Challenges and Successes Teachers Experience Educating Incarcerated Youth: A Mixed-Methods Approach

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Challenges and Successes Teachers Experience Educating Incarcerated Youth: A Mixed-Methods Approach

A Dissertation

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of

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By

Morgan W. Crozier

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife. Marissa, without you, this process would have been impossible. Since coming into my life, you have been my #1 supporter and have pushed me to be the best version of myself. Over the last three years, you have provided me with infinite love, encouragement, and therapy sessions. I know you have sacrificed so much over the previous three years; I appreciate that sacrifice, and I plan to make it up to you for the rest of my life. I love you so much, and I am so grateful that you pushed me to complete this commitment!
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Cohort 3, without this group of amazing people that supported me through three years of challenging work, I would not have made it past the second semester. Each of you holds a place in my heart, and I am so proud to have completed this journey together. The following Cohort 3 members need some additional attention. I want to thank Adam Linetty, Janice Pietrowicz, Courtney Kofeldt, Brittany Severino, and Patrick Sasse for being amazing over the last year by providing support, therapy, laughter, and guidance through this process. Each of you played a critical part in me accomplishing my goal.

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Abstract

This study explores the educators’ perspectives on their experiences providing academic services and supports to incarcerated youth placed in short-term juvenile detention centers and how they perceive success and challenges in this environment. The study used an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design while incorporating tools such as a questionnaire, interviews, and reflective journal activities to get a deeper understanding of the experiences educators encounter in this role. The questionnaire consisted of 38 questions designed to address the demographics of the teachers participating in the study, their teaching experience with incarcerated youth, professional development received, and the challenges and successes they have encountered in their role. Participants who completed the questionnaire (n=6) received a prompt whether they would like to participate in the qualitative portion of the study, consisting of a series of three face-to-face interviews and three reflective journaling activities. Three participants contributed to both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. The data collected from these interviews and journal activities were coded using the constant comparative method identifying themes like challenges, successes, potential solutions, building relationships, racism, and more. In the end, the researcher was able to get a deeper understanding of these three educators’ perceptions of their experiences, challenges, and successes they encountered in their role in providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth in short-term detention centers.

Keywords: youth, incarcerated, adjudicated, education, mixed-methods, qualitative, quantitative, juvenile detention, residential treatment facilities, academics
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Over the last twenty years, the United States has seen a drastic decrease in the use of residential placements for justice-involved children and youth. In 2000, the daily average number of juvenile delinquents housed in residential placements was 108,802 (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP], 2019). On October 25, 2017, juvenile justice facilities housed 43,580 juvenile delinquents across the country (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP], 2019). This number represents the number of children and youths as young as ten detained and placed in residential placements in 2017. This rate is two and a half times lower than in the year 2000.

However, even with the rate of youth court-ordered to residential placements taking a dramatic reduction, the United States continues to incarcerate more youth proportionally than any other developed country (Barnert et al., 2015). Despite the decrease in youth involved in the juvenile justice system and assigned to out-of-home placements, youth entering the system, like their predecessors, experience systemic and individual challenges. Before being incarcerated, these youth experience risk factors like poverty, school failure, and exposure to violence (Shader, 2004). These factors, along with mental illness and traumatic events, can significantly increase their likelihood of being incarcerated.

Systemic Issues Impacting Communities and their Youth

Statistically, one in five youth experience poverty while growing up and have a greater chance of being delayed academically, not graduating from high school, and being poverty-stricken as adults (Holzer et al., 2007). Poverty hurts youth and families, raising their likelihood of delinquency (Sampson & Laub, 2005). Systemic issues within communities provide obstacles for low-income families like unstable housing, inconsistent employment, physical and mental
health needs, as well as safety issues in their schools and community, increasing the likelihood of their children missing school and the school district and court system labeling the youth as truants (Gee & Krausen, 2015). Poverty can also damage a youths’ educational opportunities, resulting in truancy from school, failing academics, and potentially dropping out (Freudenberg & Ruglis, 2007).

Further increasing academic failure opportunities, children raised in low socioeconomic environments may have a vocabulary less robust than their middle-class peers (Walker et al., 1994). The youth affected by poverty typically score lower on intelligence tests and academic achievement than students from a higher socioeconomic background (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). These youth often come from marginalized communities and have had increased exposure to frequent violence (Gonzalez, 2017). These youth may have undiagnosed mental health issues or are not receiving adequate treatment (Gonzalez, 2017). This population has a history of adverse childhood experiences (ACE) resulting from traumatic events. Cannon et al. (2016) conducted a study in which they assessed 220 juveniles in detention for adverse childhood experiences; 99% of those participants experienced at least one ACE, while more than 86% had attributed four or more adverse childhood experiences. In this study, I plan to gather the perspective of educators on how adverse childhood experiences and trauma impact their students and how they can affect their classrooms.

**Systemic Issues Incarcerated Youth Encounter in the Education and Juvenile Justice System**

Despite this vulnerable population’s challenges and experiences before entering the system, these obstacles multiply when entering the juvenile justice system. The juvenile justice system is ill-equipped to address the youths’ challenges before entering the system and struggle
to address the systemic problems such as mental health, race-based disproportionately, and the disproportionate number of youth with special needs once they enter the system. This vulnerable population needs a wide variety of educational services and quality educators to advance academically and socially.

Mental Health

Of the 2 million youth that has contact with the juvenile justice system, Underwood and Washington (2016) estimate that between 50% and 75% of that population meet the prerequisites of having a mental health disorder. Gottesman and Schwarz (2011) posit that detention facilities are not prepared to adequately service the youth's mental health needs in their custody. Youth with mental health needs in the justice system’s custody are often not addressed due to inadequate services, lack of training, and minimal resources (Gonzalez, 2017). These facilities often lack the screening and assessment resources to identify mental health concerns; this lack of resources results in the youth not receiving the necessary services they need (McPherson & Sedlak, 2010).

Racism

Race is society’s tool to incorporate or prevent specific collections of people from equal opportunities, resources, and membership (Kohli et al., 2006). These attempts to persecute and oppress certain groups are labeled as racism. Racism has been described as a hierarchy based on race, strengthened by institutions' power, a power that victims of racism have never acquired (Solorzano et al., 2002). These institutions of power are courts, government-operated organizations, financial institutions, and schools (Trent et al., 2019). Children of color are introduced to a racist institution of power when they enroll in school. Racism can be found in the school policies and procedures, curriculums, and the teachers responsible for educating and
disciplining them. Disciplinary practices are subjective and based on how the teacher perceives the infraction and whether discipline is necessary (Staats, 2016). Gregory et al. (2017) suggest that subjective disciplinary practices can result in privileged youth receiving less punitive discipline policies and practices while students of color receive more punishing disciplinary procedures. This racial disparity in school discipline results in students of color placed disproportionately in the juvenile justice system (Mallett, 2017).

**Racial-Based Disproportionality**

Racial-based disproportionately is an issue that is prevalent in the juvenile justice field. Mallett (2017) suggests that children of color are overrepresented in each step of the juvenile justice process; the more involved the offender becomes in the system, the more likely significant inequalities occur. Of all minority justice-involved youth, African Americans represent 60% of the population, while Hispanics account for 33% (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2014). Black youth are incarcerated six times more than white youth, and Hispanics are incarcerated twice as many times as their white peers (Piquero, 2008). Puzzanchera and Robson (2014) posit that African American youth offenders are 140% more likely to be sent to court for adjudication than white youth offenders.

**Special Education Disproportionality**

The youths receiving special education services are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system. The United States Department of Education (2017) estimates that at least 30% to 60% of incarcerated youth have a disability, and they contend it could be as high as 85%. This high rate of disproportionality of special education could be higher because many justice-involved youths may not have been tested and identified as requiring special education services.
85% of incarcerated youth receiving special education services are classified under two categories: emotional disturbance and learning disabled (Quinn et al., 2005).

**Education**

Another issue that has been consistent over time in juvenile justice is the education being provided to incarcerated youth while in placement. Leone and Wruble (2015) argue that juvenile justice-involved youth have the right to quality education with equivalent services their peers receive in the public school system. Unfortunately, that has not been the trend in the juvenile or adult justice system. There has been an important set of people in the United States who have received insufficient educational services throughout history; that group comprises people placed in correctional facilities (Leone & Wruble, 2015).

The U.S. Department of Education (2014) supports this concern by comparing incarcerated youth to other individuals in society and identifying detained children as some of the least academically proficient. Each of these areas not being addressed by the juvenile justice system provides the youth in their custody with additional challenges. These extra challenges can prevent the youth from addressing the behaviors that resulted in them becoming justice-involved and impact the educators trying to provide academic services and support to the incarcerated youth.

**Teachers in Juvenile Justice**

Teaching in juvenile corrections offers many unique challenges specific to the world of juvenile justice (Gagnon et al., 2012). These obstacles include an institutional mindset that is disciplinary and not focused on rehabilitation (Nelson et al., 2010), a large number of the student population requiring academic, behavioral, and mental health support (Gagnon & Barber, 2010), and problems with the safety and security within the facilities (Jolivette & Nelson, 2010) which
makes the role of the teacher more challenging and the facilities ability to provide top-notch professional development very difficult. Teachers working in juvenile justice facilities must have the skill set necessary to address their students' academic and behavioral needs, which are often more severe than the conditions discussed in the public school system (Houchins et al., 2009). These challenges are not new in the field of juvenile corrections; these teaching adversities were made public as early as 1897 (Eggleston, 1991, as cited in Gagnon et al., 2012).

Maccini et al. (2006) suggest that some teachers working in juvenile corrections have inadequate knowledge of their content areas and do not implement research-based instructional techniques. Houchins et al. (2009) support Maccini et al. (2006) while insisting that teachers working in these facilities often do not have the necessary skills to support students' needs in their custody properly. The teachers having inadequate content knowledge and not receiving the essential support from facility administrators are just a few reasons why these teachers' professional development is critical (Gagnon et al., 2012).

Despite these challenges, it is even more critical that these teachers receive the most practical and beneficial professional development created specifically for their student population and learning environment (Gagnon et al., 2012). Even though research has identified how important it is for teachers to receive adequate professional development, a large number of teachers disclosed that the professional development they received was not pertinent or valuable to their role as a teacher (Grossman & Hirsch, 2009). Juvenile justice teachers also disclosed that they did not receive enough professional development to best educate students with disabilities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Despite the need for additional professional development designed to meet the needs of the teachers and students in this very unique setting, it is vital to identify some of the other
challenges teachers face in educating incarcerated youth. Teachers working in juvenile justice facilities identified the size of their classes, the variety of different grade levels, and their students' instructional needs as a challenge making it very difficult to facilitate student achievement on their academic goals (Houchins et al., 2009). The challenge of educating students on different instructional levels is only compounded by another challenge teachers have identified, the lack of quality of materials and supplies provided in the facilities. Educators insisted they need the proper supplies and equipment required to achieve the facilities administrators' goals and objectives (Houchins et al., 2009). Having age-appropriate materials and supplies to address the students' specific needs could help alleviate this obstacle.

Juvenile justice educators also identified concerns about the discipline and behavior occurring in their classrooms that impede the amount of quality academic instruction provided to the youth, such as the lack of appropriate school rules that youth refuse to follow, inconsistency when the staff is enforcing the rules, and the frequency of classroom disruptions (Houchins et al., 2009). Student motivation is another hurdle juvenile justice educators identified and how it interferes with academic instruction. Teachers insisted that students need to develop an increased level of confidence and self-worth. This suggestion could be a problematic request due to the challenges they have been exposed to. This vulnerable population often identifies as feeling lonely, with at least 20% of participants in one study sharing that they experience suicidal ideations such as wishing they were dead, feeling like killing themselves, feeling their life was not worth living, and 22% attempting suicide in the past (McPherson & Sedlak, 2010).

To address this marginalized population's numerous academic and behavioral needs, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2015) recommends hiring competent teachers who are capable of providing the youth in their custody a quality education. The
teachers employed by these facilities must have skills to address their students' various needs because these needs are often more extreme than the conditions being dealt with at a public school (Houchins et al., 2009). Students with these levels of needs can be very challenging, and it is crucial to hire and retain a first-class group of teachers (Houchins et al., 2017). It is also important to hire teachers who want to work with this population because they may stay longer and be more committed.

In my study, I would like to dig deeper into the challenges and successes occurring in the classrooms of short-term juvenile detention centers. Using a questionnaire, face-to-face interviews, and reflective journaling activities, I plan to explore how teachers in this setting perceive their jobs and their perceptions regarding challenges and successes occurring in the classroom. The outcomes collected may involve students, staff members, or even the administration. These outcomes can be analyzed to identify areas the participants suggest are working and the areas that need improvement resulting in possible improvement to the education being provided to incarcerated youth.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to shed light on the challenges and successes the educators face in providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth placed in a short-term secure juvenile detention center and how they perceive challenges and successes within their classrooms. The challenges educators experience in their classrooms will be more significant due to the combination of traumatic experiences their students have encountered in their homes and communities before their involvement in the juvenile justice system and their experiences since entering the juvenile justice system. It will also address the issues the juvenile justice field faces and how these systemic issues increase the youth's challenges when entering the juvenile justice
system. This foundation will help identify problems occurring in the classroom and connect these classroom behaviors to the youth’s background and their lived experiences at home, in their communities, and during their placement in a juvenile justice facility.

This study will allow its participants to share their experiences, struggles, and successes educating incarcerated youth while offering them a chance to reflect on these experiences and using their perspectives gained through lived experiences to improve the field both individually and systematically. By collecting these educators’ views that have been shaped by their classroom experiences working with this vulnerable population, the research may identify themes that are working and areas that need improvement.

Positionality

Savin-Baden and Howell-Major (2013) describe positionality as the researcher’s position they have selected towards their research topic. Positionality is often identified by connecting the researcher to three specific areas: the topic of the research, its participants, and the context and process of the inquiry (Holmes, 2020). A researcher’s positionality can impact the way their study is conducted and its outcomes (Rowe, 2014).

Over the last 20 years, I have served in several dissimilar roles working with youth involved in various stages of juvenile court systems, each shaping my positionality towards my research in diverse ways. During those years, I filled five roles in five different settings, each working with youth who exhibit mental, emotional, and behavioral issues and youth involved in the juvenile justice system. I spent time during college working as a teacher/counselor in a psychiatric hospital for children in crisis. Once I graduated with my degree in Special Education and Elementary Education, I accepted a teaching position at a long-term detention center for
court-adjudicated young men. This position provided me insight into incarcerated youth, their backgrounds, strengths, and weaknesses.

After 4.5 years, I left that position to take a teaching position working in an alternative education program for young men who had been suspended or expelled from their home school district. I have remained with this organization serving delinquent and dependent youth since 2007 in the roles of Teacher, Assistant Director, Director, and the Director of Operations. In these positions, I have seen or experienced first-hand some of the successes and challenges educators face working with incarcerated youth and the traumatic backgrounds each student has experienced before entering the juvenile justice system.

My previous work experiences built a foundation of beliefs, values, and identities that inform my positionality. I can relate to the participants in my study because I have served as a teacher providing academic instruction to incarcerated youth in out-of-home placements. According to James Paul Gee (2000), my identity is framed in several ways, such as my previous experience teaching (position), the fact that I have provided instruction to incarcerated youth (membership), and my belief that all students deserve the best education possible (personal trait). These factors all affect the lenses I use to view my research.

Having worked in these environments closely with this specific student population, I view my topic and its participants with passion, respect, and admiration. We need to respect the educators providing the academic instruction and offer them a sounding board to share their stories about the challenges and successes they have experienced in their classrooms and use those experiences as practical solutions. As an Educator, all students deserve a quality, effective and individualized education. In my study, I have attempted to take a reflexive approach towards my positionality. Holmes (2020) suggests using a reflexive approach so
the researchers can disclose their positionality in the research, to understand their own influence through the research process, rather than trying to eliminate their effect (Holmes 2020). I have a long relationship with both the subject and the participants, and my views and positionality may be biased. Using a reflexive approach, I can attempt to shed light on my positionality as it relates to the study’s research process for both the researcher and those reading my research; but it does not guarantee the research will be more open and honest (Holmes 2020).

My role as the researcher for this study is impacted by the fact that I have a depth of experience educating this type of student population. Further, I recognize that as a middle-aged, white male from a middle-class socioeconomic background that while there are commonalities between myself and the participants in this study, these same demographics may also impact my ability to create a connection with the students in these short-term detention facilities. In my role as an educator, success has been marked by seeing my students actively engage in learning, and as a result of their engagement, the students experience academic achievement for maybe the first time. In my experience, success is when a student is refusing to participate and sees no purpose in education, and over time you are able to persuade the student to participate and help them to understand the value of education. In my role as an educator, the challenge has been marked by not having the proper resources to provide my students with an education that meets their individual needs or participating in multiple-day professional development that isn’t relevant to my students and not applicable in my facility. Challenge is also trying to understand why a student is acting out in your class when you, as the educator, have no idea about the students’ background and the experiences they have encountered.
My experiences working with educators teaching detained youth and my experiences working directly with the youth have shaped my beliefs and may therefore have influenced the way I understood and interpreted the responses I obtained from my participants. My positionality influenced the outcomes of this study in various ways. First, I asked the interview questions in a manner that suggested to the participant that I was understanding and supportive because I was part of their group and have worked with this student population in the past. At times throughout the interview process, I would provide feedback on their responses based on my own experience as a teacher educating incarcerated youth. I think both situations could have influenced the results of the study.

**Rationale for Study**

This study’s rationale is based on the amount of literature that focuses on the issues youth face before becoming incarcerated and the challenges once they become involved in the juvenile justice system. The research also identifies issues the juvenile justice field faces and how they impact the youth in their care. Throughout the literature, research shows the perspectives of the incarcerated youth and the challenges the juvenile justice system faces regularly. Little research has been conducted on educators’ views of the challenges they face in these court-adjudicated programs. The educators’ perspectives are shaped by their own lived experiences within their classrooms and facilities and can help identify how educators perceive success and challenges in their classroom.

This study has the potential to be beneficial to administrators, policy makers, educators, and the youth they serve. By analyzing the teachers’ perspectives regarding the challenges and successes they experience within their classrooms and identifying possible themes that the participants share, the strengths and weaknesses within correctional education become clearer.
By discovering these strengths and weaknesses, the results of the research could be used to offer professional development for educators on how to improve classroom experience, resulting in more confident educators and better instruction for incarcerated youth.

**Problem Statement**

The problem being addressed in this study is the quality of education provided to youth placed in juvenile facilities. Education is often not the staff and administrators' primary focus. Their primary focus is on the youth’s safety and security in their custody, with little precedence on educating them (Leone & Wruble, 2015).

**Research Questions**

This mixed-methods study consists of one main research question with three sub-questions. This study's primary research question is: how do educators working in short-term juvenile detention centers perceive their experiences providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth? (qualitative aim)

The following sub-questions helped drive the study:

1. How do educators' perceive success in their classroom based on their experiences providing academic instruction to incarcerated youth placed in a short-term secure juvenile detention center? (qualitative aim)
2. How do educators perceive challenges in their classroom based on their experiences providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth placed in a short-term secure juvenile detention center encountered while educating incarcerated youth? (qualitative aim)
3. In what ways do the data collected from the interviews addressing the educators' perceptions of successes and challenges experienced in their classrooms educating
incarcerated youth in a short-term secure juvenile detention center correlate with the participants’ demographic and work experiences data reported in the survey? (mixed-methods aim)

**Rationale for Methods**

An explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design will be used in this study. Using a mixed-methods research design is ideal for exploring the challenges and successes educators face when educating incarcerated youth. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) speak about using multiple rationales in mixed-methods research and the importance of active participation from the study's participants, and how that process can benefit the study and the individual participant (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this study, I compared Creswell's scenario to my research and realized by conducting the research; I would provide participants the opportunity to share their experiences, struggles, and successes educating incarcerated youth while also offering them a chance to reflect on these experiences and identify areas they could improve on individually and systematically. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) explain that the use of mixed-methods research allows the researcher to eliminate the weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research while focusing entirely on both or as, in some cases, the more robust approach makes up for, the weaker of the two.

The explanatory sequential portion of this mixed-methods study was selected because it begins with the researcher conducting the quantitative section of the study, followed by the researcher collecting the qualitative data and clarifying the quantitative data collected (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). It also allows the researcher to use the participants’ characteristics in the quantitative portion of the study to help identify a purposive sampling (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). The design was ideal for my research because it allows the researcher to revisit the
The methods used in this study are a web-based questionnaire, a series of three interviews, and three reflective journaling activities. Each method provides a specific outcome necessary in conducting this study. The 38-item questionnaire was designed to collect qualitative and quantitative data addressing demographics, professional development, teaching background, and classroom experiences. The three interviews were implemented to gather as much information regarding how the educators perceive success and challenges in their classrooms. Each interview will address a specific set of questions that will build on the previous interview. After each interview, the participants’ will have 24 hours to complete a reflective journaling activity addressing the topic discussed during the last interview. The participant will be provided a prompt to help guide their reflection on their classrooms’ specific lived experiences.

**Significance of the Study**

This study’s findings will provide professionals in juvenile justice and education with multiple educators’ perspectives on how they perceive successes and challenges in their classrooms. By identifying these perceptions, the researcher may identify themes, topics, and subject areas that improve their students’ quality of education. This topic is relevant to the researcher because I have provided academic instruction and supervision to justice-involved youth in residential facilities and an alternative education program. I suggest that the educators providing educational services to this population have insight into the challenges and successes
they experience in their classrooms. Their perspectives could assist in improving the quality of education in these facilities.

In this study, I will be working with educators providing academic instruction in short-term juvenile detention centers. These facilities are short-term residential facilities housing between 36-48 males and females (Pennsylvania Partnership for Juvenile Services [PPJS], 2020). Youth from the age of 10 to 18 are sent to these facilities for committing a crime and have been found guilty, or they have allegedly broken the law, and they are awaiting court (Pennsylvania Partnership for Juvenile Services [PPJS], 2020). Students at these facilities receive 24-hour direct supervision, year-round schooling, and access to recreational activities and religious services (Pennsylvania Partnership for Juvenile Services [PPJS], 2020).

The State’s Department of Education is responsible for the educational programming in state-run facilities (Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network [PATTAN], 2020). The facilities in this study are operated by the County. These county-run facilities contract with school districts, private providers, and intermediate units to provide an education aligned with state standards and equivalent to the education students are receiving in the local school systems. The Centers themselves do not employ the teachers in these facilities; they are contractors assigned by the contracting entity responsible for the academic instruction.

Limitations

This research study has several limitations, including a small number of participants, how the participants were selected, and the use of two facilities. Due to COVID-19, the number of participants who were expected to participate in the study was reduced because facilities were not receiving the usual number of referred students. The centers were forced to cut back on teachers, resulting in a small number of participants. During the participant recruiting process,
COVID-19 was also mentioned as a reason that possible recruits could not participate in this study. They explained that COVID-19 has impacted their work and home lives, and they could not allocate the necessary time to participate. The use of two facilities was also a limitation; in retrospect, I should have enlisted additional facilities to ensure a larger pool of potential participants.

**Definition of Terms**

**Adjudication**- Adjudication is a stage in the court procedure when the Judge ascertains whether or not the youth engaged in the criminal act they are being charged with (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP], 2019).

**Adjudicated**- The word 'adjudicated' is equivalent to 'convicted' and suggests that the court concluded that the crime was committed by the juvenile (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP], 2019).

**Commitment/Placement**- As a provision after an adjudication of delinquency, the court orders the juvenile to be removed from their home. In comparison to "detention," detention can be ordered by the court or approved by a juvenile probation officer awaiting an adjudicatory or other hearing. Commitment/placement occurs only after a delinquency adjudication (Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission [JCJC], 2020).

**Delinquency**- The execution of a criminal act by a juvenile (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges [NCJFCJ], 1988).

**Delinquent Child/Juvenile/Youth**- A child ten years of age or older that the court has found to have committed a criminal act and is in need of care, supervision, or rehabilitation (Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission [JCJC], 2020).
**Juvenile Detention Center or Facility** - A public or private-owned and operated facility that is licensed and overseen by the State’s Department of Human Services to maintain custody of a juvenile for a short period of time (Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission [JCJC], 2020).

**Probation** - a stage in the court process that permits the youth to remain in their home and community under the supervision of an assigned probation officer and court-ordered stipulations if needed (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges [NCJFCJ], 1988).
Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I review the literature focusing on the challenges youth face in their homes, schools, and communities and the additional obstacles they encounter when involved with the juvenile justice system. By analyzing what the literature says about these challenges, I will provide a foundational understanding of why these challenges increase the likelihood of youth becoming involved in the juvenile justice system and how these challenges manifest themselves in the correctional education classroom, as well as their impact on the teachers of those classes. Using this foundation, I will identify how the youths’ backgrounds can influence the teacher and how the educators perceive their role, and the challenges and successes they experience in their classroom.

First, I identify the laws and mandates that guide the educational services for the children and youth involved in the justice system. Next, I address the challenges the youth are exposed to and their impact on the educational services they receive. The challenges the youth have been exposed to are: (a) poverty, (b) school/academic failure, (c) trauma/adverse childhood experiences, (d) mental health issues, (e) racism and racial disproportionality, (f) special education, (g) executive function and self-regulation, and (h) educational services. Once the challenges have been reported, I provide insight on the teachers working in short-term detention. Lastly, I included my theoretical framework, which clarifies the fundamental theories driving my study.

Laws/Mandates Influencing the Education of Children and Youth in the Justice System

Federal legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Act of 2002 have had an impact on the educational services in juvenile facilities (Koyama, 2012). NCLB
requires that all youth who attend public schools and juvenile facilities must take part in state testing and must report the scores for accountability (Gagnon et al., 2010). At the same time, IDEA provides youth who do not have a high school diploma the opportunity to continue receiving special education services until the age of twenty-two (Koyama, 2012). Both NCLB and IDEA have played a significant role in education for youth involved in the juvenile justice system and non-justice-involved youth. The justice-involved youth benefited greatly from NCLB and IDEA because students with disabilities constitute 12% of the student population in the United States but are overwhelmingly (25%) reported to the juvenile system and subject to arrests in school (Villalobos & Bohannan, 2017). With those statistics, NCLB and IDEA were designed to improve the quality of education provided in juvenile facilities.

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Act provides several requirements that facilities must follow to ensure compliance with the Act. First, states receiving any funding from the mandate are required to create plans ensuring that the correctional facilities are coordinating the educational instruction of the youth with their home school (Geib et al., 2010). It also protects incarcerated youth that share space with adult offenders and guarantees the child is unable to see or hear what the adult offenders are doing (Koyama, 2012). Despite these state and federal regulations designed to protect the youth and provide them with quality education, a large number of juvenile facilities fail to deliver the youth in their custody suitable programming (Leone & Wruble, 2015). In this situation, Leone and Wruble (2015) identify even more reason to have open discussions between federal and state representatives, facility administrators, and teachers to share their perspectives on why a large number of facilities are unable to provide their students with appropriate instruction.
Many states are not operating educational programming in their correctional facilities that fulfill the requirements put forth by the state and federal government (Leone & Wruble, 2015). Morrison and Epps (2002) identified a previous study that identified a correctional facility in a southern state with 70% of their population requiring special education services, while only 30% of that population received the services that were required by federal disability mandates. Unfortunately, the trend of juvenile facilities not following federal and state mandates is not new to the field. Leone & Meisel (1997) and the National Center of Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice (2005) state that over the last four decades, juvenile prisons have regularly not met state and federal regulations addressing academic curriculum, qualifications of their teachers, disciplinary practices, instructional techniques, and structure of the school day.

Some states operating juvenile correctional education programs have little to no supervision from the education department for that state (Southern Education Foundation, 2014). Lack of oversight has created an issue within these facilities, which results in an ineffective and inferior educational product for their youth. Academic programs in these facilities are not held to the same standards by the States' Department of Education as programs in the public school system (Leone & Wruble, 2015). This lack of consistency and oversight results from education not being the staff and administrators' primary focus. Their primary focus is on the youth’s safety and security in their custody, with little precedence on educating them (Leone & Wruble, 2015). This mindset has a negative influence on administrators, teachers, and youth. Administrators are focused primarily on safety, which is very important, but so is educating the youth in your custody. Teachers in these facilities will second guess their roles as teachers because the importance of education is not stressed, while the youth realize the adults in their facilities do not emphasize the importance of education, so they do not buy in.
The U.S. Department of Education (2014) insists that most facilities need to incorporate these vital components to operate a quality educational program: a juvenile correctional facility can make their own decisions, support themselves financially, are held responsible if needed, and transparent about their choices and actions. Over the past four decades, evidence confirms that states have been unable to provide incarcerated youth with appropriate educational services (Leone & Wruble, 2015). Because of this, litigation has been used by the U.S. Department of Justice, parents, and youth advocates to help children in juvenile facilities receive the appropriate services they require to meet their needs (Leone & Wruble, 2015).

**Exposure to Challenges that Impact the Educational Services for Incarcerated Youth**

Incarcerated youth are exposed to challenges and experiences before entering the juvenile justice system. These challenges and obstacles impact the educational services they receive in a variety of ways. These challenges and struggles are a result of these systemic issues: (a) poverty, (b) academic failure, (c) trauma, (d) mental health, (e) racism and race-based disproportionately, (f) executive functioning and self-regulation, and (g) the disproportionate number of youth with special needs placed in the facilities. The juvenile justice system is ill-equipped to address the obstacles the youth experienced before entering the system.

**Poverty**

Since 2000, there has been a steady increase in children living in poverty (Moore et al., 2009). About 20 percent of young people under 18 in the United States lived in poverty in 2013 (United States Census Bureau, 2014). The United States, despite having the world's largest economy, has the second-highest child poverty rate among 35 developed countries (Edelman, 2016).
Regardless of race, one in five youth experience poverty while growing up and have a greater chance of being delayed academically, not graduating from high school, and being poverty-stricken as adults (Holzer et al., 2007). Edelman (2016) supports Holzer et al. (2007), confirming that living in poverty as a child creates a level of stress that can delay the child’s development, both emotional and physical, while raising the probability of academic failure, and being a high school dropout, in turn resulting in a higher likelihood of economic struggles, unemployment, and connection with the criminal justice system as an adult. Machell et al. (2015) affirm that living in poverty harms a youth’s psychosocial development.

Seventy percent of the United States’ 15.5 million disadvantaged children are children of color (Edelman, 2016). Being poor is another issue with disproportionate implications on children of color, with nearly 1 out of every three children in 2012 being poor (Mallett, 2017). Poverty negatively impacts children’s educational outcomes but has a more significant effect on the educational outcomes of children of color (Mallett, 2017).

In the years when the highest brain development is likely in children, 23.8% of kids under five years of age are living in poverty (Edelman, 2016). Persistent poverty in childhood is linked with increases in antisocial behavior over time, suggesting that chronically poor youth become further detached from appropriate social behavior (McLeod & Shannon, 1993).

Research shows the negative effects poverty has on youth. These ramifications range from delayed emotional and physical development, academic deficiencies, dropping out of high school, stress, and poor outcomes as an adult. Each of these outcomes influences how the youth performs in school academically and behaviorally. The factors will not just impact the youths’ lives; they will provide additional challenges for the teachers providing this population with academic instruction. More specifically, teachers who provide educational instruction to
students in poverty are often met with the challenge of building rapport and creating connection despite a lack of understanding of home life circumstances. This disconnect is a result of seventy percent of the United States’ 15.5 million disadvantaged children are children of color (Edelman, 2016), while the teaching workforce consists of educators that are white (83%) and female (75%), thus creating a lack of both racial and gender diversity within the educator population (Ford, 2010).

**School/Academic Failure**

The students who attend high schools in communities with high poverty levels encounter numerous obstacles to achieving academic success that result in issues such as health, employment, and lack of financial earnings as adults (Jargowsky et al., 2016). Student underachievement in academics is a significant issue in America (Henry et al., 2011). In 2010, 78% of students attending public high schools graduated in 4 years; this number dropped dramatically for Hispanic (70%) and African American (66%) students (Mallett, 2017). The United States Department of Education (2010) reported that only 34% of eighth-grade students were skilled in math, and 32% were adept in reading. Students of color have rates of proficiency that are less than 50 percent of their white counterparts in reading and math, while the percentage of graduation for marginalized minority students is 25% less than their white peers (Henry et al., 2011).

Hirschfield and Gasper (2010) contend that research provides evidence that students who execute poorly, feel isolated, and are marginalized in school have a higher likelihood of engaging in delinquent behaviors. Youth who have a parent that has been incarcerated are more likely to struggle academically (Dallaire et al., 2010). Students who engage in school activities reduce the
likelihood of delinquency in their communities due to the change in interactions between their peers and their parents (Jang, 1999).

Hirschfield and Gasper (2010) agree with Jang (1999) and suggest that students who are actively engaged in school reduce the likelihood of engaging in delinquent behaviors. This is also true when students create bonds with their teachers and have a sense of commitment to their school because they are less likely to participate in substance use and delinquent behavior (Steinberg & Avenevoli, 1998). One component that Hirschfield and Gasper (2010) identified as being critical to graduating high school and having academic success in school was meaningful participation. Students who fail to graduate from high school have a higher likelihood of engaging in criminal activity and potential incarceration (Lochner & Moretti, 2004). The students who struggle to attain education are associated with an increased likelihood of imprisonment and arrest (Lochner & Moretti, 2004).

Research has shown that school academic failure can contribute to youth becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. This population is often isolated and marginalized, which results in the youth having minimal interest in participating in school activities. Studies have shown that school activities' involvement reduces the likelihood of juvenile delinquency (Lochner & Moretti, 2004; Hirschfield & Gasper, 2010). When a student becomes justice-involved, this history of academic failure and its side effects will transition with the youth and create additional instructional challenges for educators as they must work to engage and motivate the students.

**Traumatic Events (Adverse Childhood Experiences)**

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are events that result in the harm and traumatization of a child. These events consist of the neglect and abuse of a child often
associated with dysfunctional homes and family members with mental health issues, a history of drug & alcohol abuse, and criminal activity (Felitti et al., 1998). Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are prevalent and produce detrimental results in children and adults (Fagan, 2020). Research has shown that children who have been part of ACEs are more likely to exhibit mental health problems such as substance abuse, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and conduct disorders (Fox et al., 2015). Children who have suffered multiple ACEs have an increased risk of heart disease, cancer, and diseases affecting the lungs and liver, which could be life-threatening (Baglivio et al., 2015). These mental and physical health issues caused by ACEs can also result in behavioral and emotional impulsivity and affect relationships with their peers and family members; these struggles can often result in isolation and loneliness (Kowalski, 2018). When children feel alone and have no support system, they often turn to anti-social behaviors as an alternative, which increases the likelihood of juvenile justice involvement. Edalati and Nicholls (2017) examined the relationship between criminal justice involvement and adverse childhood experiences and found a significant relationship between the two in 80% of the studies.

Bender et al. (2010) designed a diagram to project possible ways children who experienced ACEs would transition from maltreatment to delinquency. She insisted that five “potential intervening risk factors” provided the transportation from maltreatment to delinquency. She examined these factors through a gender lens and focused on which factors would males and females participate in on their journey from abuse to delinquency. The five factors were mental health, the use of illegal substances, being uninterested and uninvolved in school, associating with antisocial peer groups, and being a runaway (Bender et al., 2010). Baglivio et al. (2015) identify five additional risk factors affecting youth: lack of self-control
(impulsivity), anger, aggression, receiving special education services, and consequential thinking.

Johnson (2018) suggests that the children of the United States of America involved in the criminal justice system are our most maltreated youth population. Baglivio et al. (2014) support Johnson (2018) and insist that justice-involved youth have experienced significant amounts of hardship and maltreatment compared to their peers in the general public.

In 2016, 856,130 youth were justice-involved; researchers believe that criminal justice-involved youth score higher on the ACE questionnaire than those who have not been juvenile justice-involved (Kowalski, 2018). With a population of this size, the long-term mental and physical effects of adverse childhood experiences could impact society dramatically, considering that 856,130 justice-involved youth were the totals for just 2016. Another shocking statistic is for every ACE a child goes through, their risk of becoming a dangerous, violent, and chronic offender increases by 35% (Fox et al., 2015). Justice-involved youth who require more intensive treatment while in residential facilities tend to have much higher ACE scores than youth with minimal involvement in the justice system (Cannon et al., 2016). Zettler et al. (2018) determined for every additional ACE occurring by the age of 12 will increase the likelihood by 20% of the youth being placed in a residential placement by the age of 18.

When children have exposure to violence in their homes, schools, and communities, the results can be labeled an adverse childhood experience. Haynie et al. (2009) identified a substantial sampling of students in grades seventh through twelfth and discovered that students who had been victimized or been exposed to violence were at a higher risk of being a runaway, a high school dropout, a teen parent, a victim of suicide, and juvenile justice involvement. Slovak et al. (2007) discovered in their findings that violence occurring in the home had a significant
influence on the youths’ position towards violence and guns, albeit violence in the home is reported far less than violence in schools and communities.

Mrug et al. (2008) indicate connections between exposure to violence in their communities and delinquent behaviors and violent delusions among youth. Youth who observed significant violence in their community reported that they were more likely to carry a weapon or exhibit violent behavior (Patchin et al., 2006). Nearly 1 out of 3 youth witnessed violence within their neighborhoods and communities (Mrug et al., 2008).

Justice-involved youth account for higher ACE scores than youth that have not had contact with the juvenile justice system (Kowalski, 2018). ACEs do not just increase the likelihood of youth participating in the juvenile justice system; it also increases the odds that those youth will re-offend in the future (Baglivio et al., 2014). Kowalski (2018) found that a history of ACEs causes a higher risk of being arrested and recidivating following release.

These results were consistent throughout the research; if youth experience adverse childhood experiences, youth have an increased chance of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. Johnson (2018) proposes that juvenile justice needs an overhaul and should be considered a “public health issue,” he believed this because the more ACEs a child experiences in their life, the higher the likelihood they become violent offenders.

Trauma and Adverse childhood experiences may have the most significant influence on whether or not a child becomes involved in criminal activity. The by-products of adverse childhood experiences are so brutal; they are likely to impact all facets of the youths’ lives.

The five additional risk factors affecting youth, such as lack of self-control (impulsivity), anger, aggression, receiving special education services, and consequential thinking (Baglivio et al., 2015), are important factors in the classroom. The unpredictability of these factors places
teachers in the position of being reactive in their approach rather than proactive. These additional challenges are why teachers before providing academic instruction, will need to understand the trauma the youth has endured, how it will change their classroom climate, and how to plan for it.

Mental Health

Mental health diagnosis is prevalent in incarcerated youth, with 70% of the population meeting the criteria for at least one diagnosis, while 27% of that population needs immediate attention (Shufelt & Cocozza, 2006). Since the cause of mental health disorders is unknown, each youth entering the juvenile justice system has risk factors making them more likely to suffer from mental illness. The most prevalent mental health conditions among incarcerated young people include illnesses such as anxiety, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, bipolar disorder, depression, personality disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Underwood & Washington, 2016). The National Mental Health Association (2004) asserts that when individuals are incarcerated, mental health issues can worsen. Incarcerated youth are at greater risk of future involvement in the criminal justice system as juveniles and adults if they do not receive the appropriate mental health services (Benner et al., 2013).

Sedlak and McPherson (2010) examined 7,073 incarcerated youths interviewed, finding that 70% of the sample disclosed experiencing a traumatic event, 60% dealt with anger issues, and 51% revealed complications from anxiety. Wasserman et al. (2003) discovered that 60% of incarcerated youth had been diagnosed with three or more mental health issues that are comorbid. This vulnerable population often identifies as feeling lonely, while at least 20% of the group shared experiencing suicidal ideations such as wishing they were dead, feeling like killing
themselves, feeling their life was not worth living, and 22% attempting suicide in the past (Sedlak & McPherson, 2010).

The National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice (2016) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2017) advocate for improved comprehensive mental health services in juvenile justice facilities because youth in these facilities have a higher likelihood of experiencing traumatic events which result in a higher incidence of mental health disorders. Benner et al. (2013) supports this idea and contends that incarcerated youth are at greater risk of future involvement in the criminal justice system as juveniles and adults if they do not receive the appropriate mental health services. Swank and Gagnon (2016) postulate that incarcerated youth must have access to quality mental health services that appropriately address their mental health needs. Sedlak and McPherson (2010) suggest that focusing on the youth’s mental health needs while placed in a juvenile facility could reduce recidivism.

In reality, some communities’ have identified juvenile justice facilities as the mental health provider for the youth in their custody (Swank & Gagnon, 2016). Unfortunately, this is a concern because these facilities do not have the necessary services and support to meet the mental health needs of the youth they serve. If these juvenile justice facilities were built to provide adequate mental health services to youth in their custody, they might be able to decrease the probability the youth has future involvement in the justice system; which may also increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for the youth, their families, and the communities they live in (Zeola et al., 2017).

Research shows that close to 70% of the incarcerated youth population has at least one mental health diagnosis (Shufelt & Cocozza, 2006). Educators can be sure that they will be working with several students with mental health disorders. These youth will require treatment
while in placement, and without the proper treatment, this population could provide additional challenges for the teachers in juvenile justice facilities. If the youth are receiving adequate mental health services designed to meet the individual’s needs, the educators may deal with smaller challenges, like a youth on a medication that makes them drowsy in class (Houchins et al., 2009), versus the youth not receiving appropriate treatment and being aggressive, impulsive, anxious, and consistently off task. Students with mental health disorders must receive consistent and suitable treatment to increase academic achievement. Unfortunately, research shows that detention facilities are not prepared to adequately service the youth's mental health needs in their custody (Gottesman and Schwarz, 2011). Without adequate services, teachers are left to navigate the student population's unpredictability, creating challenges in instruction, classroom control, and peer conflicts.

**Racism**

In the United States, groups of racialized individuals have been imprisoned and subjugated for more than half a century (Brisco & Khalifa, 2015). During that time, practices and policies were created to rationalize and preserve these groups' persecution (Brisco & Khalifa, 2015). The attempts to persecute and oppress these groups became known as racism. Historically, racism can unjustly paralyze communities and their residents while other communities and their residents thrive (Trent et al., 2019). Solorzano et al. (2002) portrays racism as a hierarchy based on race, strengthened by institutions' power, a power that victims of racism have never acquired. These institutions of power are courts, government-operated organizations, financial institutions, and schools (Trent et al., 2019). According to Kohli et al. (2006), white people created the idea of racism to separate themselves from other people.
Race has been used in society as a tool to incorporate or prevent specific collections of people from equal opportunities, resources, and membership (Kohli et al., 2006). Trent et al. (2019) illustrate racism as a social disease spread between generations of people resulting in the inequities seen in today's society. Jones et al. (2008) describe racism as "a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks." (p.496).

Children encounter institutional racism in their schools and communities (Trent et al., 2019). Kohli et al. (2006) stress that institutional racism preserves and spreads racist beliefs. In the United States, schooling has a tradition of racialization and bigotry (Kohli et al., 2017). From this history of racism, racial inequalities have developed and resulted in racial educational inequities. In the past, racial disparities in school were strengthened by the idea that certain groups of people were inferior to others because they did not have the same skills or knowledge as their white counterparts (Valencia, 2012).

These beliefs and inequities are also present in the court systems. These racial inequities in the court system can result in the disproportionate placement of children of color in the juvenile justice system. For example, African American youth are 140% more likely to be adjudicated than white offenders (Robson, 2014). African Americans (60%) and Hispanics (33%) make up 99% of the minorities who are involved in the juvenile justice system (OJJDP, 2014). The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2020) suggested that black students were arrested 2.43 times more than their white peers in 2019. According to OJJDP, the youth of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race, so arrests of Hispanic youth were not reported independently (OJJDP, 2020).

Children of color are overrepresented in each step of the juvenile justice process; the more involved the offender becomes in the system, the more likely significant inequalities occur
(Mallett, 2017). Kohli et al. (2006) suggest that white supremacy is deep-rooted, and children of color are trained to have an undesirable perception of themselves and their racial community. Woodson (1933) indicates that the process of education is used to preserve the racial-based hierarchy by improperly educating people of color to consider themselves less valuable than their white counterparts.

Racism can be used in schools to marginalize people of color through teacher selection, low expectations, academic tracking, bias, microaggressions, inappropriate curriculum, and inequitable services and resources. Most of the preservice education programs teachers attend before becoming teachers were designed with white students in mind (Ford, 2010). This is evident when Ladson-Billing (2001) indicates that 88% of the professors in college and university education departments are white; therefore, the students in those classes are not receiving any instruction from people of color, resulting in future educators creating a pedagogy aligned with the white agenda. This lack of racial diversity was almost identical to the teachers working in the public school system, with 83% identifying as white (Ford, 2010). With most teachers being white and the court systems disproportionately placing students of color into juvenile justice facilities, a racial gap has been created, causing further challenges for the youth and the students in these facilities.

This racial disconnect could result from teachers not being provided the proper preparation, not possessing the needed experience, or not having similar life experiences as their students, impacting their ability to teach this diverse student population. These statistics demonstrate the sharp contrast between teacher and student demographics and create an additional challenge for the educators because they may not relate to racial differences. The
teachers' challenges could include building rapport or creating connections due to a lack of understanding of their home life circumstances.

During a minority student's academic career, they will most likely have minimal interactions with minority teachers, affecting how they perceive themselves (Kohli et al., 2006). In an attempt to introduce diversity and decrease the impact of racism on students, culturally responsive pedagogy was introduced. Ladson-Billings describes culturally relevant practices as a "conceptual framework" that is student-centered and focuses on the students' real-life educational experiences, cultural upbringing, and areas that motivate the student (Knight-Manuel et al., 2016). Bergeron (2008) suggests the use of culturally responsive practices could prevent the "cultural disequilibrium."

The use of culturally responsive practices is necessary to address the diversity in classrooms today. Unfortunately, many teachers have not been provided the proper training needed to provide adequate classroom instruction to a diverse student population (Gay, 2002). Villegas and Lucas (2002) suggested that colleges and universities incorporate diversity into preservice teaching curriculum in response to the lack of training. It is also crucial for school districts and their administrators to invest in the tools necessary to provide all students an effective education (Harmon, 2012).

Teacher's expectations of their students can also be impacted by racism and racial inequalities. Teachers enter their schools and classrooms with their assumptions and expectations for their students. At times, these expectations and beliefs can manipulate the level of instruction being provided to their students, what class their students are in, and what academic advice is offered can all impact their students' academic experience (Lewis et al., 2015).
These racial inequalities also exist in the process of academic tracking. Lucas & Berends (2007) suggest that white students have a much higher likelihood of being placed on a high academic track than their black peers. Aronson and Steele (2005) propose that many children consider white students more intelligent than students of color. Their academic achievement is impacted by accepting this academic tracking stereotype (Aronson & Steele, 2005). The location is also a factor in some of these racial inequalities. Teachers working in low-income schools, with most of their students being African-American, focus on their students' shortfalls and have little to no responsibility for their students' learning. In contrast, in middle-class schools filled with white students, the teachers concentrate on strengthening their students' academic skills and take more responsibility for their students' learning (Diamond et al., 2004).

Teachers also bring bias into their classrooms. Curtis (1998) believes that racial bias exists on all sides of the racial and gender gap and that Whites consciously and unconsciously have a bias against Blacks and vice versa. Research has identified issues that connect the school faculty's racial ideologies to negative school outcomes (Alvare`, 2018). Teacher bias can take the form of microaggressions focused on race and ethnicity. These microaggressions can create an environment that is not inclusive and unwelcoming; because the words or actions that may have been shared on purpose or by accident include messages that include inappropriate labels and intolerance (Kupchik, 2016). These microaggressions shared by teachers may not be deliberate, but they can have a powerful effect on the students (Embrick et al., 2017). These experiences can leave the student feeling uncomfortable, non-existent, and insecure (Quijada Cerecer, 2013).

Staats (2016) defines implicit bias "as the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner (p. 29)" Implicit bias can create challenges for students, which could prevent them from participating in opportunities or
achieving success (Staats, 2016). Implicit bias can play a role in a teacher's decision-making, rendering them unaware, especially when disciplining their students. Disciplinary practices are subjective and based on how the teacher perceives the infraction and whether discipline is necessary (Staats, 2016). Each teacher may perceive behaviors differently, explaining why some students are disciplined while others are not. As a result of the teacher's conscious and unconscious bias and the subjectivity of their decision making, there is the chance that privileged youth will be encounter less punitive discipline policies and practices while students of color receive more punishing disciplinary procedures (Gregory et al., 2017).

Teachers may discipline students of color differently from their white peers, creating inequality in the school disciplinary system. This disparity in disciplinary practices between white students and students of color results in more discipline referrals for students of color, increasing the odds of students of color being involved in the juvenile justice system. If teachers can identify their implicit bias, they will improve student achievement and help their students be the best they can be (Staats, 2016).

The curriculums being used in schools propagate racism. Kohli et al. (2006) imply that school curriculums are used to strengthen white supremacy's racist ideologies while portraying anything that is not white as subordinate. These curriculums' messages focus on people of color's inadequacies while emphasizing white dominance and training them to identify their place in the racial hierarchy (Kohli et al., 2006). Many schools allege they are using multiculturalism; unfortunately, that is not the case, and multiculturalism is not being practiced (Kohli et al., 2006).

Orfield and Lee (2005) point out that schools with most of the population being people of color receive inadequate resources, untrained teachers, and unacceptable facilities, unlike the
white schools. The lack of equitable resources confirms that racism is entrenched in our educational systems' policies and practices, which spreads inequity in communities of people of color (Kohli et al., 2006). Unfortunately, some students are not privy to educational inequity because they are unaware of their white counterparts' services, and they are aware of the inadequate services they have received. Kohli et al. (2017) expressed their surprise at the little amount of research addressing racism in schools since there is such influential substantiation of racism in the educational policies and procedures guiding the K-12 school system.

Each of these racial inequities identified influences the students and provides them with one more challenge they need to overcome. Unfortunately, the results of some of these inequities like structural racism, disciplinary practices, and teacher bias can result in a student becoming part of the juvenile justice system and possibly being placed in a facility. These racist experiences the youth encounters will influence how they are educated in these facilities and can cause challenges for the facility's teachers.

**Racial-Based Disproportionality**

The United States criminal justice system is ingrained in racial inequalities (Oglesby-Neal & Peterson, 2020). For a long time, the criminal justice system has had disproportionate impacts on young people from racially ethnic minority backgrounds and economically deprived neighborhoods (National Council on Disability, 2015). Research conducted on the national level has identified racial inequalities present at each level of the juvenile justice system (Puzzanchera & Hockenberry, 2016). By identifying these inequities, the justice system created disproportionate minority contact to address the racial inequality occurring in the system. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2014) refers to Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) as the rates of juvenile justice contact between young people of a
particular minority group, which vary considerably from white non-Hispanic youth contact rates. Before 2002, DMC stood for disproportionate minority confinement, but in The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 2002, the term “confinement” was replaced with “contact” to address the racial differences found in each stage of the juvenile justice system (Majumdar, 2017).

Historically, students of color have been overrepresented in the juvenile justice system (Piquero, 2008). The over-representation of racial minorities, particularly African Americans, was recognized close to 1935 (Kempf-Leonard, 2007). Research has shown that youth of color are at a higher risk than white youth to have police contact, be arrested, and have greater involvement with the juvenile justice system (Puzzanchera & Hockenberry, 2013). In 2010, African Americans made up 13.6% of the U.S. population, according to the United States Census Bureau (2010), while the United States Department of Justice (2013) found this population representing 28% of all arrests. These statistics are identical to the juvenile justice system, with African American youth making up 57.4% percent of all youth arrested for manslaughter and 67.8% of those arrested for robbery (Burton & Ginsberg, 2012) despite these youth only representing 15% of the United States population of youth (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

The United States Department of Justice estimates that delinquency has seen a drastic reduction since 2005, but minority youth have a higher likelihood of being petitioned to court or incarcerated than their white counterparts (Hockenberry & Puzzanchera, 2018). When the court places youth in residential facilities, minority youth are more likely to be placed in facilities that address physical activity such as boot camps and wilderness challenge programs than the therapeutic placements their white counterparts attend (Fader et al., 2014). Despite attempts to reduce disproportionate minority contact for juveniles, disproportionality has not decreased in
the juvenile justice system (Burton & Ginsberg, 2012). The juvenile population in the United States in 2017 consists of whites (75%), blacks (16%), American Indians (2%), and Asian (6%), although 52% of all the arrests for violent crimes involved black youth (Puzzanchera, 2019). The murder arrest rate in 2017 for black youth was more than seven times higher than their white counterparts, while the robbery arrest rate was ten times higher for black youth (Puzzanchera, 2019). After seeing a steady decline over two decades, these arrest rates have increased significantly since the early 2000s. These statistics provide a strong foundation that racial-based disproportionality is an issue in the juvenile justice system. Unfortunately, these statistics show that children of color have a higher probability of interacting with the juvenile justice system, therefore creating a greater risk of them becoming justice-involved and experiencing adverse outcomes as an adult (Oglesby-Neal & Peterson, 2020).

These statistics demonstrate the sharp contrast between teacher and student demographics and create an additional challenge for the educators because they may not relate due to racial differences. Ford (2010) recognizes this challenge because the majority of educators are white (83%) and female (75%), thus creating a lack of both racial and gender diversity within the educator population.

**Special Education Disproportionality**

A large number of students with special needs that enter the juvenile justice system are eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) because they require intensive services designed to meet their acute educational, mental health, and social needs as well as address their substantial behavior and learning concerns (Quinn et al., 2005). According to the research, students with disabilities are often punished more frequently than students without disabilities and are constantly subjected to disciplinary practices
designed to exclude them (Sullivan et al., 2014). Special Education students who are frequently involved with school discipline and feel like they are always failing can feel excluded and develop a poor self-image, resulting in involvement in the juvenile justice system (Culliver & Sigler, 1991). Students with disabilities constitute 12% of the student population in the United States but are overwhelmingly (25%) reported to the juvenile system and subject to arrests in school (Villalobos & Bohannan, 2017).

Students with disabilities have difficulty finishing academic assignments, resulting in exhibiting behaviors that require disciplinary referrals and suspension (Skiba & Williams, 2014). Quinn et al. (2005) suggest that many of the students with disabilities entering the juvenile justice system have endured failure in school due to being significantly below grade level academically. School-age students labeled as having a behavior or learning disability are more prone to drop out of school and are at higher risk of incarceration (Annamma et al., 2014).

In a study conducted by Mendoza et al. (2020), researchers examined the likelihood of youth with disabilities entering the juvenile justice system compared to their non-disabled counterparts. The study found that students labeled with an intellectual disability are less likely to become justice-involved than their non-disabled peers, while students classified as emotionally disturbed are significantly more likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system than their classmates without disabilities (Mendoza et al., 2020). Brier (1989) proposed a hypothesis explaining why students with disabilities are more prone to be labeled delinquent than students without disabilities; he argues that students with disabilities exhibit antisocial behavior because they have challenges intellectually and neurologically. For teachers, many of whom may be unqualified to provide support to youths with disabilities, this becomes a challenge as
they navigate instruction and work to find a way to create balance for those with behavioral challenges.

For a long time, youth with disabilities’ involvement in the juvenile justice system has been a significant problem because the reporting process and data collection are not held to the same standard as disproportionate minority contact (Kincaid & Sullivan, 2019). The only federal reporting requirement for students with disabilities placed in juvenile justice facilities comes from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2006). Hockenberry and Puzzanchera (2018) contend that a great deal of previous research concentrated on students with disabilities residing in correctional facilities. This population represents a small percent of juvenile offenders who mainly commit dangerous crimes are repeat offenders. This research focus is significant but does not address the disproportionality occurring in different points of contact with the juvenile justice system, such as arrest, adjudication, court referral, or detention (Kincaid & Sullivan, 2019). The juvenile court system and public schools have created a relationship that is detrimental to students with special needs and other vulnerable populations (Mallett, 2016); this bond has been identified as the “school to prison pipeline” or the “school pathway to the juvenile system” (Marsh, 2014).

**Executive Function and Self-Regulation**

Gioia et al. (2002) describe executive functioning as the ability to display higher-order cognitive processing, organizing or predicting future events, reasoning, displaying versatility, or completing tasks. Many people under the age of 25 have deficiencies in their skills to prepare, coordinate, govern their behaviors, and realize the outcomes associated with their decision-making (Yoder & Precht, 2020).
Youth with executive functioning deficits are prone to many behavior issues that can increase the likelihood of committing crimes (Yoder & Precht, 2020). Research indicates a significant correlation between youth with executive functioning deficits and those committing crimes (Burton et al., 2016). Severe executive dysfunction in young people can be associated with more severe criminality (Yoder & Precht, 2020).

Juvenile justice-involved youth are at a higher risk of suffering from executive functioning deficits, which impede their intellectual ability resulting in lower IQ scores and marginal academic achievement (Zou et al., 2013). Yoder and Precht (2020) identified a significant connection between abuse and all executive functioning areas, which indicates justice-involved youth who are victimized at a young age will have a higher risk of deficiencies in neurological development.

Self-regulation is crucial during childhood because juveniles cultivate the capability to govern their behavior (Fine et al., 2017). Research identifies youth with minimal self-regulation skills are at a disadvantage developmentally and more likely to participate in criminal and delinquent behaviors (Fine et al., 2017). In a study by Baglivio et al. (2016), they discovered justice-involved youth from Florida who had self-regulation deficiencies were more likely to re-offend; also, they were more likely to re-offend in a shorter amount of time. Self-regulation negatively correlates with substance abuse (Wills et al., 2006), while Miller and Byrnes (2001) identified a negative relationship between self-regulation and youth’s academic proficiency and decision-making. High impulsiveness levels were correlated with a greater probability of recidivism and extended periods of incarceration among incarcerated males (Vitacco et al., 2002). Concepts of self-regulation, such as impulsiveness and decision-making, could be associated with delinquency (Himelstein et al., 2011).
Students with deficiencies in executive functioning and self-regulation will struggle in academic classrooms without proper support in place. Not only does executive dysfunction and the inability to self-regulate increase the likelihood of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system, but it also creates additional challenges for the student and the teacher. Impulsivity, poor decision making (Himelstein et al., 2011), and lower than average IQ (Zou et al., 2013) are prevalent in students with executive dysfunction and deficits in self-regulating and provides additional challenges for the classroom teacher.

**Educational Services**

The number one issue occurring within these facilities is that the staff and administrations' primary focus is on the youth's safety and security in their custody but put little precedence on educating the youth (Leone & Wruble, 2015). Safety and security are crucial and should be on top of the priority list for facilities, but the educational programming for these youth is just as important. Koyama (2012) posits the most common difficulties occurring within the majority of juvenile facilities are the lack of support from the local school districts, a transient student population, and education not being on the top of the facility's priority list.

The resources facilities have available, or their lack of resources for the students and teachers, is another reason students do not receive an adequate education while in the juvenile justice system’s custody. Koyama (2012) contends that the combination of not enough resources, a shortage of classroom space, and a wide array of academic needs can be difficult for educators to provide effective academic instruction. In a study conducted by Houchins et al. (2009), educators recognized materials and supplies to be an issue in their facilities because they were inadequate and did not meet the teachers' needs or the students. These teachers suggested that teachers meet with the assigned person responsible for purchasing the materials and aligning the
yearly goals and objectives with the specific supplies needed to achieve the goals and objectives (Houchins et al., 2009). Many facilities housing incarcerated youth need standard education resources such as textbooks, classroom space, and teachers, which is often impacted even more by an inappropriate curriculum, unqualified teachers, and minimal classroom instruction (Twomey, 2008). Geib et al. (2010) also discovered that many facilities do not have access to the educational records for the youth in their custody, their staff has minimal experience in education, and they have access to a small amount of space that is not appropriate for a classroom.

The lack of appropriate classroom space is also a detriment to the students, teachers, and facilities because it results in the overcrowding of classrooms, which creates an additional burden for both qualified and unqualified teachers. Educators in these facilities struggle to accommodate the academic and behavioral needs of students who are in different grades and on different skill levels, all placed in the same classroom (Koyama, 2012). Teachers working in juvenile justice facilities identified the size of their classes, the variety of different grade levels, and their students' instructional needs as a challenge making it very difficult to facilitate each student to achieve their academic goals (Houchins et al., 2009). Abrams (2005) identifies over-enrollment issues, insufficient services, and juvenile facilities abuse as a regular occurrence rather than an exception. These issues are concerning in many ways and will directly shape the education provided within the facilities.

To operate a quality educational program, juvenile justice facilities need to provide a high level of academic instruction consistently. Unfortunately, that is not occurring in all facilities. In some facilities, educational classes are not always held, or they are not held as frequently as they should (Twomey, 2008). A shortage of staff and especially teachers, has a dramatic impact on
the educational services provided to the youth in these facilities. In some states, teacher
vacancies create additional responsibility for the other staff in the facility because they have to
manage larger than typical class sizes and work with students who received fewer hours of
school than the state requires (Leone & Meisel, 1997). Teacher vacancies often result in students
not receiving the instruction they need, and teachers upset and angry that they are trying to teach
a group that is too large to manage. These facilities also view their educators as tutors,
disciplinarians, and moderators instead of teachers (Young et al., 2010).

The time a youth spends in a facility also plays a part in the academic services while in
placement. An incarcerated youth remains in a correctional facility for an average of six months;
if the child cannot maintain their coursework, it could impact a full academic school year
(Leone, 2002). While some students in correctional facilities only stay a short time, which
creates challenges for the educators to design and implement an effective educational program
for the youth (Koyama, 2012). Whether a student is in short-term detention or spends a more
extended time in a juvenile facility, Ahmad and Miller (2015) contend absence from school, even
for a short time, can have a damaging result on the student maintaining their classwork and
progressing towards graduation.

Incarcerated youth being placed in these facilities by the juvenile court system come from
diverse and traumatic backgrounds and often require intensive support to address their needs.
The majority of justice-involved youth have mental health needs and are severely deficient
academically (Leone & Weinberg, 2012). Some of the youth entering these facilities have a
history of academic failure and underdeveloped skills, making it very difficult for the child and
the teacher to make academics progress inside residential facilities (Young et al., 2010). Maguin
and Loeber (1996) and the Southern Education Foundation (2014) have identified students who
have a disability, are raised in poverty, struggle academically, or their families are transient are more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system. These factors they identify are alarming because the youth has no control over each of those causes, and each one can affect their academic achievement.

High school-age students involved in the juvenile court system have a higher rate of dropping out (Sweeten, 2006). Due to the high rate of justice-involved youth dropping out of high school Sullivan (2018) stresses the importance that juvenile detention facilities need to provide these children with a quality education because it may be the final possibility for those youth to obtain an education. To improve correctional education provided to incarcerated youth, the federal and state government have included incarcerated youth in several regulations designed to protect the child's rights and give them a quality education that is equivalent to their peers in the public school system.

On December 4, 2014, a letter was distributed by The U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education highlighting the seriousness of ensuring our incarcerated youth population receives an education that is equivalent to the education being provided to students in a traditional school setting (U.S. Department of Justice; U.S. Department of Education, 2014). The Joint letter from the Department of Justice and the Department of Education (as cited in Houchins et al., 2017) said,

For youth who are confined in juvenile justice facilities, providing high-quality correctional education that is comparable to offerings in traditional public schools is one of the most powerful and cost-effective levers we have to ensure that youth are successful once released and are able to avoid future contact with the justice system. High-quality correctional education, training, and treatment are essential components of meaning
rehabilitation because these equip youth with the skills needed to successfully reenter their communities and either continue their education or join the workforce. We urge leaders throughout the country to be creative in taking steps to improve traditional academic offerings for youth confined in juvenile justice facilities. (p.211)

This letter shows the commitment the United States government has towards improving the quality of education offered in juvenile justice facilities and the teachers providing the instruction (Houchins et al., 2017). This optimistic vision set forth by the United States Department of Education and the Department of Justice in 2014 does not seem to be a reality in 2021.

**Teachers in Short-Term Detention Centers**

Teaching in juvenile corrections offers many unique challenges specific to the world of juvenile justice (Gagnon et al., 2012). These challenges are prevalent in juvenile detention centers; despite their smaller size and shorter length of stay than a traditional juvenile justice facility. In juvenile detention centers, these challenges can range from the students’ limitations academically and behaviorally, students who exhibit unpredictable behaviors in class due to mental health issues and surviving adverse childhood experiences, teachers that are not prepared to educate this vulnerable population, a disconnect between the students and the educators, and a lack of appropriate materials and resources. Educators working in this field must have the skill set necessary to address their students' academic and behavioral needs, which are often more severe than the needs being tackled in the public school system (Houchins et al., 2009).

These short-term detention centers contract with school districts, educational entities, and private providers responsible for providing educational services aligned with state standards and equivalent to the education students are receiving in their local school systems (PATTAN, 2020).
The Centers themselves do not employ the teachers in these facilities; they are contractors assigned by the contracting entity responsible for providing the academic instruction; the Center does provide input on the educators being placed in the center. (B. Hubbard, personal communication, October 28, 2020). This relationship may cause a possible disconnect between the employer, the detention center, and the youth they are responsible for educating because they are not an employee of the center. The teachers in these positions are required to be state-certified. Due to the small setting, administrators often look for veteran special education teachers who are highly qualified or have a certification that is grandfathered in by the State’s Department of Education to be in compliance (B. Hubbard, personal communication, October 28, 2020).

Addressing the academic and behavioral needs of the students in the custody of the juvenile detention center provides its challenges as well as advantages in comparison to larger juvenile justice facilities. Teachers working in three state-run secure-care residential facilities identified the size of their classes, the variety of different grade levels, and their students’ instructional needs as a challenge making it very difficult to facilitate each student to achieve their academic goals (Houchins et al., 2009). Teachers working in juvenile detention centers have mentioned they prefer working in this setting because of the small class size (B. Hubbard, personal communication, October 28, 2020). As a result of the small class size and use of an online educational curriculum, these teachers can address the variety of instructional needs in their classes by individualizing the online course work to meet the needs of each of their students (B. Hubbard, personal communication, October 28, 2020). Another challenge they encounter is offering their students a beneficial educational experience due to the short length of time the youth are placed in detention (Benner et al., 2017).
An additional challenge teachers are faced with is teaching youth with undiagnosed and untreated mental health issues. The most prevalent mental health conditions among incarcerated young people include illnesses such as anxiety, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, bipolar disorder, depression, personality disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Underwood & Washington, 2016); each of these conditions could lead to unpredictable behavior that the teacher is not prepared to handle. Youth with mental health needs in the justice system’s custody are often not addressed due to inadequate services, lack of training, and minimal resources (Gonzalez, 2017). Gottesman and Schwarz (2011) posit that detention facilities are not prepared to adequately service the youth's mental health needs in their custody. These facilities often lack the screening and assessment resources to identify mental health concerns; this lack of resources results in the youth not receiving the necessary services they need (McPherson & Sedlak, 2010). This research suggests training needs to be provided to classroom teachers in these facilities to work with students with mental health issues.

Maccini et al. (2006) suggest that some teachers working in juvenile corrections have inadequate knowledge of their content areas and do not implement instructional techniques that are research-based. Houchins et al. (2009) support Maccini et al. (2006) while insisting that teachers working in these facilities often do not have the necessary skills to support students' needs in their custody properly. The teachers having inadequate content knowledge and not receiving the necessary support from facility administrators are just a few reasons why these teachers' professional development is essential (Gagnon et al., 2012). Educators working in juvenile detention centers are often required to attend professional development offered by the educational entity contracting with the detention center. This professional development is often not relevant to their role as juvenile justice teachers (B. Hubbard, personal communication,
The Detention Center offers these same educators the opportunity to find relevant professional development designed to meet their students' needs and their needs as an educator in a detention center at no cost (B. Hubbard, personal communication, October 28, 2020). To prepare these educators to work with this population, relevant and useful professional development needs to be provided.

Educators and students in this setting may struggle to build relationships with each other due to the lack of diversity within teaching. The juvenile population in the United States in 2017 consists of whites (75%), blacks (16%), American Indians (2%), and Asian (6%), although 52% of all the arrests for violent crimes involved black youth (Puzzanchera, 2019). With statistics like this, it will be difficult for these youth who are disproportionately placed based on race will struggle to relate to educators that Ford (2010) indicates as being white (83%) and female (75%), thus creating a lack of both racial and gender diversity within the educator population. This also creates a possible disconnect between the staff and the students. This is an issue because research suggests that students who develop bonds with their teachers and have a sense of commitment to their school are less likely to participate in substance use and delinquent behavior (Steinberg & Avenevoli, 1998).

These are just some of the challenges teachers working in short-term detention centers experience. In my study, using face-to-face interviews and reflective journal activities, I plan to take a closer look at these challenges and any new obstacles the participants identify as a challenge.

**Theoretical Framework**

Eisenhart (1991) views the theoretical framework as "a structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory…constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain
phenomena and relationships" (1991, p. 205). The "blueprint" for a complete dissertation research study is its theoretical framework (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). Mertens (1998) explains that the study's theoretical framework impacts each decision made while conducting your research. These authors all suggest that an appropriate theoretical framework is a crucial piece to any impactful research inquiry. This study's theoretical framework builds around the theories of Constructivism, experiential learning, self-efficacy, and Gibbs's reflective cycle. Each of these components plays a critical part in this study progressing from the beginning to the conclusion.

Constructivism

The foundation of this study's theoretical framework is Constructivism. I argue that Constructivism is the theory best suited to address the purpose and research questions of this study because Constructivism infers that individuals build knowledge and generate understanding through individual and social experiences (Narayan et al., 2013). Denzin (2012) perfectly describes the constructivist worldview that is driving the researcher to conduct this study as a "bottom-up" approach; he purports that the "bottom-up" approach allows the researcher to collect participant's perspectives and use them to generate wide-ranging patterns and, in the end, results in the broader understanding of the topic (Denzin, 2012).

The author intends to use this approach to interview educators who have experienced challenges and successes while educating incarcerated youth. The interview data is collected to bring together multiple realities to create a collection of diverse experiences and acquired knowledge that can be analyzed to improve the happenings in correctional education and juvenile justice. Crotty's (1998) idea is that there is no absolute reality shared by all; instead, each reality is free of thought and understood through the individual learner's interpretation, supporting the study's intention. The knowledge obtained from these experiences is not learned
in a textbook, from a classroom lecture, nor a college course. Experience is the only way to acquire this level of knowledge. Constructivism supports this idea and trusts that knowledge is built by the individual, not just transferred from one to another (Narayan et al., 2013).

**Experiential Learning Theory**

Experiential learning is most commonly known as a type of learning derived from lived experiences (Kolb, 2014). Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) plays a vital role in the theoretical framework of this study because this study's premise is based on the perceptions of educators, and how their experiences in their classrooms have shaped their perceptions towards teaching incarcerated youth and how they perceive successes and challenges in their class. Kolb describes experiential learning theory as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, as cited in Lee et al., 2008, p. 158). Experience is not merely an event that happens; it is an event with meaning (Boud et al., 1993). Zijdemans-Boudreau et al. (2013) assert that knowledge is acquired through experiencing an event and reflecting on what was gained from that experience.

Kolb (1984) suggests that the learning process as a whole is experiential, while educators in the field suggest that examining the learning process and creating activities using the framework of ELT can provide their students with "concrete experiences" and a source to build knowledge and opportunities to reflect upon those experiences. In this study, these concrete experiences will consist of encounters in their classrooms while providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth. Kolb (1984) suggests that learning is a process that involves one's environment and requires frequent change and involvement. The participants of this study all work in a similar work environment, but each participant's experience and level of knowledge acquired will be different based on the individuals' previous experiences, level of engagement
with their students, and their willingness to change or improve the offering of services and support to their students.

Over the past thirty years, ELT has been used to provide opportunities for professionals to create meaningful connections to their craft as a form of professional development, which in turn can result in positive change within their learning communities (Zijdemans-Boudreau et al., 2013). Individuals create knowledge from experience rather than just from the instruction they receive (Zijdemans-Boudreau et al., 2013). This study's participants have received pre-service instruction in preparation to provide academic services and support to incarcerated youth. Still, their experiences may have more impact on how they operate their classrooms, work with their students, and reflect on their successes and challenges. Boud et al. (1993) posit that individuals often connect meaning to their experiences, while other individuals will try and impress their purpose of the experience onto us. Ultimately, we provide meaning to our own experiences because others cannot know how we see or feel about that specific experience.

Dyke (2009) suggests that Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) should emphasize the role of reflection and learning with others to "encourage people to critically engage with other forms of expertise, reflect upon the received wisdom of others, test it in practice and be open to the creation of knowledge that works in a given time and place, without compromising the lives and futures of other" (p. 295). The interviews and the reflective journal activities will support Dyke’s (2009) emphasis on reflection while allowing the researcher to gather information on how the participants perceive challenges and success within their classrooms and why they think they perceive them that way.
**Gibb’s Reflective Cycle**

Gibbs's reflective cycle provides a framework that can act as a guide for conducting interviews because it includes question prompts, focuses on vital ideas, and provides the researcher and the interviewee a step-by-step diagram to answer and reflect on the provided prompts in each phase of the cycle (Husebo et al., 2015). This framework was the reason Gibbs's (1988) reflective cycle aligned with this study more than Kolb's (1984) experiential cycle. The design of Gibbs's (1988) reflective cycle emulates Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle, while Gibbs's cycle consists of 6 phases, Kolb's only consists of 4 stages, and Gibbs includes an emotional component to his cycle (Husebo et al., 2015). The emotional part that Gibbs has is a crucial piece of this theoretical framework because it focuses on teachers' perceptions and lived experiences, which can be emotional.

Reflection is a crucial contributor to this theoretical framework because the purpose of each tool the researcher is using is to extract the teachers' past lived experiences that connect to challenging and triumphant moments in their classrooms and by using reflective journal activities to have them reflect on each experience using the Gibbs's (1988) reflective cycle. Jasper and Rosser (2013) posit that reflection is how individuals learn from their experiences; it allows them to contemplate and assess their prior beliefs and knowledge based on the new venture and incorporate the knowledge gained into future use. Gibbs (1988) encourages that reflection should occur following the experience and aligns appropriately with this study's sequence.
Self-Efficacy

Akhtar (2008) describes individuals who believe in their abilities to take challenges head-on and complete tasks at a high level assigned to them exhibit strong self-efficacy skills. Barni et al. (2019) suggest that:

Teachers' self-efficacy, namely teachers' beliefs in their ability to effectively handle the tasks, obligations, and challenges related to their professional activity, plays a key role in influencing important academic outcomes (e.g., students' achievement and motivation) and well-being in the working environment. (p. 1)

Working in correctional education, teachers need strong self-efficacy skills to avoid burnout, stress, and anxiety because the position and the population can be challenging at times. Bandura (1988) noted that teachers with little to no belief that they can manage the situations or pressures occurring in their classrooms experience higher anxiety levels and exhibit lower self-efficacy skills. When educating this vulnerable population, the teachers must possess a high level of self-efficacy to ensure they can provide effective academic services and supports designed to meet their students' needs.

Figure 1.0 identifies the theories used as the foundation of this study and the progression of the theories driving my study. It introduces the questionnaire, interviews, and reflective journal activities as the instruments used to collect the quantitative and qualitative data, and lastly, it identifies the end goal of the study, illustrating the success and challenges of educators who are providing services and support to incarcerated youth so as to identify instructional strengths and opportunities for improvement.
Review of Related Studies

Houchins et al. (2009) conducted a study to identify challenges and possible solutions to delivering committed youth with a more practical education from the teachers' perspectives providing the service. There were 78 participants (28 males, 50 females) in this study; all were teachers working in three state-run residential juvenile justice facilities in Louisiana. The individuals who participated had an average of 22 years of teaching experience, nine years of teaching in a juvenile justice setting, and the mean age of 50 years old. The facilities in this study were all state-run, but each facility housed different youth numbers, and only one was co-ed; the other two housed only male offenders. The clients in these facilities were between the ages of 12-21, and the majority were males since two of the three facilities only serviced males.

Houchins et al. (2009) distributed a survey to all educators working at the three facilities that collected qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative portion of the survey asked teachers to list the three most significant challenges that hinder their ability to provide appropriate academic instruction and select one to three ways to improve those challenges. They used the constant comparative method (CCM) to assess the data as it is a reliable technique used
to organize qualitative data into themes (Houchins et al., 2009). The researchers found nine topics that summarize the challenges and possible solutions identified by the participants. They were: (a) personnel concerns, (b) academics, (c) student needs, (d) behavior and discipline, (e) materials and supplies, (f) parental involvement, (g) funding, (h) communication, and (i) facilities.

The participants identified obstacles related to personal concerns and staff support. These included facility administrators, low staff motivation, insufficient support for staff, documentation, building security, prohibited materials, and racism (Houchins et al., 2009). There was a focus on the lack of support they received from building administrators and the need for those administrators to establish goals, objectives, and expectations for the staff while also being present throughout the building and providing constructive feedback. Staff motivation was highlighted where teachers felt like they did not have a voice at work, and there were no defined expectations for themselves or their co-workers. Some teachers indicated inequity whereby teachers with more seniority were given more rights and freedoms within their schools.

To remedy these issues, the teachers suggested that they be included in management teams and conduct meetings frequently to discuss their accomplishments and hurdles at work. The teachers also indicated that they were looking for more professional development opportunities available to all staff.

Documentation was another challenge identified by the participants (Houchins et al., 2009). They suggested that they were required to complete too much documentation and insisted that they be provided with one full day every month to complete their documentation. A recommendation was for one person in the facility to complete all of the special education
paperwork and ensure that all teachers were teaching the same subject and topic area at the same time were proposed.

Academics was a prevalent theme in Houchins et al. (2009) work. They break academics down into four key sections, including the first one, student expectations. The teachers suggest that the students' expectations are unattainable because the curriculum provided is not designed to meet their students' needs. They further indicated that a new curriculum should be used that meets the needs of the majority of the students in their custody. Some stressed the need for more vocational training, while others pushed for a curriculum that would challenge their students and provide them with the skills necessary to succeed outside of the facility. Teachers also stressed the importance of not scheduling students' activities during class time (Houchins et al., 2009). These scheduled activities interfere with the students' ability to learn and stay on track academically.

The study's teachers also noted that their students' academic diversity hindered their ability to provide adequate academic instruction (Houchins et al., 2009). They mentioned that the students in their classrooms were on various instructional levels making it difficult to provide quality instruction. Other educators recommend starting with the basics, expressing that they could not teach a student to read if they cannot comprehend the alphabet. Alternatively, they could decrease the class size down to a maximum of seven students. The participants also insisted that classrooms should be assigned by levels, so you can design a lesson plan that meets the needs of the majority of your class.

Houchins et al. (2009) also suggested that building security was a hurdle for educators to overcome to provide quality education. Teachers stated that the building's security staff needed additional training related to working in a learning environment and exhibiting more professional
behavior, so they do not interrupt the classroom. Along the same lines, contraband in class was a barrier the teachers identified. The participants suggested that the facilities organize a committee to address managing and controlling contraband and develop protocol related to enforcing rules with youth and staff (Houchins et al., 2009).

The participants also shared that racism was an obstacle when it came to providing a quality academic experience. Some teachers expressed that all students should be eligible to participate in examinations offered in the facility, while others identified facility practices of promoting under-qualified staff based on their skin color. Lastly, teachers expressed that white educators who refer to African American students as "animals" should not be employed by the facility (Houchins et al., 2009, p. 53).

The researchers broke down student needs into three components: (a) student motivation, (b) support services of students, and (c) attire (Houchins et al., 2009). The study's teachers insisted that their students lacked the confidence needed to learn, relevant instruction and curriculum, and appropriate rewards for positive behavior and achievements. They provided suggestions such as a change of environment, earlier bedtimes, and dispensing medication at a time that won't impact their classwork.

To remedy the lack of accessible student supports, the teachers recommended hiring additional counselors to assist the teachers and the students while enabling them to transition in and out of the facility (Houchins et al., 2009). Finally, they recognized student attire as a challenge. Teachers suggested that the student be provided with clothing that fits appropriately.

The study participants recognized behavior and discipline as significant obstacles (Houchins et al., 2009). The participants acknowledged classroom disruptions, not following rules, and staff inconsistency when enforcing the rules as obstacles. Possible solutions for these
issues were instituting an effective behavior management system including rewards, developing programming that stresses student accountability, beneficial counseling, and making sure the students participate in highly structured activities to reduce downtime.

The participants considered materials and supplies inadequate and thus an issue in their facilities (Houchin et al., 2009). Educators suggested that teachers meet with the person responsible for purchasing materials and align the yearly goals and objectives with the specific supplies needed to achieve them. Some pushed for textbooks and workbooks for all of their students, while others went for technology and culturally relevant materials.

Houchins et al. (2009) recognized the last three themes were funding, parental involvement, and communication. Each theme serves as a barrier to providing incarcerated youth with an education equivalent to that of public school students. Teachers insisted that funding was not being used appropriately and suggested they could use the additional funding to purchase items such as computers, software, and the training necessary to use the technology appropriately (Houchins et al., 2009). They also emphasized the need to upgrade their current facilities and hire additional staff.

The participants of this study contended that parental involvement was an issue impacting the level of education provided. The lack of parental involvement was a concern for the teachers; they stressed the importance of parents needing to be involved in any decision regarding their child (Houchins et al., 2009). They also proposed finding a way for parents to visit their children more frequently and become more involved in the educational process. Lastly, communication was cited as an obstacle for the participants. Teachers cited communication between the administration and the teacher as problematic. Educators want to be included in the decision-
making process before decisions have been made. They want to be asked for their feedback so their voices can be heard.

Before this study, agencies had very little knowledge related to teachers' perspectives on strengthening the level of academic instruction and programming in juvenile justice-run facilities (Houchins et al., 2009). It provided teachers and administrators in these environments a blueprint on how to identify areas that are impeding the level of academic instruction students are receiving and conduct a conversation on how to remediate the issues.

This study is comparable to my research. The researchers identified barriers and possible solutions provided. My research will dive deeper into how the teachers perceive challenges and successes in their classrooms and reflect on the experiences that shaped these perceptions. The research may identify functional areas and those that require attention.

In another related study, Houchins et al. (2017) attempted to shed light on why juvenile justice teachers choose their profession and whether job satisfaction impacts retention. This study started with 553 teachers from three states; 486 of those participants answered the critical question of why they became teachers, while a portion of the participants did not answer enough questions to qualify for data analysis cutting the number down to 391 participants addressing satisfaction and 406 participants addressing role and experience. The majority of the participants were female general education teachers working in long-term facilities.

Each of these participants completed a survey distributed at a conference (Houchins et al., 2017). The survey is broken into six topic areas: (a) demographics, (b) satisfaction in their job, (c) satisfaction in their role, (d) experience teaching, (e) first teaching position, and (f) career aspirations. It consisted of 150 items; each section used Likert scale questions, except for the
area on demographics, it used forced-choice questions. The participants had 60 minutes to complete the survey.

Using exploratory factor analysis, frequencies, and multivariate analysis of variance to analyze the data, Houchins et al. (2017) were able to identify why juvenile justice teachers entered the profession. The top five reasons the teachers identified for entering the profession:

(a) they were not sure why they joined the profession, (b) they needed a change from the public school, (c) wanted to educate incarcerated youth, (d) wanted to teach smaller groups, and (e) they could make more money than the public school. This study found that educators who entered the field for personal reasons experienced less job satisfaction than those who entered the profession for improved career opportunities. They also established that those who entered the profession for better job opportunities experienced more job satisfaction resulting in the teacher's retention for a more extended period.

Houchin et al. (2017) suggest that if facilities want to provide their students with a high-quality education, it is crucial to hire and maintain a staff of well-qualified teachers. This study focused on why people enter the profession and why people leave, which are important factors when hiring teachers.

Summary

In this chapter, I identified some of the challenges youth face within their homes, schools, and communities. Each of these obstacles only increases the likelihood of them becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. When this occurs, the youth will encounter additional challenges, compliments of their involvement in the justice system, making it more difficult for the youth to process and regulate the feelings they are experiencing, which begins to impact all facets of their lives. The experiences these youths encounter in their homes, communities,
schools, and the juvenile justice system create a foundation built on maltreatment, failure, and trauma. This is the foundation the majority of youth bring into juvenile justice classrooms.

The unpredictability and explosive nature of the students create challenges for the teacher when planning and instructing. These teachers are focused on the goals and objectives set forth by the facilities they work in but are not prepared to address the issues that come along with this vulnerable population as a result of their background. In this study, I am going to explore the gaps in the research by examining the perspectives of teachers working in short-term juvenile detention centers. The literature is full of information on the challenges the youth and the juvenile justice facilities encounter, but there is very little information focused on the perspectives of the teachers providing the educational services. Using a questionnaire, interviews, and reflective journaling activities, I will further explore how the teachers perceive educating this population and the successes and challenges they encounter in their classrooms.

With a theoretical framework consisting of constructivism, experiential learning theory, Gibbs reflective cycle, and self-efficacy, I will explore their view of what they have learned and reflect on these experiences. I will assess how these encounters have helped shape their perspective on educating incarcerated youth and the successes and challenges they face in their classes. This study is important because it will provide the teachers responsible for providing these youth a quality education with a voice that can help identify areas that are well-functioning and areas that need to be changed in correctional education.
Chapter 3: Methods

Despite a substantial reduction in the rate of youth court-ordered to residential placements, the United States continues to incarcerate more youth proportionally than any other developed country (Barnert et al., 2015). Even with the decrease in youth involved in the juvenile justice system and assigned to out-of-home placements, youth entering the system, like their predecessors, experience systemic and individual challenges. This vulnerable population faces barriers like poverty, mental health, school, and academic failure, trauma, involvement in the juvenile justice system, a lack of executive function and self-regulation skills, and inferior educational services, all before being placed into a juvenile justice facility.

Once they enter these facilities, the youth encounter new challenges with or without the support of facility staff and the teachers responsible for educating them. The youth placed in these facilities by the juvenile court system come from diverse and traumatic backgrounds and often require intensive support to address their needs. Being a teacher in these facilities offers many unique challenges specific to juvenile justice (Gagnon et al., 2012). In juvenile detention centers, teachers encounter a wide array of student challenges such as academically and behaviorally limitations, unpredictable behaviors resulting from mental health issues, and surviving trauma.

Some of the teachers in these facilities are not prepared to educate this population because they cannot build a connection between the students and themselves or lack the appropriate materials and resources to do the job. These unique challenges can interfere with the academic services and support the students in these facilities receive, resulting in an educational program not comparable to the academics they would receive in a traditional school setting. The challenges educators experience in their classrooms can be more significant due to the
combination of traumatic experiences their students have encountered in their homes and communities before their involvement in the juvenile justice system and their experiences since entering the juvenile justice system. The educators working in these facilities must have the skill set necessary to address their students' academic and behavioral needs, which are often more severe than the needs being tackled in the public school system (Houchins et al., 2009).

The Purpose

This study aims to shed light on the challenges and successes the educators face in providing academic services and supports to incarcerated youth placed in a short-term secure juvenile detention center.

The study will determine how these teachers perceive the challenges they encounter and their success in their classrooms. I explore educators' perspectives on working in short-term juvenile detention facilities and how they perceive their experiences teaching incarcerated youth. This research provides educators with an opportunity to reflect on these experiences. By collecting the views that have been shaped by their classroom experiences working with this vulnerable population, the research may identify practices that are working and those that need improvement and help make the quality of education more equitable to that provided in the public school system.

Research Questions

This mixed-methods study consisted of one main research question with three sub-questions. This study's primary research question was: how do educators working in short-term juvenile detention centers perceive their experiences providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth? (qualitative aim)

The following sub-questions helped drive the study:
1. How do educators’ perceive success in their classroom based on their experiences providing academic instruction to incarcerated youth placed in a short-term secure juvenile detention center? (qualitative aim)

2. How do educators perceive challenges in their classroom based on their experiences providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth placed in a short-term secure juvenile detention center encountered while educating incarcerated youth? (qualitative aim)

3. In what ways does the data collected from the interviews addressing the Educators’ perception of successes and challenges experienced in their classrooms educating incarcerated youth in a short-term secure juvenile detention center correlate with the demographic and work experience data reported in the survey? (mixed-methods aim)

**Research Design**

An explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design was used for this study. Using a mixed-methods research design was ideal for exploring the challenges and successes educators face when educating incarcerated youth. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) discuss the use of multiple rationales in mixed-methods research, the importance of active participation from the study’s participants, and how that process can benefit the field and the individual participant (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Using Creswell’s line of thinking, I realized by conducting mixed-methods research; the lived experiences of those responsible for educating youth in the detention setting could provide insight into how to make the quality of education offered equivalent to the instruction provided in a traditional public-school setting.

Mixed methods investigations allow the researcher to illustrate the strong points of the quantitative and qualitative data while also sharing weaknesses in the data. This allows the
researcher to concentrate on the strengths of each method (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This provision was an essential factor when selecting my study's design because it provided the option to focus on the strengths of both the quantitative and qualitative data or just the strengths of one if either was lacking in any way.

The explanatory sequential portion of this mixed-methods study began with the quantitative section of the study, followed by qualitative data collection. The data from the qualitative forms were used to clarify and expand upon the quantitative data collected (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). This design was also ideal for my research because it allowed me to revisit the study's participants multiple times to further elucidate and elaborate on the qualitative data collected (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018).

**Setting**

The setting for this study is two short-term secure detention centers. These secure detention facilities are intended to provide short-term confinement for pre-adjudicated youth (National Institute of Corrections, 2020). The National Institute of Corrections (2020) defines the juvenile detention center as a facility designed to provide safe and short-term care to youth suspected of unlawful actions that the court deems a danger to themselves or their community. These juveniles are to be held in the juvenile facility while awaiting the legal process. The two facilities described in this study provide housing, academic instruction, and direct supervision to males and females from 10 to 18.

In the mid-Atlantic state where this study was conducted, these facilities are County-owned and operated and licensed by the State's Department of Human Services. The youth in these centers' custody participate in academic coursework, recreational activities, and additional programming (e.g., life skills, anger management, drug and alcohol awareness, and coping skills)
in a highly structured environment. Facility #1 is equipped to house 48 students, while Facility #2 can accommodate 36 students at any given time. In 2019, students, on average, were placed in Facility #1 for 15.02 days, while students placed in Facility #2 stayed for 19 days. The average stay for students increased in 2020, with students in Facility #1 staying 16.06 days and Facility #2 students staying 32 days.

Short-term detention centers are required to provide academic programming for the students in their custody. These facilities do not provide the educational programming themselves; they contract with local school districts, educational entities, or private providers to deliver the students' academic instruction in their care while placed in the facility. The educational programming in these facilities operates year-round. The teachers assigned to these facilities for the traditional school year are given the first choice to teach summer school. If they choose not to teach summer school, the provider will send another teacher who volunteers to provide instruction over the summer. The teachers assigned to these facilities are responsible for providing in-person academic instruction in their classroom located on-site with additional support from facility staff.

**Sampling Method**

The purpose of my study is to shed light on the challenges and successes that educators face in providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth placed in a short-term secure juvenile detention center and how they perceive their classrooms' challenges and successes. I realized I had a specific group of teachers I could enlist to participate in my study. When I started this process, I had to use purposive sampling to gather a group of teachers from different backgrounds and experiences that could be used to represent this specific population of teachers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the teacher population in these facilities was reduced
dramatically due to a lack of student referrals from the juvenile court systems. This forced me to transition from purposive sampling to convenience sampling because of the lack of participants.

When I first distributed my questionnaire to both facilities' administrators, they could share the questionnaire with the teachers in their Centers. They updated me that due to COVID-19, all of their teachers were conducting their classes from their homes virtually for the time being. Unfortunately, this unanticipated change to instructional modality may have placed some additional burden on teachers, making it more challenging to persuade them to complete the questionnaire. Ultimately, after sending multiple emails to the teachers in these facilities, six participants completed the questionnaire. Of the six who completed the questionnaire, three of those educators volunteered to participate in the study's qualitative portion.

The questionnaire only consisted of one inclusion criteria; the participants needed to be teaching in one of the two facilities where I distributed the questionnaire. If they were not working at one of those two facilities, they wouldn't have access to the questionnaire. The second phase consisted of two inclusion criteria. To be eligible to participate in the qualitative portion of this study, the participant needed at least two years of experience providing academic instruction to incarcerated youth and working in that role at the time of the study's interviews and reflective journaling phase.

**Participants**

This study's participants are all teachers currently providing academic services and supports to incarcerated youth in two short-term juvenile detention centers in the Mid-Atlantic section of the United States. The detention facilities do not employ the participants; they are contractors assigned to the facilities through the local school district, educational entity, or private provider. The contracted teachers in these facilities are certified by the State's Department
of Education. In this study, I had six educators total from two facilities participate in the questionnaire (quantitative) portion of the study. Of those six participants, four of them showed interest in participating in the second phase (qualitative) of the study consisting of three interviews and three reflective journal activities. When it was time to begin the second phase of the study, three of the four interested participants signed off on the informed consent form and started stage 2. One of the four did not respond to any of the emails, so I continued the study with three participants. The participants' names are changed in this study to ensure the protection of the participants' confidentiality.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, facilities had to work with fewer teachers due to the low numbers of students referred by the Courts. Of the eight educators eligible, six teachers from those facilities completed the questionnaire. Sixty-seven percent of the participants that completed the questionnaire identified as female; the other 33% identified as male.

Each of the participants that completed the questionnaire was white. The participants' ages ranged from 37 years of age to 67, with the average age being 52. Each member of my sample had reported their Master's Degree as the highest level of education they had completed when finalizing the questionnaire.

Each respondent that participated in the study had provided academic services and support to incarcerated youth for more than two years, which was of the inclusion criteria required for participation in the study's qualitative phase. The other inclusion criterion was that each teacher needed to be currently working with incarcerated youth, which aligned with 100% of my sample. Of the six participants, only five reported the length of time they worked as a teacher. Three of the participants worked as teachers for 25 years or more. All of the participants were state-certified teachers. Table 3.0 describes the specific demographic information for each
participant that completed the questionnaire and the exact participants who volunteered to participate in Phase II of the study, the qualitative stage.

Table 3.0

*Demographics of this Study's Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Highest Level of Education</th>
<th>Years of Teaching</th>
<th>Years in Current Position</th>
<th>State Certified Teacher</th>
<th>Phase II Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant #1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>Not Reported</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>13-18</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>&gt;2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>25+</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>25+</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>25+</td>
<td>13-18</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants were also asked multiple questions focused on the subjects they were responsible for teaching, what level of certification they held, and what were their areas of concentration. Table 3.1 provides the specific responses from each participant identifying their state certifications, area of concentration, and subjects responsible for teaching.

**Instruments**

The instruments used in this study were a web-based questionnaire, a series of three interviews, and three reflective journaling activities. Each method provides a specific outcome necessary in conducting this study. The 38-item questionnaire was designed to collect qualitative and quantitative data addressing demographics, professional development needs, teaching background, and classroom experiences. The three interviews were implemented to supplement
information regarding how the educators perceive their experiences teaching incarcerated youth and the challenges and successes in their classrooms. In preparation for the first interview, I reviewed the questionnaire responses to identify themes that could help construct an interview guide with meaningful questions for interview #1. Following interview #1, each interview addressed a specific set of questions that were built based on the questions and responses from the previous interview. After each interview, the participants completed a reflective journaling activity addressing the topic discussed during the last interview. The participant was provided a prompt to help guide their reflection on their lived experiences.

Table 3.1

Areas of Certification, Concentration and Subjects Taught of Questionnaire Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Subject Areas</th>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Concentration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant #1</td>
<td>Health Physical Education</td>
<td>Early Childhood (PreK-4) Middle Level (4-8) Secondary Education (7-12)</td>
<td>Health Physical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #3</td>
<td>Science Special Education</td>
<td>Middle Level (4-8) with Special Education Certification Secondary Education (7-12) with Special Education Certification</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #4</td>
<td>Social Studies Special Education</td>
<td>Secondary Education (7-12) with Special Education Certification</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #5</td>
<td>Career Readiness English Mathematics Science Social Studies Special Education</td>
<td>Secondary Education (7-12) with Special Education Certification</td>
<td>Career Readiness English Mathematics Science Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #6</td>
<td>Mathematics Special Education</td>
<td>Secondary Education (7-12) with Special Education Certification</td>
<td>Mathematics Reading Specialist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Web-Based Questionnaire

The 38 items web-based questionnaire was designed to collect information about the participant's demographics, perspectives on the professional development they have received, and how they perceive their teaching experiences in a short-term juvenile detention facility, focusing primarily on how they perceive success and challenges in their classrooms. The web-based questionnaire consists of multiple choice (19), Likert scale (11), and open-ended (8) questions. The questionnaire was expected to take the participant between 20-30 minutes to complete. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of 17 multiple choice questions and one open-ended question. Table 3.2 identifies the questions used to collect the participants' demographic data and the inquiry style used to gather the information.

Table 3.2

Demographic & General Questionnaire Questions (Part I)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Questions</th>
<th>Question Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is your gender?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is your ethnicity?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What year were you born?</td>
<td>Open-ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What is your current employment status?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you have two or more years of experience providing academic services and supports to incarcerated youth?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Are you currently providing educational services and supports to incarcerated youth?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What subject area do you teach? Please select multiple areas if they apply.</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How long have you been working as a teacher?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How long have you been teaching in your current position?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Are you a state-certified teacher in the state you teach?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. In what areas are you certified? Please select multiple areas if they apply.</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Area of Concentration? Please select multiple areas if they apply?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Question Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. How many professional development opportunities did you attend/participate in over the last two years?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Did any of those professional development opportunities address incarcerated youth and their educational needs?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Do you use an online learning system (e.g., Edmentum, LinkedIn Learning, Udamey, Coursera, or Pluralsight)?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Do you take part in scheduling classes/courses for the youth in your facility?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. How often do you have scheduled planning time?</td>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the participants completed the demographic questions, they transitioned to the second part of the questionnaire. This section consisted of 11 Likert scale questions and two multiple choice questions addressing student success, job challenges, professional development, special education, resources, and responsibilities. I used a five-point Likert scale with the following responses: (a) Strongly agree, (b) Somewhat agree, (c) Neither agree nor disagree, (d) Somewhat disagree, (e) Strongly disagree. Table 3.3 displays the questions used in this section of the questionnaire and the research questions they aligned. The questions in section two of the questionnaire consisted of multiple choice and Likert scale questions. Questions 1-2 were multiple-choice, while question numbers 3-13 were five-point Likert scale questions.

Table 3.3

Work-Related Questionnaire Questions and their Associated Research Question (Part II)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work-Related Questions</th>
<th>Associated Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I see my students as being successful when they… (Please select all that apply).</td>
<td>RQ #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I consider my job challenging due to… (Please select all that apply).</td>
<td>RQ #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The professional development I have received had an impact on my teaching.</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The professional development I received is relevant to the student population I teach.</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My job is challenging on a daily basis.</td>
<td>RQ #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-Related Questions</td>
<td>Associated Research Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I enjoy providing academic services and supports to incarcerated youth.</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I enjoy providing academic services and supports to incarcerated youth.</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am comfortable using an online learning system to educate my students.</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I have access to relevant teaching materials that align with a curriculum designed to meet the needs of our student population.</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The diversity in the academic levels of my students requires significant planning to reach all students.</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I am comfortable educating students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP).</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I have effective classroom management practices.</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I am comfortable addressing behavior issues in my classroom.</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I have input scheduling my student's academic schedules.</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the final section of the questionnaire, I incorporated open-ended questions to gather additional insight into classroom success and challenges, professional development, resources, and whether they would be interested in participating in this study's qualitative portion. Table 3.4 provides the open-ended questions used in the final part of the questionnaire, the associated research questions, and the type of question used to collect the information.

A link to a 38-question web-based questionnaire was provided to each participant in a recruitment email. In the recruitment email, the participants were informed that they inferred their informed consent to participate in this portion of the research study by completing the web-based questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed using Qualtrics. To protect the participants' privacy and confidentiality, I selected the option provided by Qualtrics not to include the participant's IP address. Selecting this option prevented me from using the IP address to identify the participant and their responses. By choosing this option, I provided an extra level of privacy.
The participants' identity interested in participating in the second phase of the study is known because they are prompted to include their contact information to contact them with information regarding the second phase of the study.

### Table 3.4

*Questionnaire Open-Ended Questions and their Associated Research Question*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Associated Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Briefly describe three successes you have experienced in your classroom?</td>
<td>RQ #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Briefly describe three challenges you have experienced in your classroom?</td>
<td>RQ #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. List three of the best/most important/most useful professional development/learning opportunities you participated in over the last two years or indicate N/A if you have had no professional learning opportunities over the past two years?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. List three of the least useful/least important/least beneficial professional development/learning opportunities you participated in over the last two years or indicate N/A if you have had no professional learning opportunities over the past two years?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If you are missing teaching materials, what three teaching materials would you request (e.g., technology, appropriate curriculum materials, classroom furniture, or classroom supplies)?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. When educating incarcerated youth, identify three strengths you possess that help you provide academic services and supports at a high level?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am looking to speak with teachers to develop my understanding of their experiences, challenges, and successes working with incarcerated youth. Would you be interested in participating in three interviews and three reflective journal activities?</td>
<td>RQ #1, RQ #2, RQ #3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before distributing the questionnaire, it was given to two professionals for review and feedback. This step was intended to ensure understanding of the questions and increase the reliability of the responses. These professionals were chosen because of their experience working...
with youth pre and post-incarceration. Each professional provided a different perspective. The first was a School Principal who once served as a classroom teacher, frequently working with youth who have been incarcerated. The second was a Clinical Director for a therapeutic counseling program that works primarily with dependent and delinquent youth in their homes or placement.

One week after the initial recruitment email was sent out, I sent out a reminder email, thanking those who participated and asking those who had not to consider participating. I received zero responses from my initial email, so I had to send multiple emails to engage my participants. Following multiple email attempts, six participants completed my questionnaire.

When the participants completed the questionnaire, Qualtrics notified me by email that a questionnaire had been completed.

**Interviews**

I conducted a series of three face-to-face interviews with each participant to gather a richer understanding of the experiences educators encounter providing academic services and supports to incarcerated youth placed in secure juvenile detention and how they perceive challenges and successes in their classrooms with this vulnerable population. The use of three interviews was chosen because Siedman (2001) described a series of three interviews to be most favorable. Bolderston (2012) also supports the idea of multiple interviews because it increases the study's accuracy while allowing the researcher to develop a more meaningful relationship with the participants by having additional time to connect. I chose to conduct three interviews because the use of multiple interviews allows the interviewer more opportunities to "confirm, clarify, and build on the information given in previous interviews" (Bolderston, 2012, p. 70).
Each interview lasted approximately 40-60 minutes. The first and second sets of interviews were conducted in December, with the third and final sets of interviews conducted in January 2021.

The interviews were scheduled using a Doodle Poll. An email was sent directly to each participant, including a link to an anonymous Doodle Poll that allowed me to see each participant's selections. The participants were only able to see their specific dates selected to ensure confidentiality. Each participant was asked to choose two dates in December and one date in January. Participants were asked to complete the Doodle Poll within 48 hours of receiving the email. A follow-up email was sent to each participant to schedule their interviews.

Before the first interview, I used the questionnaire's data to guide the development of appropriate questions for the first interview. Following the first interview, I analyzed the questions and responses discussed to develop follow-up questions for interview #2. This process was repeated for each interview. Each interview was conducted on Zoom using both the video and audio components. The participants' permission was requested to record the interviews audio and video, and each participant granted permission during our first interview. To ensure confidentiality, I only retained the audio recording for my records, and it is kept on a password-protected computer.

Using the Zoom platform provided a few benefits to this study. One of Zoom's advantages was it eliminated any travel to conduct the interviews, allowing additional time to work on the study. The platform also provided the option to record the video and audio of each interview. I choose to save only the audio for each interview. This was very helpful when I needed to revisit the interviews for clarification. Zoom also offered an opportunity to transcribe the interview, which was beneficial.
Each of the interviews I conducted with each participant individually. The interviews started in December 2020. Each of the participants took part in the first and second interviews about 11-15 days apart. Each of the first two interviews was conducted before the holiday break. Upon returning for the holiday break, scheduling the final interview was difficult due to scheduling conflicts and weather issues. I scheduled the last three interviews from January 28, 2021, to February 8, 2021.

I started the first interview with each participant describing the study and what I would need from them over the next three months. I also answered any questions they had while trying to make them feel as comfortable as possible. I introduced some of the topics we would discuss, and I would try to make them feel like it was a friendly conversation instead of a formal interview. After the first interview, I started a personal conversation with each of them because we had begun to build a relationship. This helped me ask questions in a nonthreatening manner and allowed them to respond without any angst.

Table 3.5 shows the questions I asked the participants in the first interview and the research question aligned with each interview question. I used the outcomes of the questionnaire to develop the questions for the first set of interviews.

Table 3.5

*Interview #1 Questions and the Associated Research Question*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Associated Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What made you want to teach incarcerated youth?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Please explain any experience, professional development, community-based interaction, or anything else that most prepared you to teach incarcerated youth?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Please explain how you perceive challenges in your classroom?</td>
<td>RQ #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do these challenges involve the students, other teachers, administrators, policymakers, or outside agencies?</td>
<td>RQ #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Associated Research Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Please provide a few specific examples of challenges you have experienced in your classroom?</td>
<td>RQ #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Please explain how you handled these challenges?</td>
<td>RQ #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Please explain how you perceive success in your classroom?</td>
<td>RQ #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does success look like in your classroom?</td>
<td>RQ #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How does success in your classroom involve the students, or does it include yourself, other teachers, administrators, policymakers, or outside agencies?</td>
<td>RQ #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Please provide a few examples of the success you have experienced in your classroom?</td>
<td>RQ #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. When working with incarcerated youth, what goals do you have for your students?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. With that being said, can you explain what you think your students' goals are?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Building relationships and making connections can be difficult; what social identities and lived experiences help you work with this population?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. This table outlines the questions used in Interview #1 and which research question they are associated with.*

Table 3.6 depicts the questions used in the second set of interviews. These questions revisited some of the themes identified in the first interview. They also focused on some areas teachers experience while working in this setting, such as professional development, access to materials, and relationship building. Each of the questions is aligned with the research question it relates to.

**Table 3.6**

*Interview #2 Questions and the Associated Research Question*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Associated Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In the last interview, we discussed that the students are often preoccupied with things that distract them from completing schoolwork. In your experience, what are some of the things the students are focused on?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the third and final set of interviews, I focused my questions around the challenges this population encounters before incarceration. This line of questioning allowed me to gather the educators' perceptions on these institutional and systemic issues facing their students. I also asked the participants questions that incorporated my theoretical framework to gather their
thoughts on self-efficacy, reflection, experiential learning, and constructivism. Table 3.7 shows the questions asked in the final interview and their associating research question.

**Table 3.7**

*Interview #3 Questions and the Associated Research Question*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Associated Research Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Your students come from very diverse backgrounds. Some of the students you have taught have been raised in poverty, experienced school &amp; academic failure, lived through traumatic events, suffered from mental illness, or been a victim of racism. In your experience, which of these has impacted or provided the biggest challenge for your students?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The population of incarcerated youth can be extremely diverse. In your history working with this population, what are some of the racial and ethnic backgrounds have you seen in your classroom?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If so, why do you believe this is occurring? If not, tell me why you believe that not to be the case?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. From your experience, do you believe students of color are disproportionately placed in juvenile justice facilities? If so, why do you think that is the case?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The literature shows that students who receive special education services are being disproportionately placed in juvenile justice facilities. In your experience, of the students in your classroom, what % receive special education services?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How has that number increased or decreased over the years you have been teaching in this setting? Why do you think the numbers have increased or decreased?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Institutional Racism has been a problem in society for hundreds of years. In 2020-2021, Institutional Racism was identified as a global issue requiring immediate attention. In your experience working with incarcerated youth, how do you think instructional racism has provided your students with one more challenge they have to overcome to be successful?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Does it only affect specific students from specific backgrounds? What do those challenges look like? Have you had to deal with racism in your classroom? If so, how did you handle it?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Associated Research Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The theoretical framework of this study is based on constructivism and experiential learning. Constructivism is an educational theory that suggests that learners create understanding and knowledge from their own experiences. At the same time, experiential learning is defined as learning through experiences and reflecting on what they have learned to increase comprehension and knowledge building. In your role in this setting, what has been the most influential experience that has made you the teacher you are today?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Reflection is discussed as an essential part of the process of experiential learning. How do you reflect on your job as an educator?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. How do you reflect on experiences in your classroom? Do you use an organized process or a reflective method you have designed? What do you gain from reflection?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Albert Bandura describes self-efficacy as how well someone can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations. If you were going to assign a grade to your self-efficacy, what grade would it be? Why?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following each interview, the recordings were transcribed using Zoom. Once the interview was transcribed, I emailed a copy of the transcription to the participant as a form of member-checking to ensure the transcriptions' validity and reliability. Creswell (2012) describes member checking as a method researchers use to confirm the participant's information is accurate by providing the participants the opportunity to review the data they shared to ensure it is correct. The participants were asked to read and review the documentation and notify me of any changes they saw as necessary or essential. Each participant was asked to email me with confirmation that the transcription was an accurate depiction of what they said during the interview. During the study, each participant responded via email, confirming the transcriptions were an accurate depiction of what they said in the interview. The emails for each transcription were saved as supporting documentation and kept on a secure password-protected computer. This information has been included in the Informed Consent Form, located in Appendix A.
Reflective Journals

A reflective journal with three distributed prompts was introduced to the participants to provide them an opportunity to provide additional insight on topics discussed in the interviews and explore how the educators' experiences educating incarcerated youth have shaped their perspectives and how they perceive success and challenges. Goodsett (2014) recommends reflection in teaching because it has been known to improve academic instruction without adding additional time or effort to their daily workload. The reflective journal prompt was provided to the participants within 24 to 36 hours following each interview, except for the last interview. I waited until I had completed all three final interviews had been completed before distributing the final prompt. This allowed me to review the data collected from all three final interviews and create a thought-provoking prompt to end this part of the data collection. The participants were asked to reflect on the material discussed in the interview and how they believe their lived experiences have impacted their perspective regarding the academic services and supports being provided to incarcerated youth.

The focus of these reflections is on areas that need improvement and areas of strength. The participants were expected to reflect on the content discussed in the previous interview. The interview questions and the three reflective journal activities were designed to promote reflection. The purpose of the reflective journal activities was reinforced in each interview, and I answered any questions the participants had regarding the activity. When the participants received the prompt 24-36 hours following the interview, they completed the reflective journal activities and returned them via email. Once I received the completed reflective journal prompt, I converted it from an email to a word document. The conversion made it easier to identify themes collected from the reflective journal activities and informing the development of questions for
the next scheduled interview. Cornish and Jenkins (2012) believe that reflecting on your thinking can result in growth and is just as important as pre and post-analysis of an activity. In Table 3.8, the journal prompts are listed for each interview and what research questions the prompt aligned.

**Table 3.8**

*Reflective Journal Prompts and the Associated Research Question*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal Prompt</th>
<th>Associated Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Can you please tell me more about the experiences that prepared you to teach incarcerated students and why you believe they most prepared you to work with this population? How did these experiences shape your perception of educating incarcerated youth, and how you perceive success and barriers in your classroom?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RQ #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RQ #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reflecting on your experiences as a teacher educating incarcerated youth in a short-term detention center, please share the &quot;challenges&quot; or &quot;barriers&quot; your students are faced with before being placed in your facility (such as academics, financial, racial, justice, family, community, or other related concerns)? Do you believe these previous challenges impact your student's ability to be successful in your classroom? If so, in your experience, how does it affect your students? How do you address these challenges while trying to provide effective academic instruction?</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RQ #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reflect on the biggest challenge you have faced educating incarcerated youth in short-term detention. Tell me about the challenge, how you handled it, and what you learned from it. Reflect on the biggest success you have encountered in educating incarcerated youth. Tell me about the success, why it had such an impact on you, and what you learned from it. Lastly, please tell me why you chose to be a teacher in a short-term detention center educating incarcerated youth and why you continue to work in this setting.</td>
<td>RQ #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RQ #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RQ #3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedures**

In this mixed-methods study, I used an explanatory sequential design because of its two-phased approach. This design begins with the researcher conducting the quantitative stage of the research, followed by the qualitative stage of the study, and using the results gathered in the
qualitative phase of the design to explain the quantitative phase's data. This step-by-step process made it more comfortable for the researcher to transition from the quantitative phase to the qualitative phase in an orderly fashion. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) recommend this design so the qualitative data collected can be used to explain the study's quantitative data. Figure 3.0 illustrates the step-by-step process I used to conduct this study.

**Figure 3.0**

*Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Methods Procedural Diagram*
**Quantitative Data Analysis**

I used Qualtrics to design, implement, collect, and analyze the data for the web-based questionnaire. Once all of the web-based questionnaires had been returned, I finalized the data using the reporting feature on Qualtrics to conduct descriptive analysis to provide the descriptive statistics for all of my completed questionnaires. Creswell (2012) suggests that using descriptive statistics will help identify the overall themes in the data, help comprehend the differences in scores, and understand how the scores compare. The descriptive statistics consist of measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode), variability (range, variance, standard deviation), and relative standing (percentile rank, z score) (Creswell, 2012).

Using the Qualtrics reporting feature, I accessed a report that provided me with central tendency, variability, and relative standing for each specific question from my questionnaire if it applied. Due to the small sample size of six participants completing my questionnaire, I did not use inferential analysis to discover any inferential statistics. I examined the data collected in the report provided by Qualtrics to identify trends, themes, differences, and similarities in the questionnaire data. This information was used to inform the development of interview questions and reflective journal prompts.

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative data analysis process began when I started to transcribe the interviews with each of my participants. Using Zoom to conduct the interviews, I had access to the platform's audio transcription feature (support.zoom.us). The transcription feature provided me with a rough version of the interview. I downloaded that version to my password-encrypted laptop, and I copied the interview into a word document. Using the word document, I listened to the interview's audio recording to ensure my transcription was an accurate depiction of what was
said in the interview. I had planned to listen to each interview twice in order to obtain the most accurate transcription possible for member checking. Issues such as sound quality, background noise, and the volume and annunciation of the participant required me to revisit some of the interview transcriptions additional times to ensure I was sending the participant an authentic depiction of our conversation for member checking. Creswell (2012) describes member checking as a method used by researchers to confirm the correctness of the information gathered from the participant by allowing the participant to review the collected data for accuracy and ensure that it is accurate.

At this point, I sent the completed transcription of the interview to the participant via email for member checking. In the email, I asked them to review the document and let me know in a follow-up email if my transcription was an accurate depiction of our conversation. I also informed the participants that we would address any issue they had if they disagreed. All the participants completed the process of member checking for each of their interviews and approved the transcriptions. Once I received confirmation from the participant that the transcribed interview was accurate, I began to code the interview using the constant comparative method.

The constant-comparative method is a three-step coding process, starting with open coding, followed by axial coding, and ending with selective coding (Lichtman, 2013). Before starting the coding process, I preselected open codes such as challenges, successes, and potential solutions that addressed my research questions. I preselected axial codes as well that aligned with my theoretical framework and literature for Chapter II. Some of the preselected axial codes were poverty, racism, trauma, self-efficacy, and experiential learning. Once those codes were preselected, I used the constant-comparative method to identify additional codes that were
relevant. Creswell (2012) describes the process of open coding as the researcher organizing categories about the study's topic and designate areas of information that support those categories, while Lichtman (2013) generalizes open coding to analyze primary data and associate labels and classifications.

Once I completed the open coding stage of the constant-comparative method, I started axial coding the interviews and reflective journal activities. Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe axial coding as examining the categories and subcategories collected during open coding and finding possible relationships. Lichtman (2013) suggests that axial coding occurs when a researcher uses the codes created during open coding and compares them. During axial coding, I attempted to make connections with the codes found during the open coding and the themes found in the interviews connected to other areas of my theoretical framework and literature review. I established codes like COVID-19, building relationships, and staff relationships associated directly with the themes I found during open coding in the axial coding stage.

The last step in the constant-comparative methods was selective coding. Lichtman (2013) describes selective coding as the researcher's opportunity to identify the codes they believe are the most important to the study. Strauss and Corbin (1990) portray selective coding as "the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships and filling in categories that need further refinement and development" (p. 116). The selective codes chosen using the constant-comparative method helped shape my study's narrative and data collected from the questionnaire, interviews, and reflective journal activities. The strongest of these codes addressed the research questions while aligning with my theoretical framework and literature review. For example, I used one of my open codes, success, and connect it to one of my axial codes, building relationships. From that point, I connected
building relationships to some of the participants' experiences on how they learned from what they did right and what they did wrong in the past, trying to build relationships with their students.

I used Dedoose (Version 8.3.43) to code all of my qualitative data collected from the interviews and reflective journal activities. Dedoose is a web-based application that allows the researcher to collect, organize, and analyze their research in an orderly fashion. Dedoose also provides the researcher with a secure environment to store their data to ensure confidentiality and security.

This cycle was used to collect and analyze the qualitative data throughout the study. I examined the reflective journal activities in the same manner as the interviews but did not incorporate member checking because it came directly from the participant. Once the qualitative data had been collected and coded, I attempted to interpret the results. The findings will be used to create a narrative focused on the participants' experiences, whether they answered the research questions, whether they make connections to previous literature, and the limitations and future research implications of the study.

Integration of the Quantitative and Qualitative Results

The last step in using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design is Integration. Integration is a time in the research process when the qualitative research results are introduced and interact with quantitative research results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Integration is an essential part of this study because Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) suggest the importance of Integration and how it provides a greater perception of how the specific encounters explain the questionnaire. In this study, I used Integration to compare the qualitative data collected from the
interviews and reflective journal activities with the quantitative data collected using the web-based questionnaire to help explain the results gathered by the questionnaire.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) recommend using Integration twice throughout the research process to address the outcomes of the quantitative stage and results from the qualitative stage. In this study, Integration was incorporated when the questionnaires were completed, and the descriptive statistics were identified. At this point, I followed Creswell and Plano Clark's (2018) suggestion of taking the areas that needed additional detail and started the qualitative stage of the study, working with my participants to get a deeper understanding of areas that needed clarification. This was accomplished using the descriptive statistics found in the questionnaire results and using those to help develop the interview questions, and reflective journal prompts. The last step of Integration is once the quantitative and qualitative stages are complete. The researcher will incorporate the results to conclude how the qualitative data illuminates the quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

**Threats to Reliability**

Creswell (2012) defines reliability as the results from an instrument being dependable and constant. In comparison, Salkind and Frey (2020) describe reliability as to whether or not your tool computes reliably. In my situation, there was a threat to the reliability of my questionnaire. I had a low number of responses to my questionnaire, which resulted in a limited amount of data to compare and test. I could not collect inferential data due to the small sample, limiting my ability to measure my questionnaire's reliability. Instead of inferential statistics, I collected descriptive statistics from the questionnaire, allowing me to use that information to create a narrative to describe the group of individuals that participated.
**Threats to External Validity**

The threats to the external validity of this study's external validity focused on the size of the sample, the selection process, and that the participants were not employees of the facilities; they were contractors. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, my potential pool of participants was significantly reduced because the number of educators is based on the number of youth placed in the facility. Due to the pandemic, fewer students were placed in short-term juvenile detention centers resulting in fewer teachers in each facility. This pandemic resulted in a small sample size of participants, preventing me from having additional participants and the option of a substitute if anyone dropped out of the study resulting in a threat to my study's validity.

The selection process was intended to be purposive, but I was pressed to do a convenient sampling for my study's qualitative portion due to the low number of participants. Had my sample size been more extensive, I would have recruited additional participants for the qualitative phase and conducted a purposive sampling resulting in additional participants and the ability to conduct inferential data analysis. This study's sample size was too small to use the data collected from six total participants to represent the total population of teachers educating incarcerated youth in short-term detention centers.

Another threat to the external validity was the teachers in my study were not employees of the short-term detention centers; they were teachers provided by a contracting agency. This is not the case at all short-term detention centers, making it impossible to generalize my participants with the larger group. Due to the small sample size and the teachers in my study being contractors, not detention center employees, I was unable to generalize the results to the population of educators working with incarcerated youth. To reduce this threat, I focused primarily on each educator as an individual without generalizing them as a larger population.
**Threats to Internal Validity**

My study had multiple threats to internal validity due to the instruments used and the data collection process. My questionnaire had some potential participants start the process, not complete it, and not opt into the second stage of the study. These incomplete questions were not included in the total number of questionnaires analyzed. In the qualitative portion of the study, I had four participants show interest. When I reached out to each participant, three of the four agreed to participate. I continued to try and make contact with the fourth participant but was unable to establish communication. The three participants who started stage two of the study completed it. In an attempt to mitigate the threats to my study's trustworthiness, I used triangulation, member-checking, and inter-rater reliability. Those tools served to improve the accuracy of my study's results.

**Increasing Validity and Reliability**

In research, validity is critical because its purpose is to measure the value of the data collected, its outcomes, and how well the researcher translates the data results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Cho and Trent (2006) introduced "transactional validity" because they suggest using specific methods and procedures throughout your study will make your qualitative data "more credible" (p.322). Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) suggest that researchers conducting qualitative research use at least three of these four strategies: member checking, Triangulation, reporting disconfirming evidence, and using peers accustomed to qualitative inquiry to review your data collected and outcomes applying their measures. In this study, I used strategies like member checking, Triangulation, and inter-rater reliability to measure the validity of the data I collected, my results, and how I explained my data.
**Member-Checking**

Creswell (2012) describes member checking as a method used by researchers to confirm the correctness of the information gathered from the participant by allowing the participant to review the collected data for accuracy and ensure that it is accurate. In an attempt to ensure the data I collected from my interviews were transcribed correctly and accurately. I provided each participant with their transcribed interview and asked them to review the document to ensure it was an accurate depiction of our conversation. I also requested that they email me directly whether I transcribed the information correctly and whether it was a precise depiction of our discussion. If they felt it was not accurate, I offered to discuss any areas they were uncomfortable. After they reviewed their transcription, each participant emailed me, agreeing the transcription was an accurate representation of our conversation.

**Interrater Reliability**

Salkind and Frey (2020) describe interrater reliability as a method to gauge multiple raters’ agreement on why they selected specific outcomes. I incorporated interrater reliability when I completed the coding process to measure the reliability of my codes. I enlisted the assistance of a professional working in the field of juvenile justice and mental health. I supplied her with twenty-five percent of text excerpts collected from the interview portion of this study and asked her to code them using her judgment. Once she completed coding the passages, we sat down together to discuss the codes we agreed on those we did not agree with. This discussion consisted of supporting the code we used on a passage and sharing the reasoning behind each code. If I agreed with her explanation, I updated the code, and if she agreed with my logic, the code would remain the same. Salkind and Frey (2020) suggest the more the raters agree, the
higher level of interrater reliability. The goal of this study is to have a rate of interrater reliability greater than 85%.

**Triangulation**

To validate the data collected in my study, I have incorporated Triangulation as a tool to measure validity. Creswell (2012) describes Triangulation as a method to validate the connections between data collected from various individuals using different data collection methods to support the study's themes. The process of Triangulation is used when I started to integrate the quantitative and qualitative. Triangulation makes sure that the data collected using different methods and participants are accurate (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2012) suggests that using Triangulation will help the researcher provide a final product that is precise and reliable.

I used triangulation to compare the participant's responses from the questionnaire, interviews, and reflective journaling activities. Triangulation was critical to ensure that what the participants responded to on the questionnaire aligned with their answers in the interviews. For example, I asked the participants using a 5 point Likert scale question if they had access to relevant teaching materials that aligned with a curriculum designed to meet their student population's needs. On the questionnaire, two strongly agreed, two somewhat agreed, and two somewhat disagreed, but their responses in our interviews seemed to be different. Each participant spoke adamantly about what materials they would love to have, such as computers, tablets, and access to the internet to benefit their students. Using triangulation, I was able to identify the inconsistencies and report them.

**Researcher Bias**

Over the last 18 years, I have served in many different roles working with youth involved in various stages of juvenile court systems, each shaping my bias towards my research in
different ways. After college, my first job was providing academic services and support to special education students placed in a youth detention center. This position provided me insight into incarcerated youth, their backgrounds, strengths, and weaknesses. It showed me that some educators who worked in the facility were there to collect a paycheck and had little invested in their students. It was also apparent that a group of teachers devoted to teaching their students and providing them with a foundation to overcome adversity and succeed also worked in the facility. This experience showed me that some teachers in this field give other teachers a bad reputation, while others worked hard to educate this population and received little attention. I also experienced first-hand the students' traumatic backgrounds in these facilities and how each barrier the student encountered made it much more challenging to build a positive student-teacher relationship.

I was a Special Education Teacher for a program that served sixth through twelfth-grade students who were suspended or expelled from their School Districts. The majority of my students were involved with the juvenile justice system through juvenile probation. Other students were involved in programs operated by the Department of Human Services (DHS) because of problems in the home. In this role, I worked with these youth to address the behaviors that resulted in them being suspended or expelled and providing them an academic curriculum rigorous enough to keep them on track to make sure they didn't return to their school district behind. These expectations were difficult to achieve because our student body's more significant part was significantly behind grade level. As a teacher invested in my students, I tried to provide the supports needed to help them gain the skills necessary to improve their grade level. This position was much more complicated than working in the detention center because they went home every day. This was a problem because I only had 8 hours a day to provide them with the
skills necessary to address their behavior and academic needs, knowing they were returning to a home or community that slowed or stopped our progress daily.

I was promoted from my position as a teacher to become the program's Assistant Director. As the Assistant Director, I had opportunities to address issues I had witnessed in my classroom and incorporate specific techniques that I had success with in the past to the other teachers in the program. I enjoyed this role because I could still interact with the students and check in with them in their classrooms. It allowed me to see what the teachers were doing daily and allowed us to work together to provide a high-quality, individualized program for our youth.

At this point, I was promoted to Director of the program. This role came with a lot of responsibility that drew me away from working hand in hand with the teachers and students. I wasn't able to spend any time interacting with the youth, and I wasn't able to provide the teachers with top-notch support because I became out of touch.

In these roles, I have seen first-hand the successes and challenges educators face working with incarcerated youth and the traumatic backgrounds each student has experienced before entering the juvenile justice system. Having worked with this vulnerable population and identifying areas of strength and weakness, I was curious if others in these roles had different perspectives on topics or shared similar opinions. This curiosity was why I choose this topic for my dissertation. My experiences have shaped my bias towards incarcerated youth and the teachers assigned to educating them. I believe these students deserve the highest level of education, exceeding that received by youth attending a traditional public school. Therefore, I am analyzing the data looking for evidence from their teacher's perspective that suggests areas that could be easily repaired, producing a higher level of instruction resulting in a higher student success rate.
I am an advocate for incarcerated youth receiving an equivalent education to their peers in a traditional school setting. I am also an advocate for the teachers responsible for educating these youth. I understand the importance of providing them all with the training and tools necessary to deliver this exploited group with a high-quality education comparable to or exceeding the education students receive in a traditional public school. These teachers believe in their students and want them to be successful.

Using tools like triangulation, member checking, and interrater reliability to help identify and monitor my researcher bias. Having once been an educator of incarcerated youth, my background may have played a part in my bias influence the data collection process, how the data was analyzed, and the study's results. My role as an educator could have helped or hurt the interview process because the interviewees were aware of my background and could have potentially provided me with less information because they assumed I already knew it, or they spoke freely because they viewed me as a member of their group.

My bias could have influenced the coding process because I might perceive comments differently due to my previous experiences. To mitigate my bias in the coding process, I selected the majority of codes before starting the coding process. These codes were selected from the themes discussed in Chapter II that addressed the context of my literature review and my theoretical framework. I am well aware that I would be unable to eliminate all bias towards this topic. Lichtman (2013) shared that the researcher needs to understand that they manipulate the study and its outcomes.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I reviewed this study’s purpose, research questions while introducing the procedures used to collect and analyze the data. By using a questionnaire, a series of three
interviews, and three reflective journaling activities as instruments, I was able to gather a clear idea of how these educators’ perspectives and responses aligned with this study’s research questions. The use of the constant-comparative method to help analyze the data and guide my coding provided me with a wealth of codes linking important themes identified during data collection. Threats to internal and external validity were identified, and tools like member checking, inter-rater reliability, and triangulation were used to minimize those threats. In closing the chapter, I shared my connection to this study and explained how my bias towards the research could have influenced the data collection and analysis.
Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This study explored the perspectives of educators responsible for providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth in short-term detention. This study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do educators working in short-term juvenile detention centers perceive their experiences providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth?
2. How do educators’ perceive success in their classroom based on their experiences providing academic instruction to incarcerated youth placed in a short-term secure juvenile detention center?
3. How do educators perceive challenges in their classroom based on their experiences providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth placed in a short-term secure juvenile detention center encountered while educating incarcerated youth?
4. How does the data collected from the interviews addressing the educators' perceptions of successes and challenges experienced in their classrooms educating incarcerated youth in a short-term secure juvenile detention center correlate with the participants’ demographic and work experiences data reported in the survey?

In this chapter, I present the results using the research questions that guided this study. The quantitative results for each research question will be presented first, followed by the qualitative results. I have selected this outline to align with the explanatory sequential research design I chose for this study.

Since I selected an explanatory sequential research design, I collected the quantitative data first using a web-based questionnaire. In this study, six participants participated in the quantitative portion of the study and completed the questionnaire. Three of the six participants
agreed to participate in the qualitative part of the study consisting of three interviews and three reflective journals.

**Participant's Background**

Table 4.0 identifies the participants that took part in the study, whether or not they participated in Phase II (qualitative), and their assigned pseudonym if they did participate in Phase II. During the quantitative portion of the study, I referred to the participants as Participant one through 6. When I started the qualitative portion of the study, I gave the three participants a pseudonym to protect their identity and confidentiality. The pseudonym also served to provide the reader a name to connect with the experiences and perceptions shared in this study.

**Table 4.0**

*The Study's Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Phase II Participant</th>
<th>Pseudonyms</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant #1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Miles</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The six participants in the study's quantitative phase were all currently working as teachers in short-term detention centers with two or more years of experience educating incarcerated youth. Their educational backgrounds included English, special education, mathematics, physical education, health, science, social studies, and career readiness. They were all state-certified teachers, and their certifications included: (a) Early Childhood (PreK-4), (b) Middle Level (4-8), (c) Secondary Education (7-12), and (d) Secondary Education (7-12) with Special Education Certification.
Quantitative Participants’ Backgrounds

Participants #2, #3, and #5 participated solely in the study's quantitative portion. Participant #2 is a 50-year-old female teacher working in a short-term detention facility. She has 13-18 years of teaching experience and has been in her current role for nine to twelve years. Participant #2 is certified to teach secondary education (7-12) with a concentration in English, social studies, and leadership/supervision. In an open-ended item on the questionnaire, Participant #2 shared “that most detention center students stay less than 20 days” as a challenge she experiences in her classroom.

Participant #3 is a male teacher in his late thirties. He has five to eight years of experience teaching and has been in his current position for less than two years. Participant #3 is certified middle level (4-8), secondary education (7-12), secondary education (7-12), and has a special education certification. He is currently teaching science and special education in a short-term detention center. Participant #3 was asked to list three of the least beneficial professional development opportunities he’s participated in over two years, and he responded, “Haven’t had any that weren’t useful.”

Participant #5 is a female teacher in her late sixties working in a short-term detention facility. She has more than 25 years of teaching experience and has been in her current role for five to eight years. She is certified to teach secondary education (7-12) and has a special education certificate. Currently, she is teaching career readiness, English, mathematics, science, social studies, and special education in her facility. Participant #5 identified three strengths she possesses that help her provide academic services and support at a high level as “accepting, empathetic, and flexible.”
**Background Information on the Interviewees**

The other three participants completed the questionnaire and agreed to participate in the qualitative portion of the study. Each participant in this stage was given a pseudonym. When sharing the quantitative and qualitative results, Participants #1, #4, and #6 will be referred to as Sarah (Participant #1), Miles (Participant #4) and, Nora (Participant #6) except in tables 4.6 and 4.8. Each of these participants completed the interviews and reflective journal activities and shared their perspective on educating incarcerated youth and the challenges and successes they encountered in their classroom.

**Miles.** Miles (Participant #4) is a male teacher in his late 50's with over 25 years of experience teaching. He is certified by the State in Secondary Education (7-12) and Special Education. Miles has been working in his current position at the facility for a little over four years. With over 25 years of experience, Miles shared in his final reflective journal entry writing, “my mind enjoys pedagogy, my purpose is justice, and my heart cares. I get to do all three and get paid.”

**Nora.** Nora (Participant #6) is a female teacher in her early 60's with over 25 years of teaching experience. She is state-certified to teach Secondary Education (7-12) and Special Education. Nora has been working in her current role for 13 to 18 years. Her wealth of experience in the field came out during the interviews and reflective journal activities. In her final reflective journal entry, Nora shared that “she enjoy[s] working with the students, creating relationships, and developing plans to meet their individual needs.”
Sarah. Sarah (Participant #1) is a female educator in her late 30’s. She is State certified in Early Childhood (PreK-4), Middle Level (4-8), and Secondary Education (7-12). She has been in her position at the facility for between nine and twelve years. Her perspective is shaped by her growing up as a child to a teacher and her experiences as an educator to incarcerated youth. Sarah shared with me in our first interview that “she landed a long-term sub position there and she fell in love with it. She said, “These are the kids that made sense to me.”

Coding & Themes

I used the constant comparative method to code my data collected from the interviews and reflective journals. I chose the constant comparative method to guide my coding process because Creswell (2012) suggested using this technique to organize categories about the study's topic and designate areas of information that support those categories. The constant comparative method helped me organize my data by theme, making it easier to present. Before starting the coding process, I selected some of the critical themes that emerged from my literature review and my theoretical framework. When I started the coding process, additional codes emerged. Table 4.1 identifies the 35 specific codes used in this study and whether they were selected before or emerged during the coding process. Some of the codes were used multiple times to align with other themes. For example, professional development, building relationships, teaching materials, and educational services were all used twice because they were linked to the themes, success, and challenges. Each theme has an S or E next to it to identify the codes that were selected before I started the coding process and those that emerged during the coding process.
### Table 4.1

**Codes used in this study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Codes</th>
<th>Child Codes</th>
<th>Grandchild Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Building Relationships -E</td>
<td>Classroom Diversity - E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COVID-19 - E</td>
<td>Detention Staff - E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educational Services - S</td>
<td>Documentation - E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental Health – S</td>
<td>Materials - S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Racism &amp; Racial Disproportionality – S</td>
<td>Special Ed. Disproportionality - S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilities – E</td>
<td>Student Issues - E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trauma – S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poverty – S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successes</td>
<td>Building Relationships – E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Materials – S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers Role - E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education Services – S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Detention Staff – E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special Education – S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility</td>
<td>Classroom Details – E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy &amp; Procedure – E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Population - E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Solutions</td>
<td>Professional Development – E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technique - E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Perception</td>
<td>Reflection - E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Efficacy - E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Collaboration – E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experiential Learning – E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Each theme has an S or E next to it. E identifies the codes that emerged during coding, while S signifies the selection of codes before the coding process began.
Research Question 1 - Perceived Experiences in Short-term Detention

The purpose of Research Question #1 was to recognize how teachers in short-term detention centers perceive their overall experiences educating incarcerated youth. This section reports the results collected from the questionnaire first and then reports the findings from the interviews and reflective journals. The participants shared their insight on their experiences involving professional development, teaching materials, and their responsibilities as a teacher in a short-term detention center. They identified their strengths and shared the various roles they fill working with incarcerated youth. During the qualitative phase, the participants also provided insight on possible solutions to problems they identified in the interviews and reflective journal entries.

Using the questionnaire, I was able to ask the Participants’ questions to gain insight on how they perceive areas like professional development, teaching materials, their responsibilities as teachers, and their strengths as an educator working with incarcerated youth. Table 4.2 illustrates the Likert scale items from the questionnaire and the percentage of the participants that strongly agreed (SA), somewhat agreed (SWA), neither agreed nor disagreed (N), somewhat disagreed (SWD), and strongly disagreed (SD) with the Likert scale items (3,4,6-13) found in Table 3.4 in Chapter Three.

Professional Development

Professional Development was a topic that was explored throughout the questionnaire and the interviews. The participants were asked to provide background on the professional development they received in the past. Elements of the questionnaire and interviews were designed to gather their perspective on professional development, including detail on what types of professional development opportunities were beneficial and what was not of value. The
participants clearly expressed bifurcated views on professional development, the professional development experiences that helped them and their students, and those that were not relevant at all.

**Table 4.2**

**Participant Responses to Likert Scale Items about Their Experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likert Scale Questions</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. PD has an Impact on their Teaching</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. PD is relevant to their Students</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Enjoy Teaching Incarcerated Youth</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Comfortable using Online Learning System</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Have Access to Relevant Teaching Material</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Diversity in Academic Levels requires Significant Planning</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Comfortable Educating Special Education Students</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Have Effective Classroom Management Practices</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Comfortable Addressing Behavior Issues</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Have Input Scheduling Student Academics</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quantitative Data Collected Related to Professional Development**

The questionnaire consisted of six items that allowed the participants to explain the professional development (PD) they received in the past. In the last two years, five out of six participants had received ten or more opportunities to attend or participate in PD. In a follow-up
question, five of six (5:6) of the sample selected yes when asked if any of those PD opportunities addressed incarcerated youth and their educational needs. In contrast, Participant #5 selected no.

Item # 3 invited participants to rate how the professional development impacted their teaching. Five of the six (5:6) participants responded, and of those five participants, one strongly agreed the professional development impacted their teaching (1:5), two somewhat agreed (2:5), one was neutral (1:5), and one somewhat disagreed (1:5). When asked whether or not the professional development was relevant to their student population, two of the six (2:6) participants selected somewhat agreed, another two participants (2:6) picked neither agreed nor disagreed, and the last two participants chose somewhat disagree (1:6) and strongly disagreed (1:6) with the statement.

The last two items addressing PD on the questionnaire asked the participants to provide their perspective on the three best, most important, and useful professional development opportunities and the three least useful, unimportant, and not beneficial professional development opportunities they received over the last two years.

The sample identified topics such as attending conferences, collaborating with other professionals in the field, human trafficking, dealing with trauma and their students as professional development that was beneficial. Miles, Nora, Sarah, and Participant #2 recognized the Neglected and Delinquent Symposium as an important and valuable professional development opportunity. Sarah wrote that "the best and only professional development that we had that specifically dealt with what we do was the Neglected and Delinquent Symposium." She continued by sharing that PD was beneficial in other ways, such as "Going to all the sessions and getting to connect with other teachers in the same field and finding out their successes and struggles was amazing." Participant #2 and Miles also reported collaborating with other professionals in the field as a rewarding professional development opportunity. Participant #2
documented "a joint meeting with other detention center teachers to share what works and [discuss] new ideas." Simultaneously, Nora reported the "collaborative in-service with youth center teachers from neighboring counties" as useful and important professional development.

Nora and Participants #3 and #5 identified several professional development opportunities that were beneficial that all the participants did not commonly share. Participant #5 reported training addressing human trafficking, student trauma, and equality to be valuable. Participant #3 identified a practical professional development focused on a curriculum called Nearpod. Lastly, Nora acknowledged a training she attended on financial literacy at the Federal Reserve as beneficial.

The participants described the least beneficial PD as vague, generalized, and “one size fits all.” Participant #3 shared that all of the PD they received was useful. Some of the educators shared that PD addressing technology was not useful because they don’t have the equipment or the students do not have access to the internet. Each participant provided their perspective into the PD they received that they viewed as being the least useful and least beneficial. Table 4.3 illustrates the participants’ specific responses to Item #4 of the open-ended questions, which asked them to identify three of the least useful, least important, or least beneficial PD over the past two years.

Qualitative Data Collected Related to Professional Development

Professional Development was one of the themes selected before starting the coding process. It was chosen because it was a topic addressed in the interview questions and reflective journal prompts. The participants seemed to view professional development as contributing to their successes and the lack of relevant PD as a challenge when educating incarcerated youth. I
highlighted the theme of professional development in 60 excerpts; of those excerpts, 24 addressed collaboration, and 21 addressed experiential learning.

Table 4.3

Least Useful/Least Important Professional Development Trainings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Item 4: List the three Least Useful/Least Important/Least Beneficial PD Opportunities you received over the last two years.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>We get professional development all the time that isn't useful. Things that deal only with the high school because they group us in with all those teachers. Going to IPad training when we do not have them Equity, even though they don't supply us with the same materials…we get their old stuff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #2</td>
<td>One size fits all training that is intended for the typical classroom. Mindfulness training (over and over) and Cultural awareness training (over and over) form those who have never worked in our environment or have a clue other than the PC narrative. We work well with our students because we know them and work side by side with them every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #3</td>
<td>Haven't had any that weren't useful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles</td>
<td>Repetitive De-escalation and Physical Intervention Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #5</td>
<td>Writing IEPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>Use of web-based learning (students do not have access)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generic District-wide In-services that are required by the employer but have little relevance for our population.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beneficial professional development was defined differently for each Participant in this study. Nora indicated that the most valuable professional development opportunities are the ones that she can choose for herself. She found that her employer's professional development can be beneficial if the topic is geared towards something that she feels is an issue, and she wants to know more. Miles addressed his view on the value of professional development, sharing that "training that means the most to me are actually the trainings that are not dedicated to the population that I am teaching." In our discussion during the interview, Miles expressed he felt prepared to teach incarcerated students due to his extensive experience in the field. Still, he wanted to learn new skills that prepare him to work with different populations when needed.
Professional development addressing the mental health challenges their students' experience was seen by the educators as beneficial and relevant to their facilities. Nora pointed out the value of "understanding different concepts of different mental health issues." Miles provided additional insight into the value of PD related to mental health, sharing that he "always benefits from mental health discussions, those addressing the disorders, medication, and the side effects of the medication." He elaborated on the mental health trainings, focusing on onset symptoms because "when you have older high school student, they are reaching the onset age of some of the serious mental illness."

**Collaboration.** In the questionnaire, interviews, and reflective journal responses, my teachers stressed the importance of having the opportunity to collaborate with others and identified collaboration as the best technique used for effective professional development. Sarah, Miles, and Nora shared their experiences collaborating with others in their facilities, attending conferences, and participating in scheduled meetings with facilities in neighboring counties. In a reflective journal entry, Nora shared her thoughts on collaboration in her facility, sharing that it was how she “learned to work with others to make a change." She realized, "A team approach is best when trying to set up a program that benefits youth."

Miles shared in Interview #2 that the facility staff is "very, very cooperative” and that when he identifies challenges, “they assist me the best they can." Three of the participants involved in my qualitative study, the Neglected and Delinquent (N &D) Symposium, is one of the most beneficial professional development opportunities they have the chance to participate. This event was also called out as valuable by one of the Participants that opted out of the qualitative portion. Sarah considered the N & D Symposium as "the best professional development any of us have ever had." She followed that statement saying, "You got to connect
with other people that do what you do" and "bang ideas off of each other's heads" to "see how they handled situations." Similarly, Nora shared her experience at the N& D Symposium stating, "it is so nice to have some other people you can meet with and talk to that understand the population you are dealing with and some of the unique problems." Miles's perspective aligned with Nora and Sarah when he addressed the importance of attending the N&D symposium saying, "That’s very valuable because we get to see people who are doing very much the same thing that we are and just share stories."

Nora, Miles, and Sarah also discussed the collaboration they have when with educators working in similar facilities throughout the State. In Miles' facility, they work closely with three neighboring counties, "getting together each year and just sharing successes and struggles," which he found helpful. Sarah's facility also collaborates with a neighboring county, and she suggests, "It was good to be able to talk to other professionals about what we do, how we do it, what works best, and why we think it works best, and be able to essentially improve ourselves." Miles further addressed the importance of collaboration when he said, "it is nice to have a network, and it's helped because we have been able to reach out to each other" to discuss students who transfer from facility to facility in the state or just " to talk to and develop some programs that are appropriate for our population with people from the same area."

**Experiential Learning.** Through the interviews and reflective journal prompts, I sought to determine where teachers learn to educate incarcerated youth in their facilities. My teachers identified experiences throughout their lives that helped prepare them to educate this vulnerable population better. When I asked Miles in our interview where he acquired the skills to educate incarcerated youth, he shared that "a lot of the skills that I use I've been using for so many years, and it's really hard for me to remember where they all came from." He provided more insight
when he reflected in a journal activity writing, "I have taught in a large variety of settings and my work as a therapist, residential treatment center for kids, women's abuse center, and the emergency psychiatric hospital gave me a broad base of experience." Miles continued by writing that these experiences "prepared me for the broad base of issues incarcerated students face as they are thrown together because of only one issue they share." Miles also attributed his role as a parent to helping him teach this population, sharing that "as I mentioned in the interview, parenting my seven children, five of whom had experienced severe traumatic stress, is what most prepared me for teaching kids who had severely misbehaved in a way that brought about very negative consequences."

In a reflective journal entry, Nora shared that a lot of her experience came from being a teacher in two different detention centers and "spend[ing] years working with emotionally disturbed adolescents in an alternative setting." When asked what else prepared Nora to educate this population, she documented, "many of the experiences that prepared me for teaching incarcerated youth are personal experiences." Growing up in a diverse neighborhood, Nora "came to appreciate diversity and understand how the lack of education limited many of the families' opportunities." As an Educator, Nora shared, "we cannot always change their environment, but we can help them see new possibilities." In her experience, Nora shared that "a lot of who you are as a teacher comes from your experiences and beliefs that you've developed through your own life." From her years of experience, she shared, "not all the kids are going to make it, but I just have hope for the kids. I want them to have something to believe in."

When asked about an experience that has influenced her ability to teach incarcerated youth, Sarah highlighted her childhood. She shared that her mother was a Special Education Teacher, and when she did not have school herself as a child, she went to school with her
mother. These experiences allowed her to see how her mother "handled the students that were having outbursts or getting kicked out of their classrooms." Sarah also observed, "How she was there for them, and how they respected her because she treated them with respect." According to Sarah, "growing up seeing this made me want to be a teacher so that I could help kids the way she did." She shared another tool she acquired over time in the field, and she said, "I would just say learning from the kids, and how they react to different situations." These experiences showed Sarah "that success in a classroom like mine is very different than in a ‘typical’ education environment."

Miles, Nora, and Sarah also identified some professional development opportunities as not beneficial or relevant to their student population. I coded these excerpts as a challenge. In the interviews, PD was coded in 30 passages. The excerpts identified areas addressing PD being vague, over-generalized, repetitive, and not applicable to their population or setting. Table 4.4 provides the specific responses from the teachers that were collected during the interviews sharing their perspectives on how professional development can be a challenge in their short-term detention centers.

The participants’ responses addressing their perceptions of challenges related to professional development in Table 4.4 were discovered during the interview process. Each educator provided their insight on why PD in their facility can be a challenge. Some of the themes that emerged through these educators experiences were: (a) excessive repetition of specific trainings, (b) PD provided that does not align with the requirements of the facility, (c) training that is not relevant to their student population, and (d) PD is too vague. These themes came from the participants’ experiences and their ability to reflect on those situations to identify
these specific challenges related to professional development in their role as an educator in a short-term detention center.

Table 4.4

*How Educators Perceive the Challenges Associated with Professional Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miles</td>
<td>I’ve been teaching for a lot of years, and I have been sitting through some trainings without exaggerating 20 times. They keep changing the names but teaching the exact same things (non-violent interventions) We’re in this facility; they go by different tactics and plans than what we are trained in, so it’s probably worse than meaningless because if we follow through with what we are trained to do, it wouldn’t match with what they’re doing here (non-violent interventions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>The ones that our Agency offers are not geared toward our population because they are taking primarily special education teachers from all over the county, but many of those teachers are dealing with very different populations than what we are. It’s not really geared for addressing our students. When out of 400 people at the Agency, you have four people working in a correction setting, most of the PD they are offering are not applicable. I think we can probably do more. Some were too vague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>It doesn’t directly relate to my population and what I do. It’s a different setting; they live there. They sit through agency facility meetings, and it does relate to them at all.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* This Table provides how the Participants view professional development as a challenge.

**Experiences with Teaching Materials According to Questionnaire Responses**

The questionnaire consisted of four items designed to gather information regarding teaching materials used in the participants’ classrooms. The participants were provided with a statement saying that "I have access to relevant teaching materials that align with a curriculum designed to meet the needs of our student population." The sample was split between three responses, (a) strongly agree (1:6), (b) somewhat agree (3:6), and (c) somewhat disagree (2:6). They were also asked if they were using an online learning system in their facilities, 100% of the group chose no, but the group was split on whether or not they were comfortable using an online
learning system to educate their students. Of the six participants, two participants strongly agreed (2:6), one somewhat agreed (1:6), two of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed (2:6), and the remaining two participants somewhat (1:6) and strongly disagreed (1:6) with the statement.

The last item on the questionnaire addressing teaching materials asked the participants to identify what three teaching materials they would request if they were, in fact, given the opportunity to request materials. Table 4.5 illustrates the teaching material each Participant would request if provided the opportunity.

Table 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Requested Teaching Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Technology would be amazing! We have smartboards, but we never got trained on how to use them. We try, but they never seem to work properly. Students do not have technology to be able to do interactive things in class like Kahoot, Nearpods, etc. Getting materials for PE. Materials can be difficult to obtain &quot;because when they look at the population to give us funding...the numbers are typically low we don't get much funding, and so we don't have much money to get proper equipment for class.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants #2</td>
<td>My students have access to technology and willing staff, but because we are in a County facility, Wi-Fi and internet are limited because of filtering that is needed to protect the student internet user, outside victims of our students, and government liability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants #3</td>
<td>Technology, supplies, and furniture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles</td>
<td>Lined paper, fast computers, and student access to the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants #5</td>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>Technology that does not allow students on the internet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. This Table provides the participants’ responses to question #5 of the open-ended questions.

An Educator’s Perception on Teaching Materials

The topic of teaching materials was a theme identified in the interviews and reflective journals. Teaching materials was a theme that emerged during the axial coding phase. This theme was associated with research question #1, and four excerpts were coded. When asked, "Do you
have access to the materials you believe are needed to teach this population? If not, what materials do you think this population needs to be successful?” Nora and Sarah were the only two participants that addressed materials in a positive fashion. Nora acknowledged having the necessary materials when she said, "I do, for the most part. I have been collecting for years. So at this point in time, yes." She followed that response with, "I have pretty much obtained most of what I need, and every year there might be one or two little things that I have to find and change up." Sarah responded to the question by saying, "I'm feeling good about my situation with equipment." She likes to "order different things just to keep them active and actually interested." Hence, she orders materials for in “the [residential] unit so that they can stay active," such as cornhole.

**Teacher Responsibilities Discovered in the Questionnaire**

Nine items were designed to gather some insight into the teachers' responsibilities in these facilities. The themes of the questions focused on classroom and behavior management, special education, academic diversity, scheduling, and planning time. I provided the participants a prompt that read, "I have effective classroom management practices," five out of the six participants strongly agreed (5:6) with the statement, Participant #3 somewhat agreed (1:6). The participants' responses were the same when provided the prompt "I am comfortable addressing behavior issues in my classroom," with five of the six participants strongly agreeing (5:6) with the statement and Participant #3 somewhat agreeing (1:6).

In an attempt to measure how they felt about their responsibilities in their classrooms when addressing special education, I provided the participants with the statement, "I am comfortable educating students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP)." The entire sample of six participants (6:6) strongly agreed with the statement.
The participants were asked if they took part in scheduling classes/courses for the youth in their facility, four of the six participants selected yes (4:6). Sarah and Participant #5 chose no (2:6). In a follow-up question addressing scheduling, I provided the statement, "I have input scheduling my student's academic schedules." Two of six participants strongly agreed (2:6) with the statement, three of six somewhat agreed (3:6), and one of the six neither agreed nor disagreed.

Two items were utilized to address planning time. The first item was multiple choice and asked participants how often they had scheduled planning time. All participants responded that they have at least 20 minutes every day. Item # 9 provided a statement that read, "The diversity in the academic levels of my students requires significant planning to reach all students." The participants were split with 50% strongly agreeing (3:6) and 50% somewhat agreeing (3:6) with the statement.

**Strengths of the Educators**

The participants of this study were asked to identify three strengths they possess that help them provide academic services and supports at a high level. Nora and Participants #3 and #5 recognized flexibility as one of the strengths they possess. Participant #2 wrote, "The ability to start each day with a student and not hold a grudge, believing that every student should be given the opportunity to grow intellectually and that every student can learn" are the strengths that help her educate her students at a high level. Miles focused primarily on his past experiences as his strengths pointing out his "long teaching experience, mostly teaching emotional support, and adopting five at-risk kids."

Two of the strengths Participant #3 shared were "patience and listening," while Participant #5 revealed her strengths as "concern" and being "non-bias." Nora documented that
she has three strengths that help her provide high-level services and support to her students, and they are her ability to be "accepting, empathic, and flexible." Sarah was very detailed in her response, including scenarios addressing the strengths that help her provide instruction at a high level. She shared, "In the gym, I participate/play with them, which helps them see me as a person that they can relate with and talk to." Sarah stated that "I keep my classes very open and safe so that they know that they can ask me any question and that I will not judge them." Her experience is also a strength; as a second responsibility, she works in "an emotional support school, and many of the students of mine end up incarcerated or in the shelter program." She also "works all summer with summer school to not lose the relationships with the residents." One hundred percent of the participants (6:6) strongly agreed with the statement, "I enjoy providing academic services and supports to incarcerated youth."

**Teachers’ Roles in Short-Term Detention Centers**

The teachers’ different roles in their facilities was a theme that emerged from the data collected from the interviews and journal responses. The theme emerged during the axial coding phase of the constant comparative method. It was highlighted in 23 different excerpts. The excerpts described the various roles they fill for their students and how filling these roles provides additional opportunities for success in their classroom. Sarah, Nora, and Miles provided examples from their experiences.

Sarah described her role as a teacher and encompassing the part of a role model, a therapist, and a parent. She shared that one of her roles is "a role model type figure, someone that gives advice." In her facility, Sarah is "a therapist, someone that can calm them down, offer them an ear, and give them someone to talk to and try and point them in the right direction." She also communicated that all the facility staff "fill the role of their [students’] parents." Sarah elaborated
on that comment, saying that the students “that are with us for long stays or they've been with us multiple times, we really are their family" because "some of them don't really have family, other than us, even when they get out they come back for meals and just to talk."

Miles revealed that a role he fills in his facility is "a caring support person." He supported his position by saying, "some of these students are hurting so bad that they just need to know that they're cared for, and that gets through to them as well." Miles shared that "most of my students are not at a point in their lives where academics is the most important lesson of the day." He believes it is the teacher's responsibility "to adjust what success means in the classroom" and to hold themselves accountable, saying "success of all my students is demanded and lack of success inexcusable."

Nora identified her position as the role of a listener. She described the role as "someone they can feel safe, just talking with" She provided an experience of why she feels listening is important:

I am not the court, so they can just talk about how they're feeling, what they are worried about, and be able to express it a little bit and feel like somebody cares about them, and I think that's a big role. I think that some of them are missing what I would say to them is like an Aunt or a Grandmother, somebody that they can trust to care about them and listen and talk; that's what they need.

In her role as an educator, Nora said, "my role is to scaffold the work to ensure success. I want the students to feel when they leave that if they put work into learning, they can succeed."

**Perceived Solutions**

Perceived Solutions was a theme that emerged during the coding process. Each Participant shared potential solutions to problems from their perspective during the interviews
and reflective journal activities. The theme was identified in 78 excerpts. Perceived Solutions had two child codes develop during the coding process, and they were professional development and techniques.

**Professional Development**

When I asked each participant, “If you were responsible for selecting professional development for the educators in your facility using your experience in the field. What types of professional development would you select and why?” Each of the participants provided me with some PD they believed would benefit educators in their facilities. These topics ranged from addiction, understanding a student’s background, introducing the juvenile justice system and how it works. Nora suggested understanding a student’s background as a beneficial training because “She thinks anytime you can gain an understanding of what the students are going through, what they’re experiencing gives you a better idea of how to address the issues in the classroom” preventing you from “exasperating whatever the problem is already.”

Sarah identified multiple PD opportunities that would benefit the educators in her facility. She suggested “collaborative trainings with teachers that are with similar type students so that they can actually bounce ideas off of them.” Sarah also “feel[s] we have tons of kids in there that are addicted to drugs,” so she proposed “learning about addictions” as a possible PD. Miles insisted that he “would select the high-level professional developments that are meant for other departments in other support systems because you're going to learn on the job and you're going to learn from experienced colleagues.” He followed that statement with a suggestion of training designed to address the “legal stuff” and “how does the legal system work?” Miles thinks “it’s good to have some working knowledge of all these different things that you’re going to come in contact within the classroom.”
Techniques

In this section, the participants all provided examples of techniques they use in their facility and classroom that help eliminate challenges and increase the opportunity for success. Miles shared that in his facility, the staff “address the academics by assessing them and address[ing] their confidence issues by talking to them, showing them we care, that they are smart, they can succeed, and can change their life around if they put their mind to it.”

Nora described her classroom in a reflective journal activity, and the description serves as a technique other educators could use. She wrote, “By creating a safe environment, students can feel free to try.” She continued by sharing that “The classroom can be a place to talk about the future, options, and the benefits of education.” These, along with “high expectations, small classes, and individualized attention, create the norm of everyone working” while teachers using “a variety of educational techniques used to ensure that with practice students can succeed.”

A technique that has worked for Sarah is “just go[ing] with the flow and hit on the things that the kids ask the most.” She has also “learned always to have an outline of the information that we learned in the prior class for anyone that missed and have the students that were there quickly review out loud what we went over and learned.” Sarah said, “This can be interesting at times, but it has definitely shown me what they pay the most attention to and what they learned.”

To address classroom diversity, Nora shared that she “individualizes a great deal and make[s] them into small groups” that are “based on what they need and where they are at.”

Reflection & Self-Efficacy

In the final interview with each Participant, I asked questions to address their perspective on reflection and self-efficacy. When I addressed reflection with Miles, Nora, and Sarah, asking them the following questions:
• How do you reflect on your job as an educator?
• How do you reflect on experiences in your classroom?
• Do you use an organized process or a reflective method you have designed?
• What do you gain from reflection?

Each of the participants had a different perspective about reflection.

Miles's responses related to reflection on his life. He started by saying, “every day when I walk in, I’m really, really happy to be here, and every day when I leave, I feel like there are many things that I wish I had the energy to do before I left.” Miles continued saying, “If that ever changes, I’ll retire.” In a follow-up, Miles addressed the gratitude he had for his role when he said, “I don’t usually take the time to appreciate the fact that I have the privilege of being in a relationship with them” and “when I reflect upon it that’s what comes up - is how privileged I am.”

Miles also addressed the community in the facility as a topic of frequent reflection. Miles said, “I reflect the most about the community the kids built here and give a lot of credit to the staff here because this becomes a positive, supportive community.” This community is “made up of people that don’t have a history of being supported, and I find that extremely positive and fascinating.” He ended our discussion on reflection by sharing how fortunate he feels “to meet these kids and [that] they relate to me and allow me to share a little piece of their life.”

Sarah focused her reflection on her instruction. She said, “I reflect on every lesson I do to see what worked, what didn’t work. I kind of like learning for myself over the years.” Reflection wasn’t a process she incorporated earlier in her career, and she said, “I didn’t do that my first probably four or five years when I worked here, but over the years, you learn, and you reflect
upon your lesson.” As a result of reflecting on her lessons, Sarah noticed “all of a sudden everyone’s engaged, even kids that never engage.”

The process of reflection has allowed Sarah “to build an arsenal of how to get things to go smoothly.” It also provides “insight on how I can change my practices, what I am doing right, and what I am doing wrong.” Sarah shared that it was important to reflect and sometimes “give yourself a pat on the back when that’s deserved and change your thinking when that’s warranted because that’s the only way you’re going to improve.”

Nora had a similar perspective as Sarah regarding reflection and its connection to instruction. Because of her busy schedule, Nora shared that while she “would like to, but there are some days when [she is] probably more plugging through than reflecting.” She shared her “general rule” on reflection, saying she assesses “what happened and maybe change this up tomorrow or work on something else that might be better for somebody.” Reflection for Nora has become “more innate at this point in time,” and “you just kind of get into that mindset after a while you don’t have to have it as formal.”

Reflection can be used for different reasons. Nora identified using reflection to see “what worked as far as instruction” as well as “reflect[ing] on how I dealt with a student” and “what that student is going through.” Nora uses reflection to “help put things in order, and instead of always being reactive, you’re more active in trying to do things better or in a new way or just acknowledging you did something right.”

Before moving to the topic of self-efficacy, I described self-efficacy as how well someone views their ability to execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations. I asked the participants, “If you were going to assign a grade to your self-efficacy,
what grade would it be and why?” Each Participant provided a grade and additional insight describing why they chose that grade.

Nora said, “I’ll give me a B, it’s not perfect, but I think I’ve gotten better in the years.” She continued saying, “I keep away from the C because of my desire to do right by the kids, I’m not satisfied with just getting by” and “I won’t just keep them busy, that’s not good enough for me, so I won’t do it.” Nora was clear that those were the reasons she didn’t give herself a C. She also shared why she did not give herself an A. Nora did not give herself the A because “I’m not perfect” and “there’s always room to grow.”

Sarah assigned herself “a solid B.” She substantiated her grade by sharing that “there is always room for improvement, and I definitely tried my best.” Miles gave himself the highest grade. Miles said, “I would give myself an A, and I would think that anybody at this point in their career should give themselves an A because that should be something that you are continuously working on.” He continued by sharing, “It has to do with choosing well where I am; how well it matches who I am and what I am about.” He concluded by saying, “you get a sense that you’re in the right place, doing the right thing, and you know how to do it.”

**Research Question 2 - How Educators Perceive Success**

Research Question #2 aimed to recognize how teachers in short-term detention centers perceive success in educating incarcerated youth. In this section, the quantitative data collected from the questionnaire will be presented first, and then the qualitative findings from the interviews and reflective journals will be reported.

The participants were prompted in item #1 of the questionnaire to describe three successes they experienced in their classroom. The majority of responses identified themes like creating a safe classroom environment where students feel comfortable sharing, classroom
participation, student engagement, building relationships, and students working together. In each of Sarah, Miles, and Nora’s responses, the theme of creating a safe classroom environment where students feel safe was identified. Nora described one of her successful experiences as "students demonstrate[ing] trust by being able to discuss their thoughts and ideas." Sarah recognized a similar experience, documenting "students feeling comfortable enough to ask me questions in health class that they were always too embarrassed to ask because we have a safe, nonjudgmental environment" as classroom success. At the same time, Miles acknowledged "the milieu of my classroom is positive and respectful" as a success in his classroom. Table 4.6 illustrates the participants' responses to a multiple-choice question on the questionnaire, asking them to select the scenarios they perceived their students being successful.

Table 4.6

Results of Participants' Descriptions of Students Successes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Item #1: I see my students as being successful when they…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>Actively participate in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 3, 6</td>
<td>Require minimal redirection to stay on task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>Demonstrate improvement on assigned tasks or academic tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Avoid losing privileges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 4, 5</td>
<td>Assist their peers with academic work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>Engage in positive social behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>Advocate for themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 3, 6</td>
<td>Complete assigned work with minimal resistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sarah, Nora, and Participants #2 and #3 each documented responses that addressed classroom participation and student engagement. Sarah shared a scenario where "students that rarely participate when they are in their typical school are raising their hands, reading, and helping their peers" as a success in her classroom. Participant #3 detailed that he experiences classroom successes when "student engagement is high, and they ask a lot of questions." In these
encounters, the student engagement and frequent questions "typically revolve around lessons such as future technologies, traveling to outer space and the human body." Participant #2 described classroom success as "the student acceptance of academic rigor we provide in a transitional and often temporary learning environment." Nora detailed success in her classroom by sharing, "when students come in telling me they cannot do math and leave saying they are good at math."

Building relationships and students working together were two additional themes identified in the participants' responses when addressing their classrooms' success. Participant #2 recognized building "rapport with students" as a classroom success, while Miles viewed classroom success as the ability "to make individual connections with the students." Sarah and Nora identified working together as classroom success. Nora described this scenario as times “when students are able to work cooperatively with peers and demonstrate what they have learned by being able to share with a peer." Sarah documented a similar notion when she explained that "having students work together to help each other in the PE environment to try to get each other to succeed."

Miles and Participants #2 and #5 shared some classroom successes that did not align with the recognized themes but provide valuable insights. Miles documented a personal classroom success when he wrote, "my advice is considered in the development of policies." Participant #2 detailed a classroom success as "student advocacy through their transition from home to detention center to the placement and/or back home again." Lastly, Participant #5 had a perspective, unlike the other five participants. She identified success in her classroom as "students improving basic skills," students participating in "community service projects," and "students becoming employed."
While each Participant's description of three successes they experienced in their classroom was unique to their experience, it was evident that there were ongoing themes. As themes emerged through the quantitative analysis, it became clear that it would be necessary to investigate further how building relationships and working together impacted the perceived successes through qualitative analysis.

*A Qualitative Perspective on the Importance of Building Relationships*

The theme of building relationships emerged through the axial coding phase of the constant comparative method. Participants identified building relationships as a challenge and a success in their classrooms. Data on building relationships was coded from 21 excerpts.

The participants shared examples of how building relationships can lead to success in the classroom. Nora emphasized that “building relationships and being human to your students is extremely important.” She shared that her students "want a personal connection, and that's where it starts, and it's hard, and each teacher needs to find their own limits, and that is probably the hardest." Still, without the personal connection, "you're not going anywhere." She followed that statement saying the students "may sit there out of fear or out of compliance because they don't want to get in trouble and just fill in the paperwork to say they're done, but there's not going to be much real learning without relationships."

Similarly, Miles stressed the importance of building relationships in one of his reflective journal entries, writing, "I have solidified my understanding that the more students are hurting, the easier and more essential it is to show students that you care and that you value your relationship with them." Nora also addressed that knowing her students' background information is essential for her to experience success in her classroom. She said, "I think understanding the variety of backgrounds our students come from helps in being able to understand the individual
students. As educators, we need to believe in the possible futures of our students." Nora also shared that to build relationships in your classroom, "you need to be real, and you need to listen," and sometimes "you need to have times when you might just have a little bit of laughter in your classroom."

**The Impact of Educational Services**

Educational Services were identified as an area of focus as a result of my research into the existing literature. Educational Services is a term used to address academic instruction, the use of curriculum, lesson planning, classroom expectations, and other areas addressing the educational services provided in these facilities. The theme Educational Services was coded in 31 excerpts; nine of those excerpts were associated with the child code, detention staff. Table 4.7 provides the educators’ perspectives on how they view success as it relates to the educational services provided in their short-term detention centers. This information was collected from the interviews and reflective journal activities.

Achieving success within these facilities' classrooms requires these educators to build relationships and work with detention center staff. Miles and Nora shared their experiences working with detention center staff. Nora said, "we have been able to work with them, talk with them, and work together so that they don't discount what we are doing.” This has resulted in detention center staff exhibiting “more respect for the school and "it feels like they are caring about it and seeing the education as worthwhile.” Miles described the staff role in his classroom, saying, "most of the time they are helpful in my class usually just by setting the example" they attend classes and monitor the students, allowing me to focus on teaching. He shared that "staff is always there setting a good example of how to be in class, and it's a helpful thing." Miles described the detention staff as "young and fresh out of college." He continued by saying that he
“get[s] a feeling of success because they're paying attention to me and trying to benefit from my experiences as they develop as professionals.” Nora identified the strength in the partnership between the teachers and the facility staff, sharing that they have "been able to make some adaptations and work with the administration to alter the program a little bit that would make it better for them, and they've been willing to do it" in turn "we've been able to see the standards increase as far as for the education."

Table 4.7

The Success Educators Experience in their Classrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miles</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I think the flexibility to do different things to serve the kids in different ways increases the success because I am not locked in. If I have an academic lesson all set and ready to go, but I sense that it's the right time to teach a coping skill or offer support, I can just switch, and I think it increases success. I like to do journaling and respond to the students. Some of the students are really into writing and love getting responses. I In my class, I do a lot of finances, how to manage finances, as well as classes on coping with stress, achieving happiness, and gun safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RJ</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Success in the classroom is seeing students engaging in learning, expressing pride in being able to learn, and seeing them excited about problem-solving. Success is giving students a positive school experience that will hopefully encourage some to continue their education when they leave. There are daily successes, like when the students get engaged and will work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>They care about their learning and their school and will actually talk about wanting to back and finish. Some of them will acknowledge that they actually feel like they're learning. When I can see they are getting excited, and they're actually believing they can do it, and they didn't believe when they first came in. I I want them to feel some success so that they're willing to try learning again when they get outside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>The students know exactly what to expect. There is a rubric on the wall with set activities. If a student is dealing with something, we know. Especially if it's a class with one or two students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Role of Special Education

Special Education, a theme selected before coding, was only coded four times when combined with the theme success. Sarah explained the process that her facility uses to meet the needs of students receiving special education services. In this facility, there is one special education teacher for the students placed in the detention center. Sarah informed me that "they are the ones that do the IEPs, write the IEPs, and make sure they send the IEPs to the regular education teachers." The regular education teachers provide the special education teacher with grades, progress towards meeting their goals, and what they are currently doing in class. The contracting Agency requires Sarah or the other regular education teacher to attend scheduled IEP meetings. Sarah did share a positive light on the special education process when she said, "it's good to talk to the parents and stuff when they show up." Miles and Nora did not share responses relevant to this theme.

Research Question 3 - How Educators Perceive Challenges

Research question 3 was selected to identify the specific challenges educators in short-term detention centers face. The theme challenges were coded 308 in excerpts. In Item #5 of the Likert scale portion of the questionnaire, participants were asked if they agreed with the following statement "My job is challenging on a daily basis," one Participant strongly agreed (1:6), while four somewhat agreed (4:6), and the last Participant neither agreed nor disagreed (1:6) with the statement. Table 4.8 shows specific scenarios that the participants think make their jobs challenging on a daily basis.

In the sections that follow, I will address the qualitative outcomes. These are the themes discussed in this section: (a) building relationships, (b) COVID-19, (c) mental health, (d) poverty, (e) trauma, (f) educational services, (g) racism and racial disproportionality, and (h)
facilities. These themes are those that I identified before coding and those that emerged from the qualitative research data.

**Table 4.8**

**Results of Participants’ Descriptions of Job Challenges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Question #2: I consider my job challenging because of…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 3, 5, 6</td>
<td>Difficult student behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, 6</td>
<td>The academic diversity of my students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Lack of appropriate curriculum for my students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The cultural differences of my students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Administrative policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 3</td>
<td>Students being grade levels behind academically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 5</td>
<td>Lack of academic documentation from student's prior placement/school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 4</td>
<td>Lack of instructional time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Uncertain length of stay for the students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A constant flux of students and not having the same groups two days in a row.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* This Table identifies items that make their job as an educator challenging.

**The Challenge of Building Relationships**

The criticality and challenge of building relationships emerged as a theme from data collected from the interviews and journal responses. The theme emerged through the axial coding phase of the constant comparative method. Both Miles and Nora identified challenges relating to building relationships with students. I coded six excerpts relevant to the theme. In Miles' third reflective journal entry, he said, "The biggest challenge was finding the best way to connect with the students without the opportunity to have one-to-one informal and formal conversations." In our first interview, Nora shared that "be[ing] able to develop a rapport, and a cohesiveness in a flow is very difficult because you constantly have the flux of students." In a reflective journal activity, Nora also shared that building relationship in the short term is a challenge. In her experience, a challenge building relationships was "try[ing] to reach out and make a connection with the students so that they are willing to give learning a try." In one of the
excerpts, Nora shared her experience trying to build relationships during the COVID-19 pandemic. She said, "It's also harder to make the relationships. Some of the kids will come up and talk to me but not nearly as much because you're this person on the screen, and they really want a real person."

**The Impact of COVID-19**

During the axial phase of the constant comparative method, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged as a theme. This theme was identified in 14 excerpts found during the interview process. Due to the pandemic, the facilities required their teachers to provide virtual instruction to their students, creating additional challenges for their teachers. Sarah and Nora shared their perspective about the pandemic and how it affected their classroom. Nora shared that virtual learning "doesn't work well with this population at all." Her students do not have access to the internet, so to keep up, she said:

I try to keep giving them work, and I have to go in, sometimes, but I have to go in when they're not in the classroom and make copies because they have to do everything with paper, pencil and can't be on a computer. It is far more of a challenge, and I don't feel like I'm getting through as much.

Nora expressed her feelings about virtual teaching, saying, "I just have to say the teaching remotely; I just hate it." Virtual teaching has also been a challenge. When using Zoom for instruction, Nora said, "it's very hard because they can go and sit off in the corner and I can't even see them because they're out of view" and "sometimes I'm saying, who's in the room right now."

Due to the pandemic and virtual teaching, Sarah said, "trying to get us all on the same page with these kids sitting on a computer all day" is a challenge and suggested, "professional
development addressing virtual teaching would be beneficial." Nora shared that "the Judge is detaining fewer, but those that are detained are there longer because it's hard to move them anywhere." She also pointed out that:

Even though the numbers are smaller, so they get more attention from some of the staff there, they're not getting the rest of the support, and you can just see, it's hard for them in some ways that they just feel like you know, they're just wasting time.

Because some of the students stay in the facility longer, Nora believes that "the kids are stagnant and not only that, but because of COVID they don't get the family visits, like they used to, and the court is held over Zoom." This stagnation Nora identified has other adverse outcomes, and she thinks:

They're lacking a lot of that personal connection to people that matter to them. They're allowed FaceTime phone calls with their families, but it's not quite the same as when they used to come in person.

These are just some of the perspectives on how COVID-19 influenced their role as teachers and impacted the lives of their students.

**The Influence of Mental Health**

The Mental health theme was selected before starting the constant comparative method. It was a topic identified in my literature review. This theme was coded eight times and was only present during the interview process. The participants provided several examples.

Nora shared that students with mental health needs "have increased tremendously." In her facility, "50% probably now have any variety, be it depression, OCD or substance abuse, which may be a result of another issue." Sarah described the challenges and mental health services at the facility as:
No matter what challenges they came from, and especially with mental health, many of them never even got services for their mental health issues until they're here, and we don't have good services here for mental health because it's just a short term. It's not long term we don't have those resources.

Nora's perspective on mental health services is similar. As a result of the placement being short-term, "they just want them to just get by until they can get out and go somewhere else, which is a shame; I would like to see some sort of help while they are here." She doesn't "see a big investment here in dealing with mental health issues." When I asked Nora what had the biggest impact on her students, she responded that "mental health stands out big time, but then it's hard to tell some of the mental health is that from some of the trauma they experienced in some of their family life. I wouldn't know how to separate it." She elaborated saying, "I see a lot of the trauma from their family but I also see a lot of the poverty coming up as well, which also goes into the mental health, but I see more severe mental health." In response to this challenge, Nora suggested a training and professional development related to dealing with "a variety of different mental health issues with teenagers."

**The Impact of Poverty**

Poverty was a theme that was selected before starting the coding process. It was chosen because of its importance in my literature review. Poverty was identified in four excerpts. Miles wrote about poverty in a reflective journal activity, stating that, "Many students come from low-income homes where they reach out to gang and drug affiliates to make quick cash." He referenced that poverty "brings them to stealing many times," and as a teacher, "it’s hard to change a kids mind about making easy money on the streets” and telling them “they should go to school, pay attention, and someday get a legal job.”
Sarah discussed that “sometimes the kids from poverty, come in and they have it a million times better.” She provided additional examples saying, “They have food on the table, and they know they are going to be warm at night.” Nora shared her thoughts on poverty when she said, “they seem to come disproportionately from the neighborhoods where there’s higher poverty and to be quite honest with you, and the ones that get detained here are more likely to be from poverty, I don’t care what the race is.”

**The Effect of Previous Trauma**

Trauma was another theme that was selected before starting the coding process. It was chosen because of its importance in my literature review. Trauma was identified in seven excerpts collected from the interviews and reflective journal activities. Trauma was not a topic addressed in detail by Nora and Sarah, but Miles shared his feeling about trauma and its impact on his students.

Miles focused on the impact of previous trauma and shared that trauma is a challenge in his classroom, and it’s because “they’re traumatized, and it’s really hard for them to focus.” He continued sharing, “because of traumatic experiences, a lot of them have shut down the hope of putting together a life that works,” and “they’ve given up on working hard and doing the right thing because of traumatic experiences.”

**Qualitative Findings Related to Educational Services and their Challenges**

Educational Services was a theme identified before starting the coding process. It was selected because it was a critical part of my literature review. Educational Services were coded twice to address the themes of successes and challenges. Educational Services was connected to 97 excerpts, split between six child codes (a) classroom diversity, (b) detention staff, (c) documentation, (d) special education, (e) materials, and (f) student issues.
**Classroom Diversity.** Miles, Nora, and Sarah identified classroom diversity as a challenge in the interviews and the reflective journal activities. Miles said in his facility, “there’s a huge diversity in each class” because the students are in “different grades” and from “different schools.” Classes are “grouped by court order or to reduce conflict not to facilitate education,” and often “they’ll change who’s in what class to help manage behaviors” in Miles facility. This creates a challenge for Miles because “the lack of consistency in the classroom” results in Miles never “do[ing] a unit that’s more than a week-long because it is just fruitless.”

Sarah also found classroom diversity a challenge. She shared that she teaches health class once a week and “you never know who you are going to have because you get so many new intakes each day or kids are in and out” for court or other meetings resulting in the student missing health class for the week. Another challenge she shared was that “usually you have at least one student that’s new in each class just because of new intakes.” Nora highlighted this challenge by saying, “you have to adjust some of your teaching styles because you have a very mixed group of kids” because they are different “age-wise, level-wise and because of their safety restraints.” Nora shared that the facility she works in “makes a lot of the decisions as far as who’s going in what group, and it can change from day to day.”

**Detention Staff.** Miles and Nora identified some challenges working with detention center staff and their impact on the classroom. Miles shared that “there have been some issues sometimes that they’re more distracting to class than helpful.” Nora shared that “we expect some of them when they come in, they can be more disruptive than the students” because they are “very loud” and “very confrontational.” She said it is the “most awkward challenge” because “it’s not my job to supervise their staff, but they are setting off my students in my room and distracting them.”
**Documentation.** All three participants in the interviews and reflective journal activities identified receiving student documentation from the student’s previous school or placement as a challenge. In a reflective journal entry, Miles wrote, “when many students come in, we do not have their school records and do not know what classes they are in, what their reading and math levels are, how many credits they have, or if they have an IEP.” When this happens, they are forced to gather the information from the student. Sarah addresses the challenge of asking the student for the information saying, “sometimes they tell us they’re in 11th grade, and then we find out they’re in the eighth grade.” Sarah also identified receiving documents as a challenge saying, “kids will come and go, and we still won’t have their IEP.” Nora expressed her thoughts on the challenge saying “the student will be gone before anything has ever come” and “some districts totally ignore our request.”

**Special Education Disproportionality.** When asked what percentage of students in their facilities received special education services, each Participant provided an estimate. Miles shared that his facility's special education student population was “probably at least a third, it might be 50%.” But he was not able to tell me if that percentage had increased over the years because he’d “only been teaching there for four years,” and he hadn’t “noticed a change in it.” Sarah thought the percentage of special education students in her facility was “at least in the 80s, because of low reading levels” She thought the special education population had increased while she worked there, saying, “I do go to more IEP meetings now than I ever have” and “I swear every day, I look at my email, and I have another paragraph to write for an IEP meeting or another invite.”
Over the last ten years, Nora believes the percentage of special education students in her facility has increased. She thinks the rate is “always at least 50%, sometimes higher.” When I asked Nora why you think you have seen an increase, she responded by saying:

I think that the kids that are here that have IEPs are sometimes here longer because they multiple issues going on, and it’s harder to figure out what to do with them. There isn’t always a placement to send them. I think that they’re getting in trouble at school more because they don’t always know how to use social cues and to cover up what they’re doing as well as some non-special ed students.

Materials. Miles, Nora, and Sarah each shared challenges they experience in their classroom relating to teaching material. Table 4.9 describes some of the challenges each Participant has experienced involving teaching materials. The source of each example is included in the Table, an interview is labeled I, and a reflective journal is RJ.

The participants’ responses addressing their perceptions of challenges they have experienced as it relates to teaching materials in Table 4.9 were discovered during the interview and reflective journal process. Each educator provided their insight on why access to teaching materials in their facility can be a challenge. Some of the themes that emerged through these educators experiences were: (a) lack of access to technology and the internet, (b) inability to provide an education equivalent to the public school because they aren’t able to do the same things, (c) budget and funding issues, and (d) inconsistent access to essential materials. These themes came from the participants’ experiences and their ability to reflect on those situations to identify these specific challenges related to teaching materials in their role as an educator in a short-term detention center.
Table 4.9

Challenges Educators Face Involving Teaching Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miles</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>My students can’t have access to the internet, and the lack of student access is a major problem. It’s hard to teach in a way to help them be successful if and when they return to regular high school if we can’t do the things that they do in a regular high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes it’s a little hard to know what resources we get from where some things are incongruent. We have new smartboards, but a lot of times we don’t have paper. So normally, we just buy it because it’s a lot easier than hassling with who we are supposed to get it from. Without computers and internet access, I mean that is not close to being good enough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>They don’t really have a budget for supplies for us because the budget for supplies is supposed to be coming through some of the Title One funds, so they don’t get reimbursed for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>I will ask other people in other programs that I know if they have a few extra books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>We have always been further behind on having books, resources and the kids having laptops. They did before, to an extent, but they really didn’t work. We couldn’t use Zoom meetings, so I was recording myself teaching a lesson, sending in my recordings, and they would play my recordings on the board. If they had questions, Staff would call me on my cell phone, and I would try to do the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>They do have access to the internet, but it’s very much blocked. We turn on about ten computers for five kids because only maybe three might connect on any given day, and then you gotta keep restarting, and maybe they will connect the next time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>We don’t use the books very often because most of the kids can’t keep up with them; they can’t read the information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Issues.** Miles, Nora, and Sarah all provided insight into the challenges the educators face when working with youth who have not been successful in their home schools and who experience low motivation to be successful in detention. Nora shared an issue she encounters in her class, saying, “Many students come in not wanting to or caring about school; they don’t even see a purpose.” A challenge Miles shared was ‘trying to convince them they
could one day go to college, technical school or even graduate high school” because “many do not have anyone in their family that has done any of those things.” Miles continued by saying, “the biggest challenge to the classroom is how preoccupied the kids are with things that deserve their preoccupation.” Miles elaborates on preoccupation, saying:

They’re not preoccupied with video games or what some girls said to them last period.
They’re preoccupied with a court hearing and what’s happening to different family members that they can’t see or where they’re going to be living; they’re preoccupied with things that do deserve their attention more than what I’m presenting in class.

This preoccupation can also be a result of pending “legal ramifications” or possible “placement.” Sarah told me, “Anything and everything is definitely fair game with things that they are preoccupied with.” She also pointed out that “it’s an emotional time for them,” and sometimes events in their lives impact them “either mentally or physically,” resulting in them “want[ing] to upset the class or keep their head down.” In her experience, student issues can be the result of a phone call, an “upcoming court hearing,” or an “intake meeting” She thinks that “most of these kids missed out on their childhood,” and she tries to provide an environment where “they’re laughing and acting like a kid.”

**Racism & Racial Disproportionality**

In the interviews and reflective journals, Racism and Racial Disproportionality were coded in 22 excerpts. This theme was selected before coding. The passages addressed social/racial injustice, educational services, behavior in the facility, and placement of students of color disproportionately. Miles, Nora, and Sarah each provided their perspective on this theme.

When asked if they believed students of color were being placed in their facility disproportionately, Miles said, “anyone who’s worked in a place like here and is not blind knows
that is true.” Nora addressed disproportionately when she shared, “I would have to say the African American population here is out of proportion to what it is in the Community.” She followed that statement with, “I would say that sometimes we’re closer to 50% African American here, and that is not what the population is in this county.”

Each of the participants mentioned institutional racism in our discussions. Miles identified racism as “a major factor, and it’s a factor in their lives, long before they get here and a contributing factor to them ending up here.” He continued by saying, “institutional racism has traumatized them and their families for all these years and led to the comprised situation they are in.” Nora provided some insight on a racial inequity that she noticed “I’m not saying kids that don’t live in more poverty neighborhoods don’t commit crimes or have substance abuse issues, but they don’t tend to get detained for whatever reason.” She continued her thought, saying, “They have family that gets them out right away or has the means and resources to do it.” In the “inner-city kind of neighborhoods,” those youth “don’t seem to have the resources to get them out.” When asked about institutional racism in her facility, Sarah responded by saying, “I don’t see as much of the institutional racism here. To be honest, I really don’t see it.”

Nora had a different perspective than Sarah and had multiple experiences to share. First, she mentioned racial inequities and institutional racism her students face describing “institutional racism is there and I have seen it in different ways.” She continues that statement with an example she has experienced:

I look at the quality of services that have been provided to my students, and I look where they come from invariably. If they came from a more white, more well-to-do district, they were receiving a lot more services. And the others were not. The quality of education they were getting was different as well.
She continued to address the inequities saying, “when you look at a county like ours and see what services the students attending suburban school districts receive and compare it to urban school receive, they’re nowhere close.” The students in these districts are “not offered the same level of a curriculum, materials, or assistance.” Nora continued to share her experiences and wanted to tell me an experience involving some of her Hispanic students:

I’ve even had kids who were of Hispanic background, who have talked to me about what classes they were never allowed to take because they made the assumption that they were Hispanic, and they could only take the low-level ones because English must be a problem in their homes so, even if they have gone to school here since they were in kindergarten, even at the high school level they’re still being tracked, and to me, that’s still a form of institutional racism because they’re not given the same chances as the other kids.

Nora and Miles shared their perspectives towards the disproportionate placement of students of color into short-term detention centers and their encounters with institutional racism in their roles in these facilities. Each of their perspectives provided additional insight into racism as it relates to the juvenile justice system.

**Facilities**

The theme “Facilities” was a theme that emerged during the axial phase of the constant comparative method. It was selected because the participants were sharing challenges they experienced due to the facilities they work. The theme “Facilities” was coded in 35 excerpts. The participants’ responses were addressing their perceptions of challenges they have experienced as it relates to the facilities where they work in Table 4.10.

These responses were discovered during the interview and reflective journal process. Each educator provided their insight on why the facilities where they work can be a challenge.
Some of the themes that emerged through these educators experiences were: (a) the policies and procedures of the facility, (b) the short amount of time to work with the students, (c) lack of control over educational programming because facility procedures come first, and (d) being told what materials you allowed to use and not use. These themes came from the participants’ experiences, and their ability to reflect on those situations to identify these specific challenges related to their role as an educator in their specific short-term detention centers. Table 4.10 displays the specific challenges the participants shared during the interviews and reflective journal process.

Table 4.10

The Challenges Educators Face as a Result of their Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miles</td>
<td>RJ</td>
<td>Most of the barriers are security and safety-based limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Challenges are the process. They change regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>The biggest challenge is actually the time issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>The largest challenge is that you can never develop an ongoing system because every day, there’s a new group with you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>RJ</td>
<td>A challenge is adjusting to changes in staff and procedures and not having control over setting up a program that is best educationally for the students because the facility procedures come first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Can’t use a lot of fancy gadgets because it’s not allowed here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>There are certain regulations we have to follow because of where we are situated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>They tell you what supplies you are allowed to use and not use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>RJ</td>
<td>The biggest challenge I face due to this being a short-term facility is that you can’t always give the correct amount of time/attention to certain topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RJ</td>
<td>With students coming and going so quickly or missing class due to court or other reasons, it is hard to keep the class moving at a good pace where we are learning new things and digging deeper. I constantly have to review what we did in the class before.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. These are some of the challenges they face working in secure short-term detention
Teachers Final Reflective Journal Entry

After completing the final interviews with Miles, Nora, and Sarah, I sent each of them the last reflective journal activity. The last question included a prompt to “tell me why you chose to be a teacher in a short-term detention center educating incarcerated youth and why you continue to work in this setting.” Each Participant responded to this question with examples from their previous experience.

Sarah shared her story of getting her job at the facility. Sarah wrote, “I came into this job by chance” she had received “a call two days before the school year asking if she would be interested in a long term substitute teacher position.” She said, “Yes, and it was one of my greatest decisions.” She continued, saying, “I love working with the kids here in this environment. Despite the many challenges, my successes may look different than others, but it is a very rewarding job.”

Miles wrote, “unfortunately, for many of my students’ success is measured by the degree to which they are able to stop going backward and find hope in the existence of a path forward.” He also described a bit of a mantra, writing, “My mind enjoys pedagogy, my purpose is justice, and my heart cares. I get to do all three and get paid for it.”

Nora wrote, “I don’t look at it as I chose kids in detention centers; I just feel those kids need it. They need an education; they need something to help them succeed in their future.” She elaborated on the education they need, writing, “Students need the challenge to feel they earned the success they achieve when they learn, the work we give them needs to be engaging and challenging.”
Research Question 4 – Connecting Success & Challenges to our Educators’ Background

The purpose of research question #4 was to examine the relationship between the data collected from the interviews addressing the educators’ perception of successes and challenges they experienced in their classroom and their demographics and previous work experience. I had hoped for a more significant number of teachers working in short-term detention centers to complete the questionnaire. The question was intended to examine the educators' differences and similarities in the study and how they connected to the educators’ perspectives on success and challenges shared in the interviews.

Due to the low number of responses to the questionnaire, I could not field a diverse group of educators. The six educators who did complete the questionnaire all came from similar backgrounds, making the correlation between the two insignificant. The participants were all white educators. More than half of the participants were female (4:6), and exactly half had 25+ years of teaching experience (3:6). The other half of the sample had been teaching for five to eighteen years. All of the educators who participated earned their master’s degree.

The lack of diversity in race, gender, years of teaching experience, and level of education achieved made it difficult because their responses resulted in responses were similar, presumably because of the similarities of their participants’ backgrounds and worldviews. For example, in item #3 of the questionnaire found in Table 3.4, using an open-ended question, the participants were asked to identify the top three most beneficial professional development they’ve attended. The majority of the participants (4:6) identified the “Neglected and Delinquent” Symposium as a beneficial professional development they attended. Another example was seen in item #5 of the questionnaire found in Table 3.4, using an open-ended question; the educators were asked what materials they were missing in their facilities. The majority of educators (5:6) suggested the need
for technology (i.e., computers, the internet, and students’ access to technology). These responses were significant because they answered these open-ended questions using their words and came up with comparable responses despite not receiving any prompts.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I presented the six participants' results that completed the questionnaire, and I aligned the data collected from the three participants who completed three interviews and reflective journal entries to the research questions guiding this study. By connecting the data collected using some pre-selected codes and the constant comparative method, I provided a narrative identifying how the participants perceived their classroom experiences and what success and challenges looked like for each Participant.

Through the tools used in my study, questionnaires, interviews, and reflective journals, the participants revealed intriguing insight into their perspectives on the successes and challenges they face in educating students in the short-term detention setting. The findings show that the educators’ perceptions are influenced mainly by their students’ social and emotional health in their classrooms. The educators focus on establishing a safe environment where they can build rapport with their students as the most impactful way to create space for learning. Similarly, it is the lack of these things and the shortage of fundamental tools and information needed to inform their understanding of the population that creates obstacles and challenges.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed-methods study was to shed light on the challenges and successes that educators face when providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth placed in short-term, secure juvenile detention centers. This study focused on how educators perceive their experiences working in short-term detention facilities with incarcerated youth and how they perceive their classrooms' challenges and successes. This mixed-methods study consisted of one main research question with three sub-questions. This study's primary research question was: how do educators working in short-term juvenile detention centers perceive their experiences providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth? The following sub-questions helped guide the study:

- How do educators' perceive success in their classroom based on their experiences providing academic instruction to incarcerated youth placed in a short-term secure juvenile detention center?
- How do educators perceive challenges in their classroom based on their experiences providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth placed in a short-term secure juvenile detention center encountered while educating incarcerated youth?
- In what ways does the data collected from the interviews addressing the Educators' perception of successes and challenges experienced in their classrooms educating incarcerated youth in a short-term secure juvenile detention center correlate with the demographic and work experience data reported in the survey?

Review of the Findings

In this study, I gathered a significant amount of meaningful data using a questionnaire, three interviews, and three reflective journals. Each mechanism allowed the educators to share
additional insight into their perspective towards the specific themes aligned with this study's research questions. Themes like professional development, building relationships, and educational services were discussed in detail, while topics like policies and procedures, trauma, and poverty received minimal attention. This section will share the most relevant findings, the responses that most educators agreed on, and some surprising and unexpected outcomes.

The quantitative data collected using the questionnaire provided intriguing outcomes. First, and of significance, the entire sample of six educators (6:6) strongly agreed that they enjoyed giving academic services and support to incarcerated youth. Ethnicity and years of experience were also noteworthy outcomes as 100% of the sample were white, and 50% had 25 or more years of experience (3:6). Only two of the six educators somewhat agreed with the statement, "The professional development I received is relevant to the student population I teach." Comparatively, the other four educators neither agreed nor disagreed (2:6), somewhat disagreed (1:6), and strongly disagreed (1:6). These responses were alarmingly significant because teachers working in these facilities require relevant professional development opportunities specific to their classrooms' unique student population.

The classrooms' academic diversity was addressed, with 100% of the educators agreeing that "the diversity in my students' academic levels requires significant planning to reach all students." Success can be perceived differently by each individual, so the educators' responses to student success perceptions were intriguing. When prompted with "I see my students as successful when they?" all six educators selected the following three behaviors: (a) actively participate in class, (b) engage in positive social behavior, (c) advocate for themselves. In contrast, most educators (5:6) only selected "my students' academic diversity" as a response to the prompt "I consider my job to be challenging due to?" Given my experience in the field, this
was unanticipated. I expected a more substantial consensus regarding the other challenges these educators face in their jobs.

The questionnaire's open-ended questions also allowed the educators to share their thoughts using their own words. When the educators described three successes they experienced in their classroom, they discussed trust, comfortability, and their classroom environment in a facility designed for security. Sarah shared that her "students are feeling comfortable enough to ask me questions in health class that they were always too embarrassed to ask because we have a safe non-judgmental environment." Nora said success in her classroom is "when students demonstrate trust by being able to discuss their thoughts and ideas." Miles described his classroom environment as a success when he said, "the milieu of my classroom is positive and respectful."

I asked the educators to identify the three best and the three worst professional development opportunities they participated in over the last two years. Of significance was that of the six educators; four identified the "Neglected and Delinquent" Symposium as the best and most valuable professional development opportunity. Sarah elaborated on the Symposium, saying it was "the best and only professional development that we had that specifically deals with what we do." Participant #2 addressed the least beneficial professional development opportunities as those that are "one size fits all training intended for the typical classroom."

The need for technology was a notable response (5:6) to the question, "what three teaching materials would you request if you were missing any." This need for technology was addressed in the interviews when the educators stressed the need for computers and access to the internet for their students. Each participant identified three strengths they possess that help them
provide academic services and supports at a high level. The only strength that more than two educators (3:6) shared was flexibility.

The series of interviews and reflective journal activities provided thought-provoking outcomes and some surprising and unexpected results. In the qualitative stage, educators recognized that collaborating with teachers from different facilities is an essential part of professional development. Miles, Sarah, and Nora referenced scenarios about collaborating with other professionals from similar facilities and how it was beneficial. They also provided more profound insight into the professional development opportunities that were not beneficial. Miles, Nora, and Sarah provided examples of why the training was not valuable. Specifically, it was vague, over-generalized, repetitive, and not applicable to their students or facilities.

Building relationships was a theme that received significant attention. This was important to the educators, as the existence of a relationship with the student was highly perceived as a strength in the classroom and the lack thereof as a substantial challenge. Nora shared that "Building relationships and being human to your students is extremely important" because the students "want a personal connection." Conversely, Miles described that "the biggest challenge was finding the best way to connect with the students without the opportunity to have one-on-one informal and formal conversations" in a reflective journal entry.

The responses related to the diversity of academics in the classroom seemed to focus on the unpredictability of the facility and how the facility grouped students for classes, as well as the frequency the students attended class, and not the academic diversity of their students. For example, Miles said, students in these facilities are grouped into classes "by court order or to reduce conflict, not to facilitate education." Sarah also found classroom diversity to be an issue
because "you never know who you are going to have because you get so many new intakes each day."

While discussing the diversity of academic levels, I addressed the staggering percentages of students who receive special education services in these facilities. Each participant provided an estimate of the students in their facilities that receive special education accommodations. Miles thought that "at least a third, it might be 50%" were receiving special education services. Nora estimated "at least 50%, sometimes higher," and Sarah followed, saying, "at least in the 80s, because of low reading levels." These estimates demonstrate the disproportionate number of students with special needs placed in short-term detention.

The use of technology and access to the internet was identified by Miles, Nora, and Sarah as an issue in their facilities. I found this alarming in 2021, where access to the internet is widely available. Technology and access to the internet should be accessible to all students in short-term detention with the proper security protocols. Miles highlighted a significant obstacle for these educators and their students when he stated, "it’s hard to teach in a way to help them be successful if and when they return to regular high school if we can’t do the things that they do in a regular high school."

Several issues involving the students’ outlook or mindset toward learning that the educators shared were of note. The educators revealed that some of the student issues create a challenge in their classroom. Nora shared an experience describing when students enter the facility saying, “many students come in not wanting to or caring about school; they don’t even see a purpose.” This statement was impactful and spoke to educators' challenges as they seek to reach the student, despite not knowing the students’ academic history, previous experiences in placement, or how long they have to work with the students in placement.
Racism and the disproportionate number of students of color placed in short-term detention were topics in the interview questions and the reflective journal prompts. Miles and Nora felt strongly about this topic and shared their thoughts. When asked about racial disproportionality, Nora said, “I would have to say the African American population here is out of proportion to what it is in the community.” Miles said, “Anyone who’s worked in a place like here and is not blind knows that is true.” While not surprising, these responses are alarming and validated that students of color are disproportionately placed in short-term detention centers. In contrast, I was surprised when Sarah was asked about institutional racism in her facility, and she responded saying, “I don’t see as much of the institutional racism here. To be honest, I really don’t see it.” If I had additional interview time with Sarah, I would have liked to gather a better understanding of why she felt that way.

The Focus of the Literature

The majority of literature on this topic focuses primarily on the challenges youth face before, during, and after incarceration. There is minimal research addressing the perception of educators, their experiences, and how they perceive success in educating incarcerated youth to support my educators’ perceptions. The lack of literature that portrays these educators' achievements speaks to how the system has failed to celebrate their teachers' and students' accomplishments and failed to provide a level of support designed to address the distinct challenges they encounter.

Educators’ Perspectives on Experiences Educating Incarcerated Youth

Using the questionnaire, interviews, and reflective journal activities, I understood better and recognized how the six educators in this study perceived experiences educating incarcerated youth. These experiences addressed were: (a) professional development, (b) teaching materials,
(c) their roles in the facility, and (d) additional responsibilities teachers have working in short-term detention centers. The educators shared the strengths they possess that help them provide academic services and support at a high level. The interviews and reflective journal activities provided Miles, Nora, and Sarah a chance to share their perception of possible solutions resulting from the problems they’ve encountered firsthand and using the knowledge learned from those experiences to come up with a perceived solution.

**Professional Development**

The teachers in this study shared their professional development experience in contrast to one another, those that were beneficial and those that were not. The professional development that was not beneficial was described as vague, over-generalized, repetitive, and not applicable to their students or facilities. The sentiment of the teachers was supported by the literature suggesting that even though research has identified how important it is for teachers to receive adequate professional development, a large number of teachers disclosed that the professional development they received was not pertinent or valuable to their role as a teacher (Grossman & Hirsch, 2009). The teachers also described professional development opportunities they encountered as beneficial. The majority of these opportunities came from conferences and collaborating with other professionals working in the field at similar facilities.

**Collaboration.** The educators stressed the importance of collaboration as a form of professional development. Four of the six educators in the study identified attending the “Neglected and Delinquent” Symposium as a valuable experience. Sarah described attending the symposium as “the best and only professional development that specifically dealt with what we do.” This was contrary to the teachers in Grossman and Hirsh’s (2009) study that suggested the professional development they received wasn’t pertinent or valuable. My teachers also
considered collaborating with other teachers from youth centers in neighboring counties as “rewarding.”

**Experiential Learning.** In discussions regarding professional development, the study's teachers would mention experiences that provided them with the skills necessary to educate this specific student population. An excellent example of this was when Miles shared that “a lot of the skills that I use I’ve been using for so many years, it’s really hard for me to remember where they all came from.” This aligns with Kolb’s (2014) research describing experiential learning as a type of learning derived from lived experiences. The majority of the educators suggested that their previous work experience has provided them the tools to help their students. Despite working in similar facilities, their previous experiences are unique to them, which connects to the research of Boud et al. (1993), suggesting that we provide meaning to our own experiences because others cannot know how we see or feel about specific incidents.

**Teaching Materials.** The educators in the study had mixed feelings regarding teaching materials. Some of them shared they had what they needed, while others expressed a need for additional materials. One thing that was consistent from the majority of teachers' perspective was the need for access to the internet for the teachers and students. The research that focused on materials indicated that the material and supplies in these facilities are inadequate and don’t meet the students’ needs or teachers (Houchins et al., 2009). Contrary to the research, some teachers said, “I do, for the most part,” have the materials I need, while another said, “I’m feeling good about my situation with equipment.”

**Additional Roles.** My teachers shared the different roles they fill for their students and their facilities. Each participant described their roles as a listener, role model, therapist, parent, and someone who cares. These roles are contrary to the research suggesting that facilities view
their educators as tutors, disciplinarians, and moderators instead of teachers (Young et al., 2010). Current research does not address these roles; it is focused primarily on the role of the teacher.

**Reflection & Self-Efficacy.** Both of these topics are critical parts of my theoretical framework. Reflection was a theme we discussed during the final set of interviews. Miles, Sarah, and Nora shared their perspective on reflection and how they are in their role as a teacher. The majority of the experiences they shared focused on reflecting after lessons to identify functional areas and those that need work. Miles’ approach to reflection was mindful, appreciative, and grateful for his experiences working with this population.

Each of the educators did not have an organized reflection process; with over 60 years of experience, reflection has become innate. These experiences align with the research of Jasper and Rosser (2013) and the description of reflection as the process individuals learn from their experiences by allowing them to contemplate and assess their prior beliefs and knowledge based on the new experience and incorporate the knowledge gained for future use.

Self-efficacy was another topic discussed in the final interview with each participant. I asked the educators to give themselves a grade based on their self-efficacy level and explain the particular grade. Akhtar (2008) describes individuals who believe in their ability to take challenges head-on and complete tasks at a high level exhibit strong self-efficacy skills. Through years of experience and being faced with challenges every day in their classroom, the teachers in this study have developed strong self-efficacy skills. Nora and Sarah gave themselves a B, supporting that grade with the fact that “there is always room for improvement” and “I won’t just keep them busy; that’s not good enough for me.” While Miles gave himself an A, saying, “I would think that anybody at this point in their career should give themselves an A because that should be something that you are continuously working on.”
Educators’ Perspectives on Classroom Successes in Short-term Detention

Using my data collection methods, I gained insight into how the six educators in this study perceived and defined their successes in educating incarcerated youth. The areas my teachers perceived as success were: (a) experiences in the classroom, (b) building relationships, (c) educational services, and (d) special education.

Experiences in the Classroom

The teachers in this study each brought a different perspective of what success is in their classrooms. My teachers were asked to select the behaviors their students exhibit when they are successful; all six educators chose the following items: (a) actively participate[ing] in class, (b) engage[ing] in positive social behavior, and (c) advocate[ing] for themselves.

Each of the teachers described the importance of creating a safe classroom environment where students feel safe and are comfortable sharing. Nora believed that “success is giving the students a positive school experience that will hopefully encourage some to continue their education when they leave.” This is contrary to the literature, suggesting that classrooms in juvenile justice facilities are not appropriate for classrooms (Geib et al., 2010).

My teachers directly associated student engagement with success in the classroom. When the student “engagement is high, and they ask a lot of questions,” and there is “acceptance of the academic rigor we provide,” there is a sense of success for both teachers and students. The teachers described success in their classrooms as “seeing students engaging in learning and expressing pride in being able to learn.” Unfortunately, I could not find meaningful research that addressed classroom success in short-term detention facilities to support or discredit the teachers’ perspectives in this study.
Building Relationships

The teachers in this study described their ability to build “rapport with students” as a success. According to the educators, creating an “individual connection with the students” increases the likelihood of success in your classroom. My teachers did not mention any challenges building relationships due to the racial differences between the teachers and their students. The teachers stressed that their students “want a personal connection,” and by “being human to your students,” you can make that connection. The teachers’ perspective on building relationships aligns with the literature that suggests that students who develop bonds with their teachers are less likely to participate in substance abuse and delinquent behaviors (Steinberg & Avenevoli, 1998).

Educators’ Perspectives on Classroom Challenges in a Short-term Detention Center

Using the questionnaire, interviews, and reflective journal activities, I was able to gain insight into how the six educators in this study perceived challenges in educating incarcerated youth. The themes that the educators perceived as challenges were: (a) building relationships, (b) mental health, (c) poverty, (d) educational services, (e) facilities, (f) racism, and the disproportionate placement of students of color in short-term detention centers, and (g) the COVID-19 pandemic.

Building Relationships

Building relationships with students was one of the perceived challenges teachers experience in educating incarcerated youth. According to the study educators, the short amount of time the students were in the facility makes it difficult for staff to build relationships with their students. They also identified developing rapport with the students as a challenge because students are often moved in and out of the facilities, sometimes multiple times and often without
notice. The educators did not indicate that exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACE) or that race impeded their ability to build relationships with their students. These findings are contrary to the research that indicated students who lived through ACE were more likely to develop behavior and emotional impulsivity, in turn affecting their relationships (Kowalski, 2018). Despite 100% of the teachers in this study being white and the large number of students of color disproportionately placed in short-term detention facilities, racial diversity between the teachers and their students was not noted as a challenge in developing relationships.

**Mental Health**

The mental health of the students was identified as a challenge, according to the educators. Mental health diagnosis in incarcerated youth is prevalent, with 70% of the population meeting the criteria for at least one diagnosis (Shufelt & Cocozza, 2006). Nora supported this statistic, sharing information regarding her facility and its percentage with mental health issues. She said, “50% probably now have any variety [of mental health issues], be it depression, OCD, or substance abuse.” Sarah provided her perspective on mental health, sharing that “many of [the students] never even got services for their mental health issues until they’re here, and we don’t have good services for mental health because it’s just short term.” Gottesman and Schwarz's (2011) research support Sarah’s statement, suggesting that detention facilities are not prepared to adequately service the youth’s mental health needs while in their custody.

**Poverty and Trauma**

The educators of the study suggested that poverty and trauma presented challenges in their classrooms. In a reflective journal entry, Miles wrote that “many students from low-income homes reach out to gang and drug affiliates to make quick cash,” and at times poverty “brings them to stealing.” Miles’ statement aligns with McLeod and Shannon’s (1993) belief that
persistent poverty in childhood is linked with increases in antisocial behavior over time, suggesting that chronically poor youth become further detached from appropriate social behavior.

Trauma was identified as a challenge, but the educators did not discuss the topic in detail. One participant shared that trauma was a challenge in his class, suggesting that “because of traumatic experiences, a lot of [the students] have shut down the hope of putting together a life that works,” and “they’ve given up on working hard and doing the right thing because of traumatic experiences.” Kowalski (2018) suggests something similar sharing the trauma can often result in isolation and loneliness. Edalati and Nicholls (2017) found a significant relationship between prior trauma and involvement in the criminal justice system.

**Educational Services**

The theme educational services provided the following six sub-themes that the educators perceived as challenges: (a) classroom diversity, (b) detention staff, (c) documentation, (d) special education, (e) materials, and (f) student issues.

**Classroom Diversity.** In the questionnaire, the six educators selected “the academic diversity of my students” (5:6) as a primary challenge in their role. The literature supported the educators’ perspective on this challenge, with Koyama (2012) suggesting that a wide array of academic needs can be challenging for educators to provide effective academic instruction. In the interviews and reflections, the educators portrayed their perspective on how classroom diversity was a challenge when they shared the following statements:

- There’s a huge diversity in each class.”
- Classes are grouped “by court order or to reduce conflict, not to facilitate education.”
• “You have to adjust some of your teaching styles because you have a very mixed group of kids (age, level, and safety concerns).”

The literature supports these statements, suggesting that educators in these facilities struggle to accommodate the academic and behavioral needs of students who are in different grades and on a different level and all placed in the same classroom (Koyama, 2012).

**Detention Staff.** In the interviews, the educators described experiences where detention staff working in their facilities created additional challenges educating their students. The educators explained that the staff could be “very loud” and “very confrontational,” resulting in the staff “be[ing] more disruptive than the students.” These disruptive behaviors of staff often result in “setting off the students in my room and distracting.”

**Documentation.** Documentation was labeled a challenge by the educators because they found it extremely difficult to collect school records and academic documentation from their students’ previous schools and placements. The following statements shed light on how the educators perceived the process of collecting student documentation:

• “Kids will come and go, and we still won’t have their IEP.”
• “The students will be gone before anything has ever come.”
• “Some districts totally ignore our request.”
• “Sometimes they [the students] tell us they’re in 11th grade, and then we find out they’re in the 8th grade.”

The literature supports these statements, suggesting that many facilities do not have access to the youth's educational records in their custody (Geib et al., 2010).

**Special Education Disproportionality.** The disproportionate placement of students receiving special education services in short-term detention was identified as a challenge to my
teachers. The estimated percentage of students in their facilities ranged from 33.3% to 80%. These estimates support the literature, which finds that students with disabilities are often punished more frequently than students without disabilities and are constantly subjected to disciplinary practices designed to exclude them (Sullivan et al., 2014). The teachers’ estimates are concerning because they represent a more significant percentage than what the research reports. Students with disabilities constitute 12% of the student population in the United States but are overwhelmingly (25%) reported to the juvenile justice system and subject to arrests in school (Villalobos & Bohannan, 2017).

**Materials.** The teachers in this study suggested that materials in their facilities resulted in additional challenges educating incarcerated youth. My teachers suggested that materials became a challenge when they had to purchase their supplies and borrow books and resources from friends in other facilities. The most significant challenge was that the students in their facilities did not have access to the internet. These challenges aligned with barriers addressed in a previous study conducted by Houchins et al. (2009), where the educators recognized materials and supplies to be an issue in their facilities because they were inadequate and did not meet the teachers’ or students’ needs.

**Student Issues.** In this study, my teachers shared their classrooms and described specific challenges related to their students' issues. The teachers provided examples such as (a) persuading students to care about school when they don’t see a purpose, (b) convincing them that secondary education is possible, even though no one from their family has ever gone, and (c) helping the students to focus on the here and now, instead of being preoccupied on things they can’t change. These responses prove that educators working in this field must have the capability
and skills to address their students’ academic and behavioral needs, which are often more severe than students’ needs in the standard public school system (Houchins et al., 2009).

**Facilities**

This study's educators suggested that their facilities provide multiple challenges to educating the students in their classrooms. The educators recognized the short amount of time students spend in the facility as a challenge. Koyama (2012) asserted that some students only stay in facilities for a short time, which creates challenges for educators designing and implementing an effective educational program for the youth. The educators’ feedback validated this. The educators also shared that security and safety-based limitations were a challenge. Leone and Wruble (2015) suggested that the primary issue occurring within these detention facilities is that the staff and the Administration's primary focus is on the youth’s safety and security in their custody, but put little precedence on educating the youth.

**Racism and Racial Disproportionality**

Racism and the disproportionate placement of students of color in short-term detention were perceived as a challenge by the educators in this study. Nora spoke about the disproportionate placement of students of color in her facility. She identified that 50% of the youth in her facility are African American, which is not in proportion to the county's population. This percentage is similar to the statistic that African American youth make up 57.4% of all youth arrested for manslaughter and 67.8% of those arrested for robbery (Burton & Ginsberg, 2012) despite these youths only representing 15% of the United States population of youth (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Miles's response addressing racial disproportionality in his facility resonated when he said, “anyone who’s worked in a place like here and is not blind knows that’s true.” Some
educators identified some racial inequalities in areas like academic tracking and students receiving an equitable level of resources and assistance due to where they live. This aligned with the research, suggesting that white students are more likely to be placed on a higher academic track than students of color (Lucas & Berends, 2007). Kohli et al. (2006) addressed inequitable resources when they asserted the lack of equitable resources confirms that racism is entrenched in our educational systems’ policies and practices, which spreads inequity in communities of people of color. Racism was a poignant political topic during the time this study was conducted, with civil unrest abounding after events surrounding the death of Brionna Taylor and George Floyd. The Educators shared their thoughts on social injustice and the need for improvement. Miles referred to teaching current events to his students and having open conversations about racism.

**COVID-19 Pandemic**

This study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 created challenges for people around the World, and that included Educators providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth in short-term detention centers. Each of the educators in the qualitative portion of the study perceived COVID-19 as a challenge. Due to the pandemic, the educators from both sites were forced to provide remote instruction and virtual learning, which was identified as the most significant challenge COVID-19 presented. Nora stated that virtual learning “doesn’t work for this population.” This was compounded by the fact that her facility does not allow computer access to their students. Sarah revealed that “trying to get [the teachers] on the same page with these kids sitting on a computer all day” was challenging.

The inability to build relationships with their students was another challenge that emerged due to the pandemic. Nora found it challenging to build relationships and provide Zoom
instruction because the students in her classroom would move out of view of the camera or sit in the corner, and she would not know who was in the classroom. Nora made a statement that represented the educators’ shared view when she said, “I just have to say that teaching remotely; I just hate it!”

**Connecting Success & Challenges to our Educators’ Background**

As a result of a small number of participants completing the questionnaire, I could not collect the data I had expected in order to address this question. This question required a more significant number of teachers with experiences working in short-term detention centers to complete the questionnaire. With that data, I could examine the relationship between the responses collected from the interviews addressing the educators’ perception of successes and challenges they experienced in their classroom and whether or not there were connections to the educators’ demographics and previous work experience that completed the questionnaire.

Due to the low number of educators and the lack of diversity in my pool of teachers, I did not have enough information to compare. I assessed the educators’ race, gender, years of teaching experience, and level of education. The participants were all white educators. More than half of the participants were female (4:6), and exactly half had 25+ years of teaching experience (3:6). The other half of the sample had been teaching for five to eighteen years. All of the educators who participated earned their master’s degree. The six educators who did complete the questionnaire appeared to come from similar backgrounds, making the results of research question #4 insignificant.

I examined their responses on the questionnaire, looking for variances in perspective, but the responses often resulted in similar answers. This could be a result of each of the teachers sharing comparable demographics and work experience. I did find it interesting how the six
educators that completed the questionnaire supplied similar responses to multiple open-ended items with no prompts.

**Limitations**

Creswell (2012) describes limitations as areas of the study that the researcher identifies as flaws and complications. The weaknesses the researcher acknowledges could include sample size, issues involving educators, or problems with data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2012). While working through this process, I noticed several limitations to the methodology of this study. This study's sample size was small; it did not allow me to collect enough data to generalize my findings to the larger group of teachers educating incarcerated youth. Had I expanded my pool of educators to include more than two short-term juvenile detention centers, I could have recruited more educators from different backgrounds, work experiences, and perspectives regarding working in these facilities with this population.

My study’s sample of participants lacked diversity. Each of the participants in the study is white. This aligned with the research that 83% of teachers are white (Ford, 2010). The study also lacked a significant range of work experience. Three participants had 25+ years of teaching experience, while the other three ranged from five to eighteen years.

Due to the low number of educators who completed my questionnaire, I could not collect enough data to conduct meaningful inferential analysis, limiting me to descriptive analysis and descriptive statistics. Not having access to inferential statistics prevented me from finding relationships between the variables and using those relationships to represent educators' larger population, forcing me to focus only on my study's educators. Using descriptive statistics allowed me to record the information that only described my educators and prevented me from making assumptions that would pertain to educators' larger population.
Salkind and Frey (2020) describe inferential statistics as a method to assess a specific group's features using a sample of that collection. This was difficult in my study because I only had six educators complete the quantitative portion of the study, and three complete the qualitative phase making it challenging to use such a small amount of data and use it to characterize a much larger group. I could not do a purposive sampling because I only had four educators interested in participating in the study's qualitative portion, forcing me to make a convenient selection. I also used only two short-term detention centers in the same state in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, limiting the ability to use the data collected in these two settings and infer their characteristics to all of the short-term detention centers throughout the Country.

The educators in this study were not employees of the facilities; they were employees of a contracting agency responsible for providing academic instruction to the youth housed in the facility could be a limitation to this study. These educators were required to have the same qualification as teachers working in a traditional school environment. They were expected to meet the same standards set forth by the State’s Department of Education. Due to these factors, would this study's results have changed if I worked with teachers who were employees of their facilities? Would teachers that were employees of the facility be held to the same standard? Would the Teachers employed by these facilities perceive their experiences differently than the educators in this study?

Time was a limitation to this study. Another limitation I encountered conducting this study was a lack of research focusing on the educators’ perspectives on their experiences educating incarcerated youth and how they perceived success and challenges in their classrooms.
There is very little information spotlighting teachers' perceptions of educating this vulnerable population in a juvenile justice facility.

On January 30, 2020, The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that COVID-19, an illness associated with different coronavirus strains, had become a concern for the World; on March 11, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic (Balkhair, 2020). COVID-19 became a health emergency impacting the World's communities by causing businesses and schools to close, resulting in severe economic damage and individuals experiencing mental and physical health issues (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all meetings were unable to be held in person, so all interviews were conducted using Zoom. This procedure ensured the health and safety of the educators and myself. Using Zoom to conduct my interviews had benefits as well as limitations. Zoom provides the user the ability to transcribe each interview, which was helpful. Unfortunately, I had to go through the interview transcriptions multiple times to ensure their accuracy. Another limitation I encountered using Zoom for my interviews was my inability to create the same bond with the participant had I interviewed them in person. I think it is challenging to develop a relationship strictly using Zoom as your platform to communicate.

**Researcher Relationship to the Study**

When I started my research journey, I was confident that I wanted to explore the experiences teachers have in the juvenile detention setting but was not clear on the specific areas of focus. After reflecting on my past work experience and thinking about the students I taught when I was a special education teacher at a residential placement for adjudicated youth, my focus became clear. I wanted to examine how teachers perceived their experiences educating
incarcerated youth. At the same time, acquiring an understanding of how educators perceive success and challenges in their classrooms.

As a teacher in this environment, I experienced far more challenges than successes in educating incarcerated youth. A few of the barriers I encountered in my class involved inappropriate classroom behavior, lack of appropriate materials designed to meet my students' needs, and a student population that had little to no interest in their education. These challenges were similar to the difficulties the educators in my study shared, and I could relate to their struggles.

My previous experience in the field and the literature helped develop the questions for the first interview. From that point, I used the teachers' experiences in the study to help guide and create the remaining questions. In each interview, the teachers would share an example of a challenge they were faced with, and we would discuss it in detail. At times I would share a similar experience I had working in the field. In this way, my previous work experience and my willingness to share my experiences with my teachers may have biased my research.

In acknowledging my researcher bias, I believe that it strengthens the research. The teachers in this study connected with me and provided additional insight into topics that they may not have if asked an outsider asked. This bias was influenced by the challenges and successes I experienced in educating incarcerated youth.

At times, we would discuss topics that I could not relate to because I did not have prior knowledge to continue the conversation during our interviews. For instance, multiple teachers in the study referenced Nearpod. This required me to research this tool to ensure I could make a connection the next time it was referenced. There were also times where we would chat about
topics like (a) the importance of building relationships, (b) irrelevant professional development, and (c) experiential learning. These topics took me back to my time in classrooms like theirs.

When working in this environment, building a strong relationship with the students in your class is essential if you wanted to lower the severity of challenges you faced while increasing the odds for success. Something Nora said stood out to me. She said, "you need to be real, and you need to listen," and sometimes "you need to have times when you might just have a little bit of laughter in your classroom." Her statement was authentic and critical for teachers in this environment. Despite the facilities’ security protocols, they are still kids, and as Nora said, “a little bit of laughter goes a long way.”

When I started as a special education teacher at the residential facility, I quickly found that I was not prepared to educate the students in my class because I did not have the skills necessary to address their academic, emotional, and behavioral needs. Being young and new to teaching, I thought professional development was the answer; I was wrong. The professional development I was offered did not focus on the areas I needed improvement or on my students' needs making it worthless. This aligned with my teachers’ responses about professional development being vague, over-generalized, repetitive, and not applicable to their population or setting.

Without effective professional development, I was forced to learn the skills needed from somewhere else. The learning opportunities came from experiences working with seasoned teachers and reflecting on my teaching to identify working areas and those that need improvement. With three of the teachers in my study having more than 25 years of experience, it was interesting to hear where they developed most of their talents; it was not from a book. It was from years of experience doing this right and doing things wrong and learning from them.
Implications for the Field

After analyzing the data collected from a questionnaire, a series of three interviews, and three reflective journal activities, I understood how educators perceive their experiences educating incarcerated youth in short-term detention and how they perceive success and challenges in their classrooms. This brief understanding of their experiences helped me identify possible implications for the field. Some of the implications of this research address: (a) lack of research on this topic, (b) collaboration between the teachers and the facility administration, (c) professional development, (d) professional learning communities, (e) planning time, (f) technology, (g) trauma-informed, and (h) the lack of culturally relevant teaching. The most significant implication I found conducting this research was the lack of research conducted addressing the successes teachers, and students achieve while in these facilities. It became clear that the juvenile justice system failed to celebrate its teachers' and students' accomplishments and failed to provide a level of support designed to address the distinct challenges they encounter.

The juvenile justice system and the facilities need to celebrate the accomplishments of the teachers in the facilities and the students in their custody. By celebrating their achievements, teachers may become more motivated because their hard work has been acknowledged. The majority of students in the system do not come from backgrounds where they have been rewarded or recognized for their achievements; by celebrating their accomplishments, they may enjoy the experience and strive to encounter it frequently.

The Administration in these facilities needs to collaborate with their teachers and brainstorm to identify the areas that are working, require improvement, and those that need to be removed. Teachers in these facilities understand far more than the academics they are expected...
to teach; they have a unique set of skills acquired over years of experience that have prepared
them to work with this population.

It was discovered that educators’ relevant professional development opportunities in the
short-term juvenile detention settings are lacking. While there are opportunities for these
educators to pursue professional development, the subject matter is tailored to educators in
mainstream academic settings, like the public school system. This is particularly problematic for
educators like those who participated in my study, who desire instruction to help them improve
their practice in a way that is targeted to provide support to their unique student population.
According to the educators in this study, professional development that includes topics relevant
to their students and opportunities to collaborate with professionals that work in similar settings
should be included. It appeared that the Educators in this study felt isolated, and when offered
the opportunity to collaborate with others in the field, they were empowered by comparing their
situation with others and knowing that they were not the only ones experiencing specific
outcomes. It is important that those responsible for providing educators in these facilities take
into consideration the strengths of the teachers working with these youth and provide them with
PD that builds upon their strengths.

My Teachers also identified the need for professional development that addressed the
legal process their students encounter while involved in the juvenile justice system. Specific
trainings addressing what their students face while in the juvenile system would provide the
teachers with the information necessary to help guide their students through the process. This
knowledge of the legal system and their students’ situations could help to build strong student-
teacher relationships.
The Teachers in my study repeatedly expressed the importance of interacting and collaborating with professionals from similar facilities. Since these experiences were identified as valuable, the region's facilities should create professional learning communities (PLC) for the teachers. Provide them with scheduled meeting times to address issues, present new ideas and technology, and discuss ways to improve student achievement.

Each of the teachers that completed the questionnaire identified that they received at least 20 minutes of planning time per day. This number seems low and is not equivalent to the amount of planning time teachers in the public school system receive. It is crucial that teachers in these facilities receive adequate planning time to address the students’ diverse academic and behavioral needs in their classrooms.

The lack of access to technology and the internet needed to provide instruction is a critical limitation to students' academic progress in short-term detention settings. This is particularly true during the COVID-19 pandemic, where students are reliant upon technology working correctly to participate in classroom instruction and communicate with educators. Educators are required to design and execute virtual learning modules for their students with minimal professional development.

Facilities should invest in the technology necessary to provide their students with the same opportunities as their peers in a traditional public school setting. This investment should include security software to protect the students within the facility and ensuring community protection. These facilities should incorporate applications such as Apple Classroom and Google Classroom and try to align the use of technology in their facilities with the standards created by the International Society of Technology for Education (ISTE). By doing so, they will provide the teachers and the students with the same equipment being used in their public school that is
aligned with the ISTE standards to ensure a smooth transition back into the traditional school environment.

Another implication of this study is the need for teachers in these facilities to receive training to become trauma-informed. Only one participant in this study stressed the impact trauma has on his students. The other two participants spoke very little about trauma, but they did identify strengths needed to teach this vulnerable population like patience, flexibility, concern, acceptance, and empathy, which all align with a trauma-informed framework. It is important that teachers in these facilities receive the necessary training so they are aware of their students’ trauma and provide them with the support necessary to navigate through their involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Despite the lack of diversity within the teaching profession and the majority of students in juvenile justice facilities being students of color, educators in these facilities should be incorporating culturally relevant teaching in their classrooms. In this study, none of the educators mentioned the use of culturally relevant teaching strategies, but all of them identified the majority of the students in their facilities are students of color. It is important for teachers to receive instruction on the best way to incorporate culturally relevant teaching into their classrooms in an attempt to improve the quality of education offered to all of their students. By making these recommendations, I am using my teachers’ experiences and providing them a voice to share the areas that need improvement and possible solutions to increase teachers' and students' opportunities to achieve success within the classroom.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

In the past, research addressing youth in juvenile justice facilities has focused on the challenges the youth face before involvement in the system and the results of their participation
in the criminal justice system. Very little research focuses on the teachers responsible for educating this vulnerable population and their perception of what is taking place in these facilities. By conducting my study, I understood their experiences in these short-term detention facilities and what success and challenges look like in their classrooms. My future research recommendations address the size and type of sampling, the methods used, the appropriate settings, and the time frame. First, this study could be performed on a larger scale. The study could be managed at the state or national level resulting in an extensive sampling of educators from various juvenile justice facilities. A purposeful sampling could be used to ensure a diverse selection of educators based on gender, race, and years of experience. This would ensure that your study population is not 100% white with more than 12 years of teaching experience. It would also provide the opportunity to examine the relationship between how educators perceive success and challenges in their classrooms and its connection to their demographics and work experience.

Second, the study could include a questionnaire and multiple focus groups instead of face-to-face interviews. By replacing the interviews, you would obtain different information from different people in the same amount of time you could interview one individual. This would also provide the opportunity to make generalizations with your results due to the size of the study and the number of educators. Focus groups could be conducted by facility or by region depending on the number of educators in each area.

Third, using various facilities would allow the opportunity to compare data based on the type of facilities. For example, are teachers in short-term detention experiencing the same challenges as teachers working in residential treatment facilities? These outcomes would be interesting to compare based on the amount of time students spend in these facilities.
Lastly, I would not conduct a study that focuses on the teachers working in a secure short-term detention center during a global pandemic.

Summary

The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed-methods study was to shed light on the challenges and successes that educators face when providing academic services and support to incarcerated youth placed in short-term, secure juvenile detention centers. This study focused on how educators perceive their experiences working in short-term detention facilities with incarcerated youth and how they perceive their classrooms' challenges and successes. Through my research, which consisted of a questionnaire, three interviews, and three reflective journal activities, I understood how educators in two short-term detention centers perceived their experiences working with incarcerated youth and how they perceive success and challenges in their classrooms.

During the interview process, I was able to have one-on-one conversations with the teachers in my study, providing me with three hours to discuss why they became teachers, their issues each day and why, and what success looks like for their students. These questions lead to sub-questions, and I learned a lot about each participant as an individual and as a teacher. After hours of communication, a few things were clear. The teachers in my study are experts in the field. They know how to educate as well as care for their students. The status quo was not good enough; their goal was to positively impact their students and provide them with the best education possible.

Whenever one of the teachers would identify a challenge they were having in their classroom, they wouldn’t make an excuse; they would provide a potential solution. For example, in a discussion about the challenges of academic diversity in the classroom, Nora knew it was an
issue and provided a solution she uses saying, “I individualize a great deal and make[s] them into small groups” these groups are “based on what they need and where they are at.” They weren’t waiting for someone else to solve their problem. Conducting this study proved that the teachers I interviewed were knowledgeable, caring teachers passionate about education and their students.
References

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Appendix A: IRB Approval

TO: Morgan Crozier
FROM: Nicole M. Cattano, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, WCU Institutional Review Board (IRB)
DATE: 9/15/2020

Project Title: Challenges and Successes Teachers Experience Educating Incarcerated Youth: A Mixed-Methods Approach

Date of Approval: 9/15/2020

☑ Expedited Approval

This protocol has been approved under the new updated 45 CFR 46 common rule that went into effect January 21, 2019. As a result, this project will not require continuing review. Any revisions to this protocol that are needed will require approval by the WCU IRB. Upon completion of the project, you are expected to submit appropriate closure documentation. Please see www.wcupa.edu/research/irb.aspx for more information.

Any adverse reaction by a research subject is to be reported immediately through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs via email at irb@wcupa.edu.

Signature:

Co-Chair of WCU IRB

Protocol ID #: 20200915B
This Protocol ID number must be used in all communications about this project with the IRB.

WCU Institutional Review Board (IRB)
IORG#: IOR00004242
IRB#: IRB00005030
FWA#: FWA00014155

West Chester University is a member of the State System of Higher Education
Appendix B: Informed Consent Form (Questionnaire)

Project Title: Challenges and Successes Teachers Experience Educating Incarcerated Youth: A Mixed-Methods Approach
Investigator(s): Morgan Crozier; Mimi Staulters
Key Information Statement:
My consent is being sought for a research study. I understand my participation is voluntary, and I am under no obligation to participate. Morgan Crozier is doing it as part of his Doctoral Dissertation. The purpose is to shed light on the Teachers providing services and support to youth placed in a juvenile detention center and how the Teachers view challenges and successes in their classrooms. This study will collect and share the views of the Teachers. By sharing their views, the Teacher's encounters in the field could be used to improve the quality of education offered to this at-risk group.

Your involvement will take about 20-30 minutes. It consists of taking a 38 item questionnaire.
The potential risks associated with this study are possible discomfort from answering questions in the questionnaire and a possible increase in stress and anxiety due to the loss of free time. The participation in this questionnaire provides no benefit.
If you would like to take part, West Chester University requires that you agree and sign this consent form. Since you are completing a web-based questionnaire, informed consent will be provided if you choose to complete the questionnaire. You may ask Morgan Crozier questions to help you understand this study. If you don't want to be a part of this study, it won't affect any services from West Chester University. If you choose to be a part of this study, you have the right to change your mind and stop being a part of the study at any time.

1. What is the purpose of this study?
   • To shed light on the Teachers providing services and supports to youth placed in a detention center, and how they view challenges and successes in their classrooms. This study will collect, reflect, and share the views of the Teachers. By sharing their experiences, their encounters may be used to improve the quality of education offered to this at-risk group.

2. If you decide to be a part of this study, you will be asked to do the after:
   • Complete a 38 item questionnaire
   • This questionnaire will take 20-30 minutes of your time

3. Are there any experimental medical treatments?
   • No

4. Is there any risk to me?
   • Discomfort from answering questions in the questionnaire.
   • Stress or anxiety due to loss of free time.

5. Is there any benefit to me?
   • No

6. How will you protect my privacy?
The questionnaire data will be kept confidentially and only the participants who choose to participate in the second portion of the study will have identifiable information on their questionnaire.

Your records will be private. Only Morgan Crozier, Dr. Mimi Staulters, and the IRB will have access to your name and responses.

Your name will not be used in any reports.

Records will be stored:
- In a locked desk drawer at The Academy in a locked office
- Password Protected File/Computer
- Password Protected External Hard Drive

To maintain confidentiality in this study, the researcher and the faculty sponsor will ensure all materials collected during the study are secure. All materials will be stored on a password-protected computer, a password-protected external hard drive, as well as in a locked desk drawer in the Principal Investigator's locked office. There will not be a signed informed consent form for the questionnaire portion of the study. By completing the questionnaire, the participant is providing their informed consent to participate in this portion of the study.

Records will be destroyed five years after study completion.

7. Do I get paid to take part in this study?
   - No

8. Who do I contact in case of research-related injury?
   - For any questions with this study, contact:
     - **Primary Investigator:** Morgan Crozier at 610-787-1568 or mc916809@wcupa.edu
     - **Faculty Sponsor:** Mimi Staulters at 610-436-2398 or mstaulters@wcupa.edu

9. What will you do with my Identifiable Information?
   - Personal information might be removed from private data. The initial purpose of this data will be used for a dissertation and publication in the dissertation database used by West Chester University. After removal, the information may be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent from you or the legally authorized representative.

For any questions about your rights in this research study, contact the ORSP at 610-436-3557.

I have read this form and I understand the statements in this form. I know that if I am uncomfortable with this study, I can stop at any time. I know that it is not possible to know all possible risks in a study, and I think that reasonable safety measures have been taken to decrease any risk. I understand by completing the 38 item questionnaire that I am providing my informed consent to participate in the questionnaire portion of this study.
Appendix C: Participant Questionnaire Questions

Q1 What is your gender?
________________________________________________________________

Q2 What year were you born?
________________________________________________________________

Q3 What is your ethnicity?
  o Caucasian (1)
  o Black or African American (2)
  o Latino or Hispanic (3)
  o Asian (4)
  o Native American (5)
  o Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (6)
  o Two or More (7)
  o Other/Unknown (8)
  o Prefer not to say (9)

Q4 What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?
  o High School (1)
  o Some College (2)
  o Associate's Degree (3)
  o Bachelor's Degree (4)
  o Master's Degree (5)
  o Ph.D, Ed.D (6)
  o Trade School (7)
  o Prefer not to say (8)

Q5 What is your current employment status?
  o Employed full-time (40+ hours a week) (1)
  o Employed part-time (less than 40 hours a week) (2)
  o Multiple jobs with multiple employers (3)
  o Unemployed (4)
  o Retired (5)
  o Self-employed (6)

Q6 Do you have two or more years of experience providing academic services and supports to incarcerated youth?
  o Yes (1)
  o No (2)
Q7 Are you currently providing educational services and supports to incarcerated youth?
   o Yes (1)
   o No (2)

Q8 What subject area do you teach? Please click multiple areas if they apply.
   o English (1)
   o Mathematics (2)
   o Science (3)
   o Social Studies (4)
   o Special Education (5)
   o Health (6)
   o Physical Education (7)
   o Art (8)
   o Music (9)
   o Foreign Language (10)
   o Other, please specify (11) ________________________________________________

Q9 How long have you been working as a teacher?
   o Less than two years (1)
   o 2 to 4 years (2)
   o 5 to 8 years (3)
   o 9 to 12 years (4)
   o 13 to 18 years (5)
   o 19 to 24 years (6)
   o 25 years or more (7)

Q10 How long have you been teaching in your current position?
   o Less than two years (1)
   o 2 to 4 years (2)
   o 5 to 8 years (3)
   o 9 to 12 years (4)
   o 13 to 18 years (5)
   o 19 to 24 years (6)
   o 25 years or more (7)

Q11 Are you a certified teacher in Pennsylvania?
   o Yes (1)
   o No (2)
Q12 In what areas are you certified? Please click multiple areas if they apply.
  o Early Childhood (PreK-4) (1)
  o Early Childhood (PreK-4) with Special Education Certification (2)
  o Middle Level (4-8) (3)
  o Middle Level (4-8) with Special Education Certification (4)
  o Secondary Education (7-12) (5)
  o Secondary Education (7-12) with Special Education Certification (6)
  o Does not apply (7)

Q13 Area of Concentration? Please click multiple areas if they apply.
  o English (1)
  o Mathematics (2)
  o Science (3)
  o Social Studies (4)
  o Health Education (5)
  o Physical Education (6)
  o Other, please specify (7) ________________________________________________
  o Does not apply (8)

Q14 How many professional development opportunities did you attend/participate in over the last two years?
  o None (1)
  o 1-3 (2)
  o 4-6 (3)
  o 7-10 (4)
  o 10 or more (5)

Q15 Did any of those professional development opportunities address incarcerated youth and their educational needs?
  o Yes (1)
  o No (2)

Q16 Do you use an online learning system (E.g. Edmentum, LinkedIn Learning, Udamey, Coursera, or Pluralsight)?
  o Yes (1)
  o No (2)

Q17 Do you take part in scheduling classes/courses for the youth in your facility?
  o Yes (1)
  o No (2)
Q18 How often do you have scheduled planning time?
   o At least 20 minutes every day (1)
   o At least 20 minutes 2-3 times a week (2)
   o At least 20 minutes 1 times a week (3)
   o Never (4)
   o Other, Please explain... (5) ________________________________

Q19 The professional development I have received had an impact on my teaching.
   o Strongly agree (1)
   o Somewhat agree (2)
   o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
   o Somewhat disagree (4)
   o Strongly disagree (5)

Q20 The professional development I received is relevant to the student population I teach.
   o Strongly agree (1)
   o Somewhat agree (2)
   o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
   o Somewhat disagree (4)
   o Strongly disagree (5)

Q21 My job is challenging on a daily basis.
   o Strongly agree (1)
   o Somewhat agree (2)
   o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
   o Somewhat disagree (4)
   o Strongly disagree (5)

Q22 I enjoy providing academic services and supports to incarcerated youth.
   o Strongly agree (1)
   o Somewhat agree (2)
   o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
   o Somewhat disagree (4)
   o Strongly disagree (5)

Q23 I am comfortable using an online learning system to educate my students?
   o Strongly agree (1)
   o Somewhat agree (2)
   o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
   o Somewhat disagree (4)
   o Strongly disagree (5)
Q24 I have access to relevant teaching materials that align with a curriculum designed to meet the needs of our student population.
   o Strongly agree (1)
   o Somewhat agree (2)
   o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
   o Somewhat disagree (4)
   o Strongly disagree (5)

Q25 The diversity in the academic levels of my students requires significant planning to reach all students.
   o Strongly agree (1)
   o Somewhat agree (2)
   o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
   o Somewhat disagree (4)
   o Strongly disagree (5)

Q26 I am comfortable educating students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP).
   o Strongly agree (1)
   o Somewhat agree (2)
   o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
   o Somewhat disagree (4)
   o Strongly disagree (5)

Q27 I have effective classroom management practices.
   o Strongly agree (1)
   o Somewhat agree (2)
   o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
   o Somewhat disagree (4)
   o Strongly disagree (5)

Q28 I am comfortable addressing behavior issues in my classroom.
   o Strongly agree (1)
   o Somewhat agree (2)
   o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
   o Somewhat disagree (4)
   o Strongly disagree (5)

Q29 I have input scheduling my student's academic schedules.
   o Strongly agree (1)
   o Somewhat agree (2)
   o Neither agree nor disagree (3)
   o Somewhat disagree (4)
   o Strongly disagree (5)
Q30 I see my students as being successful when they...(please select all that apply)?
  o Actively participate in class (1)
  o Require minimal redirection to stay on task (2)
  o Demonstrate improvement on an assigned tasks or academic tests (3)
  o Avoid losing privileges (4)
  o Assist their peers with academic work (5)
  o Engage in positive social behavior (6)
  o Advocate for themselves (7)
  o Complete assigned work with minimal resistance (8)
  o Other-Please identify any additional examples of student success in your classroom (9)

Q31 I consider my job to be challenging due to...(please select all that apply)?
  o Difficult student behavior (1)
  o The academic diversity of my students (2)
  o Lack of appropriate curriculum for my students (3)
  o The cultural differences of my students (4)
  o Administrative policies (5)
  o Students being grade levels behind academically (6)
  o Lack of academic documentation from student's previous placement or school (7)
  o Lack of instructional time (8)
  o Other-Please identify any additional examples that make your job challenging (9)

Q32 Briefly describe three successes you have experienced in your classroom?

________________________________________________________________

Q33 Briefly describe three challenges you have experienced in your classroom?

________________________________________________________________

Q34 List three of the best/most important/most useful professional development/learning opportunities you participated in over the last two years or indicate N/A if you have had no professional learning opportunities over the past two years?

________________________________________________________________

Q35 List three of the least useful/least important/least beneficial professional development/learning opportunities you participated in over the last two years or indicate N/A if you have had no professional learning opportunities over the past two years?

________________________________________________________________

Q36 If you are missing teaching materials, what three teaching materials would you request (E.g. technology, appropriate curriculum materials, classroom furniture, or classroom supplies)?

________________________________________________________________
Q37 When educating incarcerated youth, identify three strengths you possess that help you provide academic services and supports at a high level?

________________________________________________________________

Q38 I am looking to speak with teachers to develop my understanding of their experiences, challenges, and successes working with incarcerated youth. Would you be interested in participating in three interviews and three reflective journal activities?
   ○ Yes! Please include your name and email address so I can contact you directly. (1)

   ○ No (2)
   ○ Maybe, I have questions. Please include your name and email address so I can answer any questions you have. (3) ________________________________
Appendix D: Informed Consent Form (Interviews/Reflective Journaling)

Project Title: Challenges and Successes Teachers Experience Educating Incarcerated Youth: A Mixed-Methods Approach

Investigator(s): Morgan Crozier; Mimi Staulters

Key Information Statement:
My consent is being sought for a research study. I understand my participation is voluntary, and I am under no obligation to participate. Morgan Crozier is doing it as part of his Doctoral Dissertation. The goal is to shed light on the Teachers providing services and support to youth placed in a juvenile detention center and how the Teachers view challenges and successes in their classrooms. This study will collect and share the views of the Teachers. By sharing their views, the Teacher's encounters in the field could be used to improve the quality of education offered to this at-risk group.

Your involvement will take about 4 hours and 20 minutes. It includes taking part in a series of three interviews, each meeting lasting 40-60 minutes, and writing journal entries after each dialogue to reflect on what was covered in the conversation. This is a chance to reflect on experiences and events that took place in their classroom. These reflections will allow them to find strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and successes in their classes and to use those to help inform why they came about. The potential risks associated with this study are possible discomfort from discussing challenges occurring in the classroom and a possible increase in stress and anxiety due to the loss of free time. The potential benefits are the chance to reflect on experiences in the classrooms and how things were managed and using those experiences to improve the quality of education offered to this at-risk population.

If you would like to take part, West Chester University requires that you agree and sign this consent form. You may ask Morgan Crozier questions to help you understand this study. If you don't want to be a part of this study, it won't affect any services from West Chester University. If you choose to be a part of this study, you have the right to change your mind and stop being a part of the study at any time.

10. What is the purpose of this study?
   - To shed light on the Teachers providing services and supports to youth placed in a detention center, and how they view challenges and successes in their classrooms. This study will collect, reflect, and share the views of the Teachers. By sharing their experiences, their encounters may be used to improve the quality of education offered to this at-risk group.

11. If you decide to be a part of this study, you will be asked to do the after:
   - Join in a series of three interviews; each will last 40-60 minutes each
   - Reflect and journal after each meeting to reflect on what was discussed in the interview
   - This study will take approximately 4 hours and 20 minutes of your time

12. Are there any experimental medical treatments?
   - No

13. Is there any risk to me?
• Discomfort from discussing challenges occurring in the classroom.
• Stress or anxiety due to loss of free time.

14. Is there any benefit to me?
• The chance to think about experiences in the classrooms and how things were managed.
• Using experiences to improve the quality of education offered to this at-risk group.

15. How will you protect my privacy?
• The session will be recorded and the audio recording will be saved electronically for review.
• Conduct a series of three interviews with each member. All meetings for this proposed study will be using Zoom. During the interviews, the audio and video on Zoom will be used. The audio will be recorded to help protect the participant's identity.
• Your records will be private. Only Morgan Crozier, Dr. Mimi Staulters, and the IRB will have access to your name and responses.
• Your name will not be used in any reports.
• Records will be stored:
  • In a locked desk drawer at The Academy in a locked office
  • Password Protected File/Computer
  • Password Protected External Hard Drive
• To maintain confidentiality in this study, the researcher and the faculty sponsor will ensure all materials collected during the study are secure. All materials will be stored on a password-protected computer, a password-protected external hard drive, as well as in a locked desk drawer in the Principal Investigator's locked office. After the participant signing the informed consent form, the researcher will not ask for the participant's name or signature on any other documents. The researcher will provide a code for each participant to ensure the data is tracked correctly.
• Records will be destroyed five years after study completion.

16. Do I get paid to take part in this study?
• No

17. Who do I contact in case of research-related injury?
• For any questions with this study, contact:
  • **Primary Investigator:** Morgan Crozier at 610-787-1568 or mc916809@wcupa.edu
  • **Faculty Sponsor:** Mimi Staulters at 610-436-2398 or mstaulters@wcupa.edu

18. What will you do with my Identifiable Information?
• Personal information might be removed from private data. The initial purpose of this data will be used for a dissertation and publication in the dissertation database used by West Chester University. After removal, the information may be used for
future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent from you or the legally authorized representative.

For any questions about your rights in this research study, contact the ORSP at 610-436-3557. I, ___________________________ (your name), have read this form and I understand the statements in this form. I know that if I am uncomfortable with this study, I can stop at any time. I know that it is not possible to know all possible risks in a study, and I think that reasonable safety measures have been taken to decrease any risk.

Subject/Participant Signature  Date:
Witness Signature  Date:

WCU IRB Approval XXXX
Appendix E: Interview Questions

Interview #1

1. What made you want to teach incarcerated youth?
2. Please explain any experience, professional development, community-based interaction, or anything else that most prepared you to teach incarcerated youth?
3. Please explain how you perceive challenges in your classroom?
4. Do these challenges involve the students, other teachers, administrators, policy makers or outside agencies?
5. Please provide a few examples of challenges you have experienced in your classroom?
6. Please explain how you handled these challenges?
7. Please explain how you perceive success in your classroom? What does success look like in your classroom?
8. Does success in your classroom involve just the students, or does it include yourself, other teachers, administrators, policy makers or outside agencies?
9. Please provide a few examples of success you have experienced in your classroom?
10. When working with incarcerated youth, what goals do you have for your students?
11. With that being said, can you explain what you think your students’ goals are?
12. Building relationships and making connections can be difficult, what social identities and lived experiences help you work with this population?

Interview #2

1. In the last interview, we discussed that the students are often preoccupied with things which distracts them from completing schoolwork. In your experience, what are some of the things the students are focused on?
2. In your experience as a teacher working with this population, besides the role of teacher what other roles do you fill for these youth?
3. Does filling multiple roles for these youth lessen the number of challenges in your classroom, and increase the number of classroom successes?
4. In our previous interview, we discussed the importance of building relationships with your students. Using your experience, what feedback would you provide new teachers about building relationships?
5. A challenge that was addressed in our previous interview was the student’s not having access to the internet. If you did have access to the internet, how would you use it to benefit the students and increase the opportunity for success in your classroom?

6. What is the process to get teaching materials needed for your classroom?

7. Do you have access to the materials you believe are needed to teach this population?

8. If not, what materials do you think this population needs to be successful?

9. How often do you receive professional development?

10. Who is responsible for providing you with professional development?

11. What are the topics of the professional development?

12. Do you think the professional development is effective?

13. Does the professional development focus on educating incarcerated youth?

14. Do you believe the professional development provided makes you a better educator for this population?

15. Has the professional development you have received given you the skills to address the challenges in your classroom?

16. Has the professional development you have received been a resource to help achieve success in your classroom?

17. If you were responsible for selecting professional development for the educators in the facility, using your experience in the field what types of PD would you select and why?

Interview #3

1. Your students come from very diverse backgrounds. Some of the students you have taught have been raised in poverty, experienced school & academic failure, lived through traumatic events, suffered from mental illness, or been a victim of racism. In your experience, which of these has impacted or provided the biggest challenge for your students?

2. The population of incarcerated youth can be extremely diverse. In your history working with this population, what are some of the racial and ethnic backgrounds have you seen in your classroom?

3. From your experience, do you believe students of color are disproportionately placed in juvenile justice facilities?
4. If so, why do you believe this is occurring? If not, tell me why you believe that not to be the case?

5. The literature shows that students who receive special education services are being disproportionately placed in juvenile justice facilities. In your experience, of the students in your classroom, what % receive special education services?

6. Has that number increased or decreased over the years you have been teaching in this setting?

7. Why do you think the numbers have increased or decreased?

8. Institutional Racism has been a problem in society for hundreds of years. In 2020-2021, Institutional Racism was identified as a global issue requiring immediate attention. In your experience working with incarcerated youth, do you think instructional racism has provided your students with one more challenge they have to overcome to be successful?

9. Does it only affect specific students from specific backgrounds? What do those challenges look like?

10. Have you had to deal with racism in your classroom? If so, how did you handle it?

11. The theoretical framework of this study is based on constructivism and experiential learning. Constructivism is an educational theory that suggests that learners create understanding and knowledge from their own experiences. At the same time, experiential learning is defined as learning through experiences and reflecting on what they have learned to increase comprehension and knowledge building. In your role in this setting, what has been the most influential experience that has made you the teacher you are today?

12. Reflection is discussed as an essential part of the process of experiential learning. How do you reflect on your job as an educator?

13. How do you reflect on experiences in your classroom?

14. Do you use an organized process or a reflective method you have designed?

15. What do you gain from reflection?

16. Albert Bandura describes self-efficacy as how well someone can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations. If you were going to assign a grade to your self-efficacy, what grade would it be? Why?
Appendix F: Reflective Journal Prompts

**Reflective Journal Prompt #1**
Can you please tell me more about the experiences that prepared you to teach incarcerated and why you believe they most prepared you to work with this population? How did these experiences shape your perception of educating incarcerated youth and how you perceive success and barriers in your classroom?

**Reflective Journal Prompt #2**
Reflecting on your experiences as a teacher educating incarcerated youth in a short-term detention center, please share the “challenges” or “barriers” your students are faced with prior to being placed in your facility (such as academics, financial, racial, justice, family, community, or other related concerns)? Do you believe these previous challenges impact your student's ability to be successful in your classroom? If so, in your experience how does it impact your students? How do you address these challenges while trying to provide effective academic instruction?

**Reflective Journal Prompt #3**
Reflect on the biggest challenge you have faced educating incarcerated youth in short-term detention. Tell me about the challenge, how you handled it, and what you learned from it. Reflect on the biggest success you have encountered educating incarcerated youth, tell me about the success, why did it have such an impact on you, and what you learned from it. Lastly, please tell me why you chose to be a teacher in a short-term detention center educating incarcerated youth and why you continue to work in this setting.