the eastern hemisphere (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Poulou, 2016; Wong, 2013; Yin & Lee, 2012). There have been several studies by the same researchers trying to discern the EI levels of pre-service teachers and whether they exhibit more EI ability than non-service teachers (Roisín Corcoran & Tormey, 2012, 2013; Róisín Corcoran & Tormey, 2010). These studies use EI as a measuring stick to compare ability levels of teachers. Other studies have measured whether EI abilities of teachers and school leaders can be improved via training programs, be it in the form of university courses or in-service trainings (Cabello, Ruiz-Aranda, & Fernández-Berrocal, 2010; Castillo, Fernández-Berrocal, & Brackett, 2013; Dolev & Leshem, 2016, 2017; Jha & Singh, 2012; Kasler, Hen, & Nov, 2013; Pérez-Escoda, Filella, Alegre, & Bisquerra, 2012; Thory, 2016; Yoo & Carter, 2017). The Mayer and Salovey (1997) four branches EI framework can be used to structure studies on effective teaching, making it an appropriate fit for this research study. The next section lists the four branches and gives a sampling of how studies can be viewed through this lens.

**Perception, Appraisal, and Expression of Emotion**

The first branch of EI relates to the perception of emotion and requires the individual to be attentive to the emotions of others. Teachers with high levels of EI can perceive student emotions, empathize with them, and express their own emotions in an appropriate way, enabling them to adapt their lesson plans to the moment and avoid conflicting relationships, which might be a result of low
levels of EI (Poulou, 2016). EI abilities affect student-teacher relationships, which affect work performance in jobs of high emotional demand (Nizielski, Hallum, Lopes, & Schutz, 2012).

**Using Emotion to Facilitate Thinking**

Considering that EI is both an ability and broad intelligence, it falls under the structure of general intelligence and is therefore related to other intelligences and cognition (Mayer et al., 2016). Not only can teachers with high EI perceive emotions, they can also use emotions to facilitate thinking (Hosotani & Imai-Matsumura, 2011). Teachers demonstrate the ability and usefulness of intentionally integrating their emotions to the teaching circumstance to facilitate student learning (Yin, 2016). For example, some teachers adapt their lessons according to the moods of the students with the goal of teaching them the lesson objectives (Ferry, McCaughtry, & Hodges Kulinna, 2011).

**Understanding and Analyzing Emotional Information**

One of the effective strategies in teaching is to connect classroom activities to the needs and interests of students. In a study of student and faculty perspectives on effective teaching, Layne (2012) reports that love and knowledge of the subject matter, as well as implementing a variety of teaching methods is conducive to effective teaching. Similarly, Devine et al., (2013) find that love and passion for teaching and learning are ranked highly for ‘good teaching.’ Teachers who truly want to reach their students start from where the student is and adapt to the learning context by being aware and adjusting to the students’ confusion (Parsons, 2016). Studies demonstrate the importance of teachers relating to their students by exercising empathy (Ferry et al., 2011; Khodadady, 2012), and being compassionate and sympathetic (Devine et al., 2013). Genuinely caring for students involves trying to connect with them and their situation. This personalization of education builds a bridge between the student and the learning objectives. Gauging the emotional states of students and adapting lessons that accommodate these needs demonstrates the ability of a teacher to incorporate
the students’ emotional states (Ferry et al., 2011). Teaching is only effective when students learn and understanding and analyzing students’ emotions to adapt instruction helps improve teaching.

**Managing the Regulation of Emotions**

There are several studies that focus on the emotional regulation branch of EI. Sutton (2004) found that teachers will intentionally down-regulate (decrease) or up-regulate (increase) their emotions to achieve a desired result such as maintaining students focus on their learning. Moreover, teachers might display true emotions defined as “being real” to show students their humanity while at the same time they will try to regulate their students’ emotions as well. Hosotani and Imai-Matsumura (2011) conducted a qualitative study with high quality (defined as teachers who were considered competent enough to mentor student teachers) Japanese elementary teachers. The researchers labeled teachers’ overt choices to demonstrate or hide certain emotions such as anger, as staging or suppression. The researchers found sometimes teachers intentionally adjust their own emotions to make a point with students, such as letting them know they are disappointed for their lack of effort or angry for something inappropriate that they have done. In a three-year qualitative study on teacher emotion in China, Yin and Lee (2012) unveiled four emotional rules of teaching in Chinese culture, two of which include emotional regulation: hiding negative emotions and maintaining positive emotion. Chinese teachers considered that negative emotions should not be revealed to students and they need to provide positivity to help students learn.

Although some studies only employ a subset of EI such as focusing on emotional regulation, an open-ended qualitative study in which administrators can openly share their experiences on this topic would be interesting to compare with current research. School administrators have an influence over hiring and supervising teachers, so their experiences can contribute to expanding knowledge about what makes effective teaching. If EI is a broad intelligence that consists of four major tenets, it would be interesting to learn which areas interviewees touch upon as they reflect on
the role EI plays on effective teaching. The relationship their responses have to EI would help suggest skills to train teachers in, as EI has been shown to improve with training, to improve teaching and thereby, improve student learning.

**EI as a Theoretical Framework for the Current Study**

The purpose of this study was to learn about administrator perceptions of effective teaching and the role of EI. The previous section demonstrated how studies on teaching and EI fit well in the Salovey and Mayer (1997) model of EI. This qualitative study gathered data through semi-structured observations and analyzed and coded the transcriptions from the interviews to find themes based on the participants’ responses. EI helped frame these themes and give the data shape. Furthermore, participants were asked to consider the EI lens as they shared their experiences of working with effective teachers.

**Summary**

What makes a teacher effective is a broad topic and one that is subject to much debate considering the many variables involved and the very definition of effective being ambiguous (Keeley et al., 2016; Layne, 2012). Using the EI framework helped to direct this research study to a specific element of the teacher, which deals with emotional abilities. The purpose of this Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study was to better understand how school administrators interpret effective teaching based on their experience of supervising teachers through the lens of EI.

An additional goal of this research project was to contribute to the growing body of literature regarding the importance of emotional abilities in the field of education. Identifying nonacademic qualities of teachers contribute to student learning. This research may give credence to policy development that looks beyond the heavily weighted academic qualities of teachers, such as
obtaining a master’s level of education, that have not demonstrated adequate contribution to student learning (Ingersoll, 2007).
Chapter Two: Literature Review

The purpose of this Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study was to better understand how school administrators interpret effective teaching based on their experience of supervising teachers through the lens of emotional intelligence (EI). Teachers play an important role in contributing to the academic success of students warranting the need to determine what makes an effective teacher (Castillo et al., 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Liu et al., 2015; Qureshi & Niazi, 2012; Sautelle et al., 2015). Although there is some evidence to suggest certain measurable skills, such as scores on a teacher competency test or the completion of a teacher preparation program, they are not all equally strong predictors of teacher success (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007; Harris & Sass, 2011). Research related to the personal qualities of teachers, particularly the role of emotions, has been given increased attention (Hargreaves, 1998; Hyland, 2014).

Considered high in emotional labor (Hargreaves, 1998), teaching frequently can lead to burnout, causing job turnover, which is financially expensive for schools and academically costly for students (Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher, 2010). Given this negative relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and teacher burnout (Przybylska, 2016), teachers who enact cognitive self-regulation by reducing workload outside of the classroom, experience higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of emotional burnout (Mattern & Bauer, 2014). Reducing burnout and increasing job satisfaction can help curtail the costs incurred from schools caused by frequent teacher turnover (Watlington et al., 2010). Teachers who are considered well-adjusted have personality profiles that report higher cognitive and emotional engagement with students, colleagues and higher job satisfaction (Perera, Granziera, & McIlveen, 2018). Over the past two decades, research in EI and its role in effective teaching and student achievement has grown (Schonert-Reichl, Kitil, & Hanson-Peterson, 2017). Studies measuring student EI and school success are common, as well as research measuring teacher EI as it relates to teachers’ work in the classroom (Hagelskamp,
Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2013). This literature review is divided into the following four strands: First, this literature review explored what constitutes effective teaching. Second, literature was reviewed related to teacher EI and effective teaching. Third, studies related to professional development and EI were reviewed. Finally, since this study took place in Central America, research focused on effective teaching and EI in Ibero-America is discussed. This literature review is comprised primarily of research found by using both Scholar-One and Northeastern University’s Education Subject Guide, which includes the following databases Academic Search Premier, Education Research Complete, Education Index Retrospective, and SPORTdiscus.

**Effective Teaching**

It is difficult to define what constitutes effective teaching, given the complexity of the profession. In recent years, public policy and law have pushed to define effective teaching using metrics related to: teacher testing, graduate degrees, and student results on standardized tests (Congress, 2002; Sawchuck, 2016). Currently, researchers are broadening this definition by investigating the effect that other qualities, such as personality (Kim & MacCann, 2016; Patrick, 2011) and cognitive abilities (Hamid, Hassan, & Ismail, 2012), have on teacher performance. This strand is divided into three subsections, organized by the perspectives of the various constituents of education and their interpretation of what defines an effective teacher:

1. students’ perspective,
2. teachers’ perspective, and
3. administrators’ perspective.

**Students’ Perspective**

Using a large sample size of 1,883 of European college students, Belanger and Longden (2009) investigated the most desired attributes of professors needed to effectively communicate knowledge and skills to college students and to measure the gap between students’ expectations and
what they receive from professors. The students completed an online questionnaire, which focused on three dimensions: personality characteristics, classroom environment, and teaching style. Belanger and Longden (2009) found that students demonstrated strong agreement on what they expect from effective teachers, including being empathetic, respectful, setting learning goals, fair assessment, recognizing when the student needed help, and making learning real (Belanger & Longden, 2009).

Qureshi and Niazi (2012) conducted a study to identify the traits of effective teachers, the skills they employed, the principles of successful teaching, the effects of high-quality teaching on student achievement, and the bottlenecks such teaching. Their participants, 350 students, 100 teachers, and 50 heads of institutions, responded to questionnaires investigating the traits of effective teachers, strategies used in teaching, and the effects on students’ achievements and difficulties. Similar to Belanger and Longden (2009), Qureshi and Nizai (2012) found that students preferred teachers who were helpful, fair, innovative, cooperative, democratic, and firm. The results concerning teachers’ perceptions are discussed in the teacher perspective subsection.

A more recent qualitative study of one sixth grade teacher and her students, also seeking to incorporate students’ voices about effective teaching, focused on the topic of instructional adaptation (Parsons, 2016). The researcher examined the types of pedagogical adaptations the teacher made, why she chose those adaptations, and what the students thought about them since students had not been asked to reflect on adaptations prior to this research. Parsons (2016) observed lessons and documented when the teacher made 25 adaptations to a lesson plan to increase students’ understanding. Examples of her adaptations included modeling a task when she realized that the students seemed confused by her initial instructions or breaking down a complex task into simpler parts. Strengths of the study included both the teacher and student perspective via quick interviews at the end of a lesson, encouraging the teacher and her students to reflect on the adaption.
indicated that, in general, students found teachers’ adaptations to be helpful. However, this study was limited to one teacher and therefore, should be replicated with more teachers to see the generalizability of results.

Stelmach, Kovach, and Steeves (2017) conducted a qualitative study of 75 Aboriginal high school students, which consisted of focus groups of four or five students that met on two separate occasions. The purpose of this study was to learn about the students’ school experiences, such as what helps or hinders their learning and what characteristics do good teacher possess. The researchers learned that students prefer teachers who cared for them, showed a personal interest, were open-minded, and were able to effectively teach course content. Further studies are warranted to gauge the degree to which adaptation plays in effective teaching.

Collectively, these studies provide an indication of student preferences regarding effective teaching. Students appreciate teachers who genuinely care about them, are empathetic to their situations and helpful when they are struggling. They expect a teacher to be fair and open-minded and to know their content area. Students can give invaluable feedback as to what defines an effective teacher from their perspective.

Teachers’ Perspective

There is a positive correlation between teacher self-reflection and self-efficacy (Noormohammadi, 2014), demonstrating that self-reflection is an important aspect of teacher improvement and growth. Evaluating what teachers believe about effective teaching is a helpful step toward improving their practice. Devine et al. (2013) researched good teaching by observing and then conducting a single, semi-structured interview of 73 teachers across 12 elementary and high schools in Ireland and identified the following five factors of effective teachers:

1. passion for teaching and learning,

2. social and moral dimension,
3. reflective practitioner,
4. effective planning and management of learning, and
5. love for children.

Some teachers reported a factor such as effective planning in their interview but did not always practice that trait when being observed, which social psychologists describe as the tendency for people to enhance their individual views of themselves to protect their personal image (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009).

In a study located in Greece, Koutrouba (2012) focused on Greek teachers’ perspectives on the profile of an effective teacher. Spanning over 46 secondary schools and collecting 340 questionnaires about effective teaching, the researcher conducted a factor analysis, which narrowed teachers’ beliefs of effective teaching to seven factors:

1. teacher’s flexibility in knowledge dissemination and sociability in communication,
2. teacher’s objectivity, strictness and demandingness,
3. teacher’s initiative and individualism,
4. teacher’s friendliness,
5. teacher’s open-heartedness and open-mindedness,
6. teacher’s establishment of a supportive and innovative learning environment,
7. teachers’ use of visual aids and lecture (Koutrouba, 2012).

Similarly, Qureshi and Khan (2012) found that professional competence, teacher honesty and fairness, supportiveness, consideration of human differences, flexibility, trust building, among other traits and practices, were characteristics of effective teachers as expressed by teacher and school heads.

Considering that numerous studies frequently selected teachers out of convenience and not necessarily those who had received some distinction in teaching excellence, Keeley and colleagues
(2016) sought to determine what teaching qualities were valued by award-winning teachers compared to their colleagues who had not received an honor. The goal was to determine whether excellent teachers valued the same qualities. The researchers surveyed a group of 50 excellent university-level teachers, defined operationally as those who had won at least one national teaching award in the field of psychology, by administering the teacher behavior checklist (TBC). Results indicated that excellent teachers did not agree completely upon the same qualities. Nonetheless, enthusiasm and being prepared were rated among the highest traits (Keeley et al., 2016). The researchers suggested that excellent teachers value the relationships they build with their students as one of the most important qualities.

Carraway and Burris (2017) analyzed philosophy of teaching essays for 15 post-secondary teachers who were recognized for their effective teaching. They coded each essay individually and then grouped similar categories that eventually formed into themes. A second researcher confirmed the themes and then a month later, the philosophies were read again and recoded. Interestingly, the same themes were found. Of the six themes that emerged from the research, the top three demonstrated value in student relationships:

1. engage students in learning,
2. maintain student interest,
3. get to know students,
4. assess student knowledge,
5. set high expectations for students, and
6. participate in professional development.

Taneri (2017) examined the affective development of prospective teachers through the viewpoint of teacher preparation instructors. The survey design study used 220 teacher educators as
participants. Taneri developed and administered the Characteristics of Prospective Teachers Scale, which contained competencies of effective teachers related to cognitive and affective qualities. Findings echoed the importance of considering students social and emotional levels when teaching and emphasized that these characteristics were just as important as cognitive and physical well-being (Taneri, 2017). Considering that teachers have such an impact on student learning, it is crucial to include their beliefs about what makes their work effective.

**Administrators’ Perspective**

Principals are teacher leaders and have the potential to make a positive impact on the learning environment of a school (Sebastian, Allensworth, & Huang, 2016). One of their many typical tasks is to hire, terminate, supervise, and provide professional development for teachers. Given the nature of this important role, they have a connection to effective teaching (Donaldson, 2013). Orphanos (2013) conducted a study in Cyprus, which included surveying 80 school principals and 229 teachers about teacher effectiveness, to determine whether principals were able to discern between effective and ineffective teaching practices. These results were analyzed quantitatively and compared with the grades teachers received in their teacher preparation programs. Orphanos (2013) found that principals were in fact able to identify the strengths and weaknesses for individual teachers, which support the invaluable role principals play in the supervision of effective teaching.

In a mixed method study utilizing 368 surveys and 31 semi-structured interviews of Chicago Public School principals and assistant principals, Engel (2012) studied what teacher characteristics supervisors looked for when hiring teachers. Survey results indicated that principals who hired teachers preferred applicants who displayed: enthusiasm for teaching, strong classroom management, and being a positive role model. Results from principal and assistant principal interviews determined teachers who displayed a caring demeanor toward students (e.g. understanding, empathetic), had a command of content knowledge, gave extra effort (e.g. available for tutoring outside of regular
teaching duties), and had class management skills were more frequently hired than those who did not possess such qualities.

Researchers shared that context such as low versus high achieving schools reflected slightly different findings. For example, principals of low-achieving school valued more classroom management, caring, and willingness to do extra while high-achieving school principals mentioned knowledge, caring, and teaching skills. Therefore, school context needs to be considered when trying to generalize these findings.

Using the Effective Teacher Quality Survey (ETQS) data from 314 Chinese principals regarding their perspectives of effective teaching, Liu et al. (2015) found that teachers’ personal qualities, especially treating students with respect, were deemed to be the most important defining quality of effective teaching. The second highest indicator of effective teaching was the category of classroom and instruction organization, providing a physically and emotionally safe environment as most important. The researchers stressed the importance of not generalizing the findings because it was a convenience sample and the type of survey instrument was forced data. Furthermore, since this was an international study, there could be a cultural component. School administrators play a vital role in the hiring and supervising of teachers and therefore, have authority in reinforcing effective teaching, making their perspectives’ valuable. Moreover, they usually have some authority over organizing professional development for teachers.

**Conclusion**

There is a long history of researchers trying to define what makes an effective teacher (e.g., Donaldson, 2013; Koutrouba, 2012; Layne, 2012; Sahin & Adiguzel, 2014). Law and public policy have dictated what is valued such as advanced degrees in the content area, pedagogical knowledge, and adequate scores on teacher tests (DESE, 2017). However, research is expanding this definition to include teacher qualities (e.g., Al Musawi & Karam, 2011). Studies have varied in their
approaches to this question by conducting research incorporating the perspectives of students, teachers, and administrators (e.g., Devine, Fahie, & McGillicuddy, 2013; Orfanos, 2013; Stelmach et al., 2017).

Students preferred teachers who were empathetic and respectful toward them (Belanger & Longden, 2009), recognized when they needed help and adapted lessons to these needs (Parsons, 2016), and provided structured goals and assessed fairly (Belanger & Longden, 2009). Teachers' perspectives on effective teaching coincided with students' views concerning adequate planning and flexibility to adapt lesson planning and being objective, which produced fairness (Devine et al., 2013; Qureshi & Niazi, 2012). Furthermore, teachers shared important qualities such as passion, enthusiasm, friendliness, open-heartedness, and open-mindedness (Devine et al., 2013; Koutrouba, 2012; Stelmach et al., 2017).

Finally, administrators stated the idea of having structured goals and adequate planning as important, which can be encompassed under the heading of classroom management, with students and teachers (Engel, 2012; Liu et al., 2015). Additionally, they concurred with students about being respectful and coincided with teachers about creating a supportive environment (Liu et al., 2015). However, administrators added that presenting a caring attitude, having a command of content knowledge, being an enthusiastic and positive role-model and giving an extra effort as important traits and actions (Engel, 2012). Interestingly, the various stakeholders in a school deemed certain qualities as contributors to the effectiveness of teachers, none of which included scores on a teacher test or an advanced degree. Rather, most of the attributes were humanistic in nature, supporting the value of a study that seeks to further knowledge about administrators' perspective on effective teaching and EI.
Teachers’ Emotional Intelligence

EI is growing in distinction among the myriad of qualities used to describe teachers such as kind, polite, knowledgeable, and passionate. To review literature related to teachers and their EI, this strand utilizes the four components of the Mayer and Salovey’s (2000) EI framework:

1. perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion,
2. access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought,
3. understand emotional and emotional knowledge, and
4. regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

Perception, Appraisal, and Expression of Emotion

Part of teaching involves developing learning objectives, designing activities to help students learn those goals, and assessing whether the learning targets were met (Saphier, Haley-Specia, & Gower, 2008). As straightforward as these steps appear, teaching is considerably more complex. A teacher needs to be an expert in content area, have a strong command of pedagogical skills, and be able to work with a diverse group of students with diverse learning styles (DESE, 2017) including handling the emotional ups and downs in the classroom (Taneri, 2017). Teachers with high levels of EI can perceive students’ emotions, empathize with them, and express their own emotions in an appropriate way; enabling the teachers to adapt their lesson plans in the moment and avoid conflicting relationships (Poulou, 2016).

Ferry and colleagues (2011) conducted a study of five elementary school physical education teachers who were observed and interviewed in six rounds to examine their social and emotional knowledge of students. Researchers identified what they labeled as four junctures involving social and emotional knowledge by the teacher:

1. social and emotional preparation,
2. acquiring an emotional pulse,
3. maintaining an emotional pulse, and
4. extending social and emotional pedagogy (p.18).

Two of the junctures, acquiring and maintaining an emotional pulse, required teachers to perceive, appraise, and adjust their teaching to the needs of the students, a quality of EI (Ferry et al., 2011). Teachers in the study expressed the importance of gauging students’ emotions quickly and adjusting their teaching to reach the students, thereby helping them to learn. Similarly, but this time in a position paper written on mindfulness-interventions and the affective domain of education, Hyland (2014) discussed the importance of teachers’ being responsive to students’ needs and the lack of attention given to emotions in education in the United Kingdom. The intellectual and emotional aspects of the human being of a human being require equal consideration making it important for teachers to consider students’ SEL in additional to academic learning.

Teachers need to be aware of their own emotions and how they impact their work, as it can have positive or destructive effects for students, as demonstrated in a study of grading practices. Brackett, Floman, Ashton-James, Cherkasskiy, and Salovey (2013) conducted two studies, one in which 89 college students who were enrolled in a course on EI were asked to grade student work after being emotionally induced. Using the same emotional induction procedure, 56 middle school teachers were also emotionally induced and graded student work. Findings indicated that teachers who experienced positive emotions were more likely to grade students higher and inversely, they were likely to assign lower grades to students’ compositions when they experienced negative emotions (Brackett et al., 2013).

**Using Emotion to Facilitate Thinking**

Teachers are more than mere disseminators of knowledge and therefore, must harness students’ emotions to steer them toward learning goals (Róisín Corcoran & Tormey, 2010). In Yin and Lee’s (2012) qualitative study of Chinese emotional rules, four administrators and 25 teachers
participated in semi-structured interviews and documents were analyzed. Researchers generated four emotional rules that governed the daily work of the teachers:

1. committing to teaching with passion,
2. hiding negative emotions,
3. maintaining positive emotions, and
4. instrumentalising emotions to achieve teaching goals (p. 63).

The instrumentalization of emotions to achieve teaching goals is a clear example of the influence feelings play on cognition. Teachers who hook students’ attention, joke where appropriate, or adjust their tone to motivate students are examples of this rule in practice. Other rules, such as hiding negative emotions and maintaining positive ones relate to another aspect of EI regarding managing emotions. In a subsequent study, Yin (2016) sought to explain how teachers’ emotional labor is their regulation of feelings and expressions to succeed in their teaching goals. The researcher utilized data from a three-year qualitative study. The first part of the study included four administrators and 25 teachers from elementary to high school levels and the second study consisted of eight participants from the first study who were revisited. Both studies had a qualitative component consisting of semi-structured interviews and document collection. Yin found that teachers demonstrated the ability and usefulness of intentionally integrating their emotions to the teaching circumstance to facilitate student learning. An emotionally skilled teacher realizes when students are motivated, unmotivated, happy, or sad and has the skills to adjust a lesson to capitalize on the moment or shift the mood to one that is more learning-oriented.

Finally, Becker, Goetz, Morger, and Ranellucci (2014) examined the relationship between teachers’ emotions, their instruction behavior, and students’ emotions. Through questionnaires over a series of 15 lessons, 149 grade nine students rated their teachers’ instructional behavior and
emotions in addition to their own emotions. Results suggested teachers should model emotions for students and be aware of students’ emotions to help direct a lesson.

**Understanding and Analyzing Emotional Information**

Studies demonstrate the importance of teachers relating to their students by exercising empathy (Ferry et al., 2011; Khodadady, 2012). In a descriptive study, 81 teachers and principals applied the technique of Semantic Natural Networks to determine what is defined as social skills in professional performance. Tapia-Gutierrez and Cubo-Delgado (2015) found that empathy and solidarity were an important part of relationship building in students. This skill requires the ability to understand and analyze the emotional signals displayed by students. Although published in a peer-reviewed journal, this conference paper is a synopsis of the research and therefore, has limited information about its methodology.

Ferry, McCaughtry, and Hodges Kulinna (2011) qualitatively analyzed the role social and emotional knowledge plays in teacher performance through semi-structured interviews of five high quality teachers. The researchers noted that teachers took their teaching a step further by paying attention to the emotions of their students and tried to make a difference in their personal lives. For example, a teacher who noticed a student who appeared to be sad, made a positive comment on his poem to try to cheer him up (Ferry et al., 2011). Similarly, in Iran, Khodadady (2012) determined the importance of empathy in teaching by administering the Characteristics of Effective English Language Teachers (CEELT) and Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory to 1,074 high school students and 95 high school English teachers. Specifically, the researcher found that teacher empathy and social responsibility were correlated positively with teacher effectiveness as measured by the CEELT.
Managing the Regulation of Emotions

As adults and role models to students, it is critical that teachers self-regulate their emotions to create an emotionally stable environment. Research indicates that teachers tend to down-regulate negative emotions more than they up-regulate positive ones, warranting the need for more attention to be paid to emotional regulation (Jiang, Vauras, Volet, & Wang, 2016). Teaching is an emotionally laborious line of work (Hargreaves, 1998) and culture or work environment can occasionally dictate emotional rules as standards for teachers to follow (Hochschild, 2012; Yin, 2016; Yin & Lee, 2012). In the same three-year qualitative study on teacher emotion in China previously discussed, Yin and Lee (2012) reported that two of the four emotional rules of teaching in Chinese culture included emotional regulation, the hiding of negative emotions and maintaining of positive ones. The participants, four administrators and 25 teachers who participated in semi-structured interviews and provided documents such as teacher reflections for analysis, expressed the importance of teachers being happy even if they were sad because it was their duty to motivate students. This type of emotional regulation is indicative of the longstanding tradition of Confucianism in China, which considers the individual’s inner feelings as secondary to the greater need of the society (Yin & Lee, 2012). However, each culture has its spoken, or often unspoken, rules and how teachers regulate their emotions within this context is important (Hochschild, 2012).

In a qualitative study, Hosotani and Imai-Matsumura (2011) investigated the emotional competence of 24 high quality Japanese elementary teachers; high quality was operationally defined as those who were suited enough to mentor student teachers. These teachers were interviewed to learn about the emotions they experienced in a typical school day and how they exerted emotional competence such as expression. Researchers labeled teachers’ overt choices to demonstrate or hide certain emotions such as anger, as staging or suppression. For example, given the circumstance, a teacher might intentionally show anger to let students understand the severity of their actions or they
might refrain from displaying an emotion because it is personal and not conducive to learning (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014; Hosotani & Imai-Matsumura, 2011; Nizielski et al., 2012). This intentionality of sharing emotions is also termed as genuinely expressing emotions in the form of emotional outpouring (Yin, 2016). Hosotani and Imai-Matsumura (2011) concluded that high quality teachers used emotional competence in their teaching. Furthering this concept, Jha and Singh (2012) conducted a quantitative study of 250 faculty members from a medical and engineering college in India in which participants completed scales for EI, teacher effectiveness, and a teacher rating scale. Correlational analysis found the existence of a positive relationship between EI and teacher effectiveness as rated by teachers and students in self-reported data. Emotional stability had the highest correlation, further building the case for effective teachers demonstrating their ability to regulate their emotions.

Given the emotionally laborious task of teaching, preventing burnout is crucial for continued teacher success. In a study of 84 high school English teachers, Anari (2012) gathered data from self-reported measures including EI, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment and found that the ability of teachers to recognize, manage, and use their emotions in such a way as to prevent burnout builds a more effective and long-term teaching force (Anari, 2012; Yin, 2016).

Conclusion

Defined as an ability to perceive, regulate, and interpret emotions of others and oneself to foster growth research in EI is growing, and its recognized importance in the field of teaching is an area worth exploring (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Research has shown that teachers have a strong role in student learning, underscoring the importance of gaining a better understanding as to what makes certain practitioners more effective than others (Castillo et al., 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Liu et al., 2015; Qureshi & Niazi, 2012; Sautelle et al., 2015). Teaching is an emotionally laborious profession in that it deals primarily with human interaction (Hargreaves, 1998; Hyland, 2014) and
can lead to teacher burnout (Przybylska, 2016). Salovey et al.’s (2000) framework of EI consists of four major components including perceiving, understanding, using, and regulating emotions. Research has shown that teachers with higher EI qualities can perceive students’ emotional states and adjust teaching to their needs (e.g., Poulou, 2016). Moreover, they demonstrate a sense of empathy and caring toward students’ personal lives, thereby building positive relationships that improve learning (Ferry et al., 2011). Furthermore, teachers capitalize on students’ emotions to reach teaching and learning goals. Several international studies relating culture and regulation of emotion indicate that effective teachers have an ability to control and manage emotions and tend to experience greater job satisfaction and less burnout (Cross & Hong, 2012; Jha & Singh, 2012). Finally, not all pre-service teachers have high levels of EI (Roisin Corcoran & Tormey, 2012), which is concerning, but fortunately, other studies have shown that professional development can improve teacher EI. Attempting to understand the role of teacher EI in effective teaching needs to be analyzed in the context of student-teacher interactions.

**Student-Teacher Interactions**

The relationship between a teacher and student is paramount to building an environment conducive to success (Jones, Knudsen, & O’Meara, 2013; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013). Positive teacher-student relations are related to optimistic emotions experienced by teachers (Jo, 2014) such as joy (Chen, 2016) which can contribute to their job satisfaction and improved teaching. The following sections review research about student-teacher interactions within the context of student behavior, emotions and perceptions.

**Student Behavior**

One skill that is important in effective teaching is classroom management, especially the management of student behavior (Wong & Wong, 2004). In a quantitative study of 98 elementary teachers, Poulou (2016) researched how teachers’ perceptions of their own EI, competence in
implementing SEL to their students, teaching efficacy, and teacher-student relationships related to students’ emotional and behavioral difficulties. They administered self-measures of EI, SEL beliefs, self-efficacy, and student-teacher relationships scale and found that teachers who perceived close teacher-student relationships were less likely to report behavioral issues. Ruzek and colleagues (2016) conducted a study to investigate whether emotionally-supportive teachers motivated and engaged their students because these students had autonomy-supportive experiences, experienced stronger self-efficacy, and had positive and supportive peer relationships. Participants included 960 students from classrooms of 68 different teachers (who had participated in a field trial of coaching intervention) to measure classroom experiences. Ruzek and colleagues found that students tended to be more behaviorally engaged in emotionally supportive classrooms because they were given increased opportunities to exercise autonomy, which is characteristic of middle and high school students as they seek more independence and rely on peer relationships (2016).

Nizielski and colleagues (2012) conducted a quantitative study to understand the relationship between teacher EI and student misconduct. Four hundred Syrian teachers answered questionnaires about their EI, attention to student needs, and student misconduct. Researchers found that teachers who paid particularly close attention to students’ needs tended to have better classroom management skills. More specifically, this research indicated that emotional competencies, such as self-emotion appraisal and emotional regulation, on behalf of the teacher, increased attention to student needs, which was then negatively correlated to student misbehavior. Researchers predicted this to be true because teacher attention to student needs showed concern and exercised empathy, all of which built a healthy and safe environment (Nizielski et al., 2012).

Contrary to this, Jong and colleagues (2014) conducted a study of 120 pre-service teachers and administered questionnaires inquiring about their background, personality, and self-efficacy and a survey to students about their perceived student-teacher relationships.
Results indicated that teachers who practiced overly aggressive discipline methods tended to deteriorate relationships with their students (Jong et al., 2014), which is counterproductive to learning.

In a quantitative study of 356 middle school math students, Sakiz, Pape, and Hoy (2012) adapted items from questionnaires related to teacher affective support to explore its importance in the classroom. They found that healthy relationships, where students perceived teacher affective support, were more likely to report lower academic self-helplessness and higher academic support (Sakiz, Pape, & Hoy, 2012), equating to fewer discipline problems, which can lead to more teaching and learning.

**Emotions and Perceptions**

Relationships are symbiotic by nature and this synergy between a student and a teacher can greatly influence student success. Described as a microsystem by Cross and Hong (2012), student-teacher interaction is emotionally latent and just as teachers may gain positive and elated emotions from interactions with students, so might they feel disappointment and shame. In their qualitative case study of two elementary teachers working in a low socio-economic status (SES) community, Cross and Hong (2012) wanted to understand teachers’ emotional experiences as they are impacted by their internal and external worlds. The researchers described an example of a teacher who caught her student stealing and since she felt responsible for the well-being and growth of this student, there was a sense of failure. However, this teacher realized that too many people had already passed judgment on this student, so she chose to exercise empathy to find another way to help (Cross & Hong, 2012). Perceiving student emotions enables a teacher to react to the needs of a student, which builds better, more productive relationships.

Many studies focus on teachers’ perceptions of relationships (Chen, 2016; Cross & Hong, 2012; Poulou, 2016), but few consider the perception of students. Ainley, Freeman, and Kavenagh,
2012) developed a study to analyze the synchrony of teacher and male-student perceptions at the high school level. Researchers gathered survey data from nine teachers and 70 male students from a secondary school in a suburb of Australia. They concluded that although there was a strong match between both teacher and student perceptions, which were generally positive in nature, there was some discord in these perspectives where students perceived teachers’ lack of caring for them while teachers expressed a lack of satisfaction with the relationship.

Frisby and colleagues (2016) conducted a study of 113 university faculty members to investigate instructor-student rapport and its relationship to instruction satisfaction, commitment, morale, and efficacy by administering perception scales. Researchers found that teacher perceptions of rapport with students positively predicted their level of satisfaction.

Other studies have examined student and teacher perceptions based on teacher preference of students. Mercer and DeRosier (2010) collected teacher and child reported data from a sample of 1,104 fourth-grade classrooms from public schools and found that students’ perceptions of teachers’ preferences of students and teachers’ preferences of students predicted levels of conflict and support. For example, student-perceived low levels of teacher preference predicted higher levels of conflict just as much as teachers’ lower preference level of a student indicated a rise in conflict.

Mainhard, Brekelmans, and Wubbels (2011) investigated the associations of teacher coercive and supportive behavior in the classroom social climate determined by teacher influence and proximity. Twenty-eight Dutch, secondary level teachers completed questionnaires on teacher interaction and teacher behavior checklist to a collective total of their 1,208 students. Researchers found that coercive behavior (e.g. teacher yelling at a student or using sarcasm) disrupted the relationship between teachers and students by deteriorating it. This study also reviewed this effect a few weeks later and discovered that such emotional impact resulted in less proximity, signaling how negative emotions left a lasting adverse impression on relationships. Contrary to these negative
emotions, an additional study of 193 African American youth from low SES backgrounds found that of the many measures given, positive dimensions such as trust, communication, and closeness were associated with students’ school adjustment (Murray & Zvoch, 2011).

In a case study consisting of interviews of 11 faculty advisors/mentors and 10 doctoral students, O’Meara, Knudsen, and Jones (2013) focused on the process of human interaction from the lens of emotional competencies and found that faculty who displayed social competencies such as empathy and concern, helped build confidence in student self-efficacy. Based on their literature review, Ripski, Decker, and LoCasale-Crouch (2011) concluded that teacher effectiveness can be measured by the quality of their interactions with students, so they conducted a study of 67 pre-service teachers in which they administered personality and relationship scales. They found that pre-service teachers reported more positive personality traits than their peers who were not enrolled in the teaching program and these characteristics were likely to be beneficial for individuals entering the teaching profession.

In their qualitative analysis to examine whether SEL could be infused in a college course, 15 undergraduate students took a course with SEL infused-content and then completed a self-reflection questionnaire at the end. Waajid, Garner, and Owen (2013) found that pre-service teachers experienced a paradigmatic shift from teacher-centered to student-centered approaches to teaching. The participants realized that emotions play a role in teaching and it was important to consider the students’ needs and learning styles when developing and implementing lessons.

Through a case study of a science teacher and her middle school students, Tobin, Ritchie, Oakley, Mergard, and Hudson (2013) conducted an in-depth analysis of one, 100 minute science laboratory period and found that the teacher’s emotions, both negative and positive, had a powerful impact on student behavior. This investigation highlights the impact teachers have on student-
teacher relationships, which can fluctuate from either negative or positive, with the latter being more productive to student learning.

In a study of the efficacy of Personal, Professional Coaching (PPC) (a type of coaching grounded in theories including adult learning) of school administrators, Patti, Holzer, Stern, and Brackett (2012) trained 12 teachers and administrators to coach newly hired teachers in two secondary schools in England. The researchers also trained school administrators in 25 New York City public schools using the PPC style. Using interviews to collect and analyze data, Patti, Holzer, Stern, and Brackett (2012) determined that leaders who were more self-aware and empathic (traits of EI) tended to experience better relationships with colleagues; noteworthy is the similarity of results between the two countries.

In Israel, Dolev and Leshem (2016) examined the impact a teacher-centered EI training had on teachers’ EI. In a mixed methods study, consisting of pre and post-EI measures and interviews of 21 teachers who participated in this two-year EI training at one school, the researchers found that participants expressed more awareness of their relationships with their students and noted a shift to more personal and meaningful interactions after the training.

Collectively, these studies provide empirical evidence for paying careful attention to interactions among individuals in a school community and underscore the value of building an environment of consideration and teamwork. Drago-Severson (2009) terms these collaborative environments as teaming in which people work together to help each other learn and grow. EI can help build these relationships and participants who have participated in EI trainings perceive the school climate to be a better one (Pérez-Escoda et al., 2012).

Conclusion

Literature in the field of education stresses the highly significant role a teacher plays in student learning (Castillo et al., 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Liu et al., 2015; Qureshi & Niazi,
As research continues to try to determine what makes teachers effective, teacher qualities and their influence on student-teacher interactions show promise in improving student learning outcomes (Jong et al., 2014; Kim & MacCann, 2016). Teachers who show higher levels of EI can perceive, understand, use, and regulate emotions (Poulou, 2016). Perceiving emotions helps teachers gauge students’ moods and motivation levels and adjust their teaching to maximize learning (Ferry et al., 2011). Other studies have shown that teachers who gauged students’ emotional states and used that information to adjust their lessons were more successful in achieving their learning objectives (Ferry et al., 2011).

Complementing the perception of emotions, understanding students’ situations allowed teachers to be more caring and understanding, qualities preferred by students (Becker et al., 2014). A teacher who showed empathy helped build strong, positive, fair, and healthy relationships with students (Tapia-Gutierrez & Cubo-Delgado, 2015). Part of this relationship building involved having the ability to regulate and use emotions to motivate students and lead by example (Taxer & Frenzel, 2015; Yin, 2016). Teachers who provided supportive rather than coercive behaviors, as dictated by their ability, or lack thereof, to control their negative emotions, demonstrated respect for students, a quality considered important by students, teachers, and administrators (Mainhard et al., 2011).

Although there is a growing body of research in the field of emotions and teacher EI in student-teacher interactions, there is limited research on administrators’ perspective about the role of teacher EI and effective teaching. As suggested by Liu et al. (2015), this warrants the need to conduct more qualitative research in this area. Education is high in emotional labor (Hargreaves, 1998), thus EI has a strong influence on classroom relationships and these interactions contribute to effective teaching. Administrators have an indirect, but powerful influence on student learning since they are the ones who typically hire and supervise teachers, as well as organize professional
development. Therefore, continued research from the supervisors’ perspective on the role EI plays in effective teaching is warranted.

**EI and Professional Development**

There is growing research suggesting that levels of one’s EI, depending on the specific, defined construct and its operational definition, can be learned, making it a promising area for continued research and implementation (Dolev & Leshem, 2016; Hagelskamp et al., 2013; Waajid et al., 2013).

In her book, *Leading Adult Learning*, Drago-Severson (2009) stated the importance of providing support to school leaders and teachers in the field based on her years of experience in the field of education as a teacher, program director, consultant, and staff developer. She suggested four pillar practices for growth:

1. teaming,
2. providing leadership roles,
3. collegial inquiry, and
4. mentoring.

These four practices consist of teachers working together with colleagues to support one another and improve practice. This support is fundamental to professional growth.

Saunders (2013) researched the role emotions play in the implementation of a professional development program. The sample consisted of 27 teachers who completed questionnaires and participated in interviews about their experiences in implementing new teaching practices. Saunders (2013) found that teachers go through emotional ups and downs, but supportive relationships with their professional development program directors helped them move through the process successfully. Within the study, one participant stated how she would not share teaching risks with her colleagues because they did not have that type of relationship, suggesting the importance of how
support from colleagues can be helpful. Using a large sample of 534 Chicago Public elementary schools, Sebastian and colleagues (2016) collected quantitative survey data on school leadership, organizational process, and classroom instruction on a cohort of students from third grade and then again in eighth grade to determine the role principal leadership, teacher leadership, and the interaction of the two played on student achievement. Schools where administrators focused on building strong school learning climates helped raise student achievement directly by influencing school policy, organizing professional development, etc., but also did so along with the building up of teacher leadership, in which the principal influence with student achievement was indirect (Sebastian et al., 2016).

In a large quantitative study of 1,698 educators in South Africa, Grobler and Conley (2013) researched the extent to which school principals practiced emotional competence and instructional leadership and how these two were associated with student achievement. Participants completed a questionnaire that contained items related to instructional leadership and the principals’ use of emotional competence and these data were correlated to student achievement. Grobler and Conley (2013) found high correlations between emotional competence and instructional leadership and their association with student learning. This interaction between administrators and teachers is positive relationship building.

In two studies, Harvey, Bimler, Evans, Kirkland, and Pechtel (2012) sought to validate class emotional climate and then determine core emotional skills in teaching. Participants in the first study were 33 New Zealand university students while the second study consisted of 101 New Zealand volunteer teachers from primary and secondary school. The researcher groups tried to map and validate classroom emotions to develop teachers’ emotional profiles with one of the aims being to provide useful data to help target teacher EI training. They were able to organize emotional themes into 10 hotspot clusters:
1. emotional relationship, 
2. student-student support, 
3. emotional philosophy, 
4. emotional attitude, 
5. emotional self-acceptance, 
6. emotional student-acceptance, 
7. emotion regulation, 
8. emotion coaching, 
9. emotional availability, and 
10. emotional boundaries (p. 636).

In her book, *The Flat World and Education*, Darling-Hammond (2010) emphasized the important role professional development played in preparing teachers to be more effective in the classroom. Darling-Hammond shared examples from schools in the U.S. and other countries such as Japan in implementing professional development programs. This research demonstrates the necessity for schools to be deliberate in their creation of learning spaces for teachers, including granting teachers the freedom to frame their learning by setting goals for themselves and their students. In an ethnographic case study of eight elementary and high school teachers in Australia, Yoo and Carter (2017) made observations and collected data through surveys on the emotional experiences of the participants. The researchers concluded that emotions should be considered when conducting professional development, since the field of education is a personal one.

The role professional development plays in supporting adults, which helps to increase student learning, demands special attention. Linking together the benefits demonstrated by teacher and leader EI and its positive effects on learning, this next section is dedicated to analyzing the literature and drawing conclusions about the benefits of professional development. Of the studies reviewed,
there are a variety of methods for delivery, which includes university level courses and in-service training. The in-service training methodology consists of on-the-job training, mentoring, and coaching.

**University Level Courses**

Considering the value of EI on school climate, job effectiveness, and relationships, universities have begun to experiment with offering full course-work to infusing components in curriculum to measure its impact on EI growth. Kasler, Hen, and Nov (2013) studied the impact that a 30-hour course, titled *Emotional Intelligence in Education*, had on improving the individual levels of EI on 50 undergraduate students. Using a control group of 26 students who did not receive a college course, and administering self-reported instruments to measure empathy, EI, and emotional self-efficacy, they found that the students enrolled in the course improved their levels of EI and emotional self-efficacy, except for management of emotions. Additionally, researchers found that a decrease in personal distress correlated with a decrease in empathy, which led them to question whether empathy might be a separate construct and not part of the domain of EI (Kasler et al., 2013).

Waadid and colleagues (2013) investigated how university courses that add SEL objectives and activities impacted 15 undergraduate students’ perceptions of SEL and its association with classroom learning and behavior. Participants expressed an increased understanding of the importance of students’ emotions, making them shift their views of classroom leadership to be more student-centered.

Singh and Dali (2013) explored the need for principal EI to be a part of work competencies. Using 60 principals who were enrolled in an advanced certificate program, the researchers utilized focus groups and in-depth individual interviews and determined that one of the components of Work-integrated learning competencies (WILCS), which included the importance of developing others by understanding their needs and supporting their learning, helped develop EI. Given the nature of
these qualitative designs, there is no evidence of pre-and post-increases in levels of EI; rather there was an improvement in perception, which can be substantially effective if it orients schoolteachers and leaders to be more considerate of social and emotional climate.

Corcoran and Tormey (2012) studied how emotionally intelligent 352 pre-service teachers were by administering the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), a test based on the Salovey and Mayer (1997) Model of EI. Results indicated that student teachers had lower than expected EI as compared with students from other college major programs, suggesting that preparation programs should consider teaching emotional competence. The researchers suggested that teacher EI levels should be considered as a pre-requisite for teaching program entry.

In a later study of 352 students, Corcoran and Tormey (2013) correlated teacher EI data and teacher performance data (based on teaching practicum) to explore the relationship between EI and performance. Data indicated that there was no clear relationship between EI and student teacher success. The researchers attributed the results potentially to be connected to the fact that student teaching was a cognitively demanding task, resulting in pre-service teachers’ inhibition of their emotional competence because they were overly preoccupied with juggling a myriad of new teaching duties. This speculation is not adequate for empirical research, but it does make the point that teaching is a complex profession. In a study conducted in an elementary school in Finland, Jiang et al. (2016) administered an eight-item questionnaire to 53 students about their perceptions of their teachers’ emotions and conducted interviews with four teachers as a reflection on their emotions. The researchers learned that teachers tended to down-regulate negative emotions more than up-regulate positive ones and that reappraisal of emotion (trying to recognize an antecedent for a negative emotion and avoiding it) was more effective than suppression (trying to bury the emotion) of negative emotions. These results suggested that training in areas such as emotional regulation and reappraisal is warranted.
In-Service Training

For the purposes of this paper, in-service training refers to the training of employees, mainly school administrators and teachers, on the job, contrasted to university training designed for pre-service teachers or principals (Zembylas, 2007). The following section contains examples of the successes and shortcomings of EI or SEL trainings of leaders in schools and other professions.

In a pilot study conducted in Spain to examine the effects of an SEL program, researchers selected 47 teachers who participated in either a Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating (RULER) emotions training or eLearning training (control group), (Castillo et al., 2013). Using a pre-test-post-test design, researchers administered a battery of assessments to measure work engagement, teacher-student interactions, teacher burnout, trait effect, and personality. According to the Mayer and Salovey (1997), RULER is an SEL intervention provided to teachers and students to improve the five emotional skill areas: recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating emotions. In this study, RULER consisted of 30 hours of training over six months for teachers on how to incorporate the approach into their curriculum and honing their skills in it. Results indicated that teachers who attended the RULER training had more positive scores in EI, especially in engagement. Furthermore, teachers who participated in the training demonstrated positive interactions with students and experienced less burnout.

Similarly, research of 21 educators in Israel also concluded that teachers who participated in an EI training that included 12 workshops, perceived an increase in self-awareness and an enhancement in their EI skills (Dolev & Leshem, 2016). Interesting to note, and similar to the finding of Kasler, Hen, and Nov (2013), empathy did not demonstrate significant improvement (Dolev & Leshem, 2016).

In an experimental research design, Karimzadeh et al. (2014) examined the effect an SEL training had on the social emotional intelligence of 68 elementary teachers, grades four and five, half
in the control group and half in the experimental group. The social emotional skills training consisted of 10 weekly, two-hour sessions and the researchers applied the Bar-on Social-Emotional Questionnaire and the Effective teaching Questionnaire to measure EI and performance levels of teachers. Teachers who participated in the training demonstrated statistically significant improvements as compared to the control group. They also found that teachers’ level of EI was related to effective teaching.

Based upon the same premise that one’s EI skills can improve, Kearney, Kelsey, and Sinkfield (2014) examined whether EI skills could be taught to a group of 31 aspiring principals, and they found some contrasting results. A total of 31 participants were enrolled in a principal preparation program in Texas with 14 being a part of the control group and the other 17 having received SEL training. Both groups received pre-assessment questionnaires and the experimental group additionally received a post-questionnaire. Of the six interventions taught in their program, four of them: anxiety management, decision-making, appropriate use of assertive behaviors, and commitment ethic- did not demonstrate any statistical significance. The two interventions that proved successful were social awareness and time management. An interesting result was older participants improved more than younger ones; literature indicates that the emotional-social intelligence construct increases with age as opposed to intelligence quotient (IQ), which increases until late adolescence (Bar-On, 2006). However, Kearney, Kelsey, and Sinkfield (2014) suggested this might be attributed to the fact that older students may underrate themselves in self-report pre-test measures. Another on-site training, with a sample of 27 managers who participated in one of three EI trainings based on the popular models of EI (Bar-on, Goleman, and Hybrid), but this time in other fields in addition to education, and qualitative in design, supported the principle that EI skills can be learned. It also suggested that attributes may be more nature-oriented and people inherently had more or less receptivity to trainings (Thory, 2016).
Mentoring and Coaching. Leadership involves a heavy responsibility and duty to serve constituents well. Sometimes this practice can be lonely, as certain information is too confidential to be shared with others. In a case study about the implementation of pillar practice of mentoring, current school leaders shared how school principals found the job to be lonely and stressful (Drago-Severson, 2009). Drago-Severson (2009) purported that mentoring can help decrease isolation in the field and support adult learning, which can lead to job satisfaction (Thory, 2016). Mentoring is often labeled as coaching in the literature (Drago-Severson, 2009), so for the purposes of this paper, these terms are grouped in the same section.

Coaching. Patti and colleagues (2012) examined the effects of coaching as a form of professional development to improve some emotionally related qualities in teachers and school leaders. The researchers employed what they refer to as Personal, Professional Coaching (PPC), a type of coaching grounded in theories of adult learning EI, motivation, and self-psychology to 12 teachers and administrators in England and to principals and assistant principals in 25 New York City public schools. After the coaching process, the researchers interviewed the participants to reflect on their intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, and they concluded that the effects of relationship building and collaboration spread from the individual to the whole organization, creating a change in school climate. Furthermore, teacher leaders attributed more value to the role emotions play in the classroom and on quality instruction.

In another study that examined the impact of a leadership training and coaching program on 71 nongovernmental organization (NGO) leaders’ EI scores, Nafukho, Muyia, Farnia, Kacirek, and Lynham (2016) provided evidence that leaders can improve their EI. Leaders improved in four out of five dimensions of Bar-On's (2006) framework (stress management was the exception):

1. intrapersonal,
2. interpersonal,
3. adaptability,
4. stress management, and
5. general mood.

The researchers suggested that lack of statistically significant growth could be attributed to participants already having had a relatively high level of stress management, so limited improvement may be possible. Coaching demonstrates itself as an effective way to improve the emotional awareness of leaders, which is beneficial to effective teaching and student learning.

**Mentoring.** Mentoring shows promise of improving the emotional levels of mentees, making them more apt to handle difficult roles. In a study of 48 assistant superintendents, half with a superintendent as a mentor and half without one, research indicated that the assistants who had a mentor strengthened their levels of EI and were more willing to move to the role of superintendent (Key, Thomas, Hunter, Morote, & Tatum, 2015). These promising results advocate the benefits of mentoring and prepare candidates to move into higher levels of administration that may be difficult to fill.

Pérez-Escoda et al. (2012) evaluated the effects of two different programs, one geared toward teachers and the other toward students in primary school, with the intention of improving their personal and social well-being by developing emotional competency. In a quasi-experimental design with 92 teachers, roughly 62 percent of the experimental group received 20 weeks of EI training. Results indicated significant improvements of EI. According to Bisquerra and Pérez (2007), the researchers applied a theoretical framework of EI, which consisted of five dimensions:

1. emotional consciousness,
2. emotional regulation,
3. personal autonomy,
4. social competence, and
5. life and well-being competencies (p. 70).

Of the five dimensions, the significant improvements were in the emotional regulation and social competencies, and according to Hagenauer and Volet (2014) emotion-regulation strategies should be developed in professional development courses for teacher educators.

Conclusion

There is ample evidence to suggest that EI can be improved with professional development (Castillo et al., 2013; Kasler et al., 2013; Singh & Dali, 2013; Waajid et al., 2013). Much of the research in the field of EI is generated in leadership, but teacher EI is a growing interest. Given that teachers are leaders in their roles as instructional coordinators in their classrooms (Grobler & Conley, 2013), leadership research can be related to the classroom. Furthermore, there was a relationship between principals who were instructional leaders and student achievement (Sebastian et al., 2016). The role principals played in providing supportive relationships with teachers was connected to teacher well-being (Drago-Severson, 2012). Given the emotionally latent aspects of teaching (Hargreaves, 1998), teachers benefited from emotional support from their leaders, which helped improve their practice by lowering the odds of burnout (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Professional development of teacher and principal EI ranged from university stand-alone courses to on the job, in-service trainings (Kasler et al., 2013; Waajid et al., 2013). The research demonstrates that training is effective in improving EI to a degree warranting schools to consider incorporating EI or SEL training.

Ibero-America Context

This study took place in bilingual schools in Honduras, a Spanish-speaking country located in Central America. Murillo (2000) asserts that context is important consideration in research, and few of the previous studies cited in this literature review took place in Latin America. Spanish speaking and developing countries have different cultures and limited resources respectively, which can affect
the analysis and implementation of research. Since there is still limited empirical research published in research journals for the Honduran population specifically, the articles in this section tend to be older than five years and include research from Ibero-America, which consists of Latin America, Spain, and Portugal. This brief section includes the major subsections of the literature review, but not the minor subsections given the limited available research.

Effective Teaching

Although a topic of discussion for several decades in developed countries, research and policy development around effective teaching is still in its young stages of development in unindustrialized countries such as those in Latin America and is unfortunately related to lack of prestige and recognition of the worthiness of teachers’ work (Vaillant & Rossel, 2012). To combat this negative perception and undermining of the profession, some countries have explicitly implemented strategies such as awarding effective teachers at the national level. In their review of five Latin American countries that implemented awards to recognize and promote successful teaching, Vaillant and Rossel (2012) claim that these awards helped to raise the prestige of the profession, but the sample size was too small to make any generalizations.

Martínez-Garrido and Murillo (2016a) examined how the distribution of time to non-teaching related tasks impacted the math and language achievement of 5,610 children from nine Ibero-American countries, excluding Honduras. Using an ex post facto study with four levels of analysis including student, classroom, school, and country, the researchers found that of the five tasks related to student learning, the first highlights the importance of time spent on lesson planning and its relationship to effective teaching. Darling-Hammond (2010) also noted this characteristic when she shared how Japanese teachers were allotted a considerable amount of time to lesson planning. Martínez-Garrido and Murillo (2016b) also found that effective teaching has expanded its lens beyond cognitive development to socio-emotional learning, as well with an emphasis placed on
school climate; the affective component of the classroom was related to both language achievement as well as math but had higher effects in math. Ariza-Hernández (2017) studied how the influence of teacher EI and use of affective pedagogy affected the academic achievement of 30 first year students in the education college in Spain. In this mixed-method study consisting of data collection such as EI levels of teachers and grades earned by students, the researchers also found that affective relationships between teachers and students needed to be positive because negative ones resulted in lower student achievement.

**Emotional Intelligence and Professional Development**

In a study of nearly 6,000 schools in Latin America including Honduras, Martínez-Garrido (2017) used data from el Tercer Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo (TERCE) from UNESCO to examine the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and variables such as school leaders and school climate, a topic of scarce research. The researcher found that the work environment, classroom climate, and support from school leadership all contributed to job satisfaction of teachers, and job satisfaction of teachers contributed to effective teaching. She recommended that school leaders should aim to improve school climate. This research builds upon the work of Paris (2012) who established that perceived leader levels of EI was related to more effective leadership. School climate, which is heavily based on teacher-student relationships, is related to improved learning outcomes.

In their study of school and classroom factors related with the socio-emotional achievement of 5,603 students in nine Latin American countries, Murillo and Hernández-Castilla (2011) used an ex post facto investigation and found that teachers’ attitude was a strong indicator of the emotional development of students. Bahia, Freire, Amaral, and Teresa Estrela (2013) examined how teachers integrate emotions in the classroom, including which emotions teachers feel, how they managed those emotions to teach, and which situations generated positive and negative outcomes. The
researchers interviewed eight different teachers from numerous grade levels at the end of the school year and their results suggested the importance of incorporating the emotional dimension in teaching. At the end of the school year, these teachers participated in interviews to discuss their experiences dealing with emotions in the classroom and the researchers noted that teachers were unable to discriminate well between emotions and emotional triggers.

**Conclusion**

There is limited research on effective teaching, teacher emotional intelligence, and professional development in Ibero-America, and even less in Honduras, which is not a surprise, given the lack of resources in developing countries. The creation of networks among Spain, Portugal, and Latin America builds more opportunities to conduct research and considering there are shared cultural aspects such as language (in the case of Spain and most of Latin American countries), the research has potential for generalization (e.g. Martínez-Garrido, 2017). This brief literature review demonstrates that time spent on planning is more valuable than time used for administrative tasks. Some countries are working toward improving excellent teaching practices by publicizing and rewarding exceptional practitioners, and finally, there is a growing interest in the role that emotions have in teaching (Bahia et al., 2013).

**Summary**

Defined as an ability to perceive, regulate, and interpret emotions of others and oneself to foster growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), research in EI is growing, and its recognized importance in the field of teaching is an area worth exploring. Research has shown that teachers have a strong role in student learning, underscoring the importance of gaining a better understanding as to what makes certain practitioners more effective (Castillo et al., 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Liu et al., 2015; Qureshi & Niazi, 2012; Sautelle et al., 2015).
Teaching is an emotionally laborious profession in that it deals primarily with human interaction and can lead to teacher burnout (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Salovey and colleagues (2000) framework of EI consists of four major components including perceiving, understanding, using, and regulating emotions. Teachers with higher EI qualities can perceive students’ emotional states and adjust teaching practices to their needs (e.g., Ferry et al., 2011; Poulou, 2016) including demonstrating a sense of empathy and caring toward students’ personal lives (Daniel, 2009; Khodadady, 2012; Nizielski et al., 2012; Tapia-Gutierrez & Cubo-Delgado, 2015), thereby building positive relationships that improve learning. Attempting to understand the role of teacher EI in effective teaching needs to be analyzed in the context of student-teacher interactions (Harvey et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2016; Hong-biao Yin & Lee, 2012). Moreover, teachers capitalize on students’ emotions to reach teaching and learning goals. Several international studies relating culture and regulation of emotion indicated that effective teachers had an ability to control and manage emotions and tended to experience greater job satisfaction and less burnout (Hosotani & Imai-Matsumura, 2011; Jong et al., 2014; Poulou, 2016).

Finally, not all pre-service teachers had high levels of EI (Roisin Corcoran & Tormey, 2012), which is concerning, but fortunately, other studies showed that professional development could improve teacher EI (Castillo et al., 2013) such as college courses and in-service trainings geared toward teachers, school leaders, and student SEL. This literature review included a strand on research of effective teaching and EI in Ibero-America to reference the context of this research project. There is limited research in these countries, especially in Honduras. Considering that effective teaching is related to student achievement, EI is related to improved teacher-student relationships and effective teaching practices, and EI can be improved through professional development, there was a need for this research project. Honduras is a country high in illiteracy, warranting the need for educational opportunities and effective teaching practices. School
administrators are usually tasked with hiring, supervising, and training teachers. This research project was aimed at interviewing school administrators to learn about their perspectives on effective teaching and the contribution EI plays in effective teaching at their schools.
Chapter Three: Research Design

The purpose of this Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study was to better understand how school administrators interpret effective teaching based on their experience of supervising teachers through the lens of emotional intelligence (EI). The literature review revealed that a singular definition of effective teaching remains elusive and that even though there is a growth in the research around EI and teaching, there is still a dearth in knowledge. Furthermore, there was limited research in the administrators’ perspective of effective teaching and especially within the context of Ibero-America. Therefore, the following research question drove this study: Based on school administrators’ experiences supervising teachers, what role does teacher EI play in effective teaching? This chapter outlines the research design by discussing the qualitative research approach taken, its alignment to the study, the background of the participants, the procedures of data collection, the presentation of the findings, and the criteria applied to maintain quality control of the research.

Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research inherently considers the context and meaning-making of participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Given that the purpose of this research study was to conduct an in-depth exploration of a group of participants in a specific context, qualitative research lends itself well. Of the variety of qualitative approaches such as case studies, phenomenology, and narrative design, an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) study met the needs of this study. This section deconstructs the meaning of IPA, discusses the key scholars that developed the methodology, and the scholarly debate of this young method.

Theoretical Underpinnings of IPA

IPA consists of three major underpinnings that derive their roots from philosophical movements (Smith, 2004b). First, the interpretative prong deals with the hermeneutics, suggesting
that ontologically and epistemologically, being, and knowledge are not mutually exclusive from interpretation; meaning, the individual’s interpretation of the phenomena plays a significant role. Furthermore, this methodology considers the importance of both the researcher and the participant. The researcher’s role is to document the participant’s personal reflection of an experience either through unstructured or semi-structured interviewing. The analysis of the data takes this a step further by willingly accepting and recognizing the human experience of the researcher, as the researcher must interpret the experience-making of the participant; also known as a double hermeneutic (Smith, 2004b).

Second, IPA examines a phenomenon or an experience in and of itself. In its original form, phenomenology consists of “bracketing” the assumptions or the preconceived knowledge and experience of the researcher by stripping them away from the essence of the participant’s experiences (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2012; Smith, 2007). In its fundamental form, the core of the phenomenon can then be examined and most likely, its results generalized to the human experience. To suspend and put in abeyance the researchers’ perspective without completely removing it (Larkin, Eatough, & Osborn, 2011) requires researchers to first focus on, examine, and clearly define their positionality. This consists of making reductions of their positionality, allowing the researchers to transcend them and get to the essence of the phenomenon being studied (Smith et al., 2012). This philosophical approach suggests that knowledge of the world is inseparable from the experience of a person. However, even though IPA roots itself in phenomenology, it moves beyond the practice of bracketing and believes the perspective of the researcher is of value and must be considered as part of the interpretation of the sense-making experience of the participants.

The third foundation of IPA is the focus on the particular, also known as idiography. According to Smith et al. (2012), it signifies the importance given to each participant’s individual experience. Contrasted to quantitative methodologies in which inferential statistics requires a certain
number of participants to suggest probable correlations or interpretations of data, idiographical methodologies take great care to uncover the details of an individual case (Larkin et al., 2011). Smith (2007) suggests that focus on the particular is pertinent in two ways because the individual is unique and has something special to share while, at the same time, individuals are part of a larger whole; this element fits well with the perspective of phenomenologists.

**Key Scholars of IPA**

IPA is a relatively young, fast growing methodology. Smith (1996) is considered the founder of IPA (McCoy, 2017; Smith, 2004b) as he suggested applying hermeneutics with phenomenology and to specific, individualized cases. He also helped drive the methodology in the health sciences. Smith (1996) published a seminal article that introduced this new approach to qualitative research and built its case by positioning it within the extant literature. He contrasts it to Discourse Analysis (DA), which suggests that one should analyze discourse within the context it is spoken and not interpret it further than the linguistic features and meanings behind those features; to not go beyond the text analysis to underlying beliefs because people react in the moment (Smith, 1996). He clearly states the aim of IPA, which is to understand the participants' view of the world and recognize that the researcher cannot be separated from this interpretation; this is also considered an important acknowledgement for the field of psychology (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006). Smith (1996) further makes the argument that this approach encourages a conversation with quantitative researchers as much as qualitative ones since some areas, such as health psychology, previously employed mainly quantitative approaches. Moreover, many studies in this area tended to be pathological rather than normal experience (Smith, 1999). Most of the studies to follow his seminal work were in health psychology since the researchers were Smith’s (2004b) doctoral students (e.g. Flowers, Smith, Sheeran, & Beail, 1997; Osborn & Smith, 1998a).
Using the example of medical issues and the patients’ perception of these issues, Smith (1996) argued that a gap exists between the two and IPA can help to make sense of the gap by applying the interpretation component of IPA idiographically. By nature, IPA is the polar opposite of nomothetic research because the studies stay true to the individual cases of the participants (Smith, 1999). There are several studies that give examples of this. In a study about chronic, benign lower back pain, Osborn and Smith (1998) demonstrated the usefulness of the IPA methodology in gaining an understanding about patients’ perspective of dealing with chronic pain. One of their conclusions was the importance attributed to studying “how the body and physical states are conceptualized and given meaning by the patient” (p. 79). People handle disease differently, not just physically, but cognitively, their ability and manner of dealing with it, which is why IPA advocates for hermeneutics and idiography. In a study of HIV positive African Americans living in the UK, Flowers et al. (2006) learned that participants were living with other urgent concerns, not necessarily just their HIV diagnosis. In a study of pregnant women, Smith (1999) moved the typical quantitative analysis in psychological research to focusing on the individual’s experience of transitioning to motherhood in a “normal” sense; thereby, putting further into practice the IPA approach.

As this methodology has grown, other studies in the field of health sciences have increasingly focused on persistent health issues such as the transmission of HIV among gay men who engaged in unprotected sex. Quantitative studies failed to capture the perception of gay men who engaged in this practice, so Flowers et al. (1997) applied IPA to a study of a small sampling of gay men to gain a better understanding of this issue. Their conclusions were that men made these choices to engage in unprotected sex because they viewed it as an expression of love and a milestone in their relationship even though it was risky. These findings can arguably help future designs of education programs to target these beliefs and help raise awareness of risk-taking behaviors more than previously conducted quantitative analysis. These results move beyond the generalizations made from quantitative
analysis to allow for useful interpretation (Smith, 2004b). Reid, et al. (2005) reviewed 65 IPA papers written between 1996-2004 and stated a rise in studies applying IPA. Although many studies began in the field of health psychology, there is a continued and projected growth into other disciplines (Reid, et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2012).

Scholarly Debate

IPA continues to evolve as a methodology and grows in recognition as researchers share their studies and reflections on its use. The approach in and of itself stems from a scholarly decision to borrow elements from traditions such as hermeneutics, phenomenology, cognitive psychology, and methods of conducting qualitative research.

Hermeneutics and phenomenology. Much of the debate in IPA deals with its breaking away from the origins of the specific parts of IPA; for example, the hermeneutic component of IPA, which is the researcher interpreting the participant’s interpretation of a phenomenon. Smith (2007) compares whereas a typical researcher applying hermeneutics to an historical document would attempt to understand the meaning suggested behind the writing of the text, the present-day human science investigator is also trying to make sense of an experience of a participant via the medium of an interview that is transcribed and analyzed. He further argues that when interpreting a case of a chronic health issue (e.g. Osborn & Smith, 1998), there is a gap between what the person is experiencing and the expression of that experience. Smith agrees with Schleiermacher’s (1998) concept of getting to know the writer as well as the text (as cited in Smith, 2007) because you cannot separate the participant from the experience. He views the hermeneutic component of IPA as one that resonates well with his style of investigation because it is dynamic, thereby giving life to the process of qualitative analysis (Smith, 2007).

Smith and Osborn (1998) revolutionized the approach to research regarding chronic pain as, prior to his work, most studies were quantitative in nature. His unification of phenomenology with
hermeneutics paved the way for the participants to share and attempt to make sense of their experiences mostly through interviews. Epistemologically, following the constructivist paradigm that there is a subjective component to reality (Merriam, 1991) and accepting the researcher as a sense-making being, Smith (1999) embraces the role of the researcher as interpreter of the participant’s experience-making process as he suggests the researcher does not come as a blank slate.

Larkin, Watts, and Clifton (2006) remind us that what matters regarding phenomenology is “…being prepared to do the most sensitive and responsive job we can, given our inherent epistemological and methodological limitations” (p. 108). However, the research must remain true to the participant’s experiences by checking the details, identifying themes, creatively interpreting those themes into super-ordinate themes, and moving back to the details of the participant’s experience to not lose sight of it. Smith (2007) suggests that although the theory of hermeneutics can help shed light on the interpretation of experience, it does not solve everything. There is still much mystery around this phenomenon of interpretation and just as hermeneutics has lent a helping hand in making sense of human sciences, so too can there be the reverse, research in the human sciences, making better sense of interpretation (Smith, 2007).

**IPA and cognition.** IPA is rooted in cognitive psychology, but also differs from it as “…IPA and mainstream psychology converge in being interested in examining how people think about what is happening to them but diverge in deciding how this thinking can best be studied” (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 54). IPA prefers in-depth qualitative methods, compared to the quantitative and experimental research conducted in mainstream psychology (Smith, 2004b). The fact that IPA incorporates cognition into its approach of analyzing participants experience-making is of concern for Willig (2001) because some definitions of phenomenology consider pre-cognitive knowledge (as cited in Brocki & Wearden, 2006). However, according to Flowers et al. (1997), one
of the fundamental beliefs underlying IPA is that “it is grounded within a ‘realist’ ontology (i.e. a belief in the chain of connection between account, cognition and behavior)…” (p. 75).

Being a young methodology and one built on the flexibility of the researchers’ ability to apply their interpretation during the analysis, Brocki and Wearden (2006) expressed a concern for the lack of information about the interview schedule provided in their review of over 30 articles. They suggested this to be important to allow the reader to fully understand the connection between the semi-structured interview questions and the themes that emerged during the analysis process. Reid, Flowers, and Larkin (2005) recommended that a researcher’s interpretation can be drawn from a variety of theoretical experiences but must be based primarily in the experience of the participant; however, the absence of interview schedules does not allow for the reader to view the results with greater transparency (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Nonetheless, Brocki and Wearden (2006) concluded that this might also be the result of limited space in a journal publication. They further recommended that it would be beneficial for IPA researchers to provide their reflections on the interpretative aspect of their studies.

**Lack of rigor.** Larkin, Watts, and Clifton (2006) responded to criticism in the field of IPA not being a rigorous enough methodology. They contended that it is an approach to research that is difficult to do well, which suggests it might not be the best choice for novice researchers. However, if applied well, it shows promise of contributing much to the field. They also advised that it might be beneficial to view IPA as a stance toward research analysis, more than as a method (Larkin et al., 2006). Finally, if one were to abandon the subject/object distinction, as IPA attempts to consider the two, then qualitative research should not be viewed as subjective (Larkin et al., 2006).

**Focus groups.** Given the idiographic component of IPA, interviewing outside of the traditional one-to-one setting had been limited and questioned for its ability to remain true to the individual’s experience. However, Palmer, Larkin, de Visser, and Fadden (2010) asserted the
possibility and effectiveness of interviewing with focus groups as it is an attractive proposition to collect a larger sample of data via interviews. In their study using focus groups, they determined that some experiences emerged through the interaction in a group session versus individually, suggesting the added value of using focus groups as a means of data collection in IPA.

**IPA and embodied, active, situated cognition.** Larkin et al. (2011) termed the growing movement of embodiment, active, or situated cognition as EASC, which refers to the acknowledgement of cognition, body, and context all being interconnected. Given that cognition is not isolated to something taking place independently in the mind, but interacting with various elements in a particular context, Larkin et al. (2011) advocated for the use of IPA as a means to study the development of EASC. They suggested it is a methodology that incorporates situation and the individual interpretation and use the example of studies by Osborn and Smith (1998) to demonstrate its feasibility.

**IPA and longitudinal studies.** As the use of IPA grows in the field of qualitative researchers, its reach moves beyond temporal research to longitudinal studies. McCoy (2017) suggested that IPA appears to be a good match for longitudinal research since these studies are looking to analyze participant perspective over time, suggesting an iterative approach to data collection and interpretation. Although young and presently somewhat limited, IPA studies are growing with great significance.

**IPA’s Alignment to EI and Effective Teaching**

Emotions are an integral part of the human experience. Teaching takes place within a specific situation set in a particular culture. Some people erroneously dichotomize emotions from cognition when in fact there is research that suggests emotions are culturally learned responses (Ratner, 2000). Establishing the connection that emotions have with cognition suggests that the phenomenon of emotional experiences can be ascertained through a qualitative interpretative study.
It is about getting to the perception or the cognitive level of what the participant experiences and this can be accomplished through a dialectic approach to research (Smith, 1996). Considering this research project sought to learn about administrators’ perspective on the role EI plays in the classroom with their teachers at a school, an IPA study lended itself well because it incorporated the specific, cultural context and the interpretation of meaning-making.

Participants

The participants for this study were seven school administrators who worked at private, bilingual schools located in three different cities in Honduras: Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, and La Ceiba. There were six superintendents/heads of school and one high school assistant principal. On average, the school populations were about 1,000 or fewer students grades 1-12 (one school was grades 1-11), so the superintendents of these schools had more of a hands-on role compared to a large U.S. school district where superintendents tend to work in central offices away from the daily work of a school. Four of the participants were female and three were male, their ages ranged from 30-60, four were Honduran, and three were North American. Most of the administrators were bilingual, but the interviews were conducted completely in English. If a participant code-switched to Spanish, then this was considered in the analysis only if there was relevancy. Since it is challenging to hire certified bilingual teachers in Honduras, this selection of participants intentionally targeted administrators who worked at some of the schools that belonged to the Association of Bilingual Schools of Honduras, which made this a purposive sample, commonly used in IPA studies (Smith & Osborn, 2007). These schools were also accredited with a U.S. accrediting body, which suggested they were following recognized academic standards. Furthermore, the researcher had a working professional relationship with these administrators, which made this a convenience sample, given that some rapport was already established between the researcher and participants. Since IPA is a methodology that requires depth over breadth, it is recommended that sample sizes are small and
relatively homogenous in nature (Smith et al., 2012). The data collected from these participants was in the form of one, individual semi-structured interview.

**Procedures**

**Data Collection Methods**

There are a myriad of ways to collect data to be analyzed when conducting an IPA study. Participants are typically selected through convenience samples and chosen homogeneously since the quantity should remain small and the purpose of the research is not necessarily to generalize results, but rather to shed light on specific experiences (Smith, 1999). Given the nature of the IPA methodology, which is to study a phenomenon as experienced by an individual or a small group of individuals, the interview is a common tool for collecting data. Interviews can either be unstructured or semi-structured, the latter of the two the most recommended for novice researchers (Smith et al., 2012) and perhaps the most exemplary one for IPA (Smith, 2004). Therefore, the first data collection source for this study was one, 60-minute, semi-structured interview per participant and was structured in the following way (see appendix A for an example of the structured interview questions). First, an email was sent to the eight participants individually to invite them to participate in the study (see appendix B for a copy of the email). Attached to the email was a copy of the consent form (see appendix C for a copy of the consent form). Next, participants were asked to respond to the email within a week expressing their interest in participation. If they expressed interest in participating, they were contacted within 24 hours to set up a phone conversation to review the consent form and discuss questions or concerns and to set up the interview date, time, and location. Of the eight participants, one did not respond to any contact made, so the study was reduced to seven participants. Three of the interviews took place at the participants’ school, one at a coffee shop, and the other three online via Skype video chat. Given that IPA is an iterative process, there is no one way to conduct the interview, the questions avoided technical language, were neutral
as to not lead the participant, and were open-ended to give room to the participant to share their experiences freely (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Furthermore, the questions were structured using a funneled technique of starting with general and working toward specific questions (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Considering that sometimes it was in the moment of the experience that one’s previous conceptions or fore-understandings collided with new views of the subject matter and this could shift the direction of the interview, replacing the researcher’s previous conception with a new one (Smith, 2007), the value of keeping an open mind as a researcher, was applied.

The second data collection source was related to teacher supervision and was optional. Only one participant provided a blank template used for teacher observation. Other participants agreed to email sample observation forms but did not follow through. Usually administrators write up some type of narrative as part of a formal observation or an end-of-the-year summative evaluation for teachers. This typically includes appraisals and concerns about the teacher’s performance throughout the year and usually is based on informal and formal observations as well as other potential criteria (e.g. teacher reflections, professional development growth, etc.). This type of data could have been used to apply the IPA standard of thematic analysis similar to what Smith (1999) did with diaries of future mothers by analyzing the words chosen and descriptions of the teachers via their evaluations. However, given the lack of responses from the participants, as this was an optional requirement, this second data collection method was removed from the study.

Data Analysis

IPA analysis methods applied are flexible with no one right way of analyzing the data (Palmer et al., 2010), but methodological in the sense that there are certain steps that should be followed, but in an iterative way. The data collection and analysis consisted of several steps. First, the researcher conducted and recorded the interviews using a small audio recorder. Second, the researcher sent the recordings to Rev Corporation for transcription. Third, the transcriptions were
imported into the NVivo 12 software program for analysis. Fourth, the transcript was read through initially to type first comments that came to mind (Smith & Osborn, 2007) while listening to the recordings; any errors made by the transcription service were corrected. Next, the researcher engaged in another reading but this time jotting down thematic terms or concepts that connected the specific to the essential interpretations for each participant. This stage was conducted for each participant to stay true to the individual’s interpretation of experience. Once new themes emerged in subsequent participants’ analysis, the researcher went back to the other participants’ transcripts to determine if the new themes fit. Following Smith and Osborn’s (2007) recommendation, this stage sought to strike a balance between finding theoretical connections within and across cases, but still grounded in the idiography of the actual interview. Finally, this process was completed thoroughly for each individual participant and re-read and analyzed across all participants as the themes began to emerge. This cyclical process is viewed as the hermeneutic circle wherein the researcher is trying to make sense of a phenomenon in a specific situation, but needs to move from the part to the whole and then back to the part again (Smith, 2007).

Once the researcher developed the themes, they were listed in NVivo 12 and reviewed to look for potential patterns (Smith & Osborn, 2007). These patterns were related to clusters of themes with commonalities and were checked against accuracy with the original text (Smith et al., 2012; Smith & Osborn, 2007). These themes, typically super-ordinate themes, were determined and as newer ones emerged, following with the iterative practice, the researcher dug back into the other transcripts to review data with the new super-ordinate theme (Smith & Osborn, 2007). This process was a check to ensure that the idiographic element of IPA was not lost in the application of individual experiences toward the holistic interpretation. There was a constant balance between obvious emerging themes and the researcher digging deeper, thinking more creatively, and building other interpretations (Reid, et al., 2005). There was significant movement from part to whole and back to part again as the
researcher shifted the subordinate themes around to find the clearest way to interpret the data. Finally, the researcher sought the opinions of people as to their interpretation of the super-ordinate and subordinate themes without revealing the confidentiality of the participants by asking them how certain concepts were interrelated such as building connections and relationships. This helped find validity in the organization of the emergent themes.

**Presentation of Findings**

Since the process of IPA involves reading, re-reading, analyzing, re-analyzing, it is important that the researcher makes the process and results obtained from the process clear to the reader (Smith et al., 2012). According to Smith and Osborn (2007), there are two approaches to presenting the findings in an IPA study. One approach consists of presenting the themes derived from the study in the results section and then connecting the findings to previous literature in the discussion section. A second approach is a merge between the results and discussion section in which the findings are presented and connected to the previous literature seamlessly.

This study consisted of a separate results section organized by super-ordinate themes and sub-themes and expressing examples section by section. Following the recommendation of Smith et al. (2012) there were adequate quotations from the text added to clearly illustrate the theme and allow the reader to make the connection between the super-ordinate theme and examples as well as careful attention paid to balancing between the participants’ experience (phenomenology) and the researchers’ analysis (interpretation). In order to work toward a high level of transparency between the participants’ experience and the researcher’s applied interpretation, a table of themes was developed to use as a cross-reference among participants, as suggested by Smith et al. (2012) (see appendix D).

The discussion section positions the findings within the context of previous literature, but it is important to note that Smith et al. (2012) suggested that qualitative writing allows for the
introduction of new literature into the discussion section even if not previously considered. Since the purpose of this Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study was to better understand how school administrators interpreted effective teaching based on their experiences supervising teachers through the lens of emotional intelligence, it was important to enter the interviews with an open mind and to listen carefully to what the data was saying and try to interpret their experience. Since this did occur, it was necessary to dig back into the literature to determine where and how these interpreted results fit into the extant literature, including theoretical concepts.

Criteria for Quality Qualitative Research

Ethical Considerations

Studies involving human participants require careful consideration to protect the integrity of the individuals. Therefore, this study followed the Northeastern University Internal Review Board (IRB) approval process, which required the completion of an application that detailed the research project to try and anticipate any ethical dilemmas. This process included reflecting on the various stages of research such as prior to conducting the study, collecting the data, and reporting the data (Creswell, 2013).

Credibility

Research is a scholarly endeavor that requires high standards to ensure results are valid and reliable. The use of a theoretical framework, which is the backbone of the research project and the careful construction of a literature review grounded in primarily peer-reviewed research, helps to maintain a rigorous standard (Ravitch & Riggan, 2011). Also, using research-based practices, including analytic memoing (to maintain a transparent and reflective research process) and qualitative coding (Saldana, 2016) help to verify the veracity of the results as these processes assist the researcher in reflecting upon potential bias and validation of the emergence of themes.
Transferability

IPA studies are intentionally homogenous, purposive, and not necessarily generalizable, due to their small sample sizes (Smith et al., 2012). The goal of this research project was to gain a more in depth understanding of bilingual school administrator perspectives on EI and effective teaching within the specific context of Honduras. The study’s results may suggest future studies but with other populations and perhaps be expanded to a quantitative study that attempts to hone in on specific themes that emerged from the data.

Internal Audit

Recognizing the importance of maintaining rigor and transparency in the research process, data recordings from the interviews were archived and stored in a safe space and research memos were written throughout the process to provide rationale and reasoning behind the analysis and interpretation of results.

Self-reflexivity and Transparency

The purpose of this Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study was to better understand how school administrators interpreted effective teaching based on their experiences supervising teachers through the lens of emotional intelligence (EI). The interest I developed in this topic dates back to college where I majored in psychology at Northeastern University and originally minored in elementary and special education. I developed a genuine passion for observing and analyzing human behavior. I did not enter this research project tabula rasa, but rather acknowledged that I arrived with my own history, perspectives, and biases, which needed to be articulated (Briscoe, 2005). As a scholar-practitioner, I needed to be aware that I am privileged based on the qualities with which I was born (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). This awareness, coupled with considering personal convictions, environment and people in their context, is a necessary consideration in one’s thinking (Bailey & Gautam, 2015). Franklin (2014) used the metaphor of a backpack to suggest that
a researcher needs to carefully “unpack” one’s biases and positions to acknowledge how they can impact one’s thinking. Therefore, I engaged in deep self-reflection to recognize where my experiences and perspectives might influence my work.

**Ethnocentrism.** Having been born and raised in the United States until my thirtieth year (I moved here to be with my wife who is Honduran-American and to work at a bilingual school), I recognized that I interpreted my experiences in Honduras through a North American cultural lens. This ethnocentric behavior, which left unnoticed, can be detrimental to one’s work (Fetterman, 1998), was a result of being raised in a developed, leading nation that has taught me, via media, books, school, and other mediums, that North Americans are the center of the world and have the moral obligation to meddle in other nation’s affairs. I had to be cautious that I entered this study with an open-mind to listen to the experiences of the participants without imposing my beliefs. This was why I found it important to interview some participants who were North American and others who were Honduran to grant me a more balanced view of EI and effective teaching.

**Researcher role.** This study was conducted in bilingual schools in Honduras, which were similar to my job setting at the time. These schools belonged to the Association of Bilingual Schools in Honduras (ABSH) where I served as the treasurer of the association. Therefore, I needed to be aware that people might have responded to me differently because they viewed me both as an employee of another school and as a person in a position of delegated power. Since the ABSH conducts school visits every five years, supervisors might have been inhibited to share information with me about making judgments about the qualifications of their teachers, which could have been the case of one participant. In this circumstance, I was considered an outsider when collecting the data, which might have had an effect on the results I obtained (Briscoe, 2005).

I had to be cautious about not leading the interviewee to answer according to my beliefs, so the research questions I asked needed to be open-ended and carefully crafted. To avoid these
potential conflicts of interest, I drafted a clear and comprehensive explanation of the purpose of the study and assured the participants of confidentiality and the fact that their schools would not be named in the write up, nor would I ask them to give me names of their teachers.

As much as researchers attempt to design research projects that are valid and reliable, there always will be confounding variables in educational research. One of these variables is the researcher. The scholar-practitioner needs to recognize that when conducting observations and interpretations of data, one’s experiences, race, or cultural lens, for example, contain one’s personal agenda (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). I agree with Banks (2007) who said that the concept of objectivity is redefined by researchers clearly recognizing their subjective values when conducting research. Providing transparency when conducting research and publishing a research report enables readers to gain the perspective and intentions of researchers. Therefore, readers can read and try to understand the findings in a more critically informed way, as the study of hermeneutics reminds us of the value of knowledge being shared through writing (Gallagher, 1992).

**Limitations**

This study had its limitations, many of which were inherent in the methodology and theoretical framework. First, this study intended to interpret the experiences of seven participants, which was an intentionally small sample, therefore, one must exercise caution in generalizing the results. This intentionality is characteristic of the idiographic aspect of IPA. Second, this study employed EI as a theoretical framework. There are several scholars who interpret different definitions of EI (Bar-On, 2006; Goleman, 1998; Mayer & Salovey, 1997) and there is acknowledgement that this construct might be a subset of a general intelligence rather than a broad intelligence (Mayer et al., 2016); future research might include the redefining of EI and consequently, this might bear different meaning on the results of this study. Also, the study took place in the specific context of bilingual schools in Honduras, which was an extremely narrow
population. Linguistically, the sample was purposively selected to conduct the study in English. Given the dominant language of Honduras is Spanish, this study lacked in breadth and diversity. Future studies might include conducting interviews in Spanish and at public institutions as well. There are numerous variables that contribute to student success and a narrow population such as the private sector might have confounding variables as to what contributes to students’ success, such as educated parents, more resources, etc. With these limitations in mind, the next chapter discusses the results obtained from this IPA study.
Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

The purpose of this Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study was to better understand how school administrators interpreted effective teaching based on their experiences supervising teachers through the lens of emotional intelligence (EI). The researcher conducted interviews of seven school administrators, one of the participants was a high school assistant principal and the other six were superintendents. Each administrator participated in a single interview that lasted between 54 to 105 minutes, with the average interview being 81 minutes. Four of the interviews took place in person at the office of the school administrator, one at a coffee shop, and three were conducted via Skype video chat because these participants lived outside of the city. The original plan was to interview participants up to two times but the interview protocols seamlessly merged into one long interview. The researcher had a prior professional working relationship with all of the administrators through the Association of Bilingual Schools of Honduras, which brought a pre-established rapport and level of trust for the candidates to share responses and authentic perspectives.

The participants shared experiences of how they conducted the hiring process in order for the researcher to learn about what qualities and competencies they considered in prospective teachers. Participants gave concrete examples of successful and unsuccessful hires, and what they believed to make an effective teacher from their perspective of teacher supervision. The researcher analyzed this data through the lens of EI. Most of the conversations involved reflecting on, describing, and interpreting experiences of working with effective teachers, but one of the final interview questions asked participants to consider if their interpretation of what made effective teachers might be influenced by EI. This overall analysis led to three superordinate themes: Soft Skills of Teaching, Relationships in Teaching, and Emotions of Teaching. Although all participants shared experiences that aligned with the superordinate themes, they did not necessarily all touch upon the specific
subordinate themes; this permitted the researcher to stay true to the idiographic nature of the methodology, as different participants had varying choices of words or expressions that aligned with the superordinate themes. Throughout the analysis, there were connections made to the theoretical framework as the researcher interpreted their descriptions of effective teachers. It was worth noting that one of the participants, Pete, holds a doctorate in education and he conducted a quantitative analysis of teacher EI and student achievement. Although he was well-versed in the theoretical framework of this study, the researcher did not notice that his interview affected the results any differently than the other participants.

Table 2

*Super-ordinate Themes and Sub-themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soft skills of teaching</th>
<th>Relationships in teaching</th>
<th>Emotions in teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Building connections</td>
<td>Emotional labor of teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Caring about students</td>
<td>EI as part of effective teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-motivated</td>
<td>Managing difficult</td>
<td>People skills as EI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Soft Skills of Teaching**

The *Soft Skills of Teaching* refers to specific qualities that participants collectively interpreted as important to effective teachers. Jose pinpointed personality as being perhaps the most important aspect that he looked for in teachers because he believed the success of effective teachers to be a product of their personality; so important, in fact that his school previously had administered a personality assessment before hiring teachers but stopped because it was too expensive for the
school. The school has reignited conversations about adding this component again to their hiring process. To quantify this belief of the importance of personality, he shared, “I tell them 70%...and I just make that number up. Seventy percent of teaching is personality. That would be the biggest consideration for me.” These qualities, labeled as subordinate themes, suggest that effective teachers are Flexible, Positive, Self-Motivated, Creative, and Collaborative.

Flexible

All of the participants expressed the fact that effective teaching required someone who was flexible. The participants’ choice of words varied from “open-minded” to “coachable” or contrasted this description to someone who was not rigid. In several references to this subtheme, Alicia commented, “…teachers who are rigid and teachers who are not willing to find that gray area where we can meet are not successful.” She connected this trait to the fact that the student population was a privileged one and the parent and student expectations required teachers who “…have to be flexible” and “willing to experiment, [try] new things.” Todd also mentioned context as being important and reflected on international teachers’ ability to adapt to teaching in the cultural context of Honduras. They look for teachers who “…can go with the flow, they’re a little more flexible.” He seemed to have luck hiring teachers who have had some sort of camp counseling experience and he attributed these skills as appropriate to living and working in a developing country that required someone to be adaptable to situations such as the power going out. Both Todd and Jose used the expression “…my way or the highway”, which the researcher interpreted as referring to rigid people. Todd asked the rhetorical question of “How do you work with that?” meaning someone who was unwilling to budge in their thinking, attitude or way of doing things. Kate interpreted this fact of a person having initiative, being flexible and willing to try new teaching techniques as a person who is “coachable”, and Todd referred to this type of person as “trainable.” Kate referenced the success of the same hire that struggled at first, but was willing to learn in the end, and therefore, became a successful teacher.
From administrators’ perspective, the researcher interpreted effective teachers to be people who were willing to listen, learn, and try to change to help students learn.

Positive

Given the nature of the teaching profession being people-oriented, the majority of the participants interpreted effective teachers as positive people. Being able to use emotions to facilitate thought is one of the branches of EI and positive emotions can facilitate learning. When reflecting on an experience of having supervised or worked with an effective teacher, Kate immediately drifted back to the days of her student teaching and shared what made her cooperating teacher so effective and admirable. Among a myriad of qualities, she highlighted, “…she was always looking for the positive, and always reinforcing the positive in students” and she elaborated with an anecdote:

Communication with parents was as good as it could be for that context. I mean, parents didn't want to be super involved in that context. But constantly sending home the positive notes. The kid may have thrown a chair across the room that day, but guess what? He got his pencil out the first time she asked during math class for the first time all year. So we're going to send home a note letting the parent know that that pencil came out when it was supposed to, even though he hit a classmate with a chair that day.

Kate interpreted this type of positive behavior as effective because she motivated students. Maria described the challenge of hiring teachers internationally and the importance of making sure they had the right fit within the school community and the Honduran context. Within this explanation, she shared her experience from an unsuccessful hire. The teacher she described could not adapt to Honduras culture and within a short time, decided to head back to the U.S. She contrasted this unfortunate experience and complemented it with a new one:

We substituted her with another teacher, and it's amazing. I mean, right now, she's just done wonders. She's doing essentially the same thing. The same position, the same house [referring
to the housing provided to international teachers by the school as part of their work contract],
the same what, but her personality is completely different.

When asked to interpret her experience by explaining further what she meant by personality, to
elaborate on the specific qualities of that person, she explained, “Yes, I’m thinking it’s somebody
that’s…positive.” She also referred to someone negative as “la manzana podrida”, or a rotten apple
in English, suggesting that they would contaminate the environment. Similarly, although without as
much detail, Jose listed “positive” as one of the personal qualities that he looks for when hiring
teachers.

As he did throughout the conversation, Todd used metaphors to illustrate his ideas and in this
case of personality, he shared the antithesis of positive people when he described negative teachers,
“You want to, when you’re hiring, make sure that you weed out any of the cancerous people.
Negative Nellies, the Johnny Rainclouds…I mean, pretty much…no.” His comparison of negative
people to cancer demonstrates the dangerous effect that negative people can have on an environment,
meaning that their negative energy can multiply and spread quickly to others. His description
followed his explanation of how they did not want people who were “high maintenance” or needy,
which lead to a common theme expressed by others; they interpreted their experience of effective
teachers as people who were self-motivated.

Self-motivated

When describing effective teachers, administrators referred to them as having some sort of
drive or initiative as individuals. In her description of the fact that teachers needed to have a variety
of qualities, Alicia referenced age as irrelevant to a teacher’s success because she interpreted
effective teaching as something more, “We had a teacher who was in her 60’s and she had the energy
of a 20-year old. And then we have teachers who are young who are dragging their feet. So, I think
it’s more an inner-motivation. Inner-thing.” Her switch from past to present tense and from singular
to plural, suggested that in her experience, it was uncommon to find people so motivated and who had the collection of qualities that made them successful. She also mentioned, “…those characteristics are very hard to list and to identify in an interview when you are interviewing somebody to hire” suggesting just how challenging it could be to find the right person. Her comments validated the approach taken by Jose’s school of previously using personality assessments as part of the hiring process. Hiring for bilingual schools in Honduras can be a challenge because it is difficult to find teachers who have the appropriate credentials and are native English speakers, since these bilingual schools teach at least 70% of their content in English.

Maria shared the “…new type of profile that we’re looking for…We would like to see teachers that are self-instructed, that they continuously look for their own growth.” She referred to the fact that she organizes the school’s collective professional development plan but preferred teachers who showed initiative and requested to learn more by attending a webinar or purchasing a book of their choice. Todd shared they want people with initiative as he explained, “It’s the teacher that’s going to go above and beyond. That goes to that initiative.” However, in his first address of initiative, he spoke significantly about the importance of self-confidence. The researcher interpreted this as a connection between someone who is self-confident is probably willing to take a leading role in some way on the job. Without elaborating further, Jose mentioned that they look for someone who is “proactive” and in the same sentence went on to describe someone who is creative, the next subtheme for this super-ordinate theme of Soft Skills of Teaching.

Creative

Teaching requires an educator to attend to the needs of an often-diverse classroom of learners. Alicia worked at a small, international school, one that specialized in personalized education, which might explain why she referenced her student population as “privileged”. She shared, “When you work in a school like ours…you have to be creative.” She went on to say, “I
think there’s always a way to get to those kids and find a different alternative way to get them.”

Considering the small class size in her school, it seemed as though to personalize education and for a group of students that are from families of ambassadors and other high-profile parents, a teacher must teach “outside of the box”. Maria also referenced two effective teachers as having developed creative projects for students, “…she’s always doing these amazing projects with the students, this creativity.” The other teacher she described as someone who often had stayed late working at school developing “creative projects for his students.” This connection of creativity was made to an effective teacher’s persona as she stated, “So it goes with that kind of a personality, I’ll have to say.”

The researcher interpreted Maria’s responses as suggestive of a special profile an effective teacher needed to have and these were humanistic qualities.

According to Jose, effective teachers must be “creative and have an imagination” and described that teachers at his school needed to incorporate something “artistic” in their classroom and expressed his belief in the fact, “…every teacher should focus a little bit on creativity.” Kate described one of her most effective teachers as being a “rock star” from day one and labeled her as “…innovative, super, super innovative. Like resourceful. Going to find whatever she can.” This description dovetails well with the theme of flexibility and a teacher being able to adapt or find solutions to problems, such as helping students learn a concept that has confused them. Flexibility can also be seen as a prerequisite for someone who is collaborative, the next subordinate theme.

**Collaborative**

Five out of the seven participants interpreted effective and desirable teachers as being collaborative. Stemming from a conversation about using a technology platform to build and share curriculum among teachers, Maria went on to describe the collaborative culture at her school:

Eleventh grade teacher, and the unit, and the activity. So, everything's there. It's a matter of looking for it and creating that culture. But that notion of sharing, I think it's very important.
Working as a team member, and then whenever you do that interview, you end up knowing. And even whenever they describe their case scenarios [a new requirement the school added for prospective teachers to answer during the interview process], you can tell if it's an, ‘I, I, I,’ person, ‘I do it.’ Or, ‘No, it was my friend it was my colleague,’ and ‘I learned this from somebody else,’ just giving the credit to somebody else. All that gives you hints of what kind of person you're hiring.

The explicit reference to the use of the first-person singular pronoun of “I” versus “we” or the lack of reference to a “colleague” helping, exemplified the importance she placed on analyzing not just what teachers said, but how they said it. She also expressed the value in having someone who was “able to not only be a leader, but to be a team member.” Todd lamented on how “…education, sadly, has always had the silo mentality” and stated how “…we want team players.” Using more figurative language, he described how education could be related to the European feudal system during the middle ages:

You got the noble…and then all the little fifes; you know what I mean? And you shut your door and then you talk to the noble ‘Am I doing everything, are you going to tax me?’ Or whatever. But, we don’t want that mentality. And so how do you do that best in a school, in a building, I should say that’s set up for that? I mean, it’s the old factory model.

His reflection suggested that the physical form of schools dictated the function of its people and it is like working against the inertia of former ways of teaching, which was why he emphasized that teachers need to be collaborative.

Ana also perceived collaboration as a vital piece to effective teaching, “There’s a lot of collaboration that we’re expecting from our staff, and some people are able to open up and visit classrooms, peer teaching, et cetera, which is not, not everybody can handle it.” She was suggesting that some people do not have the confidence or maturity to welcome people in their classroom for
fear of being judged. She took this collaborative piece a step further, relating it to student learning, “But, if you want kids to learn that way, you have to model that.”

At his grades one to 11 year elementary and secondary school, Jose stressed that credentials were not helpful if someone did not have certain qualities and characteristics, one of which was collaboration and he described unsuccessful teachers as lacking this quality, “They don’t collaborate with their colleagues. They don’t understand that collegial culture…” He went on to explain how teachers should relate to and learn from students, which was indicative of the teaching and learning process to be one of collective work; a symbiotic relationship. Kate also added this quality of collaboration to her list in describing her mentor teacher, but without extensive detail.

Conclusions

Collectively and individually, the participants interpreted effective teaching to be a product of the soft skills of the teacher. Although there was a longer list of adjectives to describe effective teachers with regard to their personality, participants emphasized teachers as flexible, positive, self-motivated, creative, and collaborative. Teaching is a complex profession and teachers are required to interact with parents, administrators, colleagues, and of course, students. The participants recognized that effective teachers cannot be rigid; they have to have the ability to be able to adjust, be it to the changing educational environment such as the use of new technologies, the changing family structures, or the diversity in classrooms. Successful teachers found the balance to know when to push and pull or just yield. Being around negative people is not enjoyable and participants expressed that positivity was a must for teachers. Teachers who could not handle constructive criticism and went back to the teachers’ room or classroom and brought negative energy to others was detrimental to the school’s culture. The demands of the career are high, and administrators noted the value in having someone who was self-motivated, a go-getter, people who did not need to be instructed in their every move. Finally, educators are interconnected as human beings and the
ability to work cordially and productively with one another is required for effective teaching, but to accomplish this, the role of relationships in teaching needs to be examined.

**Relationships in Teaching**

Whether participants were describing the effective, ideal teacher through their descriptions of how they worked through the hiring process or in their reflections and interpretations of what made current or former, exceptional teachers, relationships, was a common theme. When reflecting on the conversations and previous super-ordinate theme of the *Soft Skills of Teachers*, the qualities described by participants such as flexible, collaborative, and positive could be interpreted as ones that were necessary for building human relationships. Participants spoke about the importance of having successful relationships among the various constituents in a school setting such as with parents, colleagues, and most importantly, students. Pete discussed looking for relationships, starting with the interview process:

> So this relationship stuff that we look for through the interview is the same thing. Because if you can't form a relationship with us? If you can't hit that bond correctly, then we know that you're probably not going to be able to do it with the kids either. And that's crucial for us, like really. Yeah. In any school it's crucial. Your best teachers have strong bonds.

The following three subordinate themes of *Building Connections, Caring about Students*, and *Managing Difficult Relationships* are be discussed and how they relate to relationships as being the bedrock of effective teaching.

**Building Connections**

To build successful relationships, there has to be some level of human connection; the stronger the connection, the better the relationship. In reflecting on her personal experience attending a job fair that eventually enticed her to move to Honduras to take a teaching position, Kate shared how the human connection with the hiring principal was what led her to accept the job,
“Exactly, kind of just walking around and seeing the different positions schools had to offer. It was that human connection. I just had a really good connection with the principal that ended up hiring me and had a few offers on the table.” Unsurprisingly, she later shared that finding a human connection with someone was one of the requirements she considered when hiring teachers in her role of superintendent because she expressed that effective teachers can build relationships with others:

Really and truly, in hiring it goes a lot with a gut feeling and just that connection. So if I don't have a connection with that person, our students are not going to have a connection with that person, or their colleagues are not going to have a connection. So we're looking for people who are warm, who are passionate about what they're doing.

Even if someone has the teaching credential, if there is no “gut feeling” about how this person will connect with the students or the rest of the community, “not just with students, but with colleagues and with parents, and that interpersonal connection” then they are not considered for hiring. This sentiment was clear and apparent as Kate gave an anecdotal account of an unsuccessful teacher who, on paper and in practice, met the basic teaching requirements such as a teaching certification:

We had a teacher who came and instructionally in the classroom, spot on. She knew her stuff. She knew how grouping worked. She knew everything. But she never ... It was all very surface and superficial in terms of her connection. So parents didn't trust her. Kids didn't trust her to go to her. When they had problems, they wouldn't tell her. Her colleagues ... Here greeting people is very, very important. And she never said good morning, so they all saw her as cold, and kind of shut her off. Even though she's a lovely person, I mean when you really got to know her, but just that warmth wasn't there. And that interest in developing that rapport wasn't there. So again, on paper, and even in practice, I mean her lessons were ... You know, you tick all the boxes of what you want to see in a lesson, it was there. But there was
not that connection, and so her kids, even with all that in place, they didn't thrive like we had thought they would with such solid instruction.

As referenced above, the level of connection can be indicative of the quality of the relationship and Kate interpreted her experience of what made an unsuccessful teacher as someone who had “superficial” connections. This inability to connect with others was suggestive of a lack of empathy, and empathy has been one of the traits potentially connected to EI. Similarly, but within the context of describing how teachers needed to help students and be attentive to their needs and personal struggles, Alicia explained:

Having that empathy, getting to know your kids, your students at that level. That you are able to work with them and help them learn. At the end, we're gonna learn. All these kids are gonna go to college. But what is the mark that you as a teacher, what mark are you going to leave in that student's life? That personal connection, I think is very important for us.

Alicia seemed to be describing the fact that her students come from educated families and had a level of pre-academic preparedness that the role of the teacher was more than merely teaching content, but rather impacting them as human beings, suggestive of the emotional connection between teachers and students, which can be moderated by one’s level of EI.

Pete shared a personal story of how there was a student in the school and that teachers had given up on because they could not get him to work. Among his obligations as a superintendent, Pete taught an elective course and invited this student into his class and immediately noticed a change. He shared an old adage about how employees were willing to do something for their immediate boss and not necessarily for the company and this boiled down to relationships and the personal connections that an employee has with a boss, a person, versus, a company, an inanimate entity. He went on to describe the effective teacher as applying “the art of teaching” and finding a way to reach the students through relationships:
I will do this. How come? This person does this for me. And does this meaning, they intrigue me, they challenge me, they entertain me. They respect me. You can go through all that, all the verbs on that, and say that's why the student's willing to do their side of the work in order to succeed. You know, the teacher that juggles, sort of niggles is all well and good. They're very entertaining. But to the students that didn't do their side of the work, then nothing happens, and the student's only willing to do their side of the work… when they have that touch with the teacher.

These connections help a teacher build a bridge between the student and the content being taught. As Alicia nostalgically described one of the most effective teachers she had worked with, she illustrated this element, “She connected on a personal level, her lessons were real life things. She made those connections that captured the students' interest. She made amazing field trips to different things to connect to the reading that she was having with her kids.”

It became evident to the researcher that these participants were suggesting that through building links with students, teachers were able to connect the students to the content in a more meaningful way, which influenced student learning. As important as connecting with students was, Ana and Todd warned that there must be a professional line drawn between the teachers and the students where building relationships should not be mistaken as befriending a student. Ana described a story of a teacher who was unsuccessful because he was unable to draw that fine line, “And even though we’re friends on Facebook or on Instagram, or whatever, you have to draw a line.” Likewise, Todd said, “One thing I tell my teachers is ‘You are not their friends, okay? You are their teachers. You can love them, you can be all that, but you’re not their friend. A friend goes to parties. Are you going to invite them to your party? I hope not…” Therefore, connecting with students is primordial to building relationships, but relationships need to be appropriate. Jose posed it really well when he said, “…need to be…not their friend, but you need to be friendly.” To form a
deep connection with a student, opposite to the superficial one described by Kate, then effective teachers must genuinely care about their students.

Caring about Students

Like building blocks, the themes in this research build upon and connect with one another. Participants expressed the importance of effective teachers being positive and optimistic people are more prone to engage in healthy relationship building, and positive relationships involve caring. Five out of seven participants described effective teachers as those who cared truly and genuinely about their students. They cared about them as people and about their learning. In fact, five out of seven participants explicitly utilized the word, “care.” Todd referred to research about how “the most important factor in the student’s life in achievement is a caring adult” and he went on to describe a teacher, who although did not possess the educational credentials, cared about his students:

He, genuinely, was concerned about them, loved them; but not a trained teacher, but understood kids, understood how to deliver content. And likewise, we've had teachers who have all the credentials and give all the ‘Well you guys should know that, I taught it. I'm going to give you more homework. I'm going to give you more of this. You should know that.’

Okay, that's bad teaching.

His reference to understanding students can be interpreted as understanding the whole child, including the emotional levels such as how a student feels, which is indicative of EI. Although discussed in the context of personality traits, the researcher associated this discussion of caring as a part of building successful relationships and therefore, helping students learn. Maria shared:

But that, in all, I would say it's ... caring. So, one of their personality traits I would say I would have added ... they care about what they do. They care about their colleague, they care about the principal, they care about their school. They love the school and they're faithful to
it. But at the same time, they're committed to ... whether, so it's commitment, it's care, to whatever promise they have that they're responsible for the learning of their group of students. That comes along with that extra mile as well.

This caring relationship is exemplified when teachers show students an interest in them and their endeavors. Jose listed a variety of extracurricular activities offered at his school and shared how teachers, who had won a teacher of the year award that his school organized, usually had attended these special activities for students, “So kids love that their teachers have an interest in what they’re doing inside and outside the classroom. So yeah. It goes back to the interactions. How much do you care about your kids?” This sense of caring participants expressed was not null of holding their students to expectations and high standards. Kate explained that one of her most effective teachers struck this balance, “It was clear that she was very loving, very caring, very kind, but at the same time very firm in what she was…” just as her mentor teacher, “And demanding that they’re successful. Just this, you will be successful no matter what it takes. Just insuring that. But yeah, always with a caring side.” Alicia had a very similar reflection on describing an effective teacher but who had the reputation for being tough, “But at the same time she’s caring.” Relationships experience their ups and downs, but effective teachers know how to manage the difficult times, the next subordinate theme.

**Managing Difficult Relationships**

As positive as relationships might be, participants described effective teachers as people who are non-conflictive or have this ability to be able to navigate difficult situations. According to Salovey and Mayer (1997), one of the four branches of EI deals with managing emotions and considering emotions are part of a human relationship, this ability to navigate challenging circumstances is connected to EI. There seems to be people who exacerbate situations while others diffuse them. Jose recalled a recent classroom visit in which a student who struggled to socially
connect with students was having a bad day. Jose thought to himself that it was not the ideal moment to be in this classroom, as the student became upset over the fact that he did not have a pencil. What may seem trivial to the average person was a big deal for this student, but the teacher’s response was “incredible”:

He wasn’t doing anything. He was just sitting there. The teacher goes by, says, ‘What’s wrong?’ And the kid says, ‘Well, I don’t have a pencil.’ And he was kind of rude. I said, this is…Agh. Tough time to be here. The teacher didn’t say anything. She kept doing what she was doing. She went and got a pencil from her desk. And she went back, but not straight to the kid. She kept looking at the other kids’ work and just very casually, she just dropped the pencil on the kid’s desk. And problem solved.

By contrasting this example with general discussions about struggling teachers being the ones that do not handle situations in an “emotionally intelligent way,” Pete commented, “They tend to exasperate fast, because they don’t know how to respond, basically. So and so does this, well this is how I respond to that, well, that’s all well and good. But did you defuse the situation, or did you escalate the situation?”

This ability to handle a classroom full of relationships was also termed classroom management and referred to by three of the participants. When asked to interpret whether the effective teacher Alicia was describing had any sort of conflicts with relationships with students or others, she reflected and then responded:

Yeah. I don’t recall any incident with a student that I had to intervene. I also think that an effective teacher will not involve the administration into their conflict resolution. And she was able to handle that. She had excellent classroom management. And if a teacher is constantly calling you for help, then I am taking away their authority. They cannot control the
class. So that's another characteristic of an effective teacher. Somebody that's able to deal with conflicts within immediate [right away].

As a way to probe deeper to the description that Ana explained about the qualities that described an effective teacher, by asking her which qualities, if any might be stronger than others, she added, “….class management. If you can’t control your classroom, then you’re not gonna go anywhere.”

When asked to break down what makes good classroom management, she contested, “They have to, from day one, set their parameters, especially with the older kids.” These statements interconnected with the previous theme of finding a balance between connecting with students, but drawing a line, and when teachers are able to do this, they create a more respectful relationship, and can most likely manage their classroom by avoiding conflictive relationships. Pete holds similar beliefs, “He didn't have a discipline problem in his class at all. And the reason he didn't have discipline problem? Great relationships with kids…” The researcher interpreted the participants’ experience as not suggestive of relationships being void of conflicts, but that the more effective teachers had a level of EI that enabled them to better manage the emotions to avoid letting conflicts spiral out of control.

Participants interpreted effective teachers as people who were able to redirect conflicts, which involved emotional responses, to positive outcomes, and in the case of a classroom, student learning.

**Conclusions**

Teaching as a profession involves a myriad of relationships, especially at the K-12 level where working with minors requires interacting with parents or guardians as well. Effective teachers have the ability to connect with people in a meaningful way. They tend to have strong bonds, not only with their students, but they also have rapport with parents. Their genuine care for students strengthens these connections, which is necessary for building deep relationships. Effective teachers use this knowledge and connection with students to find links between the content they are teaching and the students’ lives, once again, building meaning in this whole endeavor. However, relationships
require work and as positive as an effective teacher might be, conflicts may arise, but effective teachers rise to the occasion and manage the conflicts well. But what causes conflicts? The next section discusses the role emotions play in relationships and in the classroom, supporting the role EI plays in effective teaching.

**Emotions in Teaching**

Scattered throughout the conversations with participants, they shared responses that referred to the demands of the teaching profession, which the researcher interpreted to be a description of the theme of *Emotional Labor of Teaching*. As the researcher asked direct questions about the role of EI in effective teaching, some participants found the immediate connection between effective teachers and this ability, while others seemed enlightened by the connection as they had not considered it in those exact terms but found it relevant, so there is a theme of *EI as a Part of Effective Teaching*. Finally, participants seemed to be interpreting the lay term of *People Skills as EI*, which is the final theme of this section.

**Emotional Labor of Teaching**

Teaching requires a certain level of investment to achieve success, which can be defined as impacting students’ lives in a positive manner based on some of the dialogue shared in the interviews. In reflecting on and sharing the evolution of his views on what made a teacher effective, Todd returned to his roots and shared the lessons he had learned from his parents, whom were, in his opinion, both effective educators, “They changed lives, they had EFFECT…so you want to talk about effective? That’s effective.” In this context, he was referring to the fact that his parents had impacted their students on such a personal and emotional level as he emphasized, “…but the impact…the emotional impact. Who invites a former teacher to a wedding?” He continued, “They make life-long changes, positive changes, to kids that will affect them forever, forever.” This reflection was powerful and appeared to have influenced his view of human relationships and the
belief that teachers who cared and loved their students, who had empathy for them, found ways to make a special mark on their lives.

As much as this emotional connection to students seemed to be a part of effective teaching, it does not come inexpensively. In Alicia’s opinion, “…being a teacher is hard. It’s very hard. It’s the most demanding profession, I would say. Because you have to cater to so many needs. To so many likes and dislikes and moods, and dramas…” Referring to the challenge of the profession and the high turnover statistically, Pete’s description echoed Alicia’s, “It’s really, really hard. And it’s like an emotional…There’s an emotional pull that comes with it right? Can you have that investment on that day and on a daily basis…”

The concern expressed by participants regarding the emotional aspects of the job was weighed on in the equation when administrators were hiring teachers, but hard to measure. Jose shared the considerations he makes in the hiring process and examples of questions he asks when interviewing, “Are you sure? Have you had problems with kids? Have you had problems with parents? How do you handle a kid that is having emotional issues?” He was referring to some of the previously discussed themes of looking at a prospective teacher’s personality, personal connections and relationship building, and the emotional aspect of the profession because teachers need to have a sense of how to deal with this emotional component.

In her description of an ideal teacher, Kate described the double-edged sword it can be when a person makes the type of emotional investment in the profession:

So what comes to mind, my mentor teacher, as a student teacher, was I think the most incredible teacher that’s ever been. I mean I was super blessed to have her as a guide. And she had just that whatever it takes attitude. To a fault at times too, of just pouring herself so much into it that it actually affected her. Because we were in that inner-city school, so she had a
hard time almost disconnecting from the situations that our kids dealt with. But she just
poured herself into the lives of each kid.

According to the researcher, Kate was referring to emotion when she used the expression “pouring
herself” as this metaphor was often used in the context of “pouring my heart into it.” This
commitment was positive for the students because they had a teacher who cared and made
connections, but this level of emotional investment could lead to burnout for a teacher, which
fortunately, in this case, did not seem to happen.

**EI as a Part of Effective Teaching**

Considering that participants generally expressed agreement that a teacher’s soft skills were
an important aspect of their success, building relationships with students and other constituents
involved making connections, and the fact that teaching was an emotionally-latent endeavor, the role
teacher EI played in effective teaching was discussed directly and also interpreted indirectly during
this analysis. Part of EI is about using emotions to facilitate thought. Alicia commented on the
effectiveness of a former teacher:

Because we can all read a book and teach it. But how to make that…yes, I would say that
that was her major, her strength, is how she made the kids feel. Special, she made them feel
special. She made the feel successful at different levels. So, yeah, it’s not what you know, I
think it’s how you make your students feel.

It was evident in her choice of words and brief hesitation that she was reflecting and trying to
interpret her experience of what made this teacher effective. Similarly, she reflected back to her past
as a student:

Yeah, I remember having outstanding teachers, I still remember them, I still think about the
way they taught me, what I learned with them, how they made me feel. And that was a long
time ago. Yeah, I think that is what makes the difference is how you make the kids feel at the end of the day.

In both accounts of recollection, she reiterated the verb “feel”, which was suggestive of emotions. Also, the researcher interpreted the use of the preposition of “with” in “what I learned with them” to describe the fact that learning was collaborative, was a collective act, rather than a top-down one. If not, she would have most likely said, “what I learned from them.” This description related to Kate’s belief that teaching should be student-centered, “I think that student-centered, just getting to know the kids, and getting to know their needs. I think no matter what context you’re in. To me that’s the key to success.”

Todd addressed the impact emotions have on student learning, as well when he recalled a poster he saw some years ago that expressed, “Kids aren’t going to remember what they learned in seventh grade math. They’re not going to remember the text they read, what they’re going to remember is how you made them feel.” Now this does not go without saying that teaching and learning content knowledge is unimportant. Todd was emphasizing how impacting students is reaching them on a personal, emotional level. Whether it is done on a conscious level by the teacher might be questionable, but when a teacher tries to affect students’ feelings or mood while teaching content, according to these participants, they have a stronger impact on student learning. Similarly, Pete interpreted effective teachers as those who reached students on an emotional level, “You’re the one who touched them in the heart, more than in the brain.” Todd shared another example of how emotions affected learning when he described how a student said he hated English class, but loved Todd’s class, “Mr. I hate language arts, but I love your class.” This can imply the importance of relationships and how a teacher makes the student feel about a subject. When asked to analyze and interpret her experience about the role emotions and EI plays in teacher’s success, Alicia elaborated:
Feel the energy, yes. And not everybody has it. And it is so important. The way, when you say good morning to a student, the way that student responds to you, some teachers are able to know if that student is having a good day, had a good beginning of the day or not. But you need to pay attention, you need to slow down. And learn to observe and listen, and it’s hard.

She was suggesting that an effective teacher has the ability to recognize emotions and uses that information to shape teaching to influence learning. Pete recently completed his Doctor of Education and had conducted quantitative research in the area of teacher EI for his thesis. He also expressed the importance of teachers being able to understand the emotions of others and to use that information to adjust teaching:

Sometimes it's other things, so and so is having a really bad day. Or whatever ‘blankets’, right? They just failed their calculus exam, their mother was screaming at them in the car, and now they’ve come to your class and they’re unsettled. Well, the emotionally intelligent teacher is able to recognize that and work with that... As in, give that person their space and their time to adjust, and not push them beyond what it is... Have an idea of how far they're gonna have to go with them. An unemotionally intelligent teacher says, well it's status quo it doesn't make any difference. You've got stuff to do, suck it up, let's get moving.

If a student is not in the right frame of mind to learn and the teacher does not recognize that, then a proverbial wall will be hit. Similarly, Todd highlighted that teachers need to be more analytical about their students’ emotional states to be more effective with them:

Why is his behavior poor? Could it be that he had a fight with his mom in the parking lot? Could it be that his grandfather’s in the hospital? Could it be something other than him just trying to be non-compliant and be a weenie? Let’s get to that point, not to the point…we’re not counselors, we’re not trained in that.
Todd’s reflection made the point that although a teacher might not be able to dig so deep into a student’s life because they lack some of the professional training to help a student deal with a serious issue, teachers need to be more aware of students’ emotional states and inquire, rather than assume, the student just does not want to learn.

The researcher’s interpretation of the participant’s experience suggests the emotionally intelligent and caring teacher will pay careful attention to the learning environment. Todd framed this by describing a safe emotional environment, which was conducive to student learning:

So the emotional culture…if you have a poor culture, your students aren’t going to learn. If you have a good culture? Now, again, define ‘good and bad.’ So a healthy emotional environment is one where the kids want to take risks, but they know the teacher is going to tell them when they’re wrong.

This description can be interpreted further by associating this healthy and safe environment as one where students’ emotions are considered and accounted for. Todd relived one of his teaching experiences of reading, *Of Mice and Men* with high school students and the emotional reaction they had had to the tragic ending:

Well one year, I read the last chapter…which is when George shoots Lennie. Well these are ninth graders; talk about emotion. My boys didn’t know how to handle it, so they burst out laughing. Well how…the girls are awestruck, they’re like ‘Oh my gosh’ And they’re starting to cry. But the boys, they don’t know how to deal with that, emotion, that they love Lennie.

The point the participant was trying to make, according to the researcher, was that a teacher needs to have awareness of students’ emotions and should use that information to adjust their teaching to their students’ emotions. Todd later added that the following year, he decided to assign the last few pages of the book independently at home to give students, especially the boys, a chance to digest the emotional impact of the story and cope with their feelings in a private environment where they may
be more apt to express themselves freely rather than trying to feign strength in the presence of their classmates. This was an example of a teacher assessing an emotional situation and using that information to influence his own teaching for the benefit of student learning.

Within the context of the emotional environment, other participants pinpointed how teachers managed their emotions, a component of EI. Maria gave the example of teachers who were having a bad day and transferred this emotionally negative mood onto the students. She prefaced this example with her interpretation of what EI meant to her, “It’s being able to adapt to different situations at the same time, and not allowing those emotions to come up to the surface.” She then shared how a teacher’s lack of emotional control can negatively affect students:

Yeah, they [students] sense it and they react to it. And if the student, for example, does not understand the content. And is continuously asking the teacher, and the teacher’s having a bad day, the student is the one suffering the consequence [referring to the fact that the teacher becomes easily annoyed with the student’s request to re-explain the content]. But not only he’s not going to learn, but he reacts thinking the teacher doesn’t like me.

Maria was relating a teacher’s inability to regulate emotions as interfering with student learning, “he’s not going to learn” and disrupting relationships, “the teacher doesn’t like me.” Ana also related to the fact that effective teachers need to regulate their emotions to navigate student interactions and facilitate learning:

So it has to be, something that we all have to take into account, the emotions of the kid chatting with the friend, and then the teacher wanting to teach something, and the teacher getting angry, and the kids blowing it off, all of that plays a role, so you have to learn how to manage it, again, in a way that’s productive for those kids and the rest of the kids. Similarly, Pete explained how teachers who were unable to regulate their emotions were engaging in a losing battle with their students:
We have lots of conversations with teachers that say, look you’re the adult in the room here. You can’t get to the point where they’ve engaged you in a discussion of...Where...who’s gonna be in charge. And trust me, they’ve got the upper hand. Because with their friends they’re in charge, and you’re not.

The point Pete seemed to be making was that effective teachers need to be able to have enough emotional maturity to manage their emotions and those of their students as to not escalate conflicts, which just end up being a losing battle for teachers and not conducive to student learning. He also added the role of context and in this case, Latin culture and the cultural expectations of emotions such as grieving:

Well I mean, obviously emotions have to be validated you know. You have to understand the situations that you're in. Be it cultural, or... I'm trying to think of the right word. At that moment, right? There's a... At that moment this emotion makes sense. Teachers who are, how would say... Unaware of their surroundings, be it at that time or in general, are not very successful. So an example would be... There's been a death in someone's, what you would consider to be distant family. Or by North American standards distant family. But by Latin standards, that death is very much not a distant death. It's a family death, and therefore all family deaths are mourned and celebrated. In a different way. So if you don't understand that emotion, or that cultural context of emotion that's associated with death. Or birth. Then you would not be an as effective teacher as you possibly could be. You might just gloss over it, and really for the student they really might be hurting from that. How do you repair that damage that you've done by not acknowledging the fact that it's okay for them to feel the way that they do?

Culture and context play a significant role in what emotions are acceptable, as well as when and where. Pete, originally from Canada, but had been living in Honduras for approximately 20 years,
was making sense of how he has had to adapt to Latin culture and now understands that certain emotional responses and an awareness of the context were necessary for effective teaching. Since he recruits international teachers on a yearly basis, he has seen first hand how this relevant knowledge of how to navigate the Honduran cultural beliefs about emotions was important to the success of a teacher.

**People Skills as EI**

In five out of seven interviews, the participants referred to or interpreted EI, in plain English, as people skills or common sense. This struck the researcher because those were characteristics that people usually associate with something as a given, automatic; that it was somewhat counterintuitive when someone does not react in a way that was expected. Ana, who spoke throughout the interview in a soft-spoken manner, and not only shared experiences of controlling her emotions, demonstrated this through her soothing and natural way of answering the questions. When asked about her knowledge of EI and its role in effective teaching, she responded straightforward:

But to me, it’s almost like having common sense, emotional intelligence. And I repeat this to my admin team over and over again, when we meet and we bring issues to the table so that as a team we can help each other out, and a lot of the things are just lack of common sense. They get into trouble over something that makes no sense to me, so, to me, being emotionally intelligent, without, as I told you, having a whole lot of information on it is, have common sense, and do things, as a human being, that make sense to you. Don’t just go off on a witch hunt after a kid, over something stupid. So that type of thing, that’s how I would define it, like having common sense. What makes sense to you as a person usually will work in your professional and your daily life, family, et cetera.

As mellow as her demeanor was during the interview, her choice of words, and perhaps, coupled with her over 30 years of experience in education, seemed to show a hint of frustration and
annoyance with people’s lack of being able to see, what to her, was obvious. Assuming, “what makes sense to you as a person usually will work in your professional and daily life” signals that she either inherently or probably part of experience, learned to handle difficult situations and it was now obvious to her where people get into conflicts.

Maria’s response matched Ana’s, “But I do not let my emotions come out and be too obvious about them, that part of my emotional intelligence is being with that common sense.” Both of these participants are superintendents and work at schools that have demanding parents, and they both interpreted their abilities to deal with people and how they managed to learn how to diffuse conflicts as a product of emotional regulation. It was very possible that they gained more EI skills over the years by working in such an emotionally demanding position.

Both Pete and Jose interpreted teachers’ effectiveness as a product of their EI or personality skills respectively. According to Pete, “People who have high levels of EI, typically are the people that will say, oh those people are people-people. He’s a people-person. Meaning that he does…That they do this correctly. Or they do this effortlessly, right?” Pete’s choice of the word “effortless” resonated with how Ana interpreted EI as common sense and associated common sense with something that should be automatic, natural. From the very first interview question, Luis underscored the importance of personality over anything when it came to defining effective teachers. He later connected this to EI, and anecdotally shared:

I used to tell my vice principal that. We’re pretty confident that we can teach a teacher how to teach. If you really want to learn, we’ll teach you how to lesson-plan, classroom management. We’ll spend on and invest in professional development so that you become a teacher. What we cannot teach is people skills. It’s very hard. You are who you are, and you relate to others or you can’t.
Finally, although not written directly, but can be interpreted within the general description of an unsuccessful teacher, Kate continued to discuss how surprising it was to work with a teacher that fit all the hard skills checkboxes, but lacked the “people skills” as she stated:

You know they're [the students] a few years ahead now, and we're still seeing the residual effects of the gap that they had in their learning that year. And that was when I was a principal, so I'm going in like, how else can I support this teacher? I mean instructionally we're good. And even when it came time that we decided not to renew her contract, she didn't understand why. My evaluations have all been good, but it was that interpersonal connection that just was not there, and our community needs and expects. We call ourselves the family, like we're the [school name] family. And so, you're not even saying good morning to people.

**Conclusions**

As had been established in the previous super-ordinate theme, relationships are considered an important component of effective teaching and relationships involve people and therefore, emotions are part of the equation. Participants expressed the demand of the teaching profession and their explanations resonated with the fact that teaching was emotionally laborious. Effective teachers were described as proactive and as “pouring” their heart and emotions into their work because they genuinely cared for students. Participants also interpreted teachers’ ability to manage emotions as an important skill, which related effective teaching to EI. EI is a “buzz word” that has been circulating popular literature for several decades. Within the discussion of effective teaching, some of the participants defined what EI meant to them, in simple terms and interestingly, they interpreted EI as synonymous with common sense or people skills. They described this in the context of a teacher having to be mature, manage their emotions and those of other students, and react in a way they described as something that should be obvious; an emotionally intelligent way. Ineffective teachers
were described as those who were unable to gauge the emotional climate of their classrooms and as a result, exacerbated student conflicts rather than redirect them in a positive way.

**Summary of Findings**

The research question addressed in this study was: reflecting on their experiences of supervising teachers, what role does teacher EI play in effective teaching according to school administrators? Seven school administrators, six of whom were superintendents of bilingual schools in Honduras, engaged in in-depth, semi-structured interviews to share their experience of effective teaching. On average the interviews lasted approximately an hour and twenty minutes. The interview questions ranged from exploring what administrators looked for when hiring teachers to reflecting on their work with both effective and unsuccessful teachers. To build rapport with the participants and ease them into the topic, the initial questions, although always open-ended, were process-oriented such as how they go about the hiring process and what they looked for in teachers. Later, the researcher probed these responses and requested the participants to reflect on and interpret particular experiences. Three major super-ordinate themes emerged when analyzing the data, *Soft Skills of Teaching, Relationships in Teaching, and Emotions in Teaching.*

Although labeled as soft skills, the term in and of itself was only mentioned by one participant, but the interpretation of their experience reflecting on what made their exceptional teachers effective are characteristic of personality traits and traits that relate to EI skills. Administrators recognized teachers needed to be flexible to work with people and to adapt their instruction to students. Rigid teachers leave no room for flexibility and personalized instruction, which is necessary to meet the students where they are in their learning. It could be interpreted that teachers who are inflexible are unable to recognize where they need to improve and are not coachable. Other terms arose such as showing humility, which can be indicative of understanding
that one is not omnipotent, and it is better to be open to suggestions and show a willingness to adapt. This was particularly required for international teachers that came and worked in Honduras because lack of flexibility can be equated to lack of adaptability to the cultural context, leading to lack of success on the job; referring to the connection between personal and professional life. Administrators associated effective teaching with positive people. Participants were clear about what their school culture was like and had a sense of what type of a person fits their school environment. Although the word “positivity” was not used by all of the participants, the researcher interpreted that nobody wants a teacher who is going to drain others’ energy levels or not contribute to the well being of the school community. The personality of effective teachers can be associated with people who show initiative, are self-motivated and contribute to the greater good of the school. Administrators thought that an effective teacher was creative. They viewed this person as finding ways to develop interesting and relatable projects and activities for students. The researcher interpreted this as people who were problem-solvers and therefore, could help find ways to connect with students and support their learning. Effective teachers were those who collaborated and worked well with others. This led to the important finding that connections and relationships were key to their success.

When analyzing the explanations, anecdotal experiences, and professional opinions of the administrators, the effective teacher, who assuming had the previously listed qualities, used those characteristics to build strong relationships. Teachers who were described as unsuccessful had difficulty relating to others, connecting with the community and the students or linking curriculum in a way to reach the students. Whereas, effective teachers genuinely cared about students, found teaching to be a vocation and built strong connections based on these beliefs. Without strong interpersonal connections, teachers cannot effectively help students learn. This often boils down to classroom management issues, which is the ability for the teacher to manage the classroom
environment to help maximize the use of student time for learning. An important part of this environment is the role emotions play and the ability for teachers to manage those emotions.

Teaching is an emotional practice, as indicated by several participants, stating that it was a challenging endeavor and effective teachers, who cared about their students, poured emotion into their work, including their ability to empathize with students, a trait of EI. These teachers were able to effect students not only in teaching them academic content, but they emotionally impacted students, another trait of EI, which, to some participants, was really the practice of teaching. For teachers to do this, they need to have an emotional awareness of their classroom, of their students, and of themselves. They need to consciously be considerate of why a student might be behaving a certain way and adjust their practice to meet the student where they are to help facilitate learning. Effective teachers need not only to recognize their own emotions, but also utilize them to help students to learn, to recognize how their mood may negatively impact their students. This ability, in colloquial terms, is referred to as common sense or having people skills. When reflecting on the relationship between effective teaching and EI, administrators considered this to be a valuable component. The following flowchart is a graphical representation of the synthesis of the superordinate themes found in this study and their interaction with effective teaching and therefore, student learning.
Figure 3. EI affects emotions and is activated by emotions. EI is related to or one and the same as soft skills. Emotions are a part of relationships and are produced by and influenced by people and their levels of EI. Positive relationships are related to effective teaching and effective teaching is related to student learning.

The next chapter will explore the relationship between these findings and the previous literature, as well as provide suggestions for future projects with more in-depth exploration of the results through the EI lens.
Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications for Practice

The purpose of this Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study was to better understand how school administrators interpreted effective teaching based on their experiences of supervising teachers through the lens of emotional intelligence (EI). The EI framework chosen for this study was based on the Salovey and Mayer’s (1997) model and can be concisely defined as, “the ability to reason validly with emotions and with emotion-related information, and to use emotions to enhance thought” (Mayer et al., 2016, p. 296). As discussed in the literature review, there are a myriad of ways to define effective teaching (Belanger & Longden, 2009; Devine et al., 2013; Keeley et al., 2016; Sautelle et al., 2015), but there is limited qualitative research using EI as a lens to interpret school administrators’ perspective. Given the purpose of this study involved trying to interpret the participants’ experiences of teacher supervisor as it related to effective teaching, an IPA study was deemed the appropriate methodology as it allowed the participant to recall, explore, and reflect on this phenomenology (Smith et al., 2012) of teacher supervision while recognizing the researcher’s role in interpreting these experiences through the lens of EI.

Honduran bilingual schools need to hire teachers who are not only able to teach content, but are native, or near-native, English speakers. Given that the native language of the country is Spanish, administrators have a limited pool of potential applicants from which to select in the hiring process. Some bilingual school administrators recruit at international job fairs, based in the U.S., to fulfill these needs. Considering the limited access to resources, the researcher chose to interview seven, K-12, bilingual school administrators, of which six were superintendents, and one was an assistant principal at the high school level, to learn about what they thought defined an effective teacher. The interview questions discussed their hiring processes, what they looked for in teachers (to infer what they interpret as effective teachers), and descriptive examples of effective teachers with whom they had hired and/or supervised throughout the years. Particularly, they were asked to
imagine their experience working with effective teachers and to reflect on what they thought made this person effective. They were then asked to relate this information to EI, and if their knowledge of EI was limited, the researcher shared definitions to help inform their responses.

Using NVivo 12 to analyze to code the results, three super-ordinate themes emerged: **Soft Skills of Teaching, Relationships in Teaching, and Emotions in Teaching**. Each of the super-ordinate themes had subordinate themes, but the quantity varied. The first super-ordinate theme, soft skills of teaching included teachers who were *Flexible, Positive, Self-Motivated, Creative, and Collaborative*. The second super-ordinate theme of relationships in teaching emerged the subordinate themes of *Building Connections, Caring about Students, and Managing Difficult Relationships*. The third and last super-ordinate theme of emotions in teaching had the subordinate themes of *Emotional Labor of Teaching, EI as Part of Effective Teaching, and People Skills as EI*.

This chapter will first present the findings within the context of the literature. Each subtheme will be elaborated upon in how it either reinforced or contradicted previous literature or suggested novel understandings on how to define effective teaching and the role that EI played in this understanding. The conclusions drawn from this study were within the context of the thematic findings and the final section of this chapter makes suggestions to about the practical application of the results within the context of practice, such as the hiring and supervision of teachers and suggestions for future research.

**Soft Skills of Teaching**

Personality is considered an important part of teachers’ success. In their study of university students’ personality preferences of their professors according to the Big-Five personality model, Kim and MacCann (2016) found that students preferred professors who were high in socially preferred areas: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability (low in neuroticism). Furthermore, they learned that students tended to select a personality profile
related to their own. These traits related to some of the personality qualities mentioned by participants such as openness being related to flexibility, and agreeableness connecting to collaboration and emotional stability related to the strand finding of emotions. Similarly, Patrick (2011) found university students preferred professors who had high levels of the Big-Five positive traits, but both studies did not find a relationship with this preference to higher achievement as measured by grades. The next subsections will look at each trait individually and analyze how it fits in the context of the literature.

Flexible

Participants in this study shared the importance of teachers being flexible and able to adapt to students’ circumstances. Two participants adamantly described teachers’ attitudes such as “my way or the highway” or “the sage on the stage” being unwelcome and counterproductive to their effective teaching. Todd asked the rhetorical question, “How do you work with that?” to indicate that there was no room to meet in the middle. Rather, participants reflected on their experiences hiring and supervising teachers and concluded that a teacher needed to be willing to find a middle ground when working with students and parents, especially in the context of their schools. The researcher interpreted the administrators’ views of flexibility as being able to know when to bend or adjust instruction to the students’ needs; thereby, improving their learning. Schools, like the one where Gloria worked, expected teachers to personalize their teaching to meet student needs. Parsons (2016) found that a teacher’s attentiveness to student needs and ability to adapt was helpful to students. Belanger and Longden (2009) reported that students appreciated teachers who were able to recognize when they needed help and Ferry, McCaughtry, and Hodges Kulinna, (2011) described how physical education teachers used their knowledge of students and the students’ emotional state to adjust their lessons to fit the needs of those requiring a sense of flexibility and reflection. A reflective practitioner, an important trait considered by teachers in effective teaching (Devine et al., 2013),
requires a certain level of flexibility for a teacher to plan and adjust practice based on student learning. Similarly, teachers in Greece believed that educators should be flexible in their knowledge dissemination as well as be open-minded (Koutrouba, 2012). Particular to this present study was the interpretation that administrators view flexibility as a trait that made teachers’ coachable or trainable to refer to the importance of teachers being able to learn, grow, and adapt to the culture of the school. Kate shared her example of working with a knowledgeable teacher who struggled to connect with students, but after some work, reflection and change on his end, he became a more effective teacher, as opposed to another teacher who had certain pedagogical skills, but lacked the human emotional connection and therefore, was un-trainable.

Positive

Participants in the study viewed effective teachers as positive people, whether it meant they were able to maturely handle difficult situations without taking it personally or looked for the positive aspects in students, such as reinforcing a positive student behavior amidst several negative ones. Engel (2012) also found that administrators looked for teachers who were enthusiastic and acted as positive role models for their students. Just as negative energy is contagious, or “cancerous” as described by Todd, so too can the reverse be, positive energy is radiant. Other studies have found that passion for teaching and learning (Devine et al., 2013) and enthusiasm are highly rated teacher traits (Keeley et al., 2016). These terms can be interpreted as positive characteristics and qualities that contribute to creating positive energy.

One of the participants, Kate, referred to looking for teachers “…who are warm, who are passionate about what they are doing.” Similarly, Alicia described a person who was “…happy, somebody who enjoys teaching. In order for students to learn, you need to enjoy what you’re doing. Otherwise it’s a burden.” If teachers enjoy their work, then they are going to contribute to a positive environment unlike the “Johnny rainclouds” described by Todd. Maria expressed the difficulty of
predicting someone’s disposition during an interview because they claimed to be positive but then changed in practice, “Once she was super negative, everything that we did, ‘Oh, again, I have to do this.’ And of course, that doesn’t show…because whenever you interview, it’s always the positive side.” Anari (2012) found a positive correlation between teacher EI levels and job satisfaction, which could be a key to creating positive work environments and happier teachers. The relationship between EI and job satisfaction has been found to be related to a teacher’s emotional labor strategies (Yin et al., 2013), which is indicative of the ability of someone with higher levels of EI to regulate their emotions more and therefore, to be happier.

**Self-motivated**

Teaching is a complex profession, perhaps one of the most difficult, as stated by one of the participants. It requires a teacher to engage in a multitude of tasks, be it administrative or teaching related. School administrators such as Todd expressed the importance of a teacher showing “initiative” or “It’s the teacher that’s going to go above and beyond.” In describing the profile of what makes an effective teacher according to Greek teachers’ perceptions, Koutrouba (2012) listed teacher’s initiative and willingness to find ways to personalize learning to help learning be more effective. Students also preferred teachers who did more than the required teaching in the classroom and reached out to students by making themselves available for tutoring for example (Engel, 2012). This sort of drive is not something that can be forced, as teaching contracts often restrict required duties and teaching hours. Rather, it is something that comes from within as Alicia expressed, “I think it’s more an inner motivation,” as she referred to an effective teacher who connected with her students and always sought ways to make learning real for them.

One participant referenced the book he recently published about motivating students in the classroom and suggested it had to do with social and emotional learning (SEL). In his words, “Now we may call it enthusiasm, but it’s EQ [emotional quotient].” These references to a teacher showing
enthusiasm as a means to motivate students is suggestive of a teacher being able to use their knowledge of student emotions to help motivate them to learn. Todd referenced the importance of classes having an emotional charge, but in a balanced way because too much emotion and novelty can be a stimuli overload for students. He referenced the emotions that students might experience when learning about content in a class and it can be counterproductive to student learning if a teacher is unable to gauge and manage these emotions. He also described an effective teacher who shows confidence and a drive to learn as he stated of a teacher:

Which means that when I bring to you a strategy that you could use, you're going to figure it out. I'm not going to have to hold your hand and say ‘Okay, when the student does this ...’

Because that's what your background is.

There is some research regarding the relationship between EI and motivation. Yong (2013) found that there was a relationship between motivation and EI, but a weak one that requires further exploration. This study was done in the context of servant leadership, which, although not directly related, teaching is a practice of service to others and teachers are leaders in their classroom and often beyond the classroom, at their whole school level. However, in a study measuring people’s willingness to hypothetically help someone in need, Agnoli, Pittarello, Hysenbelli, and Rubaltelli (2015) found that in affective situations, those which involved emotions, people high in EI were able to better manage the impact of failure and still maintaining motivations. This is significant to teachers who are motivated and have high levels of EI because they would appear to be more willing to help those in need, such as students, even in difficult emotional situations. To work successfully with students, a teacher needs a certain level of creativity to develop captivating learning experiences for their students.
Creative

Administrators believed that effective teachers displayed a creative side in their ability to plan and execute activities for student learning based on student interest. They termed these teachers as innovative and having an imagination and it was evident to the researcher that to captivate the attention of the students, these administrators were describing people who found novel ways to reach their students. Jose suggested that his teachers were required to bring artistic creativity to all classrooms, while Alicia affirmed that one of her most effective teachers constantly found creative ways to work with her students. Literature pertaining to effective teaching suggests that students prefer teachers who are innovative (Qureshi & Niazi, 2012) and teachers believed that effective teaching requires teachers who were able to engage students in learning and maintain their interest (Carraway, & Burris, 2017), thereby making learning real for them (Belanger & Longden, 2009).

Collaborative

Results in this study revealed that participants defined effective teachers as being collaborative. The school administrators described this trait of collaboration mostly in the context of teachers working well with each other and administrators. Maria referenced it regarding staff working collaboratively on unit planning, Todd described it as being open to working with others, opposite of the former concept of teaching as independent work in silos, and Ana described it as being open to peer observations and therefore, being a role model for students.

According to students, Qureshi and Nizai (2012) list cooperative as one of the many traits used to describe effective teachers. This concept of effective teachers being collaborative has a connection to teachers being flexible as described in the previous section; meaning teachers are willing to work with students for the benefit of student learning or in Kate’s words, teaching that is “student-centered.”. However, the majority of the references to collaboration referred to professional learning and the school culture. Drago-Severson (2009) termed this concept as “teaming” and
described it as people working together to help each other grow. Participants who have participated in EI trainings have better perceptions of their school environment, which should make it more conducive to collaboration (Pérez-Escoda et al., 2012), which suggests there is a connection between EI and collaboration.

**Relationships in Teaching**

Schools are communities of relationships among the various stakeholders such as administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Participants in this study agreed with one another about the importance of teachers being able build relationships, which they described as having good rapport, be it with students or their parents. However, the role the relationship between a teacher and a student has is indicative of success (Jones et al., 2013; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013). Relationships are based on the building of connections and these connections require teachers to genuinely care about their students. However, conflicts do arise and the teacher who is able to manage that situation well is more successful than the teacher who cannot.

**Building Connections**

As a teacher, Pete reflected back to an experience where he had several students who were giving him a difficult time in the classroom. He decided to handle the situation by calling the parents, who then in turn, informed the students’ coach. The next day, the coach showed up to the classroom and told the boys that they had better improve their behavior. Pete described the change as instant and authentic and credits it to the relationship of respect that the coach had garnered with the students. Connecting with students, whether it is visiting them at their extracurricular events, finding ways to connect the content to their lives, or using technology as a means to deliver the content in a more student-friendly way, was an important part of effective teachers described by participants in this present study. Poulou (2016) found that teachers who felt closer to their students reported fewer conflicts. Similarly, teachers who were attentive to their students’ needs managed
their classes better (Nizielski et al., 2012). Building these positive relationships seems to rely a bit on good judgment. Ana described how teachers just sometimes have to know when to pursue an issue with a student and when to let it go. Kate explained how an effective teacher knew when it was important to celebrate the positive accomplishments of a student rather than focus on the negative ones. Contrary to these illustrations of successful management of relationships through student connections, pre-service teachers who employed harsh discipline methods ended up deteriorating relationships (Jong et al., 2014). This should not be confused with being permissive, as participants in the present study expressed that effective teachers found a balance between being flexible, yet firm and this ability was coupled with a sense of caring for students.

**Caring about Students**

Forming authentic relationships involves caring for one another. This human connection can help motivate students, as described by Pete who shared an example of how a struggling student improved performance once he had made a connection with his teacher. Maria described her school culture to be one of caring, from the teachers caring about their work, about what they do, or about their school. Previous studies demonstrated students preferred teachers who cared about them and showed an interest their lives (Stelmach, Kovach, & Steeves, 2017) just as Jose expressed that students loved the teachers who attended their extracurricular activities and Todd shared that one of his most effective teachers was genuinely concerned for his students.

Similar to Alicia’s description of effective teachers having empathy for their students, Belanger and Longden (2009) and Engel (2012) described understanding and empathy as being important traits for effective teachers, according to teacher and administrator perspectives. In a study correlating EI to the Persian Characteristics of Effective English Language Teachers (CEELT), it was found that empathy, a component of the CEELT, was positively correlated to interpersonal skills, a trait of EI (Khodadady, 2012). This suggests that empathy is a trait of EI and is correlated to
effective teaching, but there have been other studies that doubt whether empathy is in fact a trait of EI (Kasler et al., 2013).

Effective teachers also love their students (Devine et al., 2013). Similarly described by Alicia, “…you have to love what you do. You have to love teenagers, you have to love kids.” Todd shared how important it was for teachers to create an emotional environment of caring for students’ learning. He also referred to the importance of loving students and reconnecting with them, even after difficult moments. Not only then is successful teaching being passionate about content area and getting excited about teaching it, but truly caring for and loving students, since they are the reason one is teaching. This current study suggests that empathy is important to effective teaching because it is an important part of relationships (Tapia-Gutierrez & Cubo-Delgado, 2015).

Managing Difficult Relationships

Research has demonstrated that the relationship between a teacher and a student is crucial in building a positive learning environment for students (Jones et al., 2013; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013). A relationship that is conducive to learning may be associated with the fact that teachers who report closeness with students reported fewer behavioral difficulties (Poulou, 2016) and participants shared the importance of teachers being able to manage difficult situations in the classroom without administrator intervention. One participant gave the positive example of a teacher being able to manage a difficult situation by being tactful and strategically maneuvering the situation to avoid creating more conflict. This was similar to the findings of Nizielski and colleagues (2012), who had found that teachers who pay close attention to their students’ needs have better classroom management skills. Nizielski and colleagues (2012) attributed this success to be related to the EI of teachers and, more specifically, to their ability to regulate their emotions and exercise empathy, a trait discussed in the previous section reflecting teachers’ caring attitude toward students. In Jose’s description of this successful teacher, he shared how he genuinely thought a larger conflict was going
to occur, but perhaps the teacher’s ability to regulate her emotions and respond in a supportive way, handing a pencil discretely to the student, rather than in a coercive way, helped build a respectful relationship similar to research by Mainhard et al. (2011) on classroom social climate. Mainhard et al. (2011) found that coercive teacher behavior negatively correlated to teacher proximity with students, which was disruptive to relationships.

Considered as conflict management strategies, there is research that suggests a relationship between people’s preferred conflict management and their actual reaction to a conflict (Moeller & Kwantes, 2015). This research used EI as a moderator of conflict management and found that depending on people’s belief of conflict management, there level of EI might dictate their response, such as a belief in positive resolution to a conflict will more likely be employed if someone is high in EI, just as a negative strategy could be as well. This study raised serious consideration for viewing EI abilities not only as pro-social behavior but more just skill in emotional management. Therefore, it is important to consider teachers’ personality traits, as well as relationship management skills and EI, just as participants in the study described effective teachers caring for their students and being positive role models. Along these lines of research, Ann and Yang (2012) found that personality traits play a moderating role between EI and conflict management, where participants who scored low on extroversion measures, but high in EI were more likely to show a high concern for self and others. This is considered an integrative style versus a dominating style, which suggests the opposite where someone has a high concern for self and a low concern for others. These findings suggest that high EI should be coupled with other positive traits to offset the potential ability to use EI to manipulate others for the benefit of oneself, a concern expressed by Moeller and Kwantes (2015). Moeller and Kwantes (2015) researched the relationship between the beliefs and practice of conflict management and found that EI is a moderator between the two.
Emotions in Teaching

Emotions are a part of the human dimension. As described in previous sections, teachers who are passionate about their work, care about their students, are motivated in their jobs, show positive or even negative attitudes, among other characteristics, are exemplifying the emotional side of their being. When asked about whether emotions play a role in the everyday lives of teachers in the classroom, Maria responded without hesitation:

You know what I think? A huge percent. And I guess, because as human beings, we're full of emotions. As human beings, we watch a movie, we cry. We see a student who's ... eating too much and we worry about him. And a student who falls, ‘Are you okay?’ Our world, the everyday basis is filled with emotions. I'm a teacher, I'm getting an email from my principal asking for this, and it's due tomorrow. And I have all these things, suddenly I get anxious, I get angry, I get sad. So, it's all about emotions.

Research such as the work of Bahia, Freire, Amaral, and Estrela (2013) demonstrated that teachers experience both positive and negative emotions in the classroom and, depending on the level in which they are teaching, they may share more or less of their emotions with students. Other research has shown that implicit cultural rules dictate to what degree a teacher might express emotions (e.g. Hong-biao Yin & Lee, 2012). Other participants in this present study explained, “Latino culture is very temperamental. We are very vocal about feelings.” Participants also expressed varying degrees of whether it was appropriate to share emotions in the classroom. Some suggested that personal emotions should be left outside of the classroom, while others suggested that if we try to care for the emotional well-being of the students, we should do the same for the teachers. Nevertheless, emotions appear to play a significant role in teaching, suggesting it is a profession that is high in emotional labor.
Emotional Labor of Teaching

Teaching can be a challenging profession as indicated by Alicia, “…being a teacher is hard. It’s very hard. It’s the most demanding profession, I would say. Because you have to cater to so many needs. To so many likes and dislikes and moods, and dramas…” This reference of teaching being difficult is indicative of Hochschild's (1979) coined term, emotional labor, which was developed to label the type of work that involved emotional-latent context such as the work of flight attendants. Hargreaves (1998) applied this term to the educational world, recognizing that teaching involves an emotional investment, as suggested by Todd when he stated, “…There’s an emotional pull that comes with it right?” and Kate when she described an effective teacher as someone who “…just poured herself into the lives of each kid.” Additionally, participants spoke about the fact that teaching is more than just delivering content knowledge to students, it is about, in Kate’s words, “…dealing with emotions of students, emotions of parents, emotions of colleagues.” This emotionally laborious line of work requires teachers to be able to navigate the emotional waters of the daily work to help facilitate their role as teachers in helping students learn, but also to manage their own levels of stress. Teachers who had higher levels of EI tended to be more satisfied with work, which was negatively correlated to emotional exhaustion or burnout (Przybylska, 2016).

Considering teaching to be an emotional line of work, participants shared their direct thoughts on whether EI could play a role in what they described as effective teachers.

EI as Part of Effective Teaching

Participants both implicitly and explicitly shared that it was very probable that a part of what makes the teachers they had described as effective was their levels of EI. Participants drew this conclusion based on their personal understanding of EI and the definitions the researcher shared with them. Pete described ineffective, or “struggling” teachers as having “… to do with their inability to respond in an emotionally intelligent way.” Jose described the flip side of this situation when he
shared the example of a teacher managing a difficult situation when a student got upset because he
did not have a pencil. The difference between these two situations was the ability of the teacher to
identify the emotions of others, understand those emotions as well as their own, and use that
information to achieve something, such as getting an unmotivated student to work. The first
example regards teachers who lose their patience too soon and contribute to a student conflict by not
regulating their emotions and diffusing the situation. The counter example suggests that an
emotionally intelligent teacher can interpret beyond the surface level of students’ emotions and take
those cues to understand that a student was having a bad moment and it was probably better to not
add to the emotion but counteract it with a neutral emotion in this case.

Ferry et al. (2011) described teachers similarly as being able to acquire an emotional pulse
from the students and adapt their teaching to the students’ needs. This adaptation, or personalization,
as described by Alicia at her small school, requires a teacher to be flexible, creative, to care about
students and have a desire to help them. Effective teachers are able to recognize their emotions and
regulate them, as to not interfere with student learning. Maria described the opposite situation in a
case of a stressed or upset teacher who might take out the bad mood in the classroom and lead a
student to feel uneasy. Brackett, Floman, Ashton-James, Cherkasskiy, and Salovey (2013) found
similar results, but regarding teachers’ grading practices. Teachers in experiment-induced negative
moods were more apt to assign a student a lower grade, as well as the inverse for teachers who were
in a positive mood. Culture-oriented studies of emotions, such as the work of Yin and Lee (2012)
found that teachers intentionally try to hide negative emotions and maintain positive ones and that
they use emotions to achieve teaching goals; all of which are related to EI skills regarding the
recognition of emotions, the regulation of emotions, and the ability to use emotions to facilitate
thought. This ability to regulate emotions to help support student learning was stated by Maria:
And it's only the emotional intelligence that's going to allow the job to become effective.

Allowing themselves to separate from who the student is, what the student did, what is the student feeling, but in the end, we know we have this compromise of ... teaching the student. According to the descriptions that the participants gave regarding effective teaching, EI appears to have a significant role in the success of teachers. Interestingly, some participants associated the skills related to EI as something that should be relatively common.

**People Skills as EI**

It has been established that teaching is a complex profession that requires positive student-teacher interactions (Jones et al., 2013; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013). Emotions certainly play a role in the classroom, making teaching an emotional, laborious line of work. Studies such as the work of Castillo, Fernández-Berrocal, and Brackett (2013) demonstrated that SEL programs, which help improve teacher EI skills, improve their ability to make personal connections with their students and build positive relationships, train teachers to be able to manage their emotions and the emotions of their students. What might be labeled as EI in the research world was labeled as, “people skills” and even, “common sense” by this study’s participants. Ana described EI through this example:

> They get into trouble over something that makes no sense to me, so, to me, being emotionally intelligent, without, as I told you, having a whole lot of information on it is, have common sense, and do things, as a human being, that make sense to you.

Perhaps it is something that comes easy to her because of her over thirty years of experience in education and 18 as a superintendent, she has learned how to deal with difficult situations. Pete described the emotionally intelligent person as a “people person.” Similarly, Jose described the fact that effective teaching required someone to have people skills. In a qualitative study of how non-teaching staff members of a primary school interpreted SEL learning at school, Wood (2016) found that these staff members related their ability to read and manage student emotions in a natural way,
based on their experience of being parents. Perhaps, the skills and competencies in EI are in fact what people have commonly labeled as people skills and there are some people who naturally have it, others that do not, but with flexibility and willingness to learn, it can be taught and learned.

**Conclusion**

This study sought to answer the following research question, reflecting on their experiences of supervising teachers, what role does teacher EI play in effective teaching according to school administrators? Through questions that ranged from learning about what administrators looked for when hiring new teachers to sharing examples of teachers that were unsuccessful and then contrasted to teachers whom they deemed as effective, this study revealed that EI plays a significant role in effective teachers.

There are certain hard skills that are needed for a teacher to have the knowledge and strategies to educate students, but this study determined that soft skills needed to be considered when hiring teachers. Participants described mainly humanistic qualities when recounting why teachers were successful or those teachers that they had to terminate as a result of their inability to make human connections or the inability to reflect on practice and improve. These descriptions of personality traits and the importance of building relationships and the role emotions play in relationship building and teaching in the classroom all point in the direction of EI reflecting those qualities in action. Although this study had adopted the Mayer and Salovey (1997) version of EI as its theoretical framework, the personality traits and characteristics of the effective teachers described in this study appeared to relate more directly to the Bar-On’s (2006) mixed model of Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI). Of the 15 subscales measured in Bar-On’s (2006) model, all of the factors connected to some degree with descriptions given in this study. This ad hoc discovery suggests that the super-ordinate themes of the *Soft Skills of Teaching, Relationships in Teaching, and Emotions in
Teaching, along with their subordinate themes, can be considered aspects of EI, validating the importance of signifying that teachers’ EI does in fact play a role in effective teaching.

**Recommendations for Practice**

This research study revealed several findings that are suggestive of ways to improve practice. The researcher interpreted the participant’s experiences of supervising teachers and determining effective teaching to be a challenging one in the hiring process, since teaching is a complex, emotionally-latent endeavor. However, the hiring and supervision practice could be improved if EI assessments are administered as part of the process. According to the participant sense-making of effective teaching EI assessments that are mixed-models (e.g. Bar-on, 2006) may help an administrator identify qualities that have been interpreted to be proponents of effective teaching. The superordinate theme of *Soft Skills of Teaching* included traits that related to aspects of EI, which appeared to be difficult to tease out between EI and personality, which is why Bar-on’s (2006) model is a mixed one. Two other participants shared that an interview was a limited means to truly get to know a person. Therefore, EI assessments would potentially, predictive data about how teachers might fit into the school environment and how effective they might be. On paper, some potential candidates can seem perfect because they have all of the necessary credentials for teaching such as degrees in the content area, pedagogy, and experience. However, their lack of being able to build connections with students eventually surfaces and becomes conflictive.

With regard to the supervising process, it would be a good practice to take these results and turn them into a survey to administer at the researcher’s school to get a sense of how teachers’ rate these qualities as important for effective teaching to gauge where they are in their thinking. Part of the literature review in this study examined effective teaching according to the perspectives of teachers, students, and administrators. This study contributes to the literature on effective teaching according to the supervisor perspective. To make this direct impact in the current researcher’s
practice, it would be helpful to examine the teachers’ perspective about these qualities of effective teachers. This could involve an anonymous survey in which they rate the soft skills of teaching according to what degree they view them as important to effective teaching. Part of the assessment could be open-ended as well, so teachers can elaborate on what it looks like in the classroom and why they find it as important or less important, according to their experience.

According to research discussed in the literature review, classroom management is an important part of effective teaching. Similarly, the ability of a teacher to manage their emotions and their students’ emotions was interpreted as an important quality in effective teachers. Successful teachers can navigate the emotional environments in the classroom better than unsuccessful teachers. Therefore, scenarios in conflict management can be given to potential teacher candidates to learn about how and why they might respond in a particular way to a student’s behavior. A school administrator could create custom-made scenarios based on experience and use these scenarios to study a teacher’s potential ability to manage conflicts and describe why they would react the way they would.

Considering that EI is a skill that can be taught (Dolev & Leshem, 2016; Hagelskamp et al., 2013; Waajid et al., 2013), it would be beneficial to implement an EI training as part of the school’s professional development program as a means to coach teachers to be more aware of their emotions and the emotions of others. This could potentially reduce the amount of conflict in the school, thereby improving classroom management procedures, which would in turn, maximize student learning time and build stronger relationships between students and teachers. Since relationships are two-ways, it would be worthwhile to implement an SEL curriculum at school, as well to help build this awareness of emotions and emotional management at a younger age. This is a massive undertaking, so there would need to be a plan to introduce such an initiative, such as training a group of elementary teachers in EI and SEL and then have them weave this program into their current
curriculum. Over time, this would involve continuing the training until all teachers have participated.

There is some literature supporting the idea of adding EI coursework to university-level teacher preparation programs (Kasler et al., 2013) to suggest they can help improve pre-service teachers’ levels of EI. This information needs to be shared with the Honduran Pedagogical University to make considerations to adopting some of this practice in their teacher preparation programs. Furthermore, this work should be taken to the governmental level of the Ministry of Education and Congress to consider applying EI or personality assessments as protocol for teacher certifications. Currently, there is a psychological test mandated for licenses to drive vehicles, so there may be a climate of understanding for such a test at the government level, but probably not at the public teacher level. The potential barrier to this implementation would be how the policy is defined. If someone scores low, do they not pass certification? Given the previously established evidence of EI being able to be learned, perhaps these teachers can engage in a series of workshops to certify their learning.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

There are several studies that would be worth exploring in regard to effective teaching and teacher EI. Considering that students rated their teachers’ preferred personality traits similarly to their own (Kim & MacCann, 2016), so too could this be the rationale for which the participants described their most effective teachers. This study would have benefited from a mixed-methods approach in which teachers and administrators take an EI assessment, then administrators are asked to describe and name their effective teachers and then create a quantitative analysis to compare whether the administrator selected teachers actually reflect traits described in the qualitative interviews. Given that this was a qualitative study, IPA study, it was understood and accepted that
the researcher and the participants’ perceptions were influential in the interpretation of the results. This recommendation would be a good cross-reference for the validity of the information shared.

This study was done in the context of bilingual schools in Honduras due to the fact that there was a limited pool of human resources to find well-prepared English-speaking teachers to fulfill the teaching roles at schools. However, this study could have capitalized on the context of this bilingual environment. A future interest area of study would be to measure EI levels of teachers, administrators, and their levels of bilingualism. Considering flexibility, creativity, and empathy, to name a few traits, emerged as important in effective teaching, it would be beneficial to see if those traits are related to the EI levels of the teachers and whether they are bilingual and to what degree. The participants were all bilingual to some degree, so their perception was through a bi-cultural and bilingual lens, which must have had some effect on their interpretations, just as it was for the researcher. If a relationship between bilingualism and EI were to be found, language learning might be a bi-product of multilingualism and multiculturalism, which could be a future requirement for teachers.

In this study, relationships were interpreted to be an important part of what makes an effective teacher. In an interview with one of the participants, an idea was discussed about trying to find the nexus with EI, relationships, and student achievement. This is an area worth exploring in the literature and designing a quantitative research project that connects this type of assessment to the specific context of teaching, since teachers need to find a way to be friendly with students, but not crossing boundaries.
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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview Part One: Interviewee Background and Building Rapport

Introduction: This purpose of this first interview is for the researcher to get to know the background and educational experiences of the participant. Furthermore, it is to start to share experiences of working with teachers specifically in the area of hiring. The methodology for this study is Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, which requires an in-depth approach to understanding the experiences of a participant. The goal is to give you, the participant, room to share and elaborate on your experiences. The goal of the researcher is to try to interpret the experiences you are sharing.

1) To get acquainted, please share with me some of your demographic and education experience.
   a. How old are you?
   b. How many years have you been working in education and in what capacities?
   c. What is your current role and for how long have you been performing it?
   d. What educational preparation (degrees or trainings) do you have in the field?

2) Speak about your experience hiring and terminating teachers in Honduras.
   a. Explain what considerations you make when hiring teachers. For example, what are you looking for precisely? What captivates your attention when selecting teachers for your school? Elaborate on this process.
   b. Think about an experience where a teacher you hired/supervised struggled or was unsuccessful. Explain what happened; why you think that teacher was unsuccessful.

Ask participant if they have any questions and thank them for their participation. Remind the participant that they will receive a transcription of the interview via email to comment on if they
wish. The researcher will analyze the first interview and perhaps, incorporating more probing questions based on the first analysis.

**Interview Part Two: Effective Teaching and Emotional Intelligence**

**Introduction:** Given the important role teachers play in student learning, I am interested in gaining more insight about the role emotional intelligence plays in the process. I would like to hear about your experience/perspective about what makes an effective teacher. I would also like you to consider the role teacher emotional intelligence plays in their effectiveness. EI can be defined as “the ability to reason validly with emotions and with emotion-related information, and to use emotions to enhance thought.” Literature on leadership, for example, has shown that effective leaders have high levels of EI. Research about EI levels of students and teachers and its potential benefits on learning and teaching is growing and suggests that EI be considered as an important skill for teachers. The purpose of this interview is to describe your perspective and experience supervising teachers. You might consider teachers you know, but please use pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the person. I have prepared some questions to help prompt your responses, but what I am looking for more is a chance for you to tell your story based on your experience in an in-depth manner.

Consider your practice of working with teachers and what you think makes you an effective teacher.

1) Based on your experience of supervising teachers, what have you learned about effective teachers? You might want to start by imagining one of the most effective teachers and tell me about a time you have supervised or worked with this teacher.

2) You might want to consider the following aspects:

   a. personal qualities,
   
   b. professional qualities,
   
   c. interactions with students and others.
3) Based on your experiences and descriptions, which aspects do you think play a stronger role than others in the success of these teachers? Explain.

4) How has your experience of effective teaching and teacher supervision changed over time?

5) What role do you think emotions play in teaching? (Think about whether you believe emotions have a place, to what degree, in what context, etc.).

6) Explain what you know about emotional intelligence.

   a. After participants’ explanation, share these two definitions of EI.

   Defined by Mayer and Salovey (1997), two of the pioneers in the EI movement, EI is considered as- “the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (p. 10)

7) Have you ever participated in any type of emotional intelligence trainings? Why or why not?

8) Currently in Hondurans, requirements to become a certified teacher include possessing a bachelor’s degree in pedagogy, based on your experience, can you explain what other types of requirements should be considered when certifying teachers? Explain to what degree non-aspects, such as emotional intelligence, should play in certification programs.

Ask participant if they have any questions and thank them for their participation. Remind the participant that they will receive a transcription of the interview via email to comment on if they wish. This most likely will be the last interview.
Appendix B: Email Message

Dear Mr./Ms. XXXXXXX,

As part of my doctoral program at Northeastern University, I am conducting a study to learn about administrators’ experience regarding effective teaching and emotional intelligence at bilingual schools in Honduras. You have been selected as a potential participant because you hold an academic administrator role at a bilingual school in Honduras that belongs to the ABSH. This study is a qualitative analysis that consists of two single, one hour-long interviews, location and time to be determined at your convenience. A second data collection method consists of providing an anonymous teacher observation or evaluation narrative if you are willing and able to share such confidential data. Please note that confidentiality is a priority and the intention behind this study is purely academic. For more information about the study and your role as a participant, please refer to the attached document, Informed Consent.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please email me back with a convenient day/time to set up a brief phone call in which we can review the Informed Consent and discuss any questions or concerns you might have. Should you wish to proceed with the study, we will set up the interview schedule during the phone call.

Sincerely,

Michael Peabody
Doctoral Candidate
Northeastern University
Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies

Name of Investigator(s): Dr. Quannah Parker-McGowan PhD Principal Investigator, Michael Peabody Student Researcher

Title of Project: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis on School Administrators’ Perception of Effective Teaching and Emotional Intelligence

We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask this person any questions that you have. When you are ready to decide, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?

We are asking you to participate in this study because you have experience hiring and supervising teachers in a bilingual school in Honduras.

Why is this research study being done?

The purpose of this qualitative study is to learn about the experience of bilingual school administrators with regard to what they think about effective teaching and the role emotional intelligence plays in it. Teaching is a complex profession and effective teaching is difficult to define. Your role as a school administrator is valuable to student success particularly in the hiring and supervising of teachers.

What will I be asked to do?

If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to interview with the researcher. You will participate in an approximately two, one-hour long interviews with the interviewer. The interviews will consist of a series of open-ended questions with the intention of letting you share your experience in depth. The interviews will be recorded and sent to a transcription service. Once the transcription is completed, the researcher will share with you a copy of the transcription in which you will have a few days to review and debrief with the research about any doubts or questions you might have. Additionally, having the second interview allows the researcher to analyze the data and to ask follow-up or clarifying questions during the second interview.

Also, you will be asked to provide a sample of teacher supervision or evaluation report that includes a narrative summary. You will need to remove your name and the name of the teacher from the artifact to protect the teacher’s identity. Considering the sensitivity of such documents, this is an optional request. If you do not feel comfortable or are prohibited from sharing such information, there is no penalty and you can still participate in the interview.
Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?

For your convenience, the interviews will take place at a location you choose or via Skype or another online chat program if traveling poses to be difficult. The student researcher requests that there be a quiet space assigned for the interview to take place without interruptions. The interview will last approximately one hour.

The transcription of the interview will be emailed to you for your review. Feedback may be provided via email or phone call if necessary.

Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?

There will be no physical or personal risks to you. All of the data will be handled in confidence and the school name, your name, and any reference to teachers’ names will be replaced with pseudonyms. The data will be managed and stored safely and will be destroyed after three years. You are allowed to withdraw from the study at any time.

Will I benefit by being in this research?

There is no direct benefit from the research. However, the discussion can be viewed as a reflection about effective teaching and it might spur some interesting thoughts that had not surfaced prior to the interview.

Who will see the information about me?

Your part in this study will be confidential. Only the researchers on this study will see the information about you. No reports or publications will use information that can identify you in any way or any individual as being of this project.

Your audio file will be given a reference number and your name will be replaced with a pseudonym to protect your identity. The data files will be stored in NVivo, which can only be accessed with a password. A backup of the data will be stored in a password protected Gmail account.

This data will not be shared with anyone except for the researchers. In the atypical instance, the data might be shared with authorized personnel such as the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board.

Can I stop my participation in this study?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Therefore, you may withdraw from your participation at any time or refuse to answer any questions.

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact:
Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, Mail Stop: 560-177, 360 Huntington Avenue, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

Will I be paid for my participation?

This is voluntary participation.

Will it cost me anything to participate?

No.

Is there anything else I need to know?

You must be at least 18 years old to participate and be working as a school administrator of a bilingual school in Honduras.

I agree to take part in this research.
Appendix D: Participant Themes

Table 3

Participant Themes

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<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Alicia</th>
<th>Pete</th>
<th>Maria</th>
<th>Todd</th>
<th>Ana</th>
<th>Jose</th>
<th>Kate</th>
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<td>People skills as EI</td>
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