

**Phenomenological Study of the Influence of Student Adverse Childhood Experiences on the  
Social-Emotional Experiences of Novice Teachers in Urban Environments**

Dissertation Manuscript

Submitted to National University

Sanford College of Education

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

by

ROBIN L. BANKS

San Diego, California

December 2025

## **Abstract**

Teacher shortages, issues of retention, and an exodus from teaching due to workload demands have left school districts with little choice but to fill vacancies with novice teachers.

Disproportionately placed in settings where they are likely to instruct students with adverse childhood experiences, novice teachers in urban environments possess unique experiences. This study explores the influence that the adverse childhood experiences of students have on novice elementary teachers in urban environments. The problem is that novice elementary teachers in urban environments are exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences, possibly contributing to teacher burnout, fatigue, and resignation. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to explore the feelings and experiences of novice elementary teachers working in urban school districts who are exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences. Participating in a series of interviews and document review, six novice teachers provided context and revealed trajectories toward burnout, fatigue, and resignation in their work with students with childhood adversities. The Modified Stevick-Colaizzi Keen method of data analysis and NVIVO were used to organize and analyze data collected from the study's novice teachers. The findings reveal multiple internal and external factors related to the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers influenced by the adversities of their students and how novice teachers cope with their feelings relative to student adversities. Implications for practice include providing novices with trauma-informed practices and holistic strategies for coping with job-related stress and burnout. Future research should focus on the need for more exploration concerning novice teachers in urban environments in their work with students with adversities, including novices in diverse school contexts.

## **Acknowledgements**

The dedication, grit, and perseverance involved in pursuing this lifelong goal is in part dedicated to those I lost along this journey, including my parents and beloved first cousin. I want to acknowledge a fantastic circle of family, friends, colleagues, and sorority sisters who championed me every step of the way. The calls, text messages, constant reminders, and encouragement to stay the course became priceless. I cannot thank each person in my circle enough. Further still, I thank and acknowledge generations past and generations yet to come. In the words of the Iroquois Great Law of Peace, I dedicate this journey well into the seventh generation. While this journey will change future generations of my lineage, I solely dedicate this academic odyssey to my Sun and my Moon, my celestial beings. Tiffany Banks and Lashawn Banks, you two are my stars. My courageous daughters reflect all I have ever done and will do, including pursuing this doctoral degree. This is for and because of my two shining stars. Most importantly, I am thankful for the blessings and grace of God for placing me on a lifelong path of freedom and opportunity through this gift called education. To God be the Glory for the great things he has done. Finally, thank you to the best dissertation committee I could have hoped and prayed for. I would like to thank Dr. McKenna, Dr. Prager, and Dr. Vance for continuously providing guidance, expertise, compassionate feedback, and unending support. It is because of your collective knowledge that I am here. Dr. McKenna, thank you for every step of this process.

## Table of Contents

Section 1: Foundation .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	4
Purpose of the Study .....	5
Research Questions .....	7
Definitions of Key Terms .....	14
Review of the Literature .....	16
Ethical Assurances .....	39
Summary .....	42
Design and Method .....	46
Population and Sample .....	52
Instrumentation .....	56
Data Collection and Analysis.....	62
Assumptions.....	81
Limitations .....	82
Delimitations.....	83
Summary .....	88
Section 3: Findings, Implications, and Recommendations .....	90
Trustworthiness of the Data .....	91
Findings.....	95
Evaluation of the Outcomes.....	129
Implications and Recommendations for Practice .....	133
Recommendations for Future Research .....	136
References .....	141
Appendices.....	159
Appendix A Email Recruitment Letter .....	160
Appendix B .....	162
Recruitment Flyer .....	162
Appendix C Social Media Flyer .....	163
Appendix D Consent Letter .....	164
Appendix E Interview Protocol .....	166
Appendix F Interview Protocol Matrix.....	168

Appendix G Codes, Interview Transcripts, and Research Question 1 Responses First Cycle Coding.....	171
Appendix I Codes, Interview Transcripts, and Research Question 1 Responses Second Cycle Coding.....	179
Appendix J Codes, Interview Transcripts, and Research Question 2 Responses Second Cycle Coding.....	181
Appendix K Initial Clusters and Codes Leading to the Study’s Themes .....	183

## **List of Tables**

Table 1 Data Collection Instruments. . . . .	59
Table 2 Seidman’s Three Series Interview Protocol . . . . .	71
Table 3 Participant Demographic Information. . . . .	96
Table 4 Sampe of First Cycle Coding Research Question One. . . . .	103
Table 5 Sample of Second Cycle Coding Research Question Two. . . . .	105

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1 The Community Teacher (CT) Conceptual Framework. . . . .	10
Figure 2 Model of Situated Cognitive Learning Theory. . . . .	12
Figure 3 The Three Types of ACEs. . . . .	20
Figure 4 ACEs Pyramid. . . . .	21
Figure 5 Phases of First Year Teachers. . . . .	28
Figure 6 Fine-Tuning Protocol. . . . .	61
Figure 7 Modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen Method for Data Analysis. . . . .	73

## Section 1: Foundation

Teacher shortages, issues of retention, and an exodus from the teaching profession due to workload demands and compassion fatigue (Reilly et al., 2025) have left school districts with little choice but to fill vacancies with novice teachers (White et al., 2025). With 55% of teachers expected to resign or retire by the end of the current decade, novice teachers are needed to fill the void left by a rapidly graying teacher workforce (Fuchsman et al., 2024). The void left by experienced teachers is particularly prevalent in marginalized communities where vacating teachers express concerns over the influence of students' mental health on their overall health and well-being as teachers (Dabrowski et al., 2025). An integrative literature review conducted by Bettini and Park (2021) noted that novice teachers are disproportionately placed in educational environments where they are likely to instruct students facing adverse traumatic experiences outside of school. Putting the least experienced and, in some instances, the least desired teachers in marginalized, urban communities with students unequally influenced by adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) has become a widespread practice that has long-term effects on socioeconomic and health outcomes for children (Glassow & Jerrim, 2022). With an inadequate source of experienced teachers, novice teachers are called upon to support students in high-needs areas whose families and communities have been influenced by sustained adversities and trauma (Marshall, 2023).

Described by Usmani et al. (2024) as potentially traumatic events that can have lasting adverse effects on the health and welfare of a child, adverse childhood experiences have consequences beyond the victim. Children in marginalized communities, where novice teachers are frequently assigned to teach, are inordinately influenced by student ACEs compared to their peers in more affluent communities (Mersky et al., 2021). While the unequal distribution of

ACEs based on race and ethnicity has been noted in the research literature (Brandt et al., 2021), there has been limited research to date on the unequal distribution of ACEs based on socioeconomic status (Mersky et al., 2021). Children and families in marginalized communities are at a higher risk of experiencing violence within the home or community. The risk of experiencing violence or harmful acts is coupled with the likelihood of encountering abuse and neglect, impacting children's educational experiences in distressed environments and the teachers tasked with supporting them (Fleckman et al., 2022; Reilly et al., 2025). While the influence of ACEs on frontline professionals, including novice teachers, remains limited, there are no direct measures of teachers' exposure to students' traumatic experiences (Fleckman et al., 2022). The influence of ACEs on the experiences of novice teachers in urban environments remains a topic of further exploration if issues of retention, attrition, and novice teachers leaving the profession within the first 3-5 years of their experience are to be reduced or eradicated (Gorard et al., 2025; Kamrath & Bradford, 2020).

Since 2001, a limited number of research studies have addressed the varied experiences of novice teachers in marginalized urban communities influenced by student ACEs (Bettini & Park, 2021). Findings across studies revealed that despite ACEs' varied influence on novice teachers when provided administrative, mentoring, and peer support, they are less likely to leave the profession so soon after beginning their professional teaching experience (Gorard et al., 2025; French, 2020). Kamrath and Bradford (2020) found that teachers who have abandoned the profession within the earliest stages of their careers left for reasons other than the challenges of supporting students facing adverse and traumatic experiences. Despite experiencing a common phenomenon known as practice or reality shock (Skytterstad et al., 2025), when given a level of autonomy and feeling supported through socially just teaching practices that benefit often

overlooked student populations, novice teachers can support students living in communities where access to mental health resources is scarce and adverse childhood experiences are high (Dabrowski et al., 2025).

Calls for further research on the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers in urban environments influenced by student ACEs include the influence of burnout, compassion fatigue, and emotional ambivalence relative to novice teachers' experiences in urban environments (Juarez & Becton, 2024). Research comparative to compassion fatigue has focused on fields other than teaching (Esbjorn et al., 2025), especially concerning teachers with less experience than their predecessors (McKinney et al., 2024). An awareness of compassion fatigue, burnout, and other factors related to novice teachers' ability to surpass the initial stages of their teaching experiences would not only benefit school districts in terms of teacher retention, but focusing on these areas would provide stability to students requiring elevated levels of social and academic support (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020; Marshall, 2023). Along with the call to examine the range of novice teachers' experiences in urban environments, teacher sorting, the practice of assigning less experienced teachers in the most challenging educational settings must also be addressed. Teacher sorting upholds the practice of providing unequal access to experienced teachers to children living in high-poverty communities (Glassow & Jerrim, 2022).

The limitations of previous studies primarily involved sample size. Quantitative studies where stratified sampling procedures were used demonstrated significant uncertainty of results and larger standard errors (Glassow & Jerrim, 2022). With qualitative studies involving retention and turnover in urban elementary schools, the limitations tended to involve data collected from a single case within a specific elementary school setting, not expanding into schools or districts of similar context (Bettini & Park, 2021; McKinney et al., 2024). Mixed methods studies

concerning compassion satisfaction, burnout, and direct measures of novice teachers' exposure to ACEs have yet to reveal a clear link (Buric et al., 2022). Aligned with previous studies, the limitations of this qualitative study will rest on the population relative to a specific school district, uncertified novice teachers, and those in an identified teacher preparation or certification program.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem addressed in this study is that novice elementary school teachers in urban environments are exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences (Dabrowski et al., 2025; Rose & Loomis, 2025), possibly contributing to teacher burnout, fatigue, and resignation (Reilly et al., 2025). Described as prolonged exposure to potentially traumatic events in a child's life, ACEs affect over half of all children under 18 years of age (Hamai & Felitti, 2022). Adverse childhood experiences have been associated with limited life and income opportunities, specifically for children in marginalized communities (Mersky et al., 2021). Children in high-poverty communities impacted by one of the three broad categories of ACEs, including abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction (Felitti et al., 1998), are likely to develop a stress response influencing their overall educational experiences and interactions with others, specifically with the teachers that attempt to meet their academic and emotional needs (Blodgett & Lonigan, 2020). Furthermore, children in marginalized communities will likely be taught by teachers with less expertise than their middle-income peers (Bettini & Park, 2021).

Frequently assigned to low-performing Title I schools (Gorrard et al., 2025; Kamrath & Bradford, 2020), novice teachers are often left to manage the dynamic world of their students while still learning the rigors of teaching and creating classroom environments where students

feel safe and protected. While research has been conducted with frontline professionals who work with individuals exposed to trauma (Lemieux-Cumberlege et al., 2024), there remains a critical need to explore the influence that the traumatic experiences of children have on the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers who remain in close contact with them throughout the weeks and months that comprise the academic school year (Rose & Loomis, 2025). Exploring the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers who work with children exposed to ACEs can reveal trajectories toward burnout and compassion fatigue and have implications for retaining teachers in high-poverty, low-income communities (Reilly et al., 2025; Schmidt & Fosu, 2019).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the feelings and experiences of novice elementary teachers working in urban school districts who are exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences, possibly contributing to teacher burnout, fatigue, and resignation (Dabrowski et al., 2025; Reilly et al., 2025). Teachers, the pillars upon which the education system is built, are integral to the school-family-community and consequential to a progressive society (Urban et al., 2019). Teachers are even more vital for children and families living in communities at increased risk of exposure to one or more of the defining categories of ACEs (Bilbrey et al., 2024; Felitti et al., 1998). Children living in low-income, high-poverty communities have less access to community resources to support them through the observance of and threats of violence associated with poverty, placing greater responsibility on teachers for children's emotional well-being (Fleckman et al., 2022). This is especially true for teachers new to education. Teachers' time in close relationship with children exposed to ACEs, coupled with limited professional

development or training in coping with the demands of children's potentially traumatic experiences, places them at risk for the rarely explored social and emotional consequences of such incidents (Lawson, 2019; Rose & Loomis, 2025).

To fulfill the study's purpose, the research population included novice elementary school teachers working in low-income urban elementary school environments. Purposeful sampling was used to gain insight into the lived experiences of novice elementary school teachers working in environments where they teach and support students facing ACEs. The initial research population consisted of novice elementary school teachers in an identified urban school district with less than five years of professional experience serving marginalized student populations based on supplementary educational services (SES) school and district funding. Criterion sampling was then used to ensure that participants met predetermined criteria for this study, including novice teachers still working toward full teacher licensure and graduate-level coursework to provide them with the necessary education credentials.

Novice teachers hired through a state-approved certification pathway or teacher residency program were also eligible for participation in this study. An emphasis was placed on selecting participants knowledgeable about the topic through their daily experiences as novice teacher in urban environments. Criteria for this study included novice elementary school teachers serving as either general or special educators and teaching in one of the core content areas. The participant sample did not exclude participants based on gender, age, or second-career novice teachers. Diversity among participants allowed for a range of experiences and a depth of insight into the influence that student ACEs can have on novice elementary school teachers. Selecting participants whose responses and experiences supported the study's problem, purpose, research

questions, and the literature informing the study was critical in achieving methodological congruence for this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the direction of this study.

#### ***RQ1***

What are the social-emotional experiences of novice elementary school teachers in urban elementary school environments as they support students with adverse childhood experiences?

#### ***RQ2***

How do novice elementary school teachers working in urban educational environments cope with their feelings about the adverse childhood experiences of the students they teach?

### **Conceptual Framework**

Rooted in a collaborative approach to meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, this study was based on the community teacher (CT) framework. The CT framework is a conceptual framework for preparing exemplary urban teachers. The community teacher framework employs a multi-stakeholder approach to preparing in-service and novice teachers to work in high-poverty urban environments in which members of a community possess shared values, language, and cultural experiences. Contending that teaching and learning are social and cultural activities, this approach includes schools of education, community members, and teacher training programs working to prepare a multicultural teaching force invested in the communities where their students live and learn (Murrell, 2000; Thomas et al., 2020).

Widely used in graduate teacher preparation programs, the CT framework is designed to create compassionate urban teachers who demonstrate success with strategies and approaches that elevate the quality of teaching and learning for students in marginalized school communities.

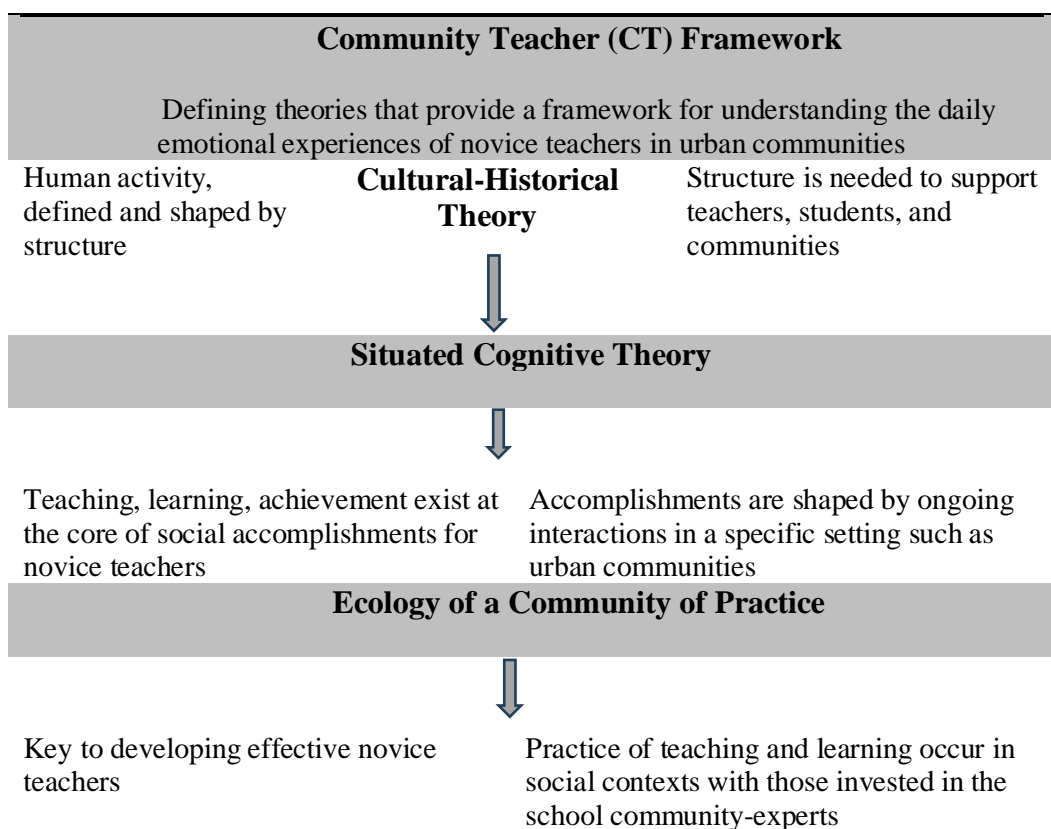
This understanding of children, families, and communities considers early career teachers and graduate students as they support children who are culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse in low-income communities (Epstein, 2018; Thomas et al., 2020). To support novice teachers in meeting a wide range of student needs, including exposure to traumatic and adverse experiences, the CT framework suggests that novice teachers in urban environments be aware of inherent inequities and structural systems of disenfranchisement that students in high-poverty areas often encounter (Fleckman et al., 2022; Mersky et al., 2021).

The CT framework defines high-poverty marginalized environments as communities that have been historically disadvantaged and have had minimal influence on the selection and preparation of teachers who work in their communities (Lampert, 2019). Preparing novice teachers to work in urban communities is a dual process. Novice teachers are influenced by the communities they serve, and if done through a collaborative stakeholder approach, the community, in turn, feels the novice teacher's influence. While the CT framework suggests that novice teachers must do more than teach and leave the community at the end of the workday, the cost of caring and community investment may result in compassion fatigue, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress for novice teachers (Reilly et al., 2025).

Grounded in three theoretical foundations, the CT framework provides a conceptual framework for understanding the daily social-emotional experiences of novice teachers in diverse urban community settings. The cultural-historical theory is the first of the three foundations upon which the CT framework rests and states that human activity is defined by structure, and structure must occur under a particular set of conditions (Murrell, 2000; Murrell, 2006). Situated-social cognitive theory, the second of the three theoretical foundations that shape the CT framework, states that teaching, education, and achievement are at the core of social

accomplishments for novice teachers. These accomplishments are shaped by the individual or novice teacher's identity, participation in specific settings, and ongoing interactions with people and activities in the community where their school district has assigned them to teach (Epstein, 2018).

The third theoretical foundation of the CT framework is the ecology of a community of practice. The ecology of a community of practice emphasizes developing training within a social context. With schools serving as inherently social organizations (Murray et al., 2020), the ecology of a community of practice allows novice teachers to become reflective practitioners of knowledge and engage in cooperative interaction with all stakeholders invested in the school-community dynamic (Murrell, 2000). This foundation further allows in-service and novice teachers to reflect on their practice as they support students from diverse, high-poverty backgrounds (Privata et al., 2021). The ecology of a community of practice further connects the two previous foundations. The third theoretical foundation is rooted in social interaction within the cultural-historical context, which stresses the use of tools and artifacts needed to support students in communities where teacher expertise is needed (Privata et al., 2021). Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the interactive design and the three theoretical foundations that create the conceptual framework for a cooperative community stakeholder approach to supporting novice teachers in urban environments. Within the community teacher (CT) framework, novice teachers become immersed in the history and culture of the communities where they work; learning must be situated in a community of practice through a multi-stakeholder approach.

**Figure 1***The Community Teacher (CT) Conceptual Framework*

*Note.* Figure 1 illustrates the theories that provide a conceptual framework for understanding the interplay between novice teachers and the communities in which their school environments are situated.

Within the CT framework, the ecology of a community of practice extends beyond the tradition of instruction. It focuses on interactions with children in communities where access to resources may be scarce, and teachers must stand in the gap (Dabrowski et al., 2025C; Fleckman et al., 2022). These interactions may arise from unplanned classroom activities in which traumatic adversities are revealed through conversations, observations, and other organic ways; thus, the ecology of a community of practice provides a vehicle for novice teachers to support learners facing sustained adversities (Murrell, 2000). The cultural learning perspective within

this framework states that teaching and learning should hold significance and make a difference in the lives of children beyond instructional strategies. Teaching and learning should demonstrate an understanding of students and the communities in which they live (Murrell, 2000). The co-participation in a community of practice supports novice teachers in becoming community teachers skilled at infusing culture into the learning environment. Learning environments are organized as safe spaces that promote security, risk-taking, and academic achievement. Socially constructed knowledge is gained through practice or the mentorship of experienced teachers. The ongoing development of cultural and social learning is of excellent value when supporting students in urban communities where ACEs are ever-present (Murrell, 2006). Figure 2 illustrates the interactive design of the community of practice. It allows novice teachers to benefit from their interactions with experts while engaging in activities, enabling them to form their identities as teachers within communities as they interact with others. The situated cognitive learning model describes the social and interactive nature of learning required for community teachers to move from novice to expert. Novice teachers move from the peripheral to the center of a community of practice

**Figure 2***Model of Situated Cognitive Learning Theory*

*Note.* Figure 2 illustrates the Situated Cognitive Learning Theory (Herrera, 2020), whereby novices participate in a community of practice supported by varying degrees of expertise.

In developing the study's problem, purpose, and research questions, a framework was needed to understand this identified group of teachers who increasingly occupy classrooms in high-poverty communities with little to no experience (Gorard et al., 2025; Murphey, 2019). The CT framework was used to frame the study's problem, purpose, and research questions through a cultural-historical and social interaction lens. The social interaction between multiple stakeholders, including teacher preparation programs, school leaders, mentors, peers, students, families, and the community in which they work, provided greater insight into the study's topic. The social-cultural, cultural-historical concepts and the ecology of a community of practice made explicit that novice teachers in urban environments must do more than present content and engage in pedagogical practices, but possess a set of multicultural community-minded

approaches that will equip them to support students with ACEs while honoring their own social-emotional well-being (Murray, 2020).

### **Significance of the Study**

This study was important because it informed practice in public education by exploring novice teachers' social-emotional experiences in urban environments as they support students in marginalized communities at higher risk of facing ACEs. Critical to society, teachers leave education for reasons ranging from retirement to the burden of bearing the mental health challenges of students in high-poverty environments (Reilly et al., 2025; Lawson, 2019). With more than 200,000 teachers leaving the profession each year (Podolsky et al., 2019), this study may benefit teacher preparation, induction, and residency programs by prioritizing what novice teachers in urban communities need most. While the Coleman Report (1966) made evident the inequities in public education based on race and socioeconomic status, unequal access to experienced teachers continues to exist in urban communities where students need support beyond academic instruction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019; McKinney et al., 2024). Current practices, such as teacher sorting, placing a disproportionate number of novice teachers in school communities of lower socioeconomic backgrounds, not only widens the gap for disadvantaged children but places novice teachers in the vulnerable position of perfecting pedagogical practices while understanding the communities they serve (Ajzenman et al., 2024; Zavelevsky et al., 2022).

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of novice elementary teachers working in urban school districts who are exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with ACEs (Fleckman et al., 2022; Reilly et al., 2025) while simultaneously identifying the resources and support needed to sustain them in disadvantaged environments.

With limited studies conducted on the role of novice teachers and ACEs over the past two decades, there remains a critical need to study this underexplored area of public education (Bettini & Park, 2021). Understanding novice teachers' social-emotional experiences highlighting the importance of novice teachers' emotional well-being, may further reveal trajectories toward burnout and compassion fatigue and the likelihood of novice teachers leaving the profession before becoming experienced teachers (Camacho et al., 2018; McKinney et al., 2024). Beyond novice teachers leaving the profession, this study may support school districts in retaining novice teachers by assigning novice teachers to schools with access to mentoring, peer collaboration, and strong leadership. The benefits of exploring this topic will add to the existing body of literature on novice teachers.

### **Definitions of Key Terms**

#### ***Adverse Childhood Experiences***

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are prolonged, sustained exposure to potentially traumatic events occurring in the life of a child under the age of 18, producing lasting effects impacting both physical and mental well-being (Usman et al., 2024).

#### ***Burnout***

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and psychological exhaustion resulting from chronic exposure within an identified profession, frequently associated with lower job satisfaction, somatic symptoms, higher medication use, and absence from work (Lemieux-Cumberlege et al., 2024).

### ***Compassion Fatigue***

Compassion fatigue impacts a variety of frontline professionals, including social workers, nurses, and teachers. It is characterized as feelings of anxiety, depression, and reduced empathy resulting from repeated exposure to the distress of vulnerable populations (Marshall, 2023).

### ***Compassion Satisfaction***

Compassion satisfaction is the positive or pleasurable experiences resulting from helping others and is often associated with a higher, altruistic purpose (Oplatka & Gramerman, 2021).

### ***Frontline Professionals***

Frontline professionals are individuals within a specialized field working closely with vulnerable or at-risk populations exposed to multiple levels of stress and compassion fatigue (Borges, 2019; Marshall, 2023).

### ***Marginalized Communities***

Marginalized communities are inclusive, or individuals or groups excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, or cultural life due to unequal power relationships between social groups (Kulkarni & Notario, 2024).

### ***Novice Teachers***

Novice teachers are in the initial stages of their careers, between 3 to 5 years, with little or no experience in teaching and are beginning to develop a philosophy for teaching and implementing acquired skills (Bettini & Park, 2021).

### ***Trauma-Informed Practices***

Trauma-informed practices include a set of approaches derived from the human services field designed to recognize the presence of trauma and its accompanying symptoms. Trauma-

informed practices acknowledge the role that trauma may hold in a person's life—inclusive of providers and support staff (Bilbrey et al., 2024).

### **Review of the Literature**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the feelings and experiences of novice elementary teachers working in urban school districts who are exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences, possibly contributing to teacher burnout, fatigue, and resignation (Reilly et al., 2025). Described by Usmani et al. (2024) as possible traumatic events occurring in the life of a child with potentially long-lasting negative influences well into adulthood, ACEs were initially identified in a large-scale study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and patients insured through Kaiser-Permanente. Affecting 50% of all school-aged children, the consequences of ACEs are significant and wide-ranging, specifically in communities disproportionately influenced by poverty and marginalization (Staehili, 2023). To compound the wide-ranging influence of ACEs, children and families living in low-income urban communities are likely to face any of the identified categories of ACEs and are further burdened by a considerable number of inexperienced, less academically credentialed teachers in their communities (Bettini & Park, 2021). While the research literature on the experiences of novice teachers in such communities remains limited, data for this study were collected through a three-series interview approach (Seidman, 2006) consisting of semi-structured individual interviews and document collection and analysis designed to add to the existing body of literature on this topic.

The literature review for this study began with an understanding of ACEs based on the seminal work of Felitti et al. (1998) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and later

expanded upon in current studies (Hamai & Felitti, 2022; Usmani et al., 2024). Adverse childhood experiences continued to be explored across sociodemographic types. This exploration placed an emphasis on the prevalence of ACEs across marginalized communities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Trends in ACEs focusing on race/ethnicity, gender, and income disparities will be explained in this study, including increases and decreases in categories over a multi-year period. The genesis of novice teachers in urban communities was described based on the most recent literature in the field of public education. With novice teachers in high demand and needed to replace a rapidly graying teacher workforce (Ramli et al., 2025; Zhukova, 2018), their experiences in urban communities were explained along with stressors described in qualitative case studies, ethnographic interviews, mixed methods, and quantitative studies. Themes in the research literature concluded with a mixture of positive and challenging social-emotional experiences, factors related to burnout, retention, and implications for future research and professional practice (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). Multiple subthemes were addressed in the review of the literature.

The Elton B. Stephens Company, EBSCO host was used as the primary database for locating peer-reviewed scholarly articles related to the influence of ACEs on novice teachers in urban environments to arrive at the major themes of the literature review for this study. It should be noted that many sources cited in this literature review exceed a span of 5 years. These sources nonetheless reflect the most current and seminal research on the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers in urban environments influenced by the ACEs of their students. Searches on this began with exploring the concept of *toxic stress and brain development, adverse childhood experiences, definitions, measurement scales, and the prevalence of ACEs*. Searches continued with *ACEs based on race, ethnicity, sociodemographic factors, and disparities between White*

*and non-white populations*. The initial search continued with 10 original and expanded ACEs, including *natural disasters, bullying, isolation, peer victimization, and criminalization*. *Current trends in ACEs and behavioral risk factors across multiple states* were also explored using EBSCO host.

Following an understanding of adverse childhood experiences and their influences on health and income disparities, searches continued concerning *ACEs and education in the K-12 arena* before narrowing the search for literature including *behavior, attendance, and academic success with students influenced by ACEs* for which the literature is saturated (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020; Thomas et al., 2020). Investigations of ACEs and life opportunities among middle-and elementary-grade students and inquiries into the social-emotional competencies of students facing adverse childhood experiences had implications for novice teachers. Moving away from students and into the influence of ACEs on novice teachers overrepresented in low-income urban communities (Glassow & Jerrim, 2022), searches focused on beginning teachers with specific attention to *urban educational environments, marginalized communities, marginalized communities, new teachers' experiences, and traumatic exposure*. The *thoughts, feelings, and emotional ambivalence of novice teachers in urban environments* were included in the EBSCOhost searches for secondary *traumatic stress, compassion satisfaction, compassion fatigue, job-related stress, and teacher retention*.

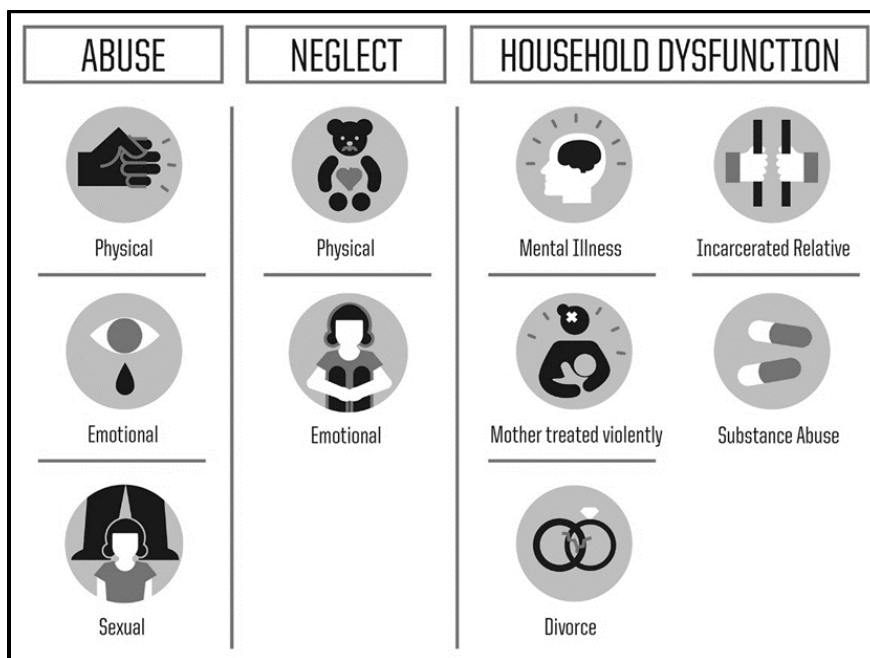
To fully understand how and in what ways novice teachers in urban environments with less than 5 years of professional experience are influenced by the ACEs of the students they teach, it must be noted that an individual's reality is constructed through human interaction and social affairs (Creswell, 2018). This study was, therefore, rooted in the social constructivist worldview whereby individuals apply meaning to the varying worlds in which they exist. The

views and perspectives prevalent in the research literature proved critical to addressing the study's problem, which is that novice elementary school teachers in urban environments are exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences (Dabrowski et al., 2025; Rose & Loomis, 2025), possibly contributing to teacher burnout, fatigue, and resignation (Reilly et al., 2025).

### ***An Understanding of the Consequences of Adverse Childhood Experiences***

Dating back to Freud (1910) and Bowley (1952), ACEs were initially referred to as battered child syndrome, with consequences linked to physical and mental adult behaviors (Petruccelli et al., 2019). Adverse childhood experiences, including abuse, neglect, and exposure to harmful living conditions, as shown in Figure 3, have wide-ranging, lifelong consequences on health and well-being beyond the victim of such experiences (Finkelhor, 2020). The figure shows the three broad categories of ACEs, and the type of childhood adversity found within each category, creating the 10 original ACEs (Felitti et al., 1998). Described by Usmani et al. (2024) as possibly traumatic events and experiences with links to elongated physical, mental, and emotional risk factors, ACEs were initially documented in a large-scale study conducted more than two decades ago (Felitti et al., 1998). Conducted in two waves with more than 17,000 participants, the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente endeavored to investigate unidentified and untreated ACEs in adults struggling with obesity. In addition to obesity, the initial study involving three categories of ACEs documented a strong relationship between the number of exposures to ACEs and other health risk factors, such as delayed cognitive and brain development in children and substance abuse in adolescents and young adults (Felitti et al., 1998). It has since been noted that participants with four or more ACEs tend to experience

compromised immune systems, allostasis, and structural changes to the pre-frontal cortex (Ray et al., 2019; Usmani et al., 2024).

**Figure 3***The Three Types of ACEs*

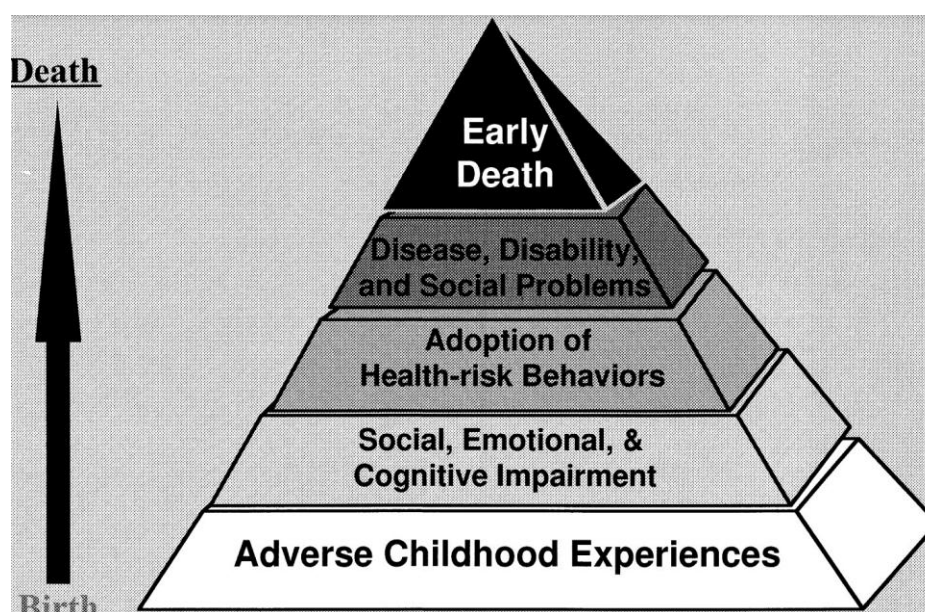
*Note.* Figure 3 illustrates the Three Types of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and subsequent categories (Dube, 2021).

While the original ACEs study added significantly to the research literature, Karatekin and Hill (2019) noted that the initial research on ACEs consisted of a majority White, college-educated population and neglected to include the adverse childhood experiences of individuals whose formative experiences were grounded in the complexities of poverty, race/ethnicity, and social class (Hamai & Felitti, 2022). With the shifting social ecology of childhood (Finkelhor, 2020), the authors expanded upon the consequences of ACEs by interviewing inner-city youth from Philadelphia in a study known as the Philadelphia ACEs project. The study found that household dysfunction for participants was anchored in a lack of love, parents' exposure to childhood adversities, and a never-ending cycle of pain and suffering linked to poverty and a lack of resources (Karatekin & Hill, 2019). Living in communities marked by crime, violence,

and discrimination also added to the adversities of children and youth living in inner-city Philadelphia. The link between poverty and poor health, leading to early death, tripled the rate of ACEs exposure for individuals in high-stress urban communities (Ray et al., 2019). The consequences of ACEs, including the interruption of health and well-being for victims, leading to early death, are highlighted in Figure 4. The ACEs Pyramid displays the mechanisms by which adverse childhood experiences influence the health and well-being of a child throughout the lifespan.

**Figure 4**

*ACEs Pyramid*



*Note.* Figure 4 illustrates the ACEs pyramid (Felitti et al., 1998) demonstrating how adverse childhood experiences can disrupt social, emotional, and cognitive functioning, leading to an early death.

Whereas there is no agreed-upon definition of adverse childhood experiences, ACEs have a common thread of toxicity, including violence, threats of violence, incarceration, and varying forms of abuse impacting the lives of children, as evidenced through adulthood (Finkelhor, 2020;

Petrucelli et al., 2019). When disaggregated by race and income (Mersky et al., 2021), families earning \$15,000 or less annually and those undereducated bear an inordinate share of ACEs. With ACEs being common, and more than half of the American population encountering at least one negative childhood experience, past research on inequalities based on race, economic status, and gender remains limited, and its intersectionality has been ignored (Mersky et al., 2021).

The seminal ACEs study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (Felitti & Anda, 1998) as well as studies conducted by Merrick et al. (2018), showed that abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction have long-term effects on individuals across racial/ethnic, economic, and gender-related lines (Mersky et al., 2021). Similar findings were also echoed, documenting the presence of ACEs across multiple geographic regions in the United States, both rural and urban (Merrick et al., 2018). While ACEs were shown to influence the overall health and well-being of a majority White, college-educated population in the original ACEs study, emerging studies reveal that ACEs are not equally distributed across various members of society, specifically the poor and disenfranchised (Finkelhor, 2020). Disenfranchised members of society identifying as Black, Hispanic, and LGBTQIA+ are three times more likely to be influenced by ACEs (Merrick, 2018). Undereducated, underemployed, or hard-to-employ groups help elevate the general understanding of why some people are at increased risk of experiencing ACEs and others are not. ACEs span multiple generations for some traditionally marginalized groups (Usmani et al., 2024).

To support this statement, Swerbenski and Gary (2020) conducted a study with 100 African American expectant mothers living in low-income urban communities. The findings of this study revealed that expectant mothers self-reported elevated levels of adversity during their childhood years and later suffered from a range of mental and physical ailments, including

thoughts of suicide, anxiety, and depression (Swerbenski & Gary, 2020). The use of tobacco and other substances before or during their pregnancies, placing their unborn babies at risk for experiencing the same fate, was rooted in their childhood adversities. Whereas the study conducted by Swerbenski and Gary (2020) has limitations relative to self-reporting and self-identification of gender and race, the differentiation of exposure to ACEs has implications for preventing ACEs and creating protective environments for marginalized school-aged children. Despite multi-decade decreases in physical abuse across all demographic types (Finkelhor, 2020), the research literature cautions that priority should be given to groups and individuals influenced by ACEs based on race/ethnicity, gender, and income (Mersky et al., 2021).

### ***Urban Communities and the Genesis of Novice Teachers***

The genesis of novice teachers in high-poverty, low-income, marginalized environments can be traced to the nation's earliest years when non-White students were excluded from educational opportunities (Kober, 2022). From the periods before the Civil War to the era of Jim Crow through *Brown v. Board of Education*, children in marginalized environments have not had equal access to educational opportunities or qualified teachers (McKinney et al., 2024). Despite economic and technological advances occurring in the decades since the desegregation of public schools, marginalized communities continue to bear far more inexperienced teachers serving more children affected by crime, economic strife, and other adversities connected to poverty (McKinney et al., 2024). While teachers serving students in less economically advantaged environments are less likely to be certified, they are needed to support the educational needs of more than 13 million impoverished school-aged children (Reilly et al., 2025).

It has been well-documented in the research literature that when viewed through the lens of race/ethnicity, gender, and income, marginalized groups and those living in high-poverty, low-income communities bear the unequal burden of ACEs (Mersky et al., 2021). Additional findings noted that school-aged children facing negative childhood experiences rooted in poverty and poverty-related challenges require prioritized attention from society to produce ideal life and educational outcomes (Berger et al., 2021). The author argued that community organizers and teachers should be well-versed in supporting and protecting children in traumatic situations to break the cycle of poverty and adversities during childhood, including children prone to abuse, neglect, and exposure to home and community violence (Mersky et al., 2021). While the ability to engage in informal and formal diagnostic tools for children with ACEs would be ideal for novice teachers, Glassow and Jerrim (2022) argued that teachers teach far too many children with little to no professional experience. This assessment would only add to burdensome workload demands (Bettini & Park, 2021; Staeheli et al., 2023).

Further complicating the varied influence of ACEs on poorer children, Glassow and Jerrim (2022) indicated in a cross-sectional study that school-aged children living in low-income urban communities have unequal access to qualified teachers. Noted across multiple sources, the problem of unequal access to the most talented teachers can be attributed to the process of teacher sorting (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). Whether district assigned based on SES data or teachers selected relative to school competition, teacher sorting occurs when experienced teachers elect to work in less challenging environments, thus leaving the least experienced for the neediest students (See et al., 2020). The concept of attracting the best teachers to students and communities most in need can be traced to the Coleman Report (1966), which highlighted the differences in educational access by race and sociodemographic factors. Children and families in

marginalized communities are at increased risk of inequitable life and academic outcomes (Bhutta et al., 2023).

With more experienced teachers choosing to work in less challenging conditions and others leaving the profession due to children's overwhelming mental health needs (Dabrowski et al., 2025), novice teachers must save the work (Camacho et al., 2018). In discussing the relevance of trauma literacy, Lawson (2019) noted that ACEs contribute to many mental health concerns of children living in poverty, leaving experienced teachers emotionally exhausted and exiting the profession. With more than half of American teachers expected to retire or leave the profession by the end of the current decade (Fuchsman et al., 2024), novice teachers are needed to replace a maturing teacher workforce (Lawson et al., 2019). Although novice teachers' willingness to answer the call to teach is ever-present due to teacher residency programs such as Teach for American (TFA) and The New Teacher Project (TNTP), the neurophysiological influence of ACEs on children's ability to attend tasks socially and interact with peers weighs heavily on those still new to the science of teaching and learning (Ray et al., 2019). This weight and a lack of expertise and training to meet such challenges make novice teachers ineffective by default (Karatekin & Hill, 2019; McKinney et al., 2024).

Beyond possessing the expertise and experience needed to work with children likely to fall outside of the mainstream, dominant narrative, Lampert (2019) argued that a critical challenge for novice teachers, specifically those in on-the-job preparation programs, is how to fully engage with not just students who may present challenges, but also with the communities in which students live. With retention issues threatening to undermine the creation of a stable teacher force (Podolsky et al., 2019), it is incumbent that novice teachers be provided with tangible strategies for engaging with the community (Garner, 2021). Creating ways for novice

teachers to engage with students and families in their natural setting is critical across all demographics. It is more vital in communities where parents have little voice in who stands before their children (Lampert, 2019).

Used in this context as a descriptor to indicate disadvantaged groups, Danielson and Saxena (2019) found the concept of community to be both political and problematic. While novice teachers must engage with communities that may not mirror their own, preparation programs and school district leaders must strategically make use of models that immerse teachers into their school communities while simultaneously avoiding stereotypes that pity those living in poverty, thus creating deficit mindsets (Danielson & Saxena, 2019). Bronfenbrenner's socioecological model (1979) has been used to set the context for the intersection of home and community, for which the school is most integral. Studies have continuously pointed to ACEs as indicators of poor life and educational outcomes. Still, when provided with a clear starting point for supporting students influenced by ACEs and strategies for intervention, there remains a likelihood of retaining novice teachers in urban communities (Podolsky et al., 2019). While all professions must have a starting point, for novice teachers in urban communities, their starting point often occurs at the intersectionality of race and poverty (Mersky et al., 2021).

### ***The Challenges of Novice Teachers in Urban Communities***

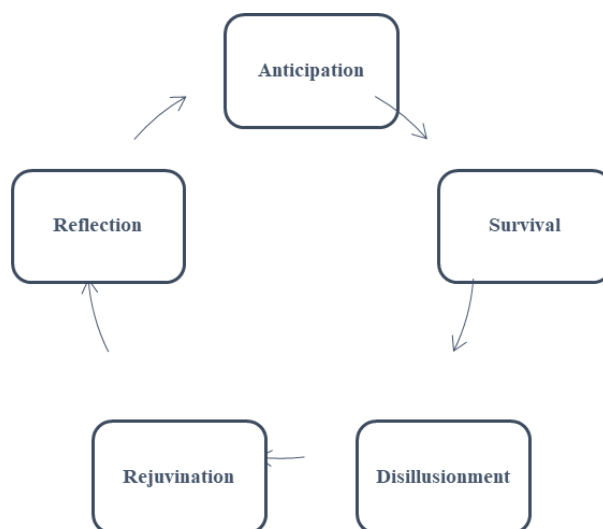
Teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become increasingly complex, with significant responsibilities for adding to the social welfare of society, even for teachers with the expertise to address a wide range of student needs (Kozikoglu & Sendemoglu, 2021). Teachers in the modern era face unprecedented demands to meet all students' social, emotional, and academic needs (French, 2020). Despite their challenges in the classroom, pressure is even greater for novice teachers in urban environments. Novice teachers in urban environments are unique in that they

must serve as both experts and learners while addressing the needs of students and preserving their own social-emotional well-being (French, 2020). Beyond the challenges of being new to an evolving and increasingly intricate practice, the experiences of urban teachers range from feeling like student experiences were beyond their locus of control to feeling like they need a break (Camacho et al., 2018). Apart from their suburban peers, novice teachers in urban environments experience similar challenges, as noted in the research literature. These challenges common among novice teachers are partly due to supporting students likely to face abuse, neglect, household dysfunction, or community violence (Fleckman et al., 2022; Reilly et al., 2025).

In a study focused on the challenges of novice teachers beyond the United States, Kozikoglu and Sendemoglu (2021) collected data from more than 900 novice teachers, echoing similar themes as those revealed in similar studies, including experiences with administrators, colleagues, community members, and students (Glassow & Jerrim, 2022; Lawson et al., 2019). The anticipation, enthusiasm, and lofty desires often observed in novice teachers at the start of their first professional experience (Moir, 1990), as noted in Figure 5, are often overshadowed by the expectations of administrators, parents, and community stakeholders (Camacho et al., 2018). The figure shows Moir's phases experienced by new and novice teachers experience throughout the academic year, including teacher emotions and attitudes. In addition to the expectations placed on novice teachers, these beginning professionals are likely to find themselves engaged in an emotional journey (Lindqvist et al., 2023) whereby they strive to balance lesson implementation, not doing an excellent job, relationships with students, demanding workloads, and student behaviors (Lindqvist et al., 2023). This level of emotional navigation often places new and novice teachers in a state of survival mode. These challenges could influence all aspects of a novice teacher's life (Kozikoglu & Sendemoglu, 2023).

## Figure 5

### *Phases of First-Year Teachers*



*Note.* Figure 5 illustrates Moir’s (1990) phases of first-year teachers beginning with anticipation and ending with reflection by the close of the academic year.

While the concerns identified do not apply to the experiences of all novice teachers, French (2020) noted in a study of first-year teachers that novice teachers often experience a cultural mismatch between themselves and the students they teach, superseding race and ethnicity. In interviews with special education teachers, Ziaian-Ghafari and Berg (2019) also noted this cultural mismatch. The cultural mismatch is likened to a phenomenon known as practice or reality shock (Skytterstad et al., 2025), which occurs when teachers experience a disconnect between their ideals and the realities of teaching. Practice shock has been known to leave novice teachers frustrated and lacking the confidence needed to meet the diverse needs of students in situations that differ from their ideals of teaching (French, 2020).

Although limited due to the number of novice teachers participating in the study, French (2020) interviewed and observed four first-year teachers to explore their social-emotional experiences in challenging environments. The experiences of a novice teacher in the study

highlighted how a beginning teacher could express anticipation and enthusiasm at the start of the school year but shift into survival and disillusionment as each month passes. With increased workloads, grand expectations, and challenging student behaviors two of the novice teachers involved in the study believed the challenges they experienced were due to the student's socioeconomic status, complicated home lives, poor parenting, and the communities in which the students lived. Conversely, another novice teacher engaged in the same study began the academic year with anticipation and optimism. Despite the challenges and range of experiences during the school year, the novice teacher appreciated the classroom's diversity and the surrounding community's unique experiences, adding to their overall social-emotional experience as a novice teacher in an urban environment (Camacho, 2018).

Adding to the complexities experienced by novice teachers in urban environments, Kamrath and Bradford (2020) identified additional themes related to the difficulties experienced by novice teachers. These themes included building or principal leadership, low salaries, and lack of collegial and mentoring support. With up to 60% of American school-aged children experiencing at least one of the categories of ACEs, the frustrations for novice teachers in urban environments are magnified, taking a more significant toll on the social-emotional experiences of this group of beginning professionals (Brandt et al., 2019). Of the challenges identified by novice teachers within the research literature, working conditions noted by Bettini and Park (2022) were most prevalent. While the obstacles imposed upon novice teachers have raised the question of whether they avoid high-poverty student populations (Ansley & Hutchins, 2019), novice teachers tend to express concerns regarding poor working conditions over many of the other challenges they experience (French, 2020). Working conditions, including building facilities, administration, leadership, and new teacher support, could readily address and improve novice

teachers' overall professional experience, resulting in higher retention rates (Lawson et al., 2019; McKinney et al., 2024).

### ***Burnout, Compassion Fatigue, and Compassion Satisfaction***

Initially rooted in gender, race, and class, American public schooling was created by religious reformers to restore societal harmony brought about by social fractions (O'Donnell, 2021). Though the fundamental ideals of public education remain, children in historically disadvantaged urban communities are less likely to have ideal experiences as they are far more likely to be taught by teachers with less expertise than those from a more affluent or middle-income background (Urban et al., 2019). Teachers in urban environments, specifically those identified as novices, spend seven to eight hours daily with students likely to witness home or community violence. In a study exploring secondary traumatic stress in educators and the need for trauma literacy, Scheepers and Young (2021) noted that secondary traumatic stress relative to the time teachers spend in close contact and communication with students has been identified as a hidden cause of negative adult outcomes for novice teachers. These often-unexplored causes include adult disengagement, depression, changes in mood, sleeplessness, and teacher turnover (Lawson et al., 2019). In known instances where children may be exposed to violence, it has been shown to interrupt sleep patterns and cause intrusive thoughts among novice teachers who may feel it is their responsibility to fix the problem (Fleckman et al., 2022). Furthermore, the nature of trusting interactions between teacher and student places teachers in a unique position to naturally learn about the adverse, often traumatic experiences their students face (Brandt et al., 2020). Studies on compassion fatigue and teachers' intent to leave the profession noted that caring is costly, underscoring secondary traumatic stress, which is common among those in helping professions (Brandt et al. 2019).

In a study exploring secondary traumatic stress, burnout, and compassion satisfaction, Fleckman et al. (2022) also noted that prolonged exposure to students experiencing trauma and adversities weighs heavily on novices shown to internalize the pain and adversities of their students. Mirroring symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), secondary traumatic stress has been conceptualized by some researchers as an extreme form of burnout, with compassion fatigue being the other (Marshall, 2023). Taking on a vulnerable role with little to no training in supporting students likely to face ACEs, without the appropriate social-emotional support, novice teachers are likely to face extremes in secondary traumatic stress, ranging from anger, sadness, confusion, and emotional exhaustion (Lawson et al., 2019). While symptoms of secondary traumatic stress vary by race/ethnicity and sex (Schepers, 2023), secondary traumatic stress in teachers has resulted in such extremes as the potential for depression, stomach issues, and anxiety-related issues (Bock et al., 2020).

Similarly, studies by Brandt et al. (2020) involving 224 elementary school teachers in low-income environments found that novices working with students exposed to trauma experienced irritability and avoidance, exacerbating work-related demands and stress. Irritability and avoidance were further linked to adult mental health issues and workplace dissatisfaction for some. Irritability, avoidance, and workplace dissatisfaction are commonly referred to within the literature as burnout (Lemieux-Cumberlege et al., 2024). Characterized by cynicism and depersonalization resulting in a decreased sense of personal accomplishment, this form of job-related exhaustion is common among frontline professionals. As illustrated in Moir's (1990) attitude and emotional phases experienced by first-year teachers, burnout develops over a period ranging from months to years.

Unlike burnout, compassion fatigue, as noted by Koenig (2018), can emerge after a secondary encounter, signaling naturally occurring emotions common among those supporting individuals facing adverse or traumatic experiences. Whereas research on compassion fatigue and novice teachers remains limited, recent studies conducted by Ziaian-Ghafari and Berg (2019) exploring the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers working with special education students revealed that as much as 81% of novice teachers working in urban environments expressed varying levels of compassion satisfaction based on results from the Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale (STSS). Arising from the human instinct to help others, compassion satisfaction has been noted in studies involving Canadian novice teachers supporting students encountering ACEs (Koenig, 2018). In exploring the need for trauma-informed literacy within the education profession, Lawson et al. (2019) noted the need for professional development and training to address burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary stress in novice teachers, including opportunities for peer support and mental wellness.

Despite the negative experiences associated with burnout, secondary traumatic stress, and flashbacks, recollections, and detachment associated with compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction balances the three. Compassion satisfaction was identified as a significant theme in a study conducted by Fleckman et al. (2022) designed to understand the reactions of teachers working with children exposed to trauma. Often cited as an understudied theme (Brandt et al., 2020), compassion satisfaction is described as a protective barrier for novice teachers in urban environments. Compassion in teachers originates from witnessing a blend of sadness, feelings, and emotions relative to the suffering of children in adverse situations (Brandt et al., 2020). For novice teachers in urban environments, this may include school and community violence, abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction (Oplatka & Gamerman, 2021).

Compassion is rooted in the tradition of philosophy and religion and, much like compassion fatigue, has been described as a vicarious experience. Semi-structured interviews conducted with novice teachers, noted that it is often difficult for beginning teachers to intentionally look beyond themselves and into the suffering of others due to the challenges they may be experiencing (Koenig et al., 2018). Novice teachers capable of practicing compassion experienced less anxiety and fewer desires to leave the profession (Oplatka & Gamerman, 2021). Just as working conditions and building leadership have been cited within the research literature as critical contributors to the negative experiences that novice teachers face (McKinney et al., 2024), these same factors, when addressed, can also serve as critical predictors of teacher satisfaction for novice teachers in urban environments (Ouellette et al., 2018).

### ***Novice Teachers and Socially Just Teaching Practices in Urban Environments***

With urban schools and communities serving as symbols of cultural, ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity, Howard and Milner (2021) argued that novice teachers need more than pedagogical practices to reach an increasingly diverse student population, specifically those existing in marginalized communities. While novice teachers must learn the rigors of teaching and possess a depth of content knowledge for a wide range of learners, socially just teaching approaches have earned a place in the canon of undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation programs (Howard & Milner, 2021). Though controversial in educational circles, socially just teaching practices are tools to help teachers transform policies into practice and support pedagogies that increase academic and life opportunities for disadvantaged student populations (French, 2020). More likely to be implemented by idealistic novice teachers, socially just teaching practices begins with acknowledging an inherent privilege and disadvantage within student populations that may or may not be agnostic of race. Beyond being idealistic in their

approaches to socially just teaching when working with students with adversities, novices employing these practices often possess an awareness of the beliefs and values they bring with them into the classroom (Howard & Milner, 2021). This awareness allows novice teachers in urban environments implementing socially just teaching practices to view themselves as change agents working in structurally broken systems likely to repeat cycles of adverse childhood experiences (Borrero et al., 2018).

In contrast to other documented teaching approaches, socially just teaching practices are closely aligned with the social-emotional experiences of those showing compassion toward the social and political circumstances of children affected by adversity (Haverly et al., 2018). Therefore, novice teachers committed to socially just teaching practices have been shown to bring their full emotional range to the job, even at the risk of burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary traumatic stress (Fleckman, 2022). A comparative case study focused on the agency of two elementary science teachers found that the teachers' identities and past experiences influenced the way their socially just teaching practices empowered them to teach science in ways that encouraged students to challenge their thoughts and enrich discussions beyond systems designed for rote learning (Chen & Mensah, 2021).

Although the ongoing challenges of novice teachers in urban environments can take a social-emotional toll, resulting in high levels of distress and anxiety (Schmidt & Fosu, 2019), novice teachers can also present an evolved image of competence, commitment to socially just teaching practices, and knowledge when empowered with the resources, materials, and strategies to meet student needs (Lawson et al., 2019). A qualitative case study exploring sense-making opportunities in the elementary science classrooms of novice teachers in urban environments revealed that this form of inquiry and discussion creates moments for novices to encourage

students to question phenomena through discussion and questioning (Haverly et al., 2018). Although not easily employed by all novices, sense-making—a form of socially just teaching—has been known to create equitable opportunities for novice teachers to close the social divide by encouraging their students, specifically those in marginalized communities, to question the world around them (Borrero et al., 2018; Haverly et al., 2018). Defying negative stereotypes of middle-class teachers facing insurmountable odds, novice teachers who employ socially just teaching acknowledged they derived satisfaction from helping children in adverse conditions (Camacho et al., 2018). While novice teachers identified the role of compassion satisfaction in their teaching practices with children in marginalized communities, compassion fatigue, and burnout overshadowed the feeling of fulfillment derived from helping children in need (Koenig et al., 2018).

Novice teachers still understanding the demands of teaching may find the practice of socially just teaching overwhelming and may elect to adhere to implementing core content and curriculum. Case studies and observations conducted by French (2020) involving five novice teachers highlighted that, despite a range of challenges, one novice teacher implemented student groups that reinforced gender equity and healthy racial practices with success. Novice teachers have used socially just teaching practices within their classrooms to give students a voice and perspective, regardless of background and circumstances. Student behaviors often attributed to family context and other social constructs are dismantled (Chen & Mensah, 2021).

To avoid oversimplification in employing socially just teaching practices, Zhukova (2018) suggested that teacher preparation programs must take the lead in equipping novice teachers with resources, strategies, and other media that empower them to work effectively with children exposed to ACEs. While socially just teaching practices fare better in school settings

where the values of the administration and the community embrace racial and social inequities, socially just teaching enables novice teachers to find passion and remain in urban environments for up to six years beyond the novice phase of teaching (Bettini & Park, 2021).

### ***Retention of Novice Teachers in Urban Environments***

Research on novice teachers in urban educational environments with children likely to face ACEs would be incomplete without acknowledging teacher retention and turnover issues (Marshall, 2023). While teacher sorting ensures that children in disadvantaged communities can access teachers, even if the teachers lack experience (Luschei & Jeong, 2018), this inequitable practice cannot guarantee that novices will remain in schools and districts beyond the early stage of their careers. With as much as 33% of novice teachers in urban environments leaving within the first three years and 70% of novice teachers having gone within the first five years of professional experience, school districts are left in a never-ending cycle of hiring, recruiting, and training (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). Research has documented that there is a financial and human cost to school districts that fail to retain novice teachers Darling-Hammond (2019). Beyond the cost of professional development, training, and preparation programs designed to create a cadre of experienced teachers, the human cost to students and families is not as easily measured.

When novice teachers leave already fragile communities, a level of trust has been violated. Research on communities conducted by Lampert (2019) noted that faith must be rebuilt with children, families, and community stakeholders when teachers leave, no matter the reason. Conversely, collaboration is sustained when teachers stay and bonds are strengthened (Camacho, 2018; Murrell, 2000). Categorized as leavers, stayers, and movers, See et al. (2020) noted key reasons why novice teachers remain, leave the profession, or move on to less challenging work

environments. This sub-theme was also evident in research conducted by Kamrath and Bradford (2020) among novice teachers who decided to stay in environments that may have contributed to varying levels of burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary traumatic stress. At the same time, novice teachers in the study cited effective leadership, collegial and social interactions, mentoring, and opportunities for decision-making as reasons to stay. Glassow and Jerrim (2022) found that these same factors contributed to why novice teachers left.

While working conditions, leadership, peer, and mentoring support have been cited within the research, novice teachers who elect to leave also cite lesser explored feelings of isolation and unmotivated students as reasons for leaving within the novice stage of their careers (Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg, 2019). Academic pressures related to teaching children who may need more grade-level support and the stress of being evaluated are among the lesser-explored factors contributing to the inability to retain novice teachers in urban environments (Bettini & Park, 2021). With factors beyond the workplace, including physical/mental health and personal relationships influencing the decisions of novice teachers to leave, those who remain in the profession and move on to other schools rarely move into similar urban environments (See et al., 2020). Whereas qualitative studies are not meant to be generalizable (Creswell, 2018) and the research cited on teacher retention referenced case studies, implications remain for retaining novice teachers in urban environments.

With students of color living in disadvantaged communities taught by novice teachers aged 25-45, school districts, administrators, and teacher preparation programs must work to maintain novice teachers. While teaching is a stressful profession, with up to 93% of all teachers experiencing extreme levels of stress (Ouellette et al., 2018), more should be done to reduce teacher stress whenever possible, such that novice teachers can persevere and students benefit

from this perseverance (Ziaian-Ghafari & Berg, 2019). Administrators who have the closest contact with novice teachers within their buildings must pay close attention to and consider the thoughts and feelings of novice teachers in their learning environments (Tran & Duo, 2019). Clear, actionable plans for student discipline, recruiting community groups and clinicians to support student mental health, and recognizing teachers' efforts will increase the likelihood of retaining novice teachers (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). Finally, relationships, whether initiated through mentoring or social interactions between colleagues, have been cited as why novice teachers leave and why they remain. In settings where teachers spend most of their time, it is critical that administrators foster relationships that create a sense of belonging and community. (Tran & Duo, 2019). Social interaction, recognition, and emotional support will do much to ensure that teachers in urban environments can fully support students with adverse childhood experiences (Kamrath & Bradford, 2019).

### **Ethical Assurances**

To fully explore the influence of student ACEs on the social-emotional experiences of novice elementary school teachers in urban environments, approval from National University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) was granted. Seeking IRB approval allowed individuals to engage in research with human subjects. Grounded in The Belmont Report (Pub. L. 38-348), IRB permission was granted to ensure that this study adhered to ethical guidelines stating that human subjects would be protected from unnecessary harm. This study demonstrated respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, with the understanding that human subjects participated in this study of their own free will and were treated as autonomous agents capable of making their own decisions (Health, Education, & Welfare, 1979).

This qualitative phenomenological study was designed to explore the lived experiences of novice elementary teachers in urban environments experiencing social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences (Dabrowski et al., 2025; Rose & Loomis, 2025), possibly leading to burnout, fatigue, and resignation (Reilly et al., 2025). Any threats to the experiences of novice teachers were established through building a trusting rapport before employing any of the study's data collection methods. Establishing a trusting rapport through transparency begins with fairness and distribution within the research and ensuring that all information shared during the data collection process remains confidential (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Reducing risks to participants further included safeguarding information shared during interviews and document collection and ensuring that data collected was secured and protected from carelessness on the researcher's part. Protecting data collected during the data collection process reduced legal and psychological risks that could arise from participants fearing that the researcher has not protected their information.

Critical to this study, issues of confidentiality were addressed early in the data collection process. Likely to occur in the same study, confidentiality refers to the individual conducting the study being fully aware of who the participants are and taking care to protect any identifying information. Confidentiality occurred when the researcher changed the names of participants to protect their identities (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Per the IRB, minimizing risks included reading aloud the informed consent prior to participants engaging in any of the three interviews and sharing documents that reflected their experiences. Finally, confidential data, including interview transcripts and confidential documents, were secured by creating backups to electronic devices and using password-protected folders for each participant.

Citing participant information extended into confidentiality issues (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Every effort was made to provide the highest level of confidentiality as it related to the data collected from novice teachers. Beyond keeping identifying information password protected, codes served as another form of confidentiality. Codes were used when referring to novice teachers in a way recognizable only to the researcher. In addition to pseudonyms for each participant, confidential codes also included referring to participants NT1 and NT2, concluding through each novice teacher involved in the study. Minimizing risks to participant information was reduced by collecting data essential to the study's purpose, reducing the researcher from being inundated with information that may not be needed to fulfill the study's purpose. Data collected from novice teachers will be deleted after three years, as outlined in the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).

The role of the researcher in a qualitative study is to gain insight through reflection into a problem impacting the natural world (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher must acknowledge their inherent position of power as they serve as conductors of the study. Positionality within a research study is defined as the individual's social location, role, and relationships with the study's context (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). An individual's positionality can impact the research process, making it imperative that researchers acknowledge their positions of power by bracketing or epoching their experiences with the study's topic. Thus, this researcher must bracket experiences as a novice teacher working under many of the same conditions with similar sociodemographic populations. Reflexive and reflective practices were used to explore the lived experiences of novice teachers influenced by the ACEs of the students they teach. In addition to drawing contrasts to professional encounters with student ACEs,

reflexive journaling was used as a form of self-examination forcing one to acknowledge the influence of previously held biases, assumptions, and identities that could have influenced the study.

### **Summary**

Teacher shortages, issues of retention, and an exodus from the field of education due to workload demands and compassion fatigue have left the teaching profession struggling to fill vacancies in school districts across the United States (McKinney et al., 2024; Reilly et al., 2025). With more than half of the current teacher workforce predicted to leave or retire by the decade's end, less experienced teachers have been hired to lead classrooms once occupied by experienced career educators (Lawson, 2019). While shortages and professional burnout influence teachers in wealthy, middle-income, and impoverished communities, teacher sorting has led to poorer communities receiving an abundance of novice teachers who are frequently ill-prepared to meet the challenges of students affected by ACEs (Glassow & Jerrim, 2022). With the consequences of ACEs influencing more than the victim and their families (Usmani et al., 2024), the first chapter of this study established a foundation for the influence of ACEs on novice teachers working in urban educational environments.

Describing urban as high-poverty communities that have been historically disadvantaged (Lampert, 2019), the study's problem is that novice elementary school teachers in urban environments are exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences (Fleckman et al., 2022), possibly contributing to teacher burnout, fatigue, and resignation (Bettini & Park, 2021). This study was guided by two research questions to understand the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers in urban environments as they support students with ACEs and how they cope with their feelings about

the ACEs of the students they teach. In addition to the identified problem and purpose, this study began by understanding the consequences of ACEs and the genesis of novice teachers in urban environments. The challenges and experiences of novice teachers in urban environments were explored, leading to a review of the literature on burnout, compassion satisfaction, and compassion fatigue. The literature review's themes and subthemes synthesized the most recent research relative to the influence of ACEs on novice teachers in urban environments (Bettini & Park, 2021). Though no singular definition of ACEs exists, the research literature commonly lists abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction as defining categories (Felitti et al., 1998). Described as potentially traumatic events reoccurring in a child's life affecting their general health and well-being, abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction are even more noticeable when disaggregated by race, gender, and income, affecting children under the age of 18 living in marginalized communities (Mersky et al., 2021; Usmani et al., 2024).

The difficulties children with ACEs encounter in their daily classroom experiences are significant challenges for novice teachers attempting to provide academic and social-emotional support to children in communities with limited resources (Fleckman, 2022). Despite the challenge's novice teachers experience, when presented with mentoring support, effective building leadership, and the opportunity to engage in socially just teaching practices, novice teachers have the potential to surpass the novice stage of their careers (Bettini & Park, 2021; Moir, 1990). Overrepresented in urban communities and often deemed inherently ineffective (McKinney et al., 2024), novice teachers have been shown to meet the challenges of supporting students while balancing demanding workloads by employing socially just teaching practices within their classrooms. Shown to match the ideologies of novice teachers, socially just teaching practices empower novice teachers within their classrooms as they move beyond the survival

phase of teaching (Chen & Mensah, 2021; Lampert, 2019). When provided with the appropriate administrative and programmatic support, novice teachers can navigate systems of race, gender, and diversity to become experienced professionals able to meet the needs of children with ACEs despite its multi-layered influence on them as novice teachers in urban environments (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). While this section established the study's foundation, the next section will describe the methodology and design used to explore this topic in detail.

## Section 2: Methodology and Design

The problem addressed in this study is that novice elementary school teachers in urban environments are exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences (Dabrowski et al., 2025; Rose & Loomis, 2025), possibly contributing to teacher burnout, fatigue, and resignation (Reilly et al., 2025). The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the feelings and experiences of novice elementary teachers working in urban school districts who are exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), possibly contributing to teacher burnout, fatigue, and resignation (Reilly et al., 2025).

Generally defined as childhood abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction (Felitti et al., 1998), ACEs have been shown to influence frontline professionals, including novice teachers assigned to teach in urban environments (Fleckman et al., 2022). The long-standing practice of teacher sorting assigns novice teachers to work in marginalized communities marred by abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction (Glassow & Jerrim, 2019). Novice teachers in marginalized communities are more likely to face burnout and compassion fatigue than their peers in higher-income environments (Camacho et al., 2018). The issues novice teachers face in urban environments reveal trajectories toward leaving the profession and threaten novice teachers' emotional and psychological well-being (Schmidt & Fosu, 2019).

Urban school environments regularly present novice teachers with more challenging experiences than those in affluent educational environments (Bettini & Park, 2021). While challenges vary among urban school environments, novice teachers in marginalized communities are influenced by the unsafe home and community environments encountered by most of the

children they teach (Finkelhor, 2019). These challenges can result in higher levels of internalized stress exhibited through emotional exhaustion, compassion fatigue, anxiety, depersonalization, or frustration, adding to the range of social-emotional experiences of novice teachers (Camacho et al., 2018; Reilly et al., 2025). Given that novice teachers spend a significant amount of time in relationship with children facing a range of adversities with limited support in how best to address their needs (Fleckman et al., 2022), this study used qualitative methods to explore the experiences of novice teachers in urban environments who are influenced by the ACEs of the students they teach.

Section 2 provides an overview of the methodology and design used to explore the lived experiences of novice elementary school teachers in urban educational environments relative to the influence of the ACEs of their students on their social-emotional experiences as novice teachers. This section began with the research methodology and design before moving into the population, sample, materials, and instrumentation needed for this qualitative study. This section further includes data collection and analysis methods, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations involving sample size and characteristics. The research problem, purpose, and aligned research questions designed to explore how and in what ways novice teachers in urban environments are influenced by the ACEs of the students they teach and how they cope with their feelings were appropriate for a qualitative, phenomenological research design as illustrated by the characteristics of qualitative inquiry.

### **Design and Method**

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore novice elementary school teachers in urban environments exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences (Dabrowski et al.,

2025; Rose & Loomis, 2025), possibly contributing to teacher burnout, fatigue, and resignation (Reilly et al., 2025). Characterized by description and exploration (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019), qualitative research was used to understand an organizational social setting through the views and perspectives of novice teachers influenced by the ACEs of their students. Qualitative research contains vital features critical to the exploration of this topic. This non-numerical form of research is naturalistic and descriptive (Creswell & Poth, 2018), meaning thick, rich descriptions of novice teachers' experiences within their natural school, classroom, or community environments were provided.

The subjective nature of qualitative research was used to collect and analyze information about the lived experiences of novice teachers likely to be influenced by student ACEs through a three-series interview approach (Seidman, 2006) and document collection and analysis (Morgan, 2022). Information was collected from novice teachers in words, phrases, images, and direct quotes, each providing insight into their lived experiences as novice teachers in urban elementary school environments. Qualitative research offers a range of data collection methods. Of the various data collection methods, in-person, and electronic interviews, personal, physical/artifacts, and professional documents were used to explore participants' experiences. Field notes and member checking were used to bridge the data collection and analysis gap. With qualitative research being naturalistic and descriptive, the natural environments of novice teachers were highlighted to describe how and why specific things occur in the context of a novice teacher's social-emotional experiences such that the study's research questions are addressed (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Involving the collection, analysis, and interpretation of participant data, qualitative research was suited for this study as the interpretive practices consistent with this methodology

made the participants' world visible to the readers of the study (Babchuk, 2019). Collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data through a qualitative approach was used to create descriptions that amplify the feelings, experiences, and perspectives of novice teachers influenced by the ACEs of their students. Time and resources were committed to appropriately address the study's problem, purpose, and research questions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The time and resources dedicated to collecting data from novice teachers in this study reflected the desire to address the real-world problem and the experiences that novice teachers in urban environments influenced by the ACEs of their students encounter.

Whereas a qualitative research design was appropriately situated to explore and apply meaning to the experiences of novice teachers engaged in this study, a quantitative approach to this study could not address the meaning that individuals or groups apply to a social or human problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Unlike qualitative research, quantitative research methods emphasize quantifying and analyzing variables to get results (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Quantitative research uses numerical data and statistical formulas to answer questions to research problems that can be quantified in terms of who, what, where, when, and how many. While quantitative studies also begin with a statement of the problem, a hypothesis is developed such that experiments may be conducted to prove or disprove the hypothesis, (Mulisa, 2022). Unlike qualitative research, where findings may be transferable to similar settings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018), quantitative findings can often be generalized to larger populations. Whereas quantitative research can explain a phenomenon in objective, numerical terms, the influence of student ACEs on novice teachers' experiences in urban environments is not quantifiable. Novice teachers in this study shared the common phenomenon of being influenced by the abuse, neglect, and other forms of ACEs their students living in marginalized communities are likely to face.

Qualitative research hosts five distinct research designs, each appropriate for a specific problem, purpose, and research questions. Each of the five qualitative research designs was examined before using a phenomenological research design to explore the influence of student ACEs on the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers in urban elementary school environments. Extending across disciplines, *phenomenology* is defined as what shows itself in the consciousness or eidos of the lived experiences of a group of individuals (van Manen & van Manen, 2021). This definition applies to gaining insight into the lived experiences of urban novice teachers as their individual and collective expressions will be added to understanding their life histories, the details of their experiences, and the reflective meaning they applied to their experiences (Seidman, 2006). Phenomenology is the philosophy of experience allowing individuals to be studied without force from those studying the phenomenon, strengthening the need to explore the realities of the natural settings where participants interact with the phenomenon being studied (Neubauer et al., 2019). Critical to this study, phenomenology was used to reduce the participants' individual experiences in their respective schools, classrooms, and communities to a shared involvement surrounding the influence of their experiences and events with student ACEs (Mertler, 2019).

The collective or shared experience for individuals often includes such common phenomena as grief, anger, anxiety, and loneliness (vanManen & vanManen, 2021). While ACEs' influence on novice teachers in urban environments remains underexplored (Bettini & Park, 2022), ACEs are intertwined with multiple shared phenomena communal to human experience. The shared phenomena within ACEs include but are not limited to substance use, maltreatment, mental illness, and incarceration (Felitti et al., 1998) each having the potential to influence novice teachers negatively (Bettini & Park, 2021). While each broad category and

classification of ACEs may influence novice teachers in urban environments, each participant had multiple ways of interpreting and applying their subjective meaning to the phenomenon's influence on their social-emotional experiences. While interpretations of the influence of the categories of ACEs on their experiences varied from one novice teacher to the next, the commonalities made the multi-layered phenomenon of ACEs worthy of qualitative exploration.

Before selecting a phenomenological research design, both a narrative and case study research design were carefully considered. While not recommended for graduate students and novice researchers due to its complexity (Mertler, 2019), a narrative research design was initially considered for this study. While a phenomenological research design was used to describe and interpret the lived experiences of novice teachers in urban environments influenced by student ACEs, a narrative research design makes room for the construction and reconstruction of participants' personal stories within the study (DeVaney, 2018). Furthermore, a narrative research design allows for the unfolding of a participant's story through chronologically connected events (Asenahabi, 2019). The primary purpose of this biographical approach to qualitative research is for individuals to narrate their experiences through a detailed storytelling approach (DeVaney, 2018). While human beings exist as natural storytelling organisms, the influence of student ACEs on novice teachers in urban environments need not be shared through chronologically connected, story-like events. Novice teachers who participated in this study were free to narrate the details of their experiences with the phenomenon through specific events that held the most significance to them. This study aimed to explore the influence of ACEs through the individual experiences of novice teachers to describe a shared phenomenon, not their biographical, chronological experiences as teachers in urban environments influenced by the adverse childhood experiences of their students.

In addition to a narrative research design, a case study approach was also considered. Defined as an in-depth analysis of a single, restricted entity or case, a case study design involves studying an identified phenomenon within a real-life, contemporary context (Kekeya, 2021). Unlike a phenomenological research design, a case study approach to qualitative research may be concrete, focusing on an individual case, a small group, an organization, or a relationship (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A case study approach is used in studies to focus on a broadly defined case ranging from individuals to projects or abstract concepts, leaving the options wide-ranging for a graduate researcher (Kekeya, 2021). As with narrative research design, case studies are complex and offer more than the commonly used single case study. Case studies extend beyond studying one case. They may involve using an instrumental case, a collective case, or an intrinsic case study, requiring the individual conducting the study to understand the research design intimately (Kekeya, 2021). Limiting the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers in urban educational environments influenced by ACEs to a single case would not allow for the intertwining of experiences needed to provide a rich description of this phenomenon.

Examining narrative and case study research designs clarified that a phenomenological research design supported the positionality adopted within this study. In exploring the influence of student ACEs on novice teachers in urban environments, the subjective focused life histories continued to shape the study's topic, the choice of participants, and the process for conducting the study. While positionality developed over time, any personal positions that could have influenced the study were acknowledged, including serving as a novice teacher in similar environments. One may not be fully aware of how identity has been constructed based on fixed and fluid factors, including being an African American woman committed to working with novice teachers in urban environments. French (2020) noted that individuals are part of the social

world, and positionality implies that an individual's social-political and historical location can influence the totality of the research study.

### **Population and Sample**

The population for this study included novice teachers working in urban elementary schools with children likely to face abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction (Blodgett & Lonigan, 2020; Felitti et al., 1998). The study's population was grounded in the practice of teacher sorting, which is used to place inexperienced novice teachers in hard-to-fill urban school environments (Lankford & Wyckoff, 2020). With teacher sorting contributing to the increase in novice teachers nationwide, the study's population included novice teachers working in marginalized urban elementary school environments across the United States. The study's problem was used to narrow the population to novice teachers influenced by the adverse childhood experiences of children living in marginalized communities where they work. Marginalized communities are environments where groups and individuals have experienced discrimination and exclusion because of unequal social, political, economic, cultural, and educational power structures (Sevelius et al., 2020). While ACEs occur across communities of all demographic classifications (Felitti et al., 1998), children in low-income, urban communities are exposed to disproportionate instances of adversities and trauma, changing the social ecology of childhood of more than 60% of poorer, non-White children (Mersky & Janczewski, 2018). This change in the social ecology of childhood due to sustained adversities has been shown to influence teachers, specifically unskilled novice teachers in urban environments (Kozikoglu, 2017).

The novice teachers selected to participate in this study were those assigned to teach in their school district's marginalized communities where students experience disparities in their

home or community environments, influencing the novice teachers who support them (Mersky et al., 2021). Based on the purpose of this study, participating novice teachers were uniquely qualified to share the details of their lived experiences and provide reflections on the meaning of their experiences as they are overly assigned and under-prepared to support children in communities with limited mental health resources and healthy outlets (Fleckman et al., 2022; Glassow & Jerrim, 2022).

Purposeful sampling was used to determine which novice teachers to select for participation in this study. Defined as a group of techniques used to select participants based on shared characteristics needed for a study's sample (Staller, 2021) purposeful sampling allowed for the selection of novice teachers within a specific urban school district who met the study's criteria. Purposeful sampling aims to choose participants who can provide the most information about the study's problem and purpose (Staller, 2021). Best used in phenomenological studies for an in-depth focus on a small sample size, purposeful sampling was further used to collect information regarding the influence of student ACEs on the social-emotional experiences of novice elementary school teachers in urban environments. Of the purposeful sampling techniques, criterion sampling was used to select novice teachers based on the criteria detailed in the following paragraph.

Novice teachers selected for this study served as general or special education teachers and taught one or more core subject areas, including reading, math, social studies, and science. Novice teachers in this study provided full-time academic instruction in a typical classroom setting to elementary students in an urban environment exposed to sustained trauma and childhood adversities. The research literature indicated that this group of novice teachers spending the most time with students is influenced the most by the adverse childhood

experiences of the students they teach (Fleckman et al., 2022). Therefore, resource teachers providing students with physical education, music, and fine arts opportunities were not part of the criteria selection for this study. Novices had to be directly influenced by the ACEs their students encounter through their daily classroom interactions, as evidenced by working conditions, building leadership, mentoring, peer support, and social support networks (Camacho et al., 2018).

Novice teachers in this study possessed a conditional teaching certificate issued by their local state department of education. Conditional teaching certificates allow early career teachers to teach in public schools on the condition that they complete state-mandated coursework and pass standardized professional assessments before being issued a Standard Professional or Advanced Teaching Certificate (Maryland State Department of Education, 2023). Novice teachers with undergraduate degrees in education and formal student teaching experience were excluded from participation in this study as they were equipped with the tools to meet student needs across a range of sociodemographic types. Conversely, novice teachers hired and recruited through local and national teaching residencies also met the eligibility criteria for this study, as they, too, must earn teaching credentials and skills based on a resident teacher certificate granted through their specific program.

The sample population for this qualitative phenomenological study was comprised of six novice teachers with less than five years of professional teaching experience in a specific urban elementary school environment. The number of novice teachers chosen for participation in this study is based on the work of Guest et al. (2006), who determined that a sample size of six to 12 participants supported reaching data saturation and helped provide a thorough understanding of the topic. Data saturation indicates a sense of repetition within the data whereby new themes no

longer emerge and information relevant to the study's research questions has been exhausted by the researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Mwita, 2022). In this study, data saturation supported the credibility and validity of data collected from participants in two ways. First, data saturation helped reduce redundancy within the data and ensured that a comprehensive set of themes emerged from the data collected across all study participants (Mwita, 2022). Secondly, ensuring that the data had been thoroughly analyzed, such that there were no new codes or themes to be explored, created an in-depth understanding of the social-emotional experiences of the study's novice teachers and the influence that student childhood adversities have on them. Attaining saturation within the data was critical to creating descriptions of participant experiences that were nuanced, multi-layered, thick, and rich.

Based on the purpose of this study, participants agreed to share and expand upon their lived experiences as novice teachers in urban environments influenced by the ACEs of their students. The perspectives and views offered by novice teachers in urban environments added to creating information-rich cases (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). These information-rich cases provided more profound insight into the details of their experiences in urban environments related to ACEs' ongoing influence. Novice teachers were recruited for this study through the following social media platforms, including X (formerly Twitter), the researcher's Facebook, and LinkedIn pages. A recruitment flyer with the eligibility criteria has been included in the appendices for this study and was posted in local café, coffee shops, and public spaces where teachers frequent. In addition to the above-mentioned social media platforms, physical flyers with a QR code were added at the instruction of the IRB support team and subsequently placed in local bookstores where teachers come to plan lessons and collaborate with fellow teachers. Finally, snowball sampling, a referral method that employs other professional networks

(Kirchherr & Charles, 2018) via graduate school professors, academic coaches, and school support personnel such as counselors and social workers were used to recruit novice teachers for this study. Of the recruitment methods mentioned, snowball sampling was the method that garnered six participants for this study.

### **Instrumentation**

Instrumentation is the measurement tool for collecting participant data in a research study (Ruslin et al., 2022). Three instruments were used to collect data from the study's novice teachers. An open-ended interview focused on the background and personal history of the participant(s) was the first instrument used. The second instrument consisted of two semi-structured, open-ended interviews focused on the details of the participants' experiences relative to the phenomenon and the reflections on the meaning of the phenomenon. The third and final instrument consisted of the collection and review of personal/professional documents submitted by participants.

Rooted in Seidman's Three Interview Series protocol (Seidman, 2006), open-ended questions were initially used to engage novice teachers in a restructuring of their focused life histories and personal experiences. The complete list of questions used to prompt participants to discuss their backgrounds openly can be found in Appendix E of this study. This restructuring began with asking participants about their childhood, familial, and community experiences. These open-ended questions were used to understand their experiences and create detailed narratives that would add to the richness of this study. Contextualizing the participants' focused life histories led to discussions about how their backgrounds brought them to the teaching profession, specifically in urban environments where students are likely to encounter adverse childhood experiences. Placing the participant's choice to become a novice teacher in an urban

educational environment within the context of their life histories created a personal rapport and the conversational tone needed for interviews in qualitative research (Mwita, 2022).

The second instrument, two semi-structured interviews, was used to explore the details of the participants' experiences within their current realities and allow them to reflect on the meaning of these experiences. The details of the experience (Seidman, 2006) were used to support participants in thinking about and reconstructing the details of some of their experiences within their school settings as they relate to the overall influence that student adversities have on them personally and professionally. The second instrument was designed to ground participants in the details of their experiences without requiring novice teachers to provide judgment or opinion regarding the detailed experiences they shared. To contextualize their detailed experiences within their school settings, novice teachers were asked to share details related to fellow teachers, parents, administrators, and the surrounding community. A complete list of questions asked, as they relate to the details of the participants' experiences, can be found in Appendix E of this study.

The second instrument also consisted of a third and final interview during which participants were asked to reflect on what their detailed experiences mean to them as novice teachers in their current school environments. In addition to expressing a range of opinions about the support they do or do not receive from fellow teachers and administrators, the reflection on meaning interviews created a safe space for novices to be more emotional than in the previous two interviews. The questions in Appendix E served as a guide in prompting participants to explore how the factors of their lives, including childhood experiences and detailed daily experiences, relate to their current social-emotional experiences as novice teachers in urban school environments. This holistic interview, which brought together all the interview phases,

allowed participants to connect with an ethereal sense of the work they do with students and families in marginalized communities, encountering a range of adversities.

Documents collected from novice teachers served as the final instrumentation tool for this study. Document analysis, often called document review, is a data collection instrument that requires reviewing various documents (Morgan, 2022). Documents refer to more than words in print and may include pictures and various art forms (Mackieson et al., 2018). Falling into three categories, the documents collected from novice teachers served as an essential source of data, adding greater context to how and in what ways the ACEs of their students influence them. Documents added context to critical areas concerning the influence that student ACEs can have on novice teachers in relation to their school settings, working conditions, leadership, systems of support, and social support networks (Glassow & Jerrim, 2022). Used to describe a range of images, artifacts, and written records, documents for this study have been categorized as physical evidence/artifacts, open-access public records, and personal documents.

Physical evidence and personal documents were used to provide visible accounts of the participants' experiences and feelings within their current school setting. These documents were produced outside the study and exist within a specific cultural, social, historical, or situational context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Novice teachers were not asked to create additional documents for this study. Existing forms of personal documentation, including community recognition and acts of service, performance improvement plans, and new teacher appreciation gifts demonstrating the range of experiences as novice teachers influenced by the ACEs of their students, were submitted and served as sufficient evidence of their experiences. Electronic and hard copies of informal observations and feedback from administrators, mentors, and district leaders related to the study's topic were also part of the personal documents and physical artifacts

collected. Finally, community giveaways, including trinkets from students who never returned to school, and evidence of student wholeness activities were added to the collection of physical evidence and artifacts from novice teachers as the context of the documents applied to this study. Documents were concealed, and all identifying information was removed to protect participants and those not involved in this study from undue harm (Belmont Report, 1979).

Documents submitted by novice teachers reflected individual experiences with the same phenomenon, and the most salient points of each participant's interview as they spoke about the details of their daily experiences. These documents added to their feelings and how they managed their emotional state while still meeting the level of expectation for students who were most in need. Sensitive data, such as social media altercations, was not added to the collection of documents as identifying information could not be concealed. However, open-access public documents such as the Maryland Compilation of School Discipline Laws (2023) and the McKinney-Vento Act (1987), protecting the educational rights of unhoused students, were used as reference points and citations. Although some documents had to be omitted from the data collection set due to the inability to protect identifying information, e-cards documenting the emotions of novice teachers served as acceptable forms of documentation, providing greater insight into the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers in urban environments. Whereas sensitive student data, such as medical and court records and formal teacher evaluations, were not part of the document review, the goal of exploring how, why, and in what ways these participants were influenced by the responses of their students remained (Fleckman et al., 2022). The documents submitted focused on how the realities of the organization or environment where novice teachers work are (re)produced through textual conventions (Morgan, 2022). Table 1 provides an illustration of the data collection instruments used in this study. Table 1 describes the

study's data collection instruments for conducting phenomenological interviews based on Seidman's Three Interview Series protocol.

**Table 1**

*Data Collection Instruments*

Three-series interview phase	Instrument	Number of Interviews
Focused Life History	Virtual and or Individual Interview (open-ended, semi-structured)	Six interviews (one per participant)
Details of the Experience	In-person, Individual Interview (open-ended, semi-structured questions)	Six interviews (one per participant)
Reflection on the Meaning of the Experience	Optional in-person or virtual interview (open-ended, semi-structured)	Six interviews (one per participant)

*Note.* Table 1 illustrates *data collection instruments used in this study* inclusive of the interview phase, instruments used, and the number of interviews per participant.

Before using any data collection instruments with participants, five experienced urban educators who were not part of this study reviewed and responded to the draft of the interview questions that novice teachers were to answer. Field testers reviewed all seven questions that were to be asked during the open-ended initial interview. It was critical that field testers read all seven questions as they set the tone for building a trusting rapport between the interviewer and interviewees. For the semi-structured interview questions taking place during the second and third interviews, field testers were asked to review specific questions from the total 15 questions that were to be asked across both semi-structured interviews. As an example, the first field tester was asked to focus on questions 1-4, the second was asked to focus on questions 5-9. The third and fourth field testers were asked to focus on questions 1-3 for the second interview, and the final field tester was asked to focus on questions 4-6 that centered on the reflections on the

meaning of the participants' experience with the phenomenon. The complete list of questions reviewed by field testers is located in the study's Interview Protocol, Appendix E.

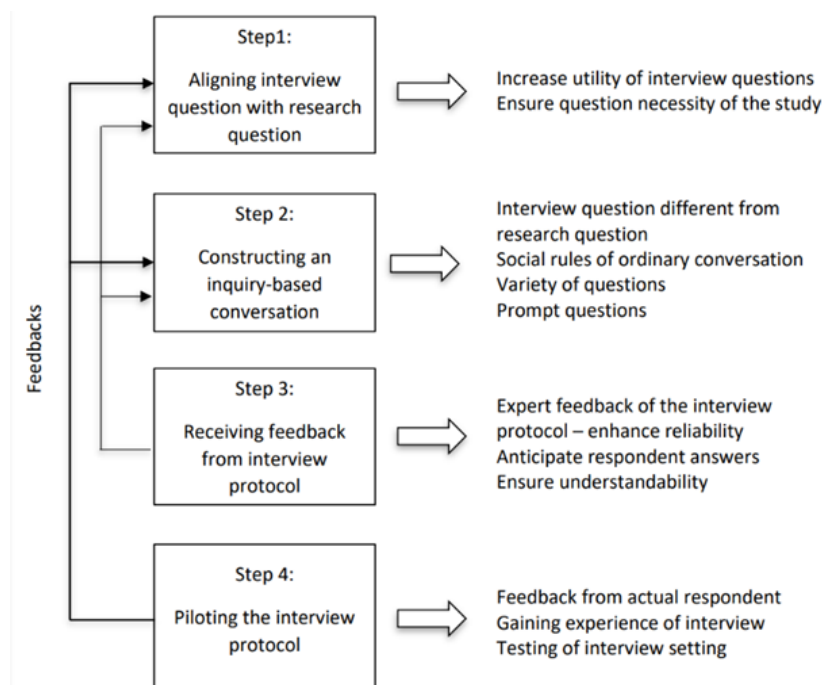
The Fine-Tuning protocol required that interview questions align with the research questions used to guide the study. Expert feedback is needed to enhance the reliability of the questions and anticipate responses that participants may offer (Mackieson et al., 2018). The purpose of engaging experienced urban educators in field-testing the interview questions was not only to gain expert feedback on the questions, but also to ensure that the interview questions were not biased toward a specific point of view. Based on the study's criteria, none of the field testers majored in education at the undergraduate level, and all taught in one or more of the core content areas in an elementary school setting. In individual meetings, each field tester was given the study's purpose, two research questions, and three sets of interview questions complementing the stages of Seidman's (2006) qualitative interview approach for phenomenological studies.

Field testing the interview questions with an elementary school principal, an elementary school assistant principal, and two district-level leaders confirmed that the questions that would be asked of participants were effective, related to the study's problem, purpose, and were free from bias. Responses provided by field testers helped to ensure that the questions would elicit a wide range of responses from participants. Feedback from field testers further helped to determine if an open-ended, semi-structured interview would be appropriate for the study's population. In reviewing the interview questions, field tester verbalized experiences and reflections including how they were influenced by the ACEs of students they encountered during their novice teacher phase. The unsolicited words, phrases, and reflections expressed by field testers would set the stage for the detailed experiences and reflections that the study's participants would later reveal. The Fine-Tuning protocol, used to ensure that interview

questions supported the study's problem, purpose, and research questions is illustrated in Figure 6. The figure shows the four steps of the Fine-Tuning interview protocol, including the feedback loop and piloting the interview questions. The Fine-Tuning interview protocol assists in collecting systematic, consistent, and comprehensive interview data (Yeong et al., 2018).

**Figure 6**

*Fine-Tuning Protocol*



*Note.* Figure 6 illustrates the steps of the Fine-Tuning protocol (Yeong et al., 2018) used as a guideline to collect data in qualitative studies making use of interviews.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection for this study commenced after field testing with urban elementary educators was completed and IRB approval was obtained. Data collected from novice teachers was grounded in a three-series interview approach based on the work of Seidman (2006). Widely used in phenomenological interviews, Seidman's Three Interview Series described three stages for focusing on the meaning that participants apply to their lived experiences (Lauterbach, 2018).

The purpose and design of Seidman's Three Interview Series (Seidman, 2006) were appropriate for this study as phenomenological interviews are used to develop an understanding of the participant's lived experiences (van Manen & van Manen, 2021). Seidman's Three Interview Series protocol offered a structure to help study participants delve into the content and context of their lived experiences while strengthening trust throughout the process (Lauterbach, 2018).

Data collection started with structuring the initial interview questions to understand the focused life history of the novice teachers engaged in this study before moving into the details of the participants' experience during the second interview. The focused life history interview revealed novice teachers hailing from the East Coast of the United States to London, England. In addition to locations, the interviews revealed bonds with siblings and families that continue to provide coping mechanisms and social-emotional support for this group of novice teachers influenced by the ACEs of their students. The second set of interviews revealed experiences with school leadership, specifically principals, the influence of the community, and how and in what ways participants were influenced by not only the ACEs of their students but also the parents and families from which the children come. Comprised of three separate interviews, the third and final interview brought together the context of the first two interviews, creating a greater understanding of the participant within the phenomenon, revealing long and short-term career trajectories. The goal was to center participants on the meaning they applied to their experiences.

While each of the three interviews could last up to 90 minutes per the interview series structure (Seidman, 2006), the first of Seidman's Three Interview Series lasted between 35 and 45 minutes across participants. All participants, except for one first-year teacher, opted to meet in person. With this being the first meeting with an interviewer they had no previous connection with, each novice teacher chose to meet in person at the location of their choice. Novice teachers

first engaged in the focused life history interview using think-aloud and recall approaches (Leighton, 2021). These combined approaches allowed participants to recall their experiences, including nuances unique to each participant's personality and background. The initial interview opened with an introduction between the interviewer and the participant and a verbal restatement of the study's problem, purpose, and research questions. Novice teachers responded to seven questions intended to understand each person's background and life history. The questions covered the following areas: (a) geographic background, (b) family dynamics/structure, (c) community, (d) school/educational experiences, and (e) draw to teaching in urban elementary education. Taking place during June, the background questions allowed novice teachers to reflect on past events and experiences leading up to the phenomenon being studied (Seidman, 2006).

Since the focused life history interview timeline coincided with the end of the academic year for all participants, an icebreaker was created in which they were asked how their school year went and how they felt now that the year had concluded for them. The icebreaker question was not part of the interview protocol and was meant to create a friendly exchange between the interviewer and interviewee. Four of the six participants mentioned they were physically, mentally, and emotionally drained, despite the high regard they held for their students. Despite expressing their desire to decompress from the school year, they each agreed to continue participating in the interviews for this study. One of the first-year teachers expressed that they were energized, excited for a major life change, and ready to start teaching summer school despite the challenges and stressors that administrators and caregivers faced during the academic year.

After introductions and the icebreaker question(s), the individual interviews began by inquiring about the participant's background and origin. Sharing geographical backgrounds

allowed novice teachers to later reflect on how their childhood backgrounds were different from or similar to the students they taught. This was critical as most participants saw themselves in the students they taught, including some of the adversities that their students face. The second question asked novice teachers to describe their childhood and family structure, yielding responses ranging from a traditional family structure to being raised by a solo parent (Manansala & Dimaculangan, 2024) or an older sibling. Although participants could skip this question if familial structures were too sensitive, participants freely discussed relationships with parents, siblings, and various religious and seasonal experiences. With the natural setting of this phenomenon centered on elementary school environments, novice teachers were asked about their school experiences, including the influence of teachers, peers, and academic experiences. They were also asked to describe experiences they may have had with attendance, discipline, and grades throughout their childhood experiences. Toward the end of the focused life history interview(s), participants were asked about their desire to teach in an urban environment with students with ACEs.

The goal of the last three questions was to create a picture of each participant's background and end with their current experience as a novice teacher influenced by the ACEs of their students. During this interview, novice teachers were given time to pause, sigh, and make non-verbal gestures before proceeding to the next question to add context to their background and experiences. Seidman (2006) suggested that space be provided between the first and second interviews, ranging from three days to a week. The suggested time between interviews is designed to maintain the connections so that the interviews build over time and feel more like an extended conversation between two people. Due to scheduling conflicts, the interviews were

largely extended to seven days between interviews. The time between interviews also allowed the interviewer to engage participants in member checking.

The second interview centered on the details of the experience (Seidman, 2006). Occurring during the third week of June and focused on novice teachers, their present lived experiences within their current school settings. The questions asked during these semi-structured interviews were created to connect to the first research question to gain an understanding of what novice teachers influenced by the ACEs of their students' experience. These interviews occurred in public coffee shops and open-space community markets where novice teachers could freely expand upon their experiences. The first five minutes of the second interview were spent asking participants if they had any questions or concerns regarding the transcript sent to them after the initial interviews. Although transcripts were sent to participants within 48 hours after the interview, there was little to no feedback, except for misreporting the number and gender of a participant's siblings. This error was immediately corrected. Reviewing the responses from the focused life history interviews allowed novice teachers to engage in member checking to ensure the accuracy, credibility, and validity (Candela, 2019) of the responses they provided during the previous interview.

Data collected during this second interview focused on the details of novice teachers' daily experiences with the students they interact with and created a narrative that revealed a complex interplay that compounded the influence that student ACEs had on them. The knowledge-based questions that novice teachers willingly answered lasted up to an hour with most participants. Due to time constraints, one participant had to split the details of the experience interview into two sessions, totaling 90 minutes for one participant. The second set of interview questions based on the review of the literature relative to this topic addressed how they

experience their (a) school setting and working conditions, (b) building leadership, (c) collegial support systems, and (d) social and support networks concerning how they were and continued to be influenced by the adverse experiences of their students within and beyond the school setting (Bettini & Park, 2021; Camacho et al., 2018).

The questions asked during the second interview challenged novice teachers to engage the senses when responding and walking the interviewer through how they experienced their school setting, including accessible materials and resources needed to support their students. After answering questions concerning working conditions, novice teachers were asked about any training from their residency program, professional development opportunities, or coursework related to the emotional influence that student ACEs may have on them. Participants specifically shared that the courses they took for certification did not prepare or help them to work effectively with students influenced by adverse childhood experiences.

Questions concerning the details of the participants' experiences continued by asking novice teachers to share their thoughts on the surrounding community and how these interactions added to the influence that student ACEs may have had on their social-emotional experiences. To gain insight into each participant's experiences, they were asked to describe how they experience social-emotional support from their building leadership, colleagues, peers, and mentors to balance the influence of students' ACEs. This question came with a range of responses, including those that shared they have no support from veteran teachers or peers in their building, to those that relied heavily on the teachers around them for their social-emotional survival in their school setting. The remaining questions for the second interview focused on what social-emotional support looks and feels like for them as novice teachers experiencing the influence of student ACEs. Novice teachers were also asked to describe the significance of their

experiences with social support networks, including friends and family. The second interview closed by allowing participants to clarify and reflect on any details of their experiences that had been shared for the better part of an hour. Novice teachers were also given a choice of dates for the final interview.

While the second set of interviews relied primarily on participant accounts based on the questions asked, the second interview was designed to ground the details of the participant's experience in fact-based experiences versus unsupported opinions (Seidman, 2006). Asking participants about their experiences in their school setting through semi-structured interviews provided participants with options within their responses. Participants were free to center their experiences on a day or a week to provide a snapshot of life inside their buildings, interacting with students, administrators, and teachers. While most participants focused on specific events that reflected the most salient aspects of their experiences, others reflected on one key event they believed defined their overall experiences. The goal of the second interview was to steer participants away from opinions and remain focused on the details of the experience; opinions were later supported by documentation and artifacts that participants were willing to submit.

Used in qualitative studies to review existing data that helps to understand the participants' experiences (Aspers & Corte, 2019), documents were submitted by novice teachers at the conclusion of the second interview. These documents used to substantiate their experiences consisted of feedback from building and district leadership concerning classroom environment, student discipline, and other factors likely to influence the emotions and add to the stressors encountered by novice teachers in urban environments supporting large numbers of students experiencing ACEs. Among the three significant categories of documentation, participants submitted personal and professional documents and physical evidence/artifacts. Document

collection and review were the hallmarks that differentiated the second interview from the first. Novice teachers were given a two-week window of time after the interviews concluded to submit various forms of documentation to support the details of their experiences. All documents submitted were uploaded into password-protected files.

While documents shared by participants varied based on specific school settings and the influence that student ACEs may have had on each participant, documentation ranged from small toys of students who never returned to school to social-emotional student classroom activities designed to help students understand their emotions and improve conduct. In addition to varying forms of communication from school-based and district leadership, artifacts from new teacher mentors and community engagement activities were also submitted by participants. It is important to note that not all documents were used for document review. Documents that reflected the experiences that appeared to resonate with the participants' experiences were selected for review and analysis. Excerpts of social media posts and curricular assignments related to student ACEs' influence on novice teachers were not used as documentation, as identifying information could not be appropriately concealed. These items were returned to participants. In sum, the goal was for novice teachers to submit professional personal documentation and artifacts that align with the discussed topic and provide visual aids that support the details of their daily experiences.

In the third and final interview, novice teachers were asked to reflect on the meaning of their experiences teaching students with ACEs in urban elementary school environments. The questions asked during the third interview are based on the belief that reflecting on the meaning of a set of experiences requires a thorough exploration of details within the context before reflection can take place (Seidman, 2013). This final interview aimed to have novice teachers

describe what their experiences mean to them within the context of their current school and community environments. The reflection on meaning interviews allowed novice teachers to engage in a metacognitive, introspective process to elicit thoughts, opinions, and perspectives relative to the meaning they applied to their experiences. Participants were asked to go beyond their daily practices and routines and reflect on the meaning of the experiences they have shared (Seidman, 2006). Questions asked included novice teachers' experiences with burnout and compassion fatigue. Participants were asked about the *cost of caring* (Costa & Moss, 2018) in their work with students exposed to sustained trauma and adversity and how they were influenced.

The final interview closed by asking novice teachers to use their combined experiences to reflect on their desire to remain or not remain in their current school setting, where they are likely to be influenced by the ACEs of their students. Whereas the final interview required more introspection and opinion from novice teachers, they were still asked to support their reflections with physical evidence or artifacts, including gifts, mementos, blog posts, toys, and other tangible objects with meaning and reflection relative to their experiences. The questions asked during the final interview combined the meaning of their present school and community experiences with projections and speculation into the future. According to Seidman (2006), the final interview requires participants to look back at their background and the details of their experiences to determine the meaning of their lived experiences. This introspective look created the conditions for meaningful reflection (Seidman, 2006). This underscored the need to establish a clear foundation for openness during the initial set of interviews.

Each of the three interview phases and the six question types was employed throughout the data collection process. The three sets of interview questions contained six question types,

allowing for the collection of diverse types of information from novice teachers (Patton, 2002). The six question types explored (a) background/demographic information, (b) knowledge, (c) experience/behavior, (d) feelings, (e) sensory, and (f) opinion/values. The questions asked of novice teachers during the three-interview series were grounded in the past, present, and future. In conclusion, the concept of meaning was not about consequence or reward based on what novice teachers shared, but on the emotional and intellectual connection between the participant's work and who they are as individuals (Seidman, 2006). Table 2 shows how Seidman's Three Interview Series protocol will be used in tandem with Patton's Six Question Types to collect a range of diverse information from novice teachers.

**Table 2***Seidman's Three-Interview Series Protocol for Phenomenological Studies*

Seidman's Three-Interview Series (2006)	Patton's Six Question Types (2002)	Duration (All times are approximately within a 90-minute timeframe)
Focused Life History	<u>Background and Demographic Information</u> Age, occupation, etc.  <u>Sensory</u> -Vivid descriptions of time, place, location  <u>Values</u> -Intentions, dreams, desires, goals	Past tense-30-35 minutes
Details of the Experience	<u>Knowledge Questions</u> -Used to gauge factual information  <u>Sensory</u> -Vivid descriptions of present experiences  <u>Experience/Behavior</u> -What a participant does or has done	Present tense-60-minutes
Reflections on the Meaning of the Experience	<u>Opinions</u> -What participants think and feel about a topic  <u>Sensory</u> -Vivid descriptions, focusing on seeing, hearing, and feelings/emotions  <u>Values</u> -What something means and the significance it holds	Past, present, and future tense-45-60 minutes

*Note.* Table 2 illustrates the use of Seidman's Three Interview Series protocol (Seidman, 2006), combined with Patton's Six Question Types (2002) in conducting interviews with the study's participants.

***Data Analysis***

The aim of data analysis in a qualitative study is to systematically reduce the amount of data gathered during the data collection process (Saldana, 2016). The process of reducing data began with organizing and managing data collected from individual interviews and documents

into secure, password-protected files. Securing data in protected files circumvented threats to ethical issues concerning the protection of participants from harm and disclosing information revealed during data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Organizing and managing data collected from novice teachers involved creating files that served as systems for easy retrieval and meaningful data analysis. The files created included the date, time, participant, and research activity, including which of Seidman's (2006) three interview phases participants were engaged in (Lester et al., 2020).

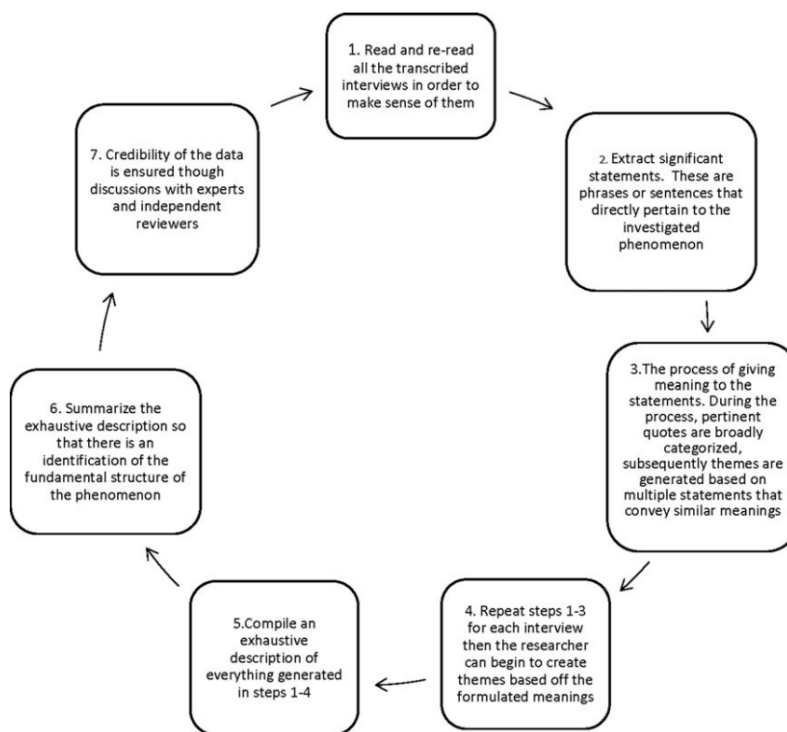
The three main files were created based on the three-interview series protocol used to collect participant data. The first file was titled FLH for focused life history. The second major file was titled DTE for details of the experience, and the third file was titled ROM, representing the final interview in which novice teachers concentrated on the reflection of meaning they applied to their experiences as novice teachers in urban environments influenced by the ACEs of their students. A separate file was created for documents collected from novice teachers with sub-folders for personal/ professional documents, open-access public records, and physical evidence or artifacts. Lester et al. (2020) suggested that unique naming conventions be generated when creating files. Since all files are password-protected and backed up on flash drives and Google files storage, a simple system of labeling files as NT1 for Novice Teacher number (1) and NT 2 for the second novice teacher to be interviewed through NT6 was used. Fictional names were later assigned to each of the study's participants. All data was transferred from a Word document into two Excel files based on the study's research questions before being uploaded into a new NVivo project.

After creating and organizing files based on data collected from novice teachers, the first step of the Modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen (Moustakas, 1994) process for phenomenological

data analysis was employed, as illustrated in Figure 7. This figure visually represents the six steps that were applied to this study, beginning with the first step of the data analysis process. A key part of the data analysis process for this study required a comprehensive description of any personal or professional experiences with the phenomenon. Descriptions of experiences relative to the influence of ACEs required the researcher to epoché or bracket experiences as a novice teacher in an urban environment struggling to connect with upper elementary students beyond race and ethnicity. Epoching experiences as a novice teacher in similar urban educational environments mirrored the three-interview series headings provided by Seidman (2006).

**Figure 7**

*Modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method for Phenomenological Data Analysis*



*Note.* Figure 7 illustrates the seven steps used to analyze and reduce data in qualitative interviews when using the Modified Stevick-Colaizzi Keen method of data analysis.

### *Epoché*

To ensure that data was analyzed through the lens of the participants' experiences, it was critical to bracket any firsthand experiences with the phenomenon of ACEs and the influence it had on me during my novice years teaching students in similar settings. Despite a span of 30 years, most of my experiences as a novice teacher were similar to those of the participants in this study. For example, there was no formal educational training during my undergraduate experiences at a small historically Black College or university. Although teaching was always at the back of my mind, psychology was my desired major. Unable to find suitable employment in the field of Psychology without further degrees or credentials, I found myself instructing sixth-grade students for what I thought would be two years while I obtained a master's degree in one of the social-science-related fields, including social work or counseling. Two years became 13 and a master's degree in education.

As mentioned by the novice teachers in this study, my novice years were filled with unsupportive and, in some instances, spiteful veteran teachers and administrators. As expressed by all participants, my novice years also included principals who displayed less than professional behavior, except for one who exhibited true leadership. Despite a cold building in the winter and a lack of air conditioning during the summer months, I persevered because the inconveniences I experienced did not compare to the work of preparing underserved, overaged, and underperforming students to compete in a world that would not pity their adverse childhood experiences. As noted by one of the novice teachers in this study, I, too, was mocked by a parent during my novice years for thinking that I was "better than" the Black people around me. While I grew up in a working-class, military household, the parent was in part correct, because the ACEs of my students were not necessarily my own experiences. Nonetheless, I was deeply influenced

by stories of substance abuse among parents, neglected children, and students, unwanted, floating between relatives.

To maintain a neutral position during this study, journaling reflexively was a process I used during the interview phase. Analogous to what ethnographic researchers may maintain while immersing themselves in a culture or community during the data collection process, the reflexive journal helped me to center my experiences. While not all phases of Gibbs reflexive cycle of journaling (Adeani et al., 2020) were implemented, a notation of personal introspections was maintained. Personal introspection allowed me to monitor personal triggers and ensure that the data collection and the analysis that followed belonged to the participant and not the one conducting the study. Beyond examining personal triggers, reflexive journaling allowed me to monitor my responses and reactions to the experiences shared by participants. This was critical to viewing the participants' experiences with the phenomenon through a fresh perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In closing, this reflexive process allowed me to remain neutral as 21st-century novice teachers told of their experiences in today's high-stakes educational environment (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020).

After bracketing experiences as a novice teacher influenced by student ACEs, the first step of the Modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen method (Moustakas, 1994) was to reduce the data collected from participants. This method of data analysis involved becoming familiar with the data collected from novice teachers, extracting significant statements to give meaning to what was shared. The recursive data analysis process involved compiling an exhaustive description of what was generated in the previous steps of the process. Summarizing the exhaustive description to highlight the fundamental aspects of the participants' experiences and establishing credibility

through others, including the novice teachers engaged in this study, were the remaining steps of the data analysis process.

The first step of the Modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen method further involved multiple rereadings of interview transcripts to make sense of what had been collected during each of the three interview phases across individual participants (Moustakas, 1994). Annotating, highlighting, and making notes of repeated words and phrases was a key part of becoming familiar with the data. The goal of becoming familiar with the data was to gain an all-inclusive understanding of the lived experiences of novice elementary teachers in urban environments and the factors that influence their encounters with student ACEs. With each of the six novice teachers participating in three interviews, the data were reread a minimum of 18 times. Rereading transcript data and analyzing documents submitted by participants led to the identification of significant statements or accounts provided by participants across individual interviews. Intertwined with becoming familiar with the data, pulling out significant statements, the second step involved identifying sentences, phrases, and larger passages of text that were relevant to the phenomenon under exploration (Moustakas, 1994). Significant statements for each participant were isolated on an Excel spreadsheet per research question. Organizing the analysis of data in this manner allowed for a deeper line-by-line analysis of the language, including popular expressions that appeared to be common to a specific geographic region. Extracting significant statements and accounts of the experiences of novice teachers as they relate to the influence of students' ACEs led to giving meaning to the statements that had been identified.

Applying meaning to significant statements was the third step of the Modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen data analysis process (Moustakas, 1994). This step in the process called for

categorization of direct quotes and meaningful statements made by participants that were relevant to the study's research questions. The meaning-making process involved organizing quotes and searching for similarities and patterns across participants to get to the essence of the phenomenon. Isolating quotes and significant statements onto blank documents, including Microsoft Word and Excel pages, apart from the massive amounts of data collected, ensured that the data was being interpreted accurately and from the point of view of the novices sharing their experience. The meanings generated from quotes and significant statements were categorized and coded into clusters of meaning.

Noting significant words, phrases, and statements during the third step of the data analysis process led to the creation of meaningful units of analysis known as codes. For this study, creating codes involved assigning letters or words to salient or summative attributes of the data (Saldana, 2016). A list of initial codes based on repeated words, phrases, and comparisons was manually generated and captured onto a Word document before dividing the interview transcripts into two categories based on the study's research questions. Once the manual codes were transferred from an Excel file and placed onto an Excel spreadsheet, the file was loaded into a new NVivo project. A total of 79 codes were generated via an NVivo project based on the first research question related to the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers in urban environments. For the second research question regarding how novice teachers in urban environments cope with their feelings relative to the ACEs of their students, NVivo generated 54 codes and close to 500 mentions of the codes. The NVivo-generated codes were manually clustered to provide meaning to the statements offered by participants, allowing initial themes to emerge.

The fourth step of the Modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen method (Moustakas, 1994) was recursive in that the first three steps were revisited for connections across the themes that had begun to emerge. Ensuring that the identified themes represented commonalities across participants, the initial themes were revisited and reduced to reflect six themes per research question, reflecting the most salient experiences of the study's novice teachers. Producing the final themes of this study required the shrinking of the emergent themes, such as worker, violence, and sleep deprivation, to be recategorized and clustered with themes that were more meaningful to the study's research questions. This was critical as the 18 themes were automatically assigned to the first research question. With the second research question having more than a dozen themes, this theme reduction process was key to getting to the essence of the participant experience.

The fifth step, compiling an exhaustive description of the data, (Moustakas, 1994), led to the creation of a rich, detailed account of the nuances experienced by novice elementary school teachers in urban environments working with large numbers of students likely to experience adverse childhood experiences. Significant statements, including quotes, clusters, codes, emergent themes, and the final themes of the study, were combined to create textural descriptions concerning the experiences of the novice teachers engaged in this study. The themes of teachers, community, parents/families, adversities, childhood, students, and emotions were used to create textural descriptions for the first research questions. While textural descriptions created a clear understanding of what participants experienced regarding the study's topic in a narrative format (Creswell & Poth, 2018), structural descriptions were used to create an exhaustive description of how and why participants experienced the phenomenon.

Going beyond what participants experienced, the themes of emotional safety, personal community, boundaries, self-care, triggers, and the why of it all were used to create structural descriptions. When compiling the exhaustive description, structural descriptions were used to reveal how novice teachers cope with their feelings about the adverse childhood experiences of the students they teach, and why they continue to persevere in this work. Often referred to as imaginative variation, meaning that the reflection on the meaning that participants applied to their experiences varied from one participant to the next, while allowing for a commonality to exist across participants (Essom & Roald, 2025). Imaginative variation, critical to generating structural descriptions of the participant's experience, was key as each urban school community has its values, shared histories, and characteristics while still finding consensus on the how of their experiences (Murrell, 2000). Using imaginative variation as a part of the data analysis process allowed for mental imagery and created a personal structure of the participant's experience. Imaginative variation underscored the importance of epoching or bracketing one's experience with the phenomenon such that the mental picture reflects the participant's experience, not the individual conducting the study (Neubauer et al., 2019).

The remaining steps of the Modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen method involved summarizing or condensing the exhaustive description and returning to the participants for validation of the analysis of the data (Moustakas, 1994). Summarizing the exhaustive description involved avoiding repetitions within the findings, such that the fundamental structure of the lived experiences of novice teachers in urban environments influenced by the ACEs of their students could be illuminated in all aspects. Finally, the credibility of the data was ensured through member checking with participants and two reviewers unrelated to the study. A summary of the data that had been analyzed was shared with participants to ensure that their collective

experiences had been represented in a way that authentically and accurately reflected their experiences.

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are factors presumed to be true in a qualitative study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). This study included assumptions grounded in the eligibility criteria, research design, and scope of interest for the study. Things assumed as plausible to individuals who read this study began with the basic assumption that each of the six novice teachers selected to participate in this study was who they represented themselves to be. This assumption meant that each participant was assumed to be an early-career teacher with less than 5 years of experience working in an urban environment with elementary-aged children, likely to encounter adverse childhood experiences due to circumstances beyond their control.

Beyond working with children living and learning in challenging environments, it is assumed that novice teachers in this study were working toward a professional license in education as they developed the expertise in content knowledge and the skills necessary to meet the social and emotional needs of the students and the communities in which they live. For credibility to be maintained, it was further assumed that participants would respond to the interview questions asked of them in a manner that reflected the truth of their experiences as novice teachers in urban environments. This truth would be expressed with integrity and openness in a way that does not express ill intent or harm to any groups or individuals connected with their work as novice teachers. The honesty, integrity, and openness of participants resulted in diverse responses among novice teachers with a shared experience across multiple settings.

## **Limitations**

The limitations of a study refer to the potential weaknesses beyond one's control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Limitations are defined as elements of a study over which the researcher has little to no control (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Limitations likely to threaten the trustworthiness of this study included researcher bias, the boundaries of time, participant flexibility, and the limitations of the research design. The potential for bias was rooted in the researcher's experiences as a novice teacher in similar urban environments working with upper elementary and middle school students facing abuse, neglect, and childhood dysfunction (Felitti, 1998). As with the novice teachers selected to participate in this study, also served as a general and special educator without the benefit of an undergraduate degree in education or a professional teaching certificate during the novice career stages. The skills of teaching in the core subject areas and meeting a range of student needs were gained at the school site at the risk to the researcher's physical and mental well-being. This expertise was gained while instructing children who depended on the teacher to provide emotional and physical support in communities where access to resources beyond the school's campus is limited (Camacho & Henderson, 2022; Fleckman et al., 2022). Therefore, this study involved reflexive journaling and uploading transcripts verbatim into NVivo to limit researcher bias.

While bias was mitigated through reflexive journaling, immediately responding to interview transcripts, and member checking, managing time took far more effort for both personal and professional reasons on the part of all stakeholders involved in the study. Conducting a qualitative research study was time-consuming, as trust had to be established to create a safe space for sharing experiences related to the explored phenomenon (Silverio et al., 2020). An investment of time was required if the meaning was to be applied to the influence of

adverse childhood experiences on novice teachers' social-emotional experiences in urban environments. Time was dedicated to virtual and in-person individual interviews in public spaces and locations that worked best for the participants. With participants having the flexibility to leave the study at any time and of their own free will, the data collection process could have been incomplete, and results threatened. Each aspect of the data collection process was time-consuming per Seidman's (2006) interview protocol and required flexibility as a total of 27 questions over three separate interviews had to be conducted. Even when time was able to be negotiated and spent with participants in a way that maximized the data collection process, the research design itself was still likely to have limitations.

The study was limited to selecting participants who had all experienced the layered influences of the adverse childhood experiences of the students they teach and were willing to express these experiences openly. Beyond the willingness of participants to articulate their stories, phenomenology as a design is limited in that it requires an advanced understanding of the role of broader philosophical assumptions and how to identify them within the context of a study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This level of understanding may be beyond the capacity of novice researchers and graduate students (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Though stated explicitly within the study, bracketing firsthand experiences can be challenging, and it is recommended that individuals reflect on how their understanding and histories may influence the results of this study (Holmes, 2020).

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations are defined as the limits or boundaries of a research study that are within the researcher's control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Common delimitations include the study's purpose, research questions, research design, data collection methods, and the population

being studied. The scope of interest for this study included six early-career teachers. The novice teachers in this study provided core curricular instruction in one or more of the four subject areas, including math, reading, science, or social studies. Participants shared the everyday experience of not possessing an undergraduate degree in education, working toward a professional license, or being hired or recruited through a teacher residency program designed to prepare recent college graduates or career changers to teach in traditionally marginalized communities. Teaching in communities with scarce resources to produce healthy children and families allowed participants to give voice to their unique perspectives on how this phenomenon influenced them as teachers and individuals. Ingrained in a collective approach to meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, this study was based on the Community Teacher (CT) framework, which employs a joint stakeholder approach to preparing in-service and novice teachers to work in high-poverty urban environments (Murrell, 2000). Therefore, the scope of this study aligned with the problem, purpose, research questions, and theoretical framework designed to guide this qualitative exploration into a specific set of lived experiences.

With the scope of this study established, the delimitations or boundaries included sample size and sample characteristics. These delimitations have been set so that the aims of this study remain attainable. These boundaries exclude novice teachers who provide middle and high school instruction to students likely to encounter ACEs. With the formative years impacting the trajectory of a child's educational and life experiences (Merrick et al., 2018), novice elementary school teachers were able to offer a perspective on the influence of ACEs that secondary teachers cannot. Academic coaches, administrators, and building leaders were also excluded from the study's sample, as coaches and administrators may have gained expertise over the years in supporting students who face ACEs. The same is true of experienced, licensed teachers.

The population of teachers selected to participate in this study served as a delimitation, as this underrepresented group of teachers and geographical location may not reflect the larger population of urban teachers, both novices and veterans, in similar environments beyond the boundaries of this study. The study's sample size served as another delimitation. According to Guest (2006), a sample size of six to 12 participants is ideal for an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon, providing a range of perspectives. Still, this sample size may limit how the study results can be transferred. While an increased sample size beyond the selected six participants may provide a broader range of responses and add to the thick descriptions needed for qualitative studies, a larger sample size would exceed the time required to complete this doctoral study. Though not limited to race, gender, age, or nationality, the narrowly defined sample for this study may decrease its transferability to other settings and contexts for those who may read this work. The final delimitation of this study may lie in the inability to generalize the results of this study, as the goal of qualitative studies is not to generalize the findings but to apply meaning to a particular phenomenon or set of experiences (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

### **Ethical Assurances**

To fully explore the influence of student ACEs on the social-emotional experiences of novice elementary school teachers in urban environments, approval from National University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) was granted. Designed to ensure the protection of study participants from harm, the tenants of the Belmont Report (1979) remained at the forefront of interactions with all novice teachers engaged in this research project. The well-being of participants was prioritized throughout this study with regard to respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Belmont Report, 1979). Each novice teacher was made aware that they were participating in this study of their own free will and capable of making their own decisions,

which included leaving the study at any time. While novice teachers were autonomous agents, a number of steps were taken to assure the protection of participants from unnecessary harm at every step of the process.

Initial steps taken to protect participants from harm involved sharing the contents of National University's letter of consent (Appendix D) outlining the study's criteria for participation, research activities, and benefits. Discussions around consent also involved notifications of privacy and data collection, and the obligation of the interviewer to serve as a mandated reporter due to professional responsibilities beyond those of a doctoral student. Protecting study participants from harm further included adhering to the interview protocol (Appendix E) which was approved by National Universities Institutional Review Board. Although the study was determined to pose minimal harm or risks to participants, it was still critical to employ each of the previously mentioned steps to ensure that no undue harm was imposed on participants.

Any threats to novice teachers' sharing their experiences were addressed by establishing a trusting rapport before employing any of the study's data collection methods. Establishing a trusting rapport through transparency began with fairness and distribution within the research study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Reducing risk of threat to participants included safeguarding information shared during interviews and document collection and ensuring that data collected was secured and protected from carelessness on the researcher's part. Protecting data further reduced legal and psychological risks that could have arisen from participants fearing that the researcher had not protected their information.

Critical to this study, issues of confidentiality and anonymity were addressed early in the data collection process. Likely to occur in the same study, National University's IRB contends

that confidentiality refers to the individual conducting the study being fully aware of who the participants are and taking care to protect any identifying information. Confidentiality occurred when the researcher changed the names of participants to protect their identities (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Confidentiality further occurred when there were no identifiers to link to an individual participant. Per National University's IRB, minimizing risks to confidentiality included creating backup systems to protect data and using password-protected folders.

Finally, all materials used in this research study were stored and secured in places only accessible to the researcher and will be shredded or permanently deleted after three years by federal regulations (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Citing participant information organically lends itself to confidentiality issues (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). While participants are not necessarily anonymous, every effort was made to provide the highest level of confidentiality relative to the data collected from novice teachers. Beyond keeping identifying information password protected codes served as another form of confidentiality. Codes were used in the next section of this study when referring to novice teachers in a way recognizable only to the researcher. Confidential codes combined letters and numbers for NT 1 and NT 2, indicating novice teacher number one and two, concluding through each novice teacher involved in the study. Minimizing risks to participant information was reduced by collecting data essential to the study's purpose, reducing the researcher from being inundated with information that may not be needed to fulfill the study's purpose. Data collected from novice teachers will be deleted at the conclusion of the study, as outlined in the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).

The role of the researcher in a qualitative study is to gain insight through reflection into a problem impacting the natural world (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher must

acknowledge their inherent position of power as they serve as conductors of the study. Positionality within a research study is defined as the individual's social location, role, and relationships with the study's context (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). An individual's positionality can impact the research process, making it imperative that researchers acknowledge their positions of power by bracketing or epoching their experiences with the study's topic. Therefore, I had to bracket experiences as a novice teacher working under many of the same conditions with similar sociodemographic populations. In preparing to explore the lived experiences of novice teachers influenced by the ACEs of the students they teach; reflexive approaches were exercised. Reflexive journaling was used to propel the individual conducting the study to engage in self-examination as it forced one to acknowledge the influence of previously held biases, assumptions, and identities that may influence the study.

### **Summary**

This section provided an overview of the methodology and design used to explore the influence that students' adverse childhood experiences can have on the social-emotional experiences of novice elementary school teachers in urban educational environments. The methodology and design section began by discussing the research design and explaining how a phenomenological approach best explains the topic of interest. The chapter continued with a discussion of the population and sample. This study included novice teachers with one to three years of professional experience in urban environments where students are likely to encounter ACEs. Purposeful sampling was used to identify a population that could inform the research relative to the study's problem, purpose, and research questions.

Data collection instruments for this study included an initial virtual and in-person open-ended interview, two semi-structured interviews, and the collection of professional documents,

artifacts, or physical evidence reflecting the setting where the phenomenon is likely to occur. The Fine-Tuning interview protocol (Creswell, 2018) was used for field testing, and Seidman's Three Interview Series protocol (2006) and Patton's six-question types (2002) guided the data collection process. All protocols encouraged open dialogue and provided support in structuring and asking questions that adhered to ethical standards as outlined in the Belmont Report (PL-38-348). This section further discussed the process for data analysis once all forms of data were collected. While NVivo was reserved for efficient management, storage, and analysis, the steps of the Modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method (Moustakas, 1994) was used throughout the data analysis process. Assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, including researcher bias, sample size, and the exclusion of other populations, such as experienced teachers in rural and suburban environments, were addressed in the final subsections of this chapter.

### **Section 3: Findings, Implications, and Recommendations**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the feelings and experiences of novice elementary teachers working in urban school districts who are exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), possibly contributing to teacher burnout, fatigue, and resignation (Reilly et al., 2025). The problem addressed in this study is that novice elementary school teachers in urban environments are exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences (Dabrowski et al., 2025; Rose & Loomis, 2025), possibly contributing to teacher burnout, fatigue, and resignation (Reilly et al., 2025). Two research questions framed this study. The research questions that framed this study are listed below.

#### ***RQ1***

What are the social-emotional experiences of novice elementary school teachers in urban elementary school environments as they support students with adverse childhood experiences?

#### ***RQ2***

How do novice elementary school teachers working in urban educational environments cope with their feelings about the adverse of childhood experiences the students they teach?

The organization of this section begins with a discussion of the four criteria of trustworthiness, including the role of member checking on the study's findings. Followed by a descriptive summary of the novice teachers who participated in this study, including the demographic characteristics of individual participants. With potentially identifying information being obscured, a description of the overall study is provided, and the results are reported

without interpretation. An overview of the study organized by each research questions is provided following the descriptive summary of participants.

Factors or limitations that may influence the interpretation of the results include the population selected for participation in this study. Selecting novice teachers in urban elementary schools who have experienced the layered influence of the adverse childhood experiences of their students may serve as a limitation since other populations of novice teachers, including middle and high school novice teachers and those in suburban environments, were not part of this study. In addition to focusing on novice teachers within a specific environment, limitations may involve the sample size and that the study's participants were drawn from the same urban school district. The potential limitations of this study indicate that the findings may only be applied to similar contexts where novice teachers encounter mirrored experiences. The implications and recommendations for practice and future research are discussed later in the study.

### **Trustworthiness of the Data**

The trustworthiness of a qualitative study indicates the extent to which the data collected may be influenced by the person conducting the study, potentially leading to conclusions that are misleading to the reader (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined four qualitative research criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The first element of trustworthiness is credibility. Credibility is the plausibility of the findings in a research study (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The credibility of a study is established through research-based methods of phenomenological research (Moustakas, 1994). These established methods relative to this study include epoching or bracketing any experiences with the phenomenon. Though intimately familiar with the study's topic through decades of professional practice in

similar environments, epoching helped maintain the positionality of a researcher and not that of a former novice teacher participating in this study. Proactive measures were taken within the study to reduce researcher bias, thus maintaining the credibility of the data collected from novice teachers.

Prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, and member checking are techniques that helped ensure the credibility of this research study (Tisdell et al., 2025). While member checking the interview transcripts with participants did not influence the study's results, both electronic and in person opportunities were provided for participants to provide feedback to the responses they provided in previous interviews. Member checking was further used to ensure that novice teachers were more than just respondents to the questions that were asked of them. A critical aspect of trustworthiness, member checking was employed as a means to ensure the voices of participants are represented accurately in a study (Candela, 2019). Member checking involved participants receiving a raw transcript of their typed responses 24 hours after the interview via email. All the study's participants except for one novice teacher did not respond to the opportunity to edit the transcript. Time was also allotted at the start of each new interview phase for participants to edit, review, or delete any previous responses provided. The start of each interview began with providing novice teachers with the opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns regarding the previous interview. Except for a few misspellings, none of the study's participants disagreed with the transcript's accuracy.

Prolonged engagement refers to the researcher spending an extended amount of time with participants gaining greater insight into their experiences, values, and social interactions (Bloomberg, 2017). Prolonged time over a three-series interview protocol led to trust between the interviewer and interviewee(s). This trust allowed for a wider range of responses. While

observation as a stand-alone data collection method was not used, natural observations of participants during each of the three interviews included observed body language, deep breaths, and hesitation of responses. These natural observations were to add to the thick descriptions and an overall understanding of participants. Along with persistent, natural observations during interviews, triangulation was also used to establish credibility. Triangulation is a technique that tests validity through the meeting of data from various sources and differing researchers (Bloomberg, 2017). Triangulation of the data included the collection and analysis of documents submitted by participants substantiating their experiences with other teachers, students, communities, and families.

The second element of trustworthiness is transferability. Transferability is defined as the degree to which the findings of a study can be transferred to other settings, contexts, and populations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Transferability in this study was used to develop the type of thick descriptions often found in qualitative studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Referring to the use of thick descriptions to define and apply the setting to other contexts (Bloomberg, 2017) transferability has been highlighted in multiple ways in this study. Transferability, as it applies to this study, will enable readers to use the findings in other contexts mirroring the study's participants and overall research design. The detailed descriptions of the time and context across six different elementary school teachers with distinct sets of students added to the study's transferability as the school settings varied by not only student populations, but the socioeconomic status and demographics of the surrounding communities. The study's participants expressed a range of experiences relative to the influence that student ACEs can have on them depending on factors such as leadership, collegial support, mentoring, building facilities, and family support and connections (Bettini & Clark, 2021; Diab & Green, 2024).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that thick descriptions provide a level of external validity by illustrating in sufficient detail the extent to which the researcher has made explicit such details as the natural setting of the participants and the setting(s) in which the study was conducted. These details further include the climate, behaviors, and attitudes of participants. Each of these has been used to add to the study's transferability. Unlike quantitative studies, transferability is not only reliant on the time and context, but the degree of similarity between future contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study's findings have been articulated beginning with the initial focused life history interviews through the final reflection of meaning interviews where participants provided detailed reflections on the meaning they applied to their experiences within the phenomenon. This added clarity and further context to the findings.

The third element of trustworthiness is dependability. Dependability refers to the consistency of the findings of a study over time (Aspers & Corte, 2019). As opposed to results that can be replicated over time as in quantitative studies, dependability focuses on findings that can be tracked and documented over time (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Ensuring that a study can be repeated over time, dependability includes the aspect of consistency (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Dependability in this study included ensuring that the research process for this study was well-documented, logical, and able to be traced by anyone who reads the study. The documented, logical, and traceable steps to this study have been detailed throughout beginning with Section 3. The steps of the data collection and analysis process have been clearly articulated and include graphics to assist the reader in understanding how the data was collected, organized, and analyzed, leading to the development of the study's findings.

The fourth element of trustworthiness is confirmability. Confirmability is used to establish that the study's findings and interpretations are drawn from the data collected from

participants and not from the interests and motivations of the researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). As part of confirmability, the researcher must demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations have been reached. Aligned to the recommendations of Aspers & Corte (2019) the experiences of participants and the findings of the study have been grounded in the research literature that framed this study. Specific confirmability activities include transparent descriptions of the actions taken from this study's genesis to the reporting of the findings. Confirmability in this study also included the trust created during the initial interviews to engage with participants across all interview phases regardless of previously held assumptions and biases about the phenomenon.

Discussions of the transformation of raw data, natural observations during interview phases, and identifying themes within the data have been made transparent in this study. Engaging with data from a neutral standpoint during the second and third interviews was done through open-ended questions designed to elicit a wide range of natural responses from participants. While subjectivity is likely to occur in qualitative studies, Bloomberg (2017) stated that the goal of confirmability is not to produce a set of objective findings but to demonstrate a level of reflexivity that makes clear any biases, preconceived ideas, assumptions, and subjectivity on the part of the researcher.

## **Findings**

Data collected from six novice teachers from varying elementary schools within the same urban intensive school district were used to develop the findings of this study. Urban intensive school districts are school districts located in large metropolitan cities within the United States (Howard & Miller, 2021). Participants ages ranged from 24 to over 50, with an average age of 31.8 years. Beyond the range of ages, participants' life experiences, racial and cultural identities

added depth to understanding the influence of student adversities on the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers in urban environments. While diversity existed among individual participants, statements drawn from interviews and documents revealed commonalities in the details of the experiences of participants and how the participants make meaning of those experiences.

Recruited through snowball sampling, each novice teacher met the eligibility criteria which was verified before beginning the first of the three interviews required for data collection. Eligible participants worked in a typical elementary classroom setting serving as a general or special education teacher in one or more of the core subject areas. Novice teachers were required to be engaged in teacher coursework and possess a conditional teaching certificate allowing them to work toward full credentialing. Finally, participants willing to elaborate on the details of their experiences with teacher burnout, fatigue, stressors, and thoughts of resignation (Camacho, 2018) were selected to take part in this study. It is important to note that none of the six participants allowed themselves to be video or audio recorded for this study. A descriptive summary of each participant has been outlined in subsequent paragraphs. Table 3 shows demographic information for each participant.

**Table 3***Participant Demographic Information*

NT Number	Pseudonym	Years Taught	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Grades
1	Clay	3.0	29	Black	5 <sup>th</sup>
2	Murch	1.5	24	White	4 <sup>th</sup>
3	Kellie	1.0	28	Black	2-5 <sup>th</sup>
4	Ken	2.5	30	Latino	2 <sup>nd</sup>
5	Millie	1.0	27	Black	3 <sup>rd</sup>
6	Georgia	3.0	50+	White	3 <sup>rd</sup>

*Descriptive Summary of Participants*

Clay, the first novice teacher interviewed, is in his third year of teaching. Though only teaching for three years, Clay is already working at his second school, which is uncommon for most novice teachers in his district. Opting to interview in person at a community marketplace, Clay was initially hesitant to open up during the initial interview. Clay made clear his participation was at the request of his teacher friend, who initially desired to participate in this study. After easing into the interview and realizing that his middle-upper class upbringing as a Black American male was not under scrutiny, his body language relaxed, and his jaw muscles loosened. Clay went from appearing to be closed off to providing the most data across all three interviews. He was on time and greeted each subsequent interview with a smile. While Clay expressed frustrations with his principal, whom he believes has negatively singled him out on multiple occasions, he was open to any form of prompting. He took several deep breaths when speaking about his most recent 5th-grade class, including the low and high points.

Murch, the second participant interviewed, has been teaching for a year and a half. Murch was high-energy and talkative and expressed pride in her cultural heritage. She responded to questions throughout all three interviews without prompting and unknowingly answered several questions well before the questions were asked. Murch started teaching midway through her first year when, according to her accounts, the previous novice teacher did not return after the Christmas break. Between graduate school applications to pursue an LCSW in social work, Murch decided to apply for a teaching job and found herself teaching within two weeks. Unprepared to teach high-needs, below-level students, Murch clarified that she loves her students and the classroom community she created. Inside her four walls exists a protective bubble that she believes preserves all things innocent about childhood. She maintains a firm, no-bullying zone. Murch stated that she remains steadfast and refuses to be "bullied" by her school's administration despite being reprimanded multiple times and compared to veteran teachers with more expertise. Her core belief is that the happiness of her students, and not that of the administrators, is what matters most.

At the time of the interview(s), Kellie had completed her first year of teaching and displayed natural enthusiasm for her students despite a challenging first year with a caregiver incident. Kellie was equally enthusiastic about participating in this study. Kellie was the only person who chose to meet over Zoom. Of the six participants, Kellie believed she most identified with the students in her self-contained special education class. While she was a self-described honor student when it came to her academics, Kellie described losing her mother suddenly during her middle school years and being raised by an older sister who stepped in as a surrogate parent. Like her current population of students, Kellie grew up surrounded by decaying buildings and an unsafe community. She mentioned momentary bouts of self-diagnosed Post-Traumatic

Stress Disorder on Monday mornings when she drives into a community reminiscent of the one she worked hard to escape. Nonetheless, Kellie shared her love of her mentor teacher of 25 years and plans to remain at her current school for many years. After working in the criminal justice system immediately following her undergraduate years with adolescents facing numerous ACEs leading to their crimes, Kellie believes that she is at her school to change the trajectory of children with ACEs.

Ken is a second-year teacher who began his career midway through the 2022 school year. Ken opted to meet in person at a coffee shop. Unlike the other participants, Ken grew up in an immigrant community in Florida, where English was not his first language. After taking nearly double the time to pursue his bachelor's degree due to a full-time work schedule, Ken came to his school district for a personal life change. With Spanish as his first language, Ken has found success working in a community where more than 70% of the student population is a combination of native Spanish speakers and new to the United States. Feeling at home in his school community, Ken has become a staple within his two-and-a-half years of teaching at his sizeable elementary school. Surrounded by an environment split between six-figure-earning couples with no children and immigrant families with multiple generations in one dwelling, Ken does not face many external stressors other participants expressed. Ken stated that his stressors, including burnout and fatigue, are self-imposed due to staying late to translate for his parents. He also volunteers with the local immigration and refugee center to find students who have been missing from school. Finally, Ken supports his teacher-friend, who does not speak Spanish and has difficulty understanding the lives of the parents whose children they teach.

Although substituting and working with children in recreational settings, Millie is a first-year teacher. Millie believed their previous experience with children, whether substituting or

working in after-school tutoring programs, counted toward formal teaching as it did not. Millie appeared to be the most pensive of all the participants in this study despite the end of the current school year. They spoke of being unsupported with 3rd graders in emotional and mental distress and approximately eight students with emotional needs that they did not have the skill set to support. Millie spoke of having objects thrown their way and staying up late into the night, studying strategies on cultural relevancy to find ways to help students. Millie despises the current curriculum and is committed to implementing more cultural relevancy in their work with students. Despite their distressed demeanor, leaning forward with hands clasped for most interviews, Millie shared that they love their students and are willing to give the school year another as their love for children and the trauma they encounter will not allow them to abandon children in need.

Georgia is a Caucasian female and a career-changer. Spending decades as a pediatric trauma nurse, Georgia described herself as an unconventional novice teacher. While Georgia had become accustomed to witnessing children experience trauma, her mostly immigrant school community is comprised of challenges that were unique to her past experiences. Although Georgia is unaware of any forms of neglect or abuse her students may experience, she noticed that the adversities linked to English language learners posed a different set of adversities that she is still learning to understand. Unlike the 3rd-graders she teaches, Georgia hails from a rural community and has always desired to work with children who had vastly different experiences from hers. While Georgia believes that she is fulfilling her purpose by working with children experiences ACEs, she admitted to experiencing what she deems as severe burnout. The burnout Georgia experienced resulted in semi-permanent red eyes for weeks and thinning hair. With interviews occurring at a coffee shop within walking distance of her school, Georgia's demeanor

was friendly and open, tending only when discussing experiences with her school's administration.

### *Discussion of the Study-Interviews*

The Modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen method was used to support the emergence of themes across both of the study's research questions. Employed in phenomenological studies, this method of analysis allowed for depth into participants' lived experiences drawn from transcript data and documents submitted by novice teachers (Moustakas, 1994). Identifying themes and insight into the phenomenon came through implementing the seven sequential and iterative steps of the Modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen method, which first involves familiarization with data. Identifying significant statements, converting significant statements into formulated meanings, and categorizing meaning to develop themes were the next steps in designing the study's findings. Developing an exhaustive description of the phenomenon based on the previous steps of the Modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen method and producing the fundamental structure such that only the basic essence of the participant experience was revealed led to the final step in the process. Seeking verification for the validation of findings was the last step in developing the study's themes. This interactive step involved participants via member checking to ensure that the study's findings accurately reflected their experiences as novice teachers in their current school settings. Member checking relative to the last steps of the Modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen method was used to verify the basic structure and key statements describing the participant's lived experiences relative to the phenomenon.

The first step of the Modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen method of familiarization (Moustakas, 1994) with the data involved a first and second rereading of interview transcripts from each of the six participants across all three interviews and thoroughly examining the

documents submitted for review. Familiarization with the data included using manual and electronic processes for first and second-cycle coding. Basic elements such as word count and repetition, as well as identifying repeated words, keywords in context, and phrases most salient to the participant experience were crucial parts of becoming familiar with the data that was captured. Reading and rereading the data for nuances and other aspects expressed by the study's novice teachers occurred after each individual interview leading to the second step in the Modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen method.

The second step involved the identification of significant statements made by participants. Identifying substantial statements made by the study's novice teachers involved searching transcripts for larger chunks of data, comparing/contrasting data across participants, and searching for language patterns, including synonyms and metaphors. Following the identification of significant statements, the third step involved converting identified statements into formulated meanings known as codes. This step in the theme development process involved roughly categorizing statements into similarities and forming patterns with initial themes across participant transcripts. Converting significant statements into codes further involved rereading and organizing the data, based on word choice(s), inferences, and popular expressions common to novice teachers in a specific urban environment. Following the manual coding process, an NVivo file was created whereby more than 80 codes were electronically generated for the first research question and 60 codes for the second research question.

The fourth step involved categorizing meanings (codes) to develop themes. Generated electronically and refined manually, the themes for the first research question revealed the range of social-emotional experiences that novice teachers in this study encountered in their work with students with adverse childhood experiences. Nearly 20 themes were generated electronically.

Revisiting the data and clustering overlapping themes across participants resulted in six themes that provided insight into the first research question. While the themes will be elaborated on in more detail, the six themes and their corresponding meanings that addressed the first research question are described in the following paragraph.

The first theme of teachers reflects the influence of and reliance on teachers that novices experience in their work with students with ACEs in complex environments. The second theme of community reflects the interdependent, emotional relationship between the schools where novices work and the communities in which they are situated. The third theme of Parents/families provided insight for novices into the root of the adversities their students face as minors dependent upon the decisions made by their parents and family members. Major ACEs, the fourth theme of ACEs initially identified by Felitti et al. (1998) and later expanded upon by Finkelhor (2020), reflected identified ACEs specific to the school communities that most influenced them. Students, the fifth theme focused on the challenges novice teachers experience in providing academic instruction to students experiencing a range of other factors which have been noted to interfere with children's progress in school (Blodgett. & Lanigan 2018). The final theme for the first research question revealed the importance of emotions. Participants expressed sentiments that captured their emotions as they interacted with teachers, communities, parents/families, and grappled with the ACEs of their students.

A sample of the themes and related codes for the first research question is shown in Table 4. An expansive list of themes and codes can be found in the appendices of this study.

**Table 4***Sample of First-cycle Coding: Research Question 1*

Theme	Participant	Quote
Teachers	1	Teacher relationships of all types are important to me, Substitute teachers, older teachers: we are kindred spirits. It feels like inclusivity and warmth
Community	2	The surrounding school community Challenges stereotypes; there's lots of greenery and clean; good residents who look out for the teachers. They Protect the school...our partners are great
Parents/Families	3	My parents try hard, but my kids suffer from their choices and end of facing adversities because of their parents unhealthy relationship choice. This results in dysfunctional living circumstances
Major ACEs	4	My students face food shortages. They face unusual obstacles because they may be new to this country
Students	5	I try different strategies, but I still end up dealing with behavior problems and I never really get to the academics
Emotions	6	My emotions range from feelings of anxious to shifts in my mood shifts; love my students but I'm always fearing something like pop-up observations

In continuing with the fourth step of the Modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen method, themes were also developed for the study's second research question. Focused on how novice teachers cope with their feelings about the ACEs of their students, the second research question resulted

in six manually generated themes. The six themes were reduced from 13 electronically produced themes to reveal how novice teachers cope with internal and external factors relative to their experiences in urban school environments. The themes that addressed the second research questions are outlined in the following paragraph.

Emotional safety was the first theme addressing the second research question. Emotional safety was a sentiment expressed by participants as they found themselves in need of emotional safe spaces due to their work with students with ACEs. The second theme of personal community reflects the chosen community of neighbors, family members, and colleagues that novice teachers credit with supporting them through their high-stress work environments as they help students facing adversities. Boundaries, the third theme, spoke to how novice teachers created boundaries that transcended their personal well-being and enabled them to cope with their work-related stressors. Self-care arose as the fourth theme as novice teachers experienced stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue at the risk of their physical and mental health. Stressors: Stressors, the fifth theme reflected an unending cycle of stressors which for most participants triggered the ongoing need to rely on their personal communities, create emotional safety, establish boundaries, and engage in self-care. The Why, the final theme for the second research question reflected the reasons why novice teachers engage with sometimes hostile parents/families, unsupportive veteran teachers, and ignored by administrators to an intangible source outside of rational decision-making. A sample of the themes and related codes for the second research question is shown in Table 5. An expanded list of themes and codes can be found in the appendices of this study.

**Table 5***Sample of Second-cycle Coding: Research Question 2*

Theme	Participant #	Quote
Emotional Safety	1	The room of a kinder teacher and the office of an admin team member are my safe havens. These are the place I go to decompress and feel seen and appreciated for what I do with my kids.
Personal Community	2	My family is proud of me, but my sister-in-law is my person. She is there for me on some super tough days. My teacher besties is part of my chosen community too.
Creating Boundaries	3	Saying no is hard for me because I know it will benefit my scholars, but I have to protect myself. When I do not set boundaries, my body suffers. Boundaries are my way of standing up for myself
Self-care	4	My self-care includes time with my spouse and our fur babies...grabbing some good food and watching something fun on TV. It's as simple as shutting down my device during family time
Stressors	5	A few of my students need help beyond what I can provide, and when they act out (which is often), I am stressed out. This is coupled with visits from different leaders in an out of my classroom
Reasons Why	6	I know without a doubt that I have a higher calling to work with children faces adversities

The fifth step, developing an exhaustive description of the phenomenon based on the identified themes and steps one through four of the modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen method required the creation of an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under exploration. This step involved synthesizing the meanings derived from the themes of both research questions for an in-depth description of the experiences of the novice teacher engaged in this study.

Developing an exhaustive description required revisiting interview transcripts and documents to bring together all identified themes to create an account that describes the essence of what novice teachers in urban environments influenced by the adversities of their students' experience. This description comprised details of the participants' experiences in their school environments, the range of social-emotional experiences and the meaning they apply to those experiences. Finally, the exhaustive description included how novice teachers cope with the factors that add to the stressors they encounter in their work with students with ACEs, along with salient quotes that highlight the participant experience. The exhaustive description served to create a depiction that extended beyond individual statements and themes to offer a full understanding of the social-emotional experiences of novice elementary school teachers influenced by the adverse childhood experiences of their students.

The sixth step of the Modified Stevick Colaizzi-Keen method focused on summarizing the exhaustive description developed into the key aspects of the study's topic (Moustakas, 1994). Revisiting interview transcripts and developing themes across both research questions, such as teachers, community, and emotional safety, moved the description beyond individual participant stories to an overall understanding of the experiences of novice teachers in an identified urban area as a group. Thus, the study's fundamental structure is shaped by novice teachers

experiencing a series of internal and external factors that influence their work and commitment to elementary-aged children facing adverse childhood experiences.

The seventh and final step of the process focused on ensuring the credibility of the descriptions by involving the participants in the process. Seeking verification for the validation of the findings was done through member checking. While member checking was conducted after each of the three interviews to ensure that data was accurately captured, this form of member checking was done to present participants with a summarized version of their experiences. Novice teachers were individually shown a descriptive summary of the participants relative to their participation in the study. Novices were also sent a chart of the themes that emerged from their transcribed data and a brief narrative describing the study's findings, no more than one paragraph. Independent study reviewers were not part of the verification process to validate findings.

### ***Document Review***

In addition to interview data, personal/professional documents submitted by participants and open-access public records were used to substantiate the details of the participant(s) experience. Beyond validating individual experiences, documents were submitted by novice teachers substantiating the study's themes. Thank you notes, e-cards, and baked goods highlighted the need for validation and support from fellow teachers regardless of the level of teacher experience. In sharing documentation of teacher support, novices noted that their peers, whether mentors or fellow novices, helped with in-the-moment decision-making with parents, administrative strife and assisted with students facing a range of adversities. Additional examples of theme support and individual experiences included gift cards and acknowledgment for participation in shoe giveaways and other community-based activities. Photographs of backpacks

filled with microwavable food items for the weekend demonstrate the food insecurity and housing instability that some students encounter. Food and housing insecurities were some of the major ACEs identified by novices as they spoke of how the ACEs of their students influenced them.

Additional documentation supporting the study's themes included behavior management charts and contracts, which underscored novice's attempts at focusing on student outcomes while attempting to provide instruction despite behavioral interruptions. Banned cell phone signs highlight experiences with parents that some novices deemed as less than positive, provoking feelings of anger, fear, and distress due to altercations concerning confiscated phones. Despite experiences that novices viewed as negative, shoe-give away activities for the beginning of the school year reflect the interactive relationship between novice teachers and the communities where their schools are located. Snapshots of performance improvement plans and classroom feedback regarding room environments, classroom management, and time on task reflected the stressors that novice teachers experience, including administrative strife. Amidst a range of positive and negative experiences, participants submitted documents highlighting the reason they remain committed to serving students with adversities. Photographs of worn action figures, rubber balls, and other items taken from students during class remind novices of their work with students facing challenges. The submitted documents highlight participants' social-emotional experiences in their work with students with ACEs in urban environments.

Beyond documents submitted by participants, public records such as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (CDEA 84.196), which is the United States Department of Education's response to education for homeless students, were referenced in response to participants being influenced by the housing instability of their students. Whereas none of the

novices mentioned students being unhoused for an extended period, the McKenny Vento Act outlines schools and school districts' responsibility to provide students with services and support. Services under the McKinney Vento Act, most notably include mental health, to address the trauma that adversities experience may have caused. Public records referenced also include the Maryland State Department of Education's Licensure Pathways for teachers. With the eligibility criteria for the study focused on teachers still working toward full licensure or certification, these public documents were critical as novices noted certification requirements as one of the major stressors they experienced.

While the state education department outlined multiple pathways for full licensure, the district where novice teachers work requires 36 post-baccalaureate credit hours and six hours of reading coursework. Furthermore, teachers without undergraduate degrees in education are required to pass the Praxis assessment for state licensure and any other specialty area assessments, such as those needed for special educators. The detailed certification requirements concerning the study's novice teachers are critical as most participants have delayed or abandoned the required coursework even though their employment hinges upon completing their certification requirements. Most novices in this study found that taking virtual, hybrid, or in-person classes was too overwhelming after working in challenging environments throughout the day.

The final set of public records referenced as it relates to the participants' experiences and the themes of this study was the Maryland Compilation of School Discipline Laws and Regulations. While it is the responsibility of each district and school administrator to apply the laws for student discipline to their learning environment, the Maryland Compilation of School Discipline Laws and Regulations outline the type of discipline and consequence necessary to

maintain safe and supportive student environments. Half of the participants noted their struggles with student discipline and how they felt unsupported by their administrators. This document notes key areas of student discipline described by participants during the interview process. Some noteworthy sections of the discipline laws and regulations relative to the participants' experiences include incident reporting to parents, student bullying, and the teacher's autonomy to remove students from the classroom. While there were no laws or regulations against teachers removing children from the classroom, novices noted that they were often reprimanded for this practice. Whereas novices believed suspension was the appropriate response to disruptive behavior, social-emotional learning, as outlined in the laws and regulations, is noted as an alternative response. It should be noted that one novice teacher submitted documents in support of social-emotional safe spaces within the classroom. While the teacher did not believe the practice was strong enough for the discipline issues in the classroom, they were committed to finding ways to reduce disruptive behaviors.

The themes from the interview data added to the credibility of the study's findings and explained what novice teachers experienced as they support students with ACEs and how they cope with their feelings in such environments. While this study focused on the influence of student ACEs and not on the personal adversities of the participants, novice teachers freely shared their experiences, connections, or lack of personal experience with the phenomenon of ACEs and how their life experiences continue to influence their work with students with adverse childhood experiences in marginalized communities. Participant experiences as described in their own words via transcript data will be discussed in response to each research question in subsequent paragraphs

**RQ 1**

*What are the social-emotional experiences of novice elementary school teachers in urban elementary school environments as they support students with adverse childhood experiences?*

The first research question sought to answer the question of what the social-emotional experiences of novice elementary school teachers in urban environments are. There were six themes that aligned with RQ 1: teachers, community, parents/families, major ACEs, students, and emotions. The findings from interview transcripts and documents revealed that novice teachers' experiences are intertwined with various factors. These factors include the rapid formation of close relationships with fellow teachers and the reciprocity between novice teachers and the communities where they work, including parents and families. Themes for this study were derived from comparisons across interview transcripts and documents submitted by participants. Pattern coding was initially used to group clusters of related words and phrases into meaningful categories. Focused coding was then used to refine codes that were initially grouped and subsequently categorized. Manually refining codes based on relevance to each research question led to developing the study's themes. A visual display representing the clusters of words and phrases used to develop the study's themes is included in the appendices of this study.

**Theme 1 - Teachers.** Teachers was the first central theme to emerge in response to the first research question. Whether noting parents who worked as career educators or teachers who inspired them, participants' experiences with teachers influenced their career choices and daily experiences as novice teachers. From the focused life history interviews to the final Reflection on Meaning, the importance of teachers in participants' lives became a critical concept in this study. Interview questions focused on novice teachers' combined school experiences, teaching in

an urban environment, and the support they did or did not receive in their current workspaces led to identifying related codes based on interview responses. Phrases clustered around the theme of teachers included teacher friends, mentor teachers, and the importance of other novice teachers. Concepts such as vulnerability, trust, and the emotional experiences novice teachers had with other teachers further supported this theme. Participants such as Kellie elaborated on the vulnerability she experienced with teachers she had only known for months. Kellie described the way she relied on her colleagues for social and emotional support.

Kellie stated, “My family has never seen the tears I felt vulnerable enough to shed with my mentor and the other teachers on my team.” Kellie noted that the homely feel of her school evoked a natural sense of sharing and openness with the other teachers. Whether sharing baked goods from home as indicated in the documents or the adversities of their students, Kellie lamented that by mid-year, she had shared some of her most personal thoughts with her colleagues. Kellie added the following to capture the close the innate trust she has in the teachers on her team. “The teachers on my team supported me through a hurtful experience. I was berated and cursed at by a parent. They rallied around me in such a way that it felt as if they had known me for years.”

Elaborating on how rapidly bonds are formed with other teachers, Murch credited another novice teacher with preventing her from leaving teaching prematurely. Though she found the veteran teachers at her school to be less than supportive, she credited her bond with another novice teacher as the primary reason she chose to commit to at least one more year of teaching. Murch shared how the friendship the two have formed has transferred into her life beyond school. “Whether in or outside of school, we are the only ones who understand our unique challenges and feel like outsiders in our building.” Echoing a sentiment shared by another

participant, Millie would welcome a larger network of teacher support but is grateful for the connection they share with someone whom they consider a true friend.

**Theme 2 - Community.** While the theme of teachers resonated with the entire participant group, the second central theme, community, emerged as a key response to what participants experienced in their interactions within their surrounding school communities. The concept of community as a theme was initiated with participants making comparisons and, in some instances, sharp contrasts between their childhood communities and those of their students experiencing ACEs. While novice teachers were asked about the influence of the community, including parents, caregivers, and other stakeholders, parents and families ultimately emerged as a separate theme within the study based on the elaborate responses provided. Participant responses revealed that the concept of community encompassed organizations, local proprietors, and community leaders, including pastors and activists.

The similarities among participant descriptions of their communities ranged from low-income and gentrified communities to infiltrations of community violence. Amid describing decaying buildings and the struggles of immigrant families within their communities, novice teachers also described community leaders as proud, fully invested representatives. As participants personalized their connections to their communities, clusters of words such as depressed, motivated, and community connectedness appeared across participants and were grouped accordingly. Novice teachers' connections to and feelings about their school community were expressed by participants such as Ken, who works in a predominantly Spanish-speaking community where many of his students struggle to fully communicate in English.

Though not originally from the community where his school is located, Ken innately understood the struggles of a largely immigrant, Spanish-speaking community and the social,

political, and cultural context of their surroundings. For Ken, it was unquestionably similar to his childhood experiences and propelled him to do more than teach. Ken elaborated on the immediate need to engage with his school community during his first year of teaching.

My investment in my school's community is based on an understanding I hold of the values that people living and working near on another often share. The stories of the community where I work are the stories of the leaders in the community where I grew up. It is the story of people helping people push through adversity and insurmountable odds, while often feeling unwanted by the larger community, so I support without being asked. Ken's connection to the community surrounding his school is an example of its members' influence on him as a novice teacher in a diverse urban community where community members, including his students, frequently experience ACEs.

Like Ken, Kellie works in a community that mirrors some of her childhood experiences. Excited about changing careers, Kellie shared that upon visiting her school before teaching, she was somewhat saddened by the optics of the community. Abandoned houses, broken glass, and graffiti on the nearby wall were the sights that, according to Kellie, immediately captured her attention. Kellie stated that her initial thoughts were, "I worked hard to escape a community like this, but here I was, several states away and surrounded by much of the same." While the sadness over the urban decay of her school community still influences her on occasion, her involvement with the community, including local businesses, has shifted her outlook and her commitment to her students facing childhood adversities. In addition to supporting local bodegas at lunchtime, Kellie has volunteered to support multiple community-based after-school activities.

I have become acquainted with the barber shop owner who offers students free haircuts, and the grandparents from the senior center who read to our students in the primary grade

classrooms. I also work closely with the sorority volunteers who support lunch shifts. The students trust these people, and they, in turn, share things about my students, such as who may be facing some crisis.

Kellie and Ken's affirming experiences within their school communities helped them to remain focused on the positive aspects of their experiences, as some participants had less than positive experiences with parents and families who reside within these communities.

**Theme 3 - Parents/Families.** The next major theme that emerged was that of parents and families. Experiences with parents and families generated a range of emotional responses from participants. Words and phrases such as adult tantrums, tirades, and parental threats were threaded across participants when describing their experiences with parents and families. While participants such as Ken had overwhelmingly positive experiences with parents and families, the majority of participants did not. As participants worked closely with students and understood more about the adversities many parents encountered, phrases such as incarcerated parents, hardworking parents, missing parents, and poor parental choices were shared and later categorized as related codes. While participants shared that they did not want to place blame on the parents, Murch shared her feelings about parental contributions to the ACEs that one of her students encountered.

I had a bright, inquisitive student who started shutting down. I had been trying for nearly a month but could not reach the student's mother. Finally, the mother returns my call in the middle of the night, sounding like she was crying. Sadly, she was being abused by a partner, and she and her children, one of whom was my student, had been living in a van for months. I was not only horrified, but I felt helpless. Although she was a victim of

domestic violence, I found myself quietly angry with the mother for placing this level of adversity on her children.

Murch's emotional encounter with a family that was experiencing temporary homelessness due to an intimate partner relationship reflects the myriad emotions she often found herself experiencing when it came to the adversities her students faced.

Clay's dual experiences with the parents and families of his former students added to the words, phrases, and clusters of meaning that participants used to describe their experiences with parents and caregivers. "My initial interactions with parents were adversarial and connected to confiscating electronic device during instructional time." Although Clay stated that he was reinforcing school policy by holding the items until a parent came to retrieve them, he often absorbed the brunt of parental frustration. "I had no idea that most of my parents did not have their own transportation. I understood that upholding school policy only added to their frustrations, and I caught the brunt of it."

Over time, Clay avoided reinforcing his school's cell phone policy and consequently avoided interactions with parents, as they seemed to end negatively for him. Clay supported his experiences with photos of banned cell phone signs. A newly adopted state-wide policy on electronic devices in schools further substantiated his experiences. While the experiences of Clay, Murch, Kellie, and Millie added to the cluster of related phrases resulting in negative parental experiences, Clay shared that helping the grandparent of one of his former students provided him with a set of positive experiences. "She was kind and gave context as to why some of the parents were hostile." Ken concluded by stating that he knew he had to find compassion within to change his interactions with the parents and families of his students.

**Theme 4 - ACEs.** Major childhood adversities was the fourth theme that emerged from the data, with participants noting the difficulty of providing academic instruction while responding to student adversities. Major childhood adversities, such as food and housing insecurity, emerged as a theme in response to the first research question. This theme emerged as an extension of novice teachers sharing their interactions with parents and families and their observations regarding the connectedness between parental actions and the cluster of adversities their students experienced. Although numerous childhood adversities exist, novice teachers in this study referred to the following adversities across interviews. The cluster of adversities included housing instability, food insecurity, incarceration, abandonment, missing parents, and language barriers. Domestic and community violence emerged as related phrases. With the participants' schools existing within underserved communities or communities amid gentrification, participants noted poverty and other factors related to poverty, such as undereducation and some parents' inability to help children with homework, as part of the major ACEs their students encounter.

Clay shared his experiences with the ACEs his students face. "My students witness and sometimes experience a lot of violence. They seem enraptured by it, which frustrates me to act." Elaborating on the unsafe communities and violence his students encounter, Clay also shared how he attempted to counter what his students experience. "I started a mentoring club where I stayed after two or three days a week, talking to my kids, especially the boys, about alternatives to violence." This club soon included homework and tutoring to give them a safe space.

Whereas Clay described the violence that surrounds his students, Kellie explained her experiences with food insecurity within her school and the community. "My school is in an impoverished neighborhood. My school has everything from a closet with clean clothing to an

empty classroom that doubles as a food pantry.” While sharing that the school’s food pantry supplies students with weekend backpacks and is open for parents experiencing food insufficiency, she detailed what she found most surprising.

The food pantry is open to anyone in the community twice a month for those in need. The line was often outside the school's back door. I am grateful that donations given to our school support the entire community, but I am equally depressed that this is the measure people have to go through to feed themselves and their families.

Thoughts and reflections shared by participants noted that ACEs such as sustained community violence and food insecurity influence their most important stakeholder, the students.

**Theme 5 - Students.** A broad category, students emerged as the fifth theme in response to the first research question. While participants were not asked directly about students as they were not the study’s focus, participants shared that parents/families, the surrounding community, and the ACEs students encounter influence their experiences with the students they teach. Codes related to this theme ranged from classroom management, student emotional needs, and academic performance. Beyond attempting to implement behavior management strategies and seeking support with student attendance, novice teachers shared that working with large numbers of students with ACEs created a range of emotions that they continued to grapple with even though the school year had concluded. While struggling with behavior management and how best to teach their mostly below-level third-grade class, Millie’s experiences were both frustrating and frightening. “I love my kids and want to become the type of teacher who is impactful...the type of teacher that TV shows revolve around, but I cannot get my students to settle down long enough for me to teach.” Millie went on to describe the emotional distress that a large number of her students experience, making teaching a difficult task. In addition to the

frustration expressed during the second interview, Millie described the dangerous situations in the classroom.

Half of my class have been identified as highflyers by the school support team, meaning they can experience emotional meltdowns at any time during the day. These are some of the most challenging moments I have experienced. In attempting to protect the other kids in my room, I have had objects thrown my way like staplers and things that can be easily picked up and flung across the classroom. I know they are children and their emotional needs pain me too, but by the time the school day ends, I am the one who is in tears.

While Kellie shared that she has felt the pressure of increasing the reading and math scores of her students with diagnosed learning disabilities, Clay elaborated on his experiences with his upper elementary students in both of his language arts classes.

I want my kids to read and calculate at grade level and compete with their peers from other school districts. Although I still have much to learn regarding instructional strategy work, my experiences have shown that increasing academic outcomes might be the easy fix. It is the other part of working with students in marginalized environments that tends to weigh on me. Of all the factors that the majority of my students have to contend with, it is the community violence that bothers me the most. Gun violence between specific groups is one thing, but the violence between families seemingly resulting from the ills of poverty is what shows up in my classroom. Fights between families spill over into my classroom to the point where I have to address these issues before I can focus on improving my students' academic performance.

**Theme 6 -Emotions.** The sixth theme in response to the first research question is emotions. Experiences with the teachers around them, their communities, parents/families, the

students, and the adversities they experience added to the final theme related to the first research question. Emotions emerged as a theme based on the words and phrases including feeling overwhelmed, unprotected, angry, and humiliated. Other emotions referenced by multiple participants include compassion, satisfaction, and empathy.

Whether expressing worries over their students that extend beyond the school day or noting the breakthrough moments and wins they experienced, novices such as Ken expressed how they experienced his emotions. Expressing the least negative experiences, Ken shared the primary emotion(s) he has experienced as a second-year novice teacher. “Simply put, it is pride. I am proud of how I poured into my students and encouraged them daily, even at the risk of my mental and physical health. Translating for parents and directing them towards resources felt great. While Ken admitted that he has had difficulty saying no to parents needing support with their basic needs and setting boundaries, he is enthusiastic about continuing to reduce the adversities within his school community. Conversely, participants Clay and Millie experienced what they described as embarrassment with parents, administrators, and incidents with students that left them feeling unprotected, and embarrassed. Both participants added to the theme of emotions with documents illustrating a performance improvement plan (PIP) and administrative feedback, which both participants experienced emotions akin to bitterness and hurt.

Themes for the first research question included the influence of teachers, community, parents/families, major ACEs, students, and participants' emotional experiences. Using the same strategies of pattern and focused coding for the development of themes, the themes for the second research question focused on how novice teachers cope with their feelings amidst internal and external factors such as emotional safety, establishing a personal community, and creating self-imposed boundaries. The themes related to the second research question explore practicing

self-care to reduce burnout, acknowledging triggers, and honoring why they chose to work with students with ACEs.

## ***RQ2***

***How do novice elementary school teachers working in urban educational environments cope with their feelings about the adverse childhood experiences of the students they teach?***

The second research question focused on how novice teachers cope with their feelings as it relates to the adverse childhood experiences of their students. How novice teachers cope is not agnostic of the environment in which they work. Findings from interview transcripts and documents revealed six themes in relationship to how novice teachers choose to cope. The six themes in response to the second research question include how novice teachers created emotional safety, their personal/chosen communities, and the creation of protective boundaries. The three remaining themes include utilizing self-care as a healthy way to cope, the acknowledgement of stressors, and the reason(s) why they are committed to working with students with adverse childhood experiences.

Prior to theme development, clusters of synonymous words and phrases were grouped to form codes. The data was coded multiple times to ensure the inclusion of relevant concepts. Akin to first-cycle coding, pattern coding was initially used to group clusters of related words to form codes reflecting the most salient aspects of how participants cope. As with second-cycle coding, focused coding was applied to filter codes that were initially grouped and categorized. Physically refining codes based on their salience led to the development of the study's themes for the second research question. Related codes will be discussed within the appropriate theme in subsequent paragraphs.

**Theme 1 - Emotional Safety.** The first major theme that developed was emotional safety. Participants noted the need to create emotionally safe spaces for themselves due to their work with students with ACEs. In addition to working with students, participants needed emotional safety as they encountered negative parental experiences and families who needed more resources than they were able to provide. A sense of belonging, socialization, safe spaces, and mutual support clustered along with other terms, leading to the emergence of emotional safety as a theme. Adult children, spouses, specific family members, and fellow teachers added to the emotional safety that novice teachers believed was needed to support students in various states of sustained distress. Participants shared how they cherish the emotional safe spaces they created with trusted others as they engage in work that requires a significant amount of their mental, physical, and emotional attention.

Growing up in Jamaica and coming to United States for college, Millie shared that they lacked an extended network of friends and family in the immediate area. While not establishing connections with the larger group of teachers had been discouraging, Millie shared that their work friend has become someone with whom they feel emotionally safe. Sharing a personal moment of reflection, Millie shared how acceptance from a peer led to implicit trust, care, and the emotional safety she needed to cope. When speaking of the person that makes Millie feel emotionally safe, the following was shared. “I have always felt othered. I never tried to fit in with any particular group, but when I met my buddy teacher, I knew I had found the protection I needed to make things around me more manageable.”

Adding to how the emotional safety of a peer helped her cope with the complex relationships that exist, Millie offered a description of the emotional safety found in a fellow novice teacher.

It is simple and uncomplicated. At the end of most days, I go over to my friend's classroom and occupy their space. Sometimes I bring planning work to complete and other times, it is just a soft drink and some candy. I play music through the Bluetooth for us while planning, grading, or we do nothing. We might gripe about the day, but most times it is the nothingness of it all. It is those days when I am suddenly better and ready to give teaching and all that goes with it another try.

While Millie relied on another teacher for emotional support as a way to cope, Clay having an expansive network of friends and family, found emotional safety in one of his administrators. While the role of administrators as it relates to novice teacher's coping mechanisms will be described when discussing specific stressors, Clay was the only participant that found emotional solace in an administrator. Mirroring Millie's experiences, Clay offered the following insights into the safety he feels.

My assistant principal's door is always open and welcoming to students and staff. There is a waiting bean bag chair, sweets, soft drinks, and a TV that is always on mute.

Everyone, including the children love this space. We rarely talk about the specifics of the day, sometimes it is a bit of encouragement, but mostly it is simply feeling like it is okay to allow my guard to rest.

**Theme 2 - Personal Community.** In addition to the emotional safety that novice teachers require as part of how they cope, the next major theme to emerge was personal or chosen community. Related codes across interview transcripts revealed a cluster of phrases such as adult children, specific family members, and neighbors as friends. Beyond related codes, novice teachers credited their personal/chosen communities with supporting them through the

challenges and breakthrough moments they face as they work with students and families who rely on them for support with academics and resources that exceed the demands of their jobs.

Participants Murch and Georgia relied on specific family members such as adult children and in-laws for their emotional safe spaces. Murch shared, “My sister-in-law is the reason I did not resign mid-year. She listened without judgement, cooked for me ,or treated me to dinner; she was always there.” Expressing similar sentiments, Georgia explained how her adult son would buy lunch or help tend to her garden so she could maintain healthy habits while experiencing stress, thinning hair, and heavy workload demands. “Knowing that I am a natural worrier, without asking, my son would stop by, and we would ride to the rural community where I grew up. It was what I needed to survive with in this work.”

**Theme 3 - Creating Boundaries.** While novice teachers credited their personal/chosen communities with creating a level of emotional safety, creating boundaries was also part of the coping mechanisms used by participants. Creating boundaries was the third major theme in response to the second research question. For novice teachers, creating and adhering to self-imposed boundaries not only helped them to cope with the challenges of being influenced by the ACEs of their students but added to their sense of balance and well-being. With Ken sharing the least negative experiences and Clay sharing the most, both participants cited boundaries as a critical part of how they cope with the stressors that add to their layered feelings. Despite different experiences, both participants cited nurturing their passions, logging off of devices at a certain time, and limiting school-related activities in the evenings as part of the boundaries they created for themselves.

Elaborating on their mirrored experiences, Ken noted, “I went above for my school community, but it resulted in feelings of burnout. Now I limit how late I stay and the days I

commit to parents and the community after school.” Noting similar experiences with feeling burned out, Clay shared that he felt unappreciated by his school’s administration for the work he was doing after school with tutoring and mentoring. “In the midst of volunteering after school with kids who needed a safe space, I was placed on a performance improvement plan. It was so hurtful that I placed boundaries on my afterschool work with the kids.”

**Theme 4 - Self-care.** In addition to creating boundaries that helped participants reduce burnout and fatigue, novice teachers noted the importance of prioritizing self-care as a part of how they cope. Thus, self-care emerged as the next central theme. Phrases that clustered across participant data included avoiding burnout, fatigue, exhaustion, and stress. Various forms of physical and mental activities such as yoga, running, and journaling are also clustered into related codes supporting the theme of self-care. While participants like Murch and Ken used mental and physical self-care techniques such as yoga, deep breathing, and journaling to avoid anxiety and stifle overwhelming thoughts, Georgia and Clay’s experiences with burnout led them to prioritize self-care as a part of their overall health and wellness.

A combination of stress, exhaustion, and the influence of being placed on a performance improvement plan (PIP) led Clay to prioritize self-care. He describes a specific incident with burnout that caused him to shift his priorities.

I had not been okay since being placed on a PIP. The constant observations and the critical feedback began to take its toll on me both physically and mentally. I ignored the physical and mental symptoms that began to show up in my body. The physical and mental came to a point one morning when I became extremely dizzy and nearly passed out. The result was that I was out of work for a week.

Clay explained that his experience with burnout indicated his need to prioritize his

overall health. He concluded his reflections on his experience by stating that, “I had to learn how to care for myself as much as I care about the adversities and challenges my students experience.” All participants including Georgia who mentioned bouts of nausea and thinning hair prompting her self-care routine, noted the stressors that trigger the need for placing their feelings in perspective and caring for themselves.

**Theme 5 - Stressors.** Stressors was the next major theme that emerged from clusters of words and phrases such as principals, administrators, and school leaders. Phrases supporting this theme also included triggers, student adversities/needs, certification requirements, and extensive lesson planning. Participants Millie and Georgia reflected on the stress of having lessons scrutinized by school leaders without the proper instructional support and being verbally reprimanded by administrators over incidents with parents in which both participants noted they were not at fault. Millie, noting issues with behavior management in previous interviews, described stressful encounters with her administrators resulting from employing behavior management strategies they learned in a certification course:

Behavior management has not been my strong point, and everyone in my building knows this, yet I have no mentor when it comes to this issue. When I tried to institute some strategies that I learned about in one of my courses, my principal reprimanded me saying that these strategies were not aligned to the [positive behavior intervention support structure that the school had adopted. I had to take apart my strategy chart which was beginning to work and dispose of my behavior management contracts.

Millie concluded her description of this experience by noting, “The stress of managing behavior without an immediate reward for my students came back immediately, and I had the added stress of leaders watching ensuring that I did not revert back to the strategy that they

advised me not to use.” While not experiencing behavior management concerns, like Millie Georgia, faced unannounced classroom visits and scrutiny from her administrator for what she believed was due to standing up to unfair administrative protocols.

**Theme 6 - Reasons Why.** Despite the stressors that Millie and the other participants experienced, they each had their reasons why they would continue to work with students with ACEs. The reasons why emerged as the final theme of this study, and for participants added to how and why they cope with a myriad of stressors. From ethereal to cultural reasons, participants believed they were destined to work with children most in need. Poor, marginalized, of color, poverty, and shared identity were some of the related words and phrases that led to the last theme of this study-the why. Remembering the reasons why they do this work is what participants such as Clay refer to as, “The Lord’s work.” Kellie and Ken referred to working with children and families, who look like them and have their shared experiences. Sharing similar experiences, Kellie, Ken, and Clay noted in separate interviews, “I understand the vernacular, including the sub-texts and body language. I enjoy the same foods and have many of the racial and cultural struggles even as an adult.”

Believing that her work with children with ACEs is part of a lifelong higher calling, Georgia attributed the reasons why she tolerates unkind behavior from her school administrator and has a plethora of coping mechanisms to an intangible source. After 30 years as a frontline professional in another field Georgia shared that would not have logically signed up to work with people facing constant trauma and obstacles again. “I would not have chosen this profession for my next career. It was divinely chosen for me, so I have to follow the path that I am supposed to walk in.”

Despite their experiences with a range of internal and external factors, the study's novice teachers decided they would remain committed to working with children with adverse childhood experiences. Falling into the categories of movers, leavers, or stayers, participants Kellie and Georgia stated they would stay in their current schools despite the stressors and constant coping mechanisms they have to develop. Although experiencing success, Ken intends to leave teaching in a few years as with Murch to work as an advocate or clinician for children with ACEs. Clay intended to transfer to another school and Millie remained undecided about the future.

### **Evaluation of the Outcomes**

This study addressed the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences (Dabrowski et al., 2025; al., Rose & Loomis, 2025), contributing to teacher burnout, fatigue, and resignation (Reilly et al., 2025). Framed by two research questions, the study's outcomes revealed a range of experiences encountered by novice teachers and how they cope with their feelings amid a myriad of stressors within their school environments. The outcomes of the study are organized by each research question and describe how the findings addressed the study's problem and purpose and contribute to the existing research literature.

The first research question noted novice teachers questioning the lack of parental engagement as parents in low-income settings often prioritize survival over school engagement concerning their children (Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018). This pattern of perceived parental disengagement has consequences beyond children (Usmani et al., 2024) as participants found themselves emotionally influenced by their students and the families of their students. Whether propelled to advocate for students and families with adversities or internalizing their emotions to

the point of fatigue and burnout, ACEs have implications for teachers, families, and children, which have been cited as interrupting the social ecology of childhood (Finkelhor, 2020).

The interruption of healthy childhood experiences found novice teachers expressing their struggle(s) to meet the academic and emotional needs of children even when equipped with support from mentors and coaches. Novice teachers still learning the rigors of teaching expressed difficulty educating children functioning below grade-level. The high prevalence of children's exposure to ACEs has been shown to impede success in core subjects (Blodgett & Lanigan, 2018). Demanding workloads, challenging student behaviors, and the responsibility of increasing academic outcomes forced participants to decide if they would continue teaching, leave for another school within the same district, or leave teaching altogether (Glassow & Jerrim, 2022; Diab & Green, 2019). Notwithstanding career decisions, novice teachers expressed their commitment to meeting the emotional needs of students with ACEs despite the risk fatigue and burnout.

All participants experienced burnout related to the second research question. While participants expressed numerous ways of circumventing and coping with burnout, research indicated high rates of occupational burnout in stressful elementary school environments (Brandt et al., 2020). Amid varying levels of collegial support and less than positive experiences with administrators, novice teachers persevered in their commitment to students until they were mentally or physically forced to slow down. Outside of headaches, anxiety, and bouts of dizziness, burnout has been linked to teacher absenteeism and lower work satisfaction (Koenig et al., 2018), as also noted by one novice teacher in this study. Unlike burnout, which builds over time, compassion fatigue experienced by participants can occur after a singular second-hand encounter with a student's adverse experience (Brandt et al., 2020). Participants reflecting on

their own traumatic childhood experiences as a native Spanish speaker and a child in similar urban environments experienced compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress as they worked to ensure students had equitable educational opportunities beyond their current environments.

The review of public records, personal artifacts, and physical evidence further supported the outcomes of this study. Public records such as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (1987) highlighted the U.S. Department of Education's response to the protections of more than one and a half million unhoused children (McKinney-Vento, 2022). Public records concerning food insecurity, school discipline, and state certification requirements for public school teachers provided context to the stressors expressed by participants. Personal artifacts included stressors such as snapshots of personal improvement plans and classroom environment feedback from school based and non-school based staff. Finally, the review of documents provided evidence of collegial and community support for novice teachers. Tokens of appreciation and reminders of the critical role that participants hold within their school-communities further substantiated the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers.

The outcomes provide a composite description of the what and how of novice teachers' experiences. The outcomes align with the study's research questions by revealing themes unique to novice teachers in environments where students are more likely to experience ACEs linked to poverty and whereby novice teachers, much like their students, are held to the same standard(s) as their peers in rural and suburban settings (Mersky et al., 2021). This imbalance between novice teachers in urban environments and novice teachers in more affluent settings contributes to burnout, fatigue, and thoughts of resignation among novice teachers (Fleckman et al., 2022). Whereas none of this study's participants reported receiving training on how to support students

with ACEs, studies conducted by Koenig (2018) noted that professional development relative to compassion fatigue, stress, and burnout is necessary to validate the experiences of novice teachers and retain them in challenging environments.

Data from interviews and documents did not produce results that diverged from interviews and document collection, nor did the results contradict prior research and theory relative to the study's topic. Participant experiences and reflections complemented the most recent research on novice teachers in urban environments, ACEs, burnout, and teacher retention in high-poverty communities (Benson, 2020; Broussard, 2021). The results of this study remain consistent with existing research and theory relative to novice teacher's experiences in high-poverty environments, including working with students with ACEs. While the extent to which student adversities influence the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers in urban environments remains limited, the study's results are consistent with research conducted on early career teachers (Camacho et al., 2018; Fleckman et al., 2022). Consistent with role and social capital theory, novice teachers' experiences were shaped by their attempts to navigate the social contexts of their school and community environments (Bettini & Park, 2021).

Aligned with research conducted by Geiger and Pivarova (2018), novice teachers' experiences were shaped by working conditions, collegial interactions, lack of administrative support, and demanding workloads while learning how to teach students with adversities beyond their locus of control. With working conditions, including student interactions (Bettini & Park, 2021), having implications for burnout, fatigue, and possible resignation, the results of this study further align with existing research on the short and long-term implications of each (Madigan et al., 2023). Finally, how novice teachers cope with stressors and their feelings about the ACEs of their students aligns with existing research on the experiences, challenges, and coping habits of

novice teachers in public education (Schmidt & Fosu 2019; Wilson et al., 2024). While the results of this study are not meant to be generalized, the contextualized understanding of the experiences of novice teachers in urban environments influenced by student ACEs may be applied to similar urban elementary school settings. The implications and recommendations for practice, including trauma-informed literacy, frameworks for self-care, and burnout amid challenges for staffing urban schools, will be described in the next section.

### **Implications and Recommendations for Practice**

The first implication for practice concerns the coursework required for state certification. Each participant stated that the required courses did not support them in the challenges they faced as urban teachers working with students with sustained adversities. With novice teachers in need of more than assigned courses in their work with students with ACEs, there exists a need for trauma-informed literacy and relevant training and/or professional development. Trauma-informed literacy, originating at the intersection of public health and public education, surpasses a general understanding of the sustained adversities and trauma of children in high-poverty communities. Trauma-informed literacy provides beginning educators with insight into how the transfer of ACEs and childhood trauma influences all stakeholders with close contact and firsthand knowledge of the adversities that children encounter (Lawson et al., 2019). While trauma-informed literacy may not prevent job-related stress or burnout, being literate in this area would help novices better understand the vulnerable position their role as teachers in urban elementary school environments places them in.

Through training and interactive professional development experiences, novice teachers would be better prepared for the likelihood of shifts in their mood(s), disengagement, sleep deprivation, and finding themselves in short and long-term depressive states (Lawson et al.,

2019). Whereas trauma-informed practices are being advanced in service of students with ACEs, a dual agenda must be created in public education to include trauma-informed literacy that benefits novice teachers in high-poverty environments.

The second implication for practice has involves providing novice teachers with holistic strategies for coping with job-related stress, burnout, and fatigue. Whether provided as part of teacher induction or incorporated into ongoing professional development, novice teachers on the front lines of responding to the whole child require holistic strategies to care for themselves in and beyond their school environments. Inclusive of collaboration, trust, peer support, and empowerment, novice teachers may benefit personally and professionally from working within a self-care and wellness framework. The self-care and wellness framework (Juarez & Becton, 2024) is designed to address burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary stress, two of which were noted by participants. A self-care and wellness framework has been adopted in various districts throughout the United States to improve teacher retention and address national teaching shortages. While practices such as mindfulness, meditation, and emotional regulation have been instituted in high-poverty schools to reduce job-related stress and help teachers cope, novice teachers may require more. Juarez and Becton (2024) proposed a semester-long series of lessons focusing on self-care and wellness. Facilitated by a school-based clinician, these scaffolded lessons conducted during professional development would benefit novices in recognizing the signs of job-related stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue.

The final implication for practice involves administrative support for early career teachers. Novice teachers can benefit from equitable and consistent administrative support. Administrative support is critical as teachers who resigned from their positions during the novice stages of their careers cited a lack of administrative support as a motivating factor in their

decision to leave (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). Of the working conditions novice teachers face in challenging environments, the need for fair and unbiased administrative support eclipsed experiences with challenging student behaviors, low salaries, and demanding workloads (Tran & Duo, 2019). While the type of support administrators provide can vary from one novice teacher to the next, administrative support must include encouragement, assistance when needed, and backing novices with difficult student behaviors. Novice teachers would further benefit from professional development provided by administrators such that expectations regarding student behaviors, observations, and lesson planning are clear and not translated through mentors and other leadership staff. Whether professional development or more personalized settings, administrative support can provide novice teachers with pedagogical knowledge, create professional competence, and improve relationships among novice teachers and administrators (Reitman & Karge, 2019).

Recommendations for practice relative to the implications involve school administrators accessing the support of local schools of public health such as the Bloomberg School of Public Health which has resources for public school educators working with children in high-poverty schools. Schools of public health can provide schools with background knowledge about ACEs inclusive of the most recent research concerning children in marginalized communities. In addition to schools of public health, the Maryland State Department of Education provides resources for school districts and schools such that teachers, specifically novice teachers, understand themselves in the context of poverty. These resources, which can be presented at faculty meetings or professional development sessions, can support teachers in knowing their students and understanding how to teach children who are culturally and linguistically diverse. The final set of recommendations for practice includes ways that administrators can support

novice teachers. School districts across the United States have instituted employee wellness programs designed to protect the mental well-being of teachers. Recommendations for practice include utilizing resources provided by these types of programs which include resources for recognizing the signs of burnout, meditation, and therapeutic and clinical supports when needed. Recommendations based on interactions with field testers who have become administrators include frequent check-ins with novice teachers. Personalized notes recognizing their work with students, inexpensive gift cards, and recognizing early signs of leadership qualities in novice teachers. The practices will do well in supporting novice teachers and retaining them in their current environments.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

There are two key recommendations for future research. The first recommendation involves the need for additional research related to job-related stress, fatigue, and burnout regarding novice teachers in urban environments working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences. Although qualitative and mixed methods studies have been conducted on frontline professionals who work with individuals exposed to trauma, there remains a critical need to explore the influence that the adverse experiences of children have on the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers as they experience increased amounts of job-related stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue. Although compassion fatigue is thought of more positively, the cost of caring (Brandt et al., 2020; Fleckman et al., 2022;) still adds to the fatigue and burnout encountered by novice teachers in urban environments. Given that children in high-poverty schools experience increased adversities, future research should explore the short and long-term influence of job-related stress, fatigue, and burnout, each having consequences for the retention of novice teachers (Brandt, 2020). Additional research on the influence of job-related

stress, fatigue, and burnout with novice teachers in urban environments would benefit schools and school districts with significant poverty-related challenges. Recommendations for research in these areas would support school districts in breaking the cycle of replacing novice teachers who chose to leave through continuous recruitment and hiring efforts (Glassow & Jerrim, 2022), thus reducing the number of novice teachers who must be hired each year. The time, effort, and cost of replacing novice teachers could be redirected towards reducing workload demands, increasing administrative and collegial support, and developing district-wide initiatives to reduce job-related stress, fatigue, and burnout.

The second recommendation for future research is to focus on diverse school contexts whereby novice teachers are likely to work with large numbers of students with ACEs and be influenced by the adversities of their students. Similar contexts would include rural and Appalachian school environments where novice teachers require support working with students whose adversities are linked to poverty and must gain a unique understanding of the social, historical, and political contexts of the communities in which their schools are located (Sherfinski et al., 2021; Tran & Duo, 2019). While suburban school environments provide education to children who are mainly White, middle, and upper class and more likely to attend college (Diamond et al., 2020), urban, rural, and Appalachian school community environments are often characterized by poor infrastructures, poverty, substance dependency, and children facing adverse and or traumatic experiences (Sherfinski et al., 2021; Tran & Duo, 2019). Future research on novice teachers should expand to these populations, as rural and Appalachian novice teachers are equally influenced by the need for training and professional development with challenging populations and facing job-related stress, burnout, and resignation. Further research with rural and Appalachian novice teachers in conjunction with more research on urban novice

teachers would help to eradicate the negative narrative attached to urban school environments as these populations consist primarily of non-minority student populations and families (Sherfinski et al., 2021).

## **Conclusions**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the feelings and experiences of novice elementary teachers working in urban school districts who are exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), possibly contributing to teacher burnout, fatigue, and resignation (Reilly et al., 2025). The study's problem is that novice elementary school teachers in urban environments are exposed to social-emotional stressors while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences (Dabrowski et al., 2025; Rose & Loomis, 2025), possibly contributing to teacher burnout, fatigue, and resignation (Reilly et al., 2025). Two research questions framed the study: (1) What are the social-emotional experiences of novice elementary school teachers in urban elementary school environments as they support students with adverse childhood experiences? and (2) How do novice elementary school teachers working in urban educational environments cope with their feelings about the adverse of childhood experiences the students they teach?

Through the collection of interview data and document analysis, the study's findings revealed that novice teachers are influenced by multiple factors that compound their experiences relative to how they cope with their feelings concerning the adversities of their students. The study findings were organized around six themes for each research question. The six themes aligned with RQ1 included teachers, community, parents/families, major ACEs, students, and

emotions. The six themes aligned with RQ2 included emotional safety, personal community, creating boundaries, self-care, stressors, and reasons why.

Factors revealed by the findings of this study include the need for novice teachers in challenging urban environments to feel bonded to and form connections with colleagues, families, and the communities in which their schools are located. In addition to novice teachers coping with their emotions, findings further revealed the physical toll of burnout on novice teachers, an ethereal calling to work with students with adversities, and the need for consistent administrative support such that novices remain in their current school environments. These findings highlight the factors that can add to why novice teachers stay in their schools despite their challenges, leave for a school with fewer stressors, or leave teaching in pursuit of another field.

Implications for practice suggest that novice teachers entering teaching without undergraduate degrees in education require more than mandated certification coursework if they are to remain in schools where they are likely to be influenced by the adversities of their students. Novice teachers can benefit from trauma-informed literacy, which provides insight into how they may be influenced by the transfer of student adversities. Trauma-informed literacy is needed to better prepare novice teachers for the possibilities of the mental and physical influence of their work with students with adversities and in some instances trauma. Holistic strategies for coping with job-related stress, fatigue, and burnout also have implications for novice teachers in stressful environments as the employment of a holistic approach inclusive of a self-care and wellness framework will aid in the retention of novice teachers where teacher turnover is generally higher than in less challenging environments (Glassow & Jerrim, 2022). Implications for practice include school districts and administrators employing the support of schools of

public health to provide novice teachers with greater context around poverty-related challenges encountered by children in marginalized communities.

Whereas collegial support and mentoring are critical for the retention of novice teachers, administrative support provides novice teachers with clear expectations and professional competencies needed to fulfill their role(s) as teachers. While demanding workloads, working conditions, and student behaviors may persist, relationships with administrators have been shown to increase retention and sustain novice teachers who are needed to fill a rapidly changing teacher workforce complete with a significant number of retirees in the coming years. With novice teachers being the most vulnerable during the first three to five years of teaching, urban school districts must create dual agendas that support students with ACEs and the novices that work with them such that novice teachers decide to remain in communities where they are likely to support a significant number of students with adverse childhood experiences.

## References

- Adeani, I. S., Febriani, R. B., & Syafrudin, S. (2020). Using GIBBS 'reflective cycle in making reflections of literary analysis. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 6(2), 139-148.  
<https://doi.org/10.25134/ieflj.v6i2.3382>.
- Asenahabi, B. (2019). Basics of research design: Guide to selecting appropriate research design. *International Journal of Contemporary Applied Researches*, 6(5), 76-89.
- Ansley, B., & Hutchins, D. (2019). Cultivating positive work contexts that promote teacher job satisfaction and retention in high-needs schools. *Journal of Special Education Leadership* 32(1), 3-16. <https://eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1274904.pdf>.
- Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019). What is qualitative research? *Qualitative Sociology*, 42, 139-160.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7>.
- Ajzenman, N., Bertoni, E., Elacqua, G., Marotta, L., & Vargas, C. M. (2024). Altruism or money? Reducing teacher sorting using behavioral strategies in Peru. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 42(4), 1049-1091. <https://doi.org/10.1086/725166>.
- Babchuk, W. (2019). Fundamentals of qualitative analysis in family medicine. *Family Medicine and Community Health*, 7(2), 1-10. <https://doi.10.1136/fmch-2018-000040>.
- Benson, K. L. (2020). Teacher training for students affected by adverse childhood experiences ACEs (Doctoral dissertation, California Lutheran University, 2020).
- Berger, E., Bearsley, A., & Lever, M. (2021). Qualitative evaluation of teacher trauma knowledge and response in schools. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, and Trauma*, 30(8), 1041-1057. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2020.1806976>.
- Bilbrey, J. B., Castanon, K. L., Copeland, R. B., Evanshen, P. A., & Trivette, C. M. (2024)

- Primary early childhood educators' perspectives of trauma-informed knowledge, confidence, and training. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 51(1), 67-88.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-022-00582-9>.
- Bettini, E., & Park, Y. (2021). Novice teachers' experiences in high-poverty schools: An integrative literature review. *Urban Education*, 56(1), 3-31.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916685763>.
- Bhutta, Z. A., Bhavnani, S., Betancourt, T. S., Tomlinson, M., & Patel, V. (2023). Adverse childhood experiences and lifelong health. *Nature Medicine*, 29(7), 1639-1648.  
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-023-02426-0>.
- Blodgett, C., & Lanigan, J. (2018). The association between adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and school success in elementary school children. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 53(1), 137–146. <https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000256>
- Bloomberg, L. (2017). *Techniques to identify themes in qualitative data*. [webinar]. Northcentral
- Bloomberg, L., & Volpe, M. (2019). *You are completing your qualitative dissertation: A roadmap from beginning to end* (4<sup>th</sup> ed). SAGE.
- Bock, C., Heitland, I., Zimmermann, T., Winter, L., & Kahl, K. G. (2020). Secondary traumatic stress, mental state, and work ability in nurses-results of a psychological risk assessment at a university hospital. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 11, 298.  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2020.00298>.
- Borges, N., DaSilva Fonseca, C., Baptista, P., Queiros, C., Baldonado Mosteiro, M., & Mosteiro-Diaz, M. (2019). *Compassion fatigue among nurses working on an adult emergency and urgent care unit*. *Rev-Latino-Am. Enfermagem*, 27. <https://doi.1590/1518-8345.2973.3175>.

- Borrero, N., Ziauddin, A., & Ahn, A. (2018). *Teaching for change: New teachers experiences with and visions for culturally relevant pedagogy*. *Critical Questions in Education*, 9(1), 22-39.
- Brandt, A., Santacrose, D., & Barnett, M. (2020). In the trauma-informed care trenches: Teacher compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, burnout, and intent to leave education within underserved elementary schools. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 110, 104437. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104437>.
- Broussard, D. (2021). Teachers' experiences teaching students who have traumatic experiences: A Case Study (Doctoral dissertation, Capella University).
- Buric, I., Sliskovic, A., & Macuka, I. (2018). A mixed-methods approach to the assessment of teachers' emotions: development and validation of the Teacher Emotion Questionnaire. *Educational Psychology*, (38)3, 325-349. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2017.1382682>.
- Camacho, D., Vera, E., Scardamalia, K., & Phalen, P. (2018). What are urban teachers' thinking? and feeling? *Psychology in the Schools*, 55(9), 1133-1150. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22176>. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191710670>.
- Camacho, S., & Henderson, S.C. (2022). The social detriments of adverse childhood experiences: An intersectional analysis of place, access to resources, and compounding effects. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(17), 10670.
- Candela, A. (2019). Exploring the function of member checking. *The Qualitative Report*, 24(3), 619-628.

- Chen, J. L., & Moore Mensah, F. (2022). Toward socially just science teaching through professional development: The science teacher identity development and agency of two elementary teachers of color. *Science Education, 106*(2), 385-411. <https://doi.10.1002/sce.21699>.
- Costa, D., & Moss, M. (2018). The cost of caring: Emotion, burnout, psychological distress in critical care clinicians. *Annals of the American Thoracic Society, 15*(7), 787-790.
- Creswell, J. (2018). *Essential skills for the qualitative researcher*. SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among the five approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) Sage.
- Dabrowski, A., Hsien, M., Van Der Zant, T., & Ahmed, S. K. (2025, January). “We are left to fend for ourselves”: Understanding why teachers struggle to support students’ mental health. In *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 9, p. 1505077). Frontiers Media SA. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.20241505077>.
- Danielson, R., & Saxena, D. (2019). Connecting adverse childhood experiences to community health to promote health equity. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 13*(7). <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12486>.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Podolsky, A. (2019). Breaking the cycle of teacher shortages: What kind of policies can make a difference? *Education Policy Analysis, 27*(34), 1-15. <https://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.27.4633>.
- DeVaney, S., Spangler, A., Lee, Y., & Delgadillo, L. (2018). Tips from the experts on conducting and reviewing qualitative research. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal, 46*(4), 396-405. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcsr.12264>.

- Diab, A., & Green, E. (2024). Cultivating resilience and success: Support systems for novice teachers in diverse contexts. *Educations Sciences*, 14(7), 2-19.  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsa/407011>.
- Diamond, J., Maddox, L., & Velasquez, M.D. (2021). Race, place, and opportunity in suburban educational spaces. *Educational Researcher*, 50(4), 249-255.  
<https://doi.org/10.30102/0013189X20972676>.
- Dube, S.R. (2024). Adverse childhood experiences research: The latest path forward. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 154, 106899. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.106899>.
- Epstein, J. (2018). School, family, and community partnerships in teacher's professional work. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 44(3), 1-11.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2018.1465669>.
- Esbjørn, B. H., Moltke-Aaen, F., Schwanz, K. A., & Paiva-Salisbury, M. (2025). An innovative Approach to addressing compassion fatigue: A feasibility study of a serious game. *Simulation & Gaming*, 10468781251350934.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/104687812513550934>.
- Essom-Stenz, A., & Roald, T. (2025). Imaginative Variations: A Phenomenological Analysis of Imaginary Worlds in Experiences of Visual Art. *Estetika: The European Journal of Aesthetics*, 62(1). <https://doi.org/10.33134/eeja.565>.
- Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., Koss, M. P., & Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4), 245–258. [doi.org](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1549-3767(98)00179-0)

- Finkelhor, D. (2020). Trends in adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in the United States. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 108*, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104641>
- Finlayson, C. S., Fu, M. R., Squires, A., Applebaum, A., Van Cleave, J., O'Ceaderbhail, R., & DeRosa, A. P. (2019). The experience of being aware of disease status I women with recurrent ovarian cancer: A phenomenological study. *Journal of Palliative Medicine, 22*(4), 377-384.
- Fleckman, J., Petrovic, L., Simon, K., Peele, H., Baker, C., & Overstreet, S. (2022). Compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, burnout: A mixed methods analysis in a sample of public-school educators working in marginalized communities. *School Mental Health, 14*(4), 933-950. [doi.org/10.1007/1230-022-09515-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/1230-022-09515-4).
- French, K. (2020). Identity development & belief change: Experiences of beginning urban teachers. *Current Issues in Education, 2*(3), 1–31.
- Fuchsman, D., McGee, J. B., & Zamarro, G. (2024). Teachers' knowledge and preparedness for retirement: Results from a nationally representative teacher survey. *AERA Open, 10*, 23328584241253819. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584241253819>
- Geiger, T., & Pivovarova, M. (2018). The effects of working conditions on teacher retention. *Teachers and Teaching, 24*(6), 604-625. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2018.1457524>
- Glassow, L., & Jerrim, J. (2022). Is inequitable teacher sorting on the rise? Cross-national evidence from 20 years of TIMSS. *Large-Scale Assessments, 10*(6), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40536-022-00125-9>.
- Gorard, S., Ledger, M., See, B. H., & Morris, R. (2025). What are the key predictors of international teacher shortages? *Research Papers in Education, 40*(4), 515-542. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2024.2414427>.

- Guest, A., Bunce, H., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59-82.  
[doi.org/10.1177/15225822X05279903](https://doi.org/10.1177/15225822X05279903).
- Hamai, T., & Felitti, V. (2022). *Adverse childhood experiences: Past, present, and future*. In: Geffner R., White J.W., Hamberger L.K., Rosenbaum A., Vaughan-Eden V., Vieth V. I. *Handbook of Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Across the Lifespan*. Springer, Cham. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-89999-9>.
- Haverly, C., Calabrese Barton, A., Schwarz, C. V., & Braaten, M. (2020). "Making space": How novice teachers create opportunities for equitable sense-making in elementary science. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 71(1), 63-79.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487118800706>.
- Holmes, A.G. (2020). Researcher positionality consideration of its influence and place in qualitative research: A new researcher guide. *International Journal of Education*, (8)4,1-10. <https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v8i4.3232>.
- Howard, T.C. & Milner, H.R. (2021). Teacher preparation for urban schools. In *Handbook of Urban Education* (pp. 195-211). Routledge.
- Herrera, S.P. (2020). *Situated learning theory. Theoretical Models for Teaching and Research*. Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: WSU Open Text
- Institutional Review Board, Northcentral University (2018). Pilot Studies and Field Tests.  
<http://www/commons.ncu.edu>.
- Juarez, S.W. & Becton, A.B. (2024). A self-care and wellness framework in educator prep to address burnout, compassion fatigue, & secondary traumatic stress. *Action in Teacher Education*, 46(2), 169-186. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educi14070711>.

- Kamrath, B. & Bradford, K. (2020). A case study of teacher turnover and retention in an urban elementary school. *Educational Consideration*, 45, (3), pp. 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.4148/0146-9282.2181>.
- Karatekin, C. & Hill, M. (2019). Expanding the original definition of adverse childhood Experiences (ACEs). *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma*, 12, 289-306. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-018-0237-5>.
- Kekeya, J. (2021). Qualitative case study research design: The commonalities and differences between collective, intrinsic, and instrumental case studies. *Contemporary PNG Studies*, 36, 28-37.
- Kirchherr, J. & Charles, K. (2018). Enhancing the sample diversity of snowball samples: Recommendations from a research project on anti-dam movements in Southeast Asia. *PloSone*, 13(8), e0201710. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone020170>.
- Kober, N., Rentner, D., Ferguson, M. (2022). For the common good: Recommitting to public Education in a time of crisis. *Center on Education Policy*. ED606967.
- Koenig, A., Rodger, S., & Specht, J. (2018). Educator burnout and compassion fatigue: A pilot study. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 33(4), 259-278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08295735168885017>.
- Korstjens, I. & Moser, A. (2018). “Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 120-124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092>.
- Kozikoglu, I. & Sendemoglu, N. (2023). Predictors of the challenges faced by beginning teachers: Pre-service teacher education competency and professional commitment *Research in Pedagogy*, (11)1, 1-16. EJ1317244.

- Kulkarni, S. J., & Notario, H. (2024). Trapped in housing insecurity: Socioecological barriers to housing access experienced by intimate partner violence survivors from marginalized communities. *Journal of community psychology*, 52(3), 439-458.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.23052>.
- Lampert, J. (2019). A community-engaged framework for the preparation of teachers for high-poverty communities. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, pp. 48, 449–466.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-020-00406-08>.
- Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2002). Teacher sorting and the plight of urban schools: A descriptive analysis. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(1), 37-62.  
<https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737024001037>.
- Lauterbach, A.A. (2018) Hermeneutic phenomenological interviewing: Going beyond semi-structured formats to help participants revisit experiences. *The Qualitative Report* (23)11, 2883-2898. <https://doi.org/10.46743.2160-3715/2018.3464>.
- Lawson, H., Caringi, J., Gottfried, R., Bride, B., & Hyndon, S. (2019). Educators' secondary traumatic stress. *Harvard Educational Review*, 89(3), 421–519. <https://doi.org/10.17763/1943-5045-89.3.421>.
- Leighton, J. P. (2021). Rethinking think-alouds: The often-problematic collection of response process data. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 34(1), 61-74.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08957347.2020.1835911>.
- Lester, J. Yonjoo, C., Lochmiller, C, (2020). Learning to do qualitative analysis: A starting point. *Human Resources Development Review*, 19(1), 94-106.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484320903890>.

- Leeuwen, N. & van Elk, M. (2019). Seeking the supernatural: The interactive religious experience model. *Religion, Brain, and Behavior*, 9(3), 221-251.
- Lemieux-Cumberlege, A. H., Griffiths, H., Pathe, E., & Burley, A. (2024). Posttraumatic stress disorder, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout in frontline workers in homelessness services: Risk and protective factors. *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness*, 33(2), 329-340. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10530789.2023.2191405>.
- Lindqvist, H. Weurlander, M. Wernerson, A. & Thornberg, R. (2023) The emotional journey of the beginning teacher: Phases and coping strategies, *Research Papers in Education*, (38)4, 615-635. <https://doi.10.1080/02671522.2022.2065518>.
- Luschei, T & Jeong, D. (2018). Is teacher sorting a global phenomenon? Cross national evidence on the nature and correlates of teacher quality opportunity gaps. *American Educational Research Association*, 47(9), 556-576.
- Mackieson, P., Shlonsky, A., Connolly, M. (2018). Increasing rigor and reducing bias in qualitative research: A document analysis of parliamentary debates using applied thematic analysis. *Qualitative Social Work*, 0(0), 1-16.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1437325018786996>.
- Manansala, G. A., & Eje-Dimaculangan, G. (2024). Beyond winning: Lived experiences of thriving young professionals raised in solo-parent families. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 2(8), 581-597. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0326>.
- Marshall, R. B. (2023). Teacher Preparedness to Support Students with Adverse Childhood Experiences. In M. Shelley, M. Unal, & S. Turgut (Eds.), *Proceedings of IHSES 2023 International Conference on Humanities, Social and Education Sciences* (pp. 188-206), Denver, CO, USA. ISTES Organization.

Maryland State Department of Education (2023). Maryland Certifications.

<http://www.Marylandpublicschools.org>.

McKinney, S. E., Ford, D. J., & Tomovic, C. (2024). The impact of star teacher characteristics on teacher selection and retention in urban high poverty schools: A qualitative analysis. *Education and Urban Society*, 56(4), 422-445.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/00131245221139451>.

Merrick, M., Ford, D., & Guinn, A. (2018). Prevalence of adverse childhood experiences from 2011 to 2014 behavioral risk factor surveillance system in 23 states. *JAMA Pediatric Medicine*, 172 (11), 1038-1044. <https://doi: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2018.2537>

Mertler, C.A. (2019). *Introduction to educational research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) SAGE.

Mersky, J., Choi, C., Plummer, C., & Janczewski, C. (2021). Disparities in adverse childhood experiences by race/ethnicity, gender, and economic status: Intersectional analysis of a nationally representative sample. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 117, 1-12.

<https://doi.10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105066>.

Mersky, J. P., & Janczewski, C. E. (2018). Racial and ethnic differences in the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences: Findings from a low-income sample of US women. *Child abuse & neglect*, 76, 480-487. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.12.012>.

Mitchall, A. M., & Jaeger, A. J. (2018). Parental influences on low-income, first-generation students' motivation on the path to college. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 89(4), 582-609.

Moir, E. (1990). Phases of first-year teaching. California New Teacher Project. (CDE) [online].

Morgan, H. (2022). Conducting a qualitative data analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(1), 64-77.

<https://doi.org/10.4673/2160-3715/2022.5044>.

- Moser, A, & Korstjens, (2018). Practical guidance to qualitative research: Sampling, data collection, and analysis. *The European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 9-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092>.
- Moustakas, C. E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. SAGE.
- Mulisa, F. (2022). When does a researcher choose a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed research approach? *Interchange*, 53(1), 113-131. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10780-021-09447-2>.
- Murphey, D. & Sacks, V. (2019). Supporting students with adverse childhood experiences: How educators and schools can help. *American Educator* 43(2), 8-11.
- Murray, B., Thurston, D., & Boylan, R. (2020). We are in this together: Bridging and bonding social capital in elementary school PTOs. *American Educational Research Journal*, (57)5, 2210-2244. <https://doi.org/10.3102.0002831220908848>.
- Murrell, P.C. (2000). Community teachers: A conceptual framework for preparing exemplary urban teachers. *The Journal of Negro History*, 69 (4), 338–348. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2696249>.
- Murrell, P. (2006). Toward social justice in urban education: A model of collaborative cultural inquiry in urban schools. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 39(1), 81–90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665680500478890>.
- Musson Rose, D., Loomis, A. Teacher Burnout, Student-Teacher Relational Closeness, and the Moderating Effect of Work Stress Focused Supervision. *Early Childhood Educ J* 53, 1027–1039 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-024-01651-7>.
- Mwita, K. (2022). Factors influencing data saturation in qualitative studies. *Research in Business & Social Science*, 11(4), 414-420. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbsvli4.1776>.

- Neubauer, B, Witkop, C., Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspect Med Educ*, 8, 90-97. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2>.
- O'Donnell, C. (2021). The common Awakening: Religion and the transatlantic roots of American public education. *The Journal of Childhood & Youth*, 14(4), 472–474. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190085155.001.0001>.
- Oplatka, I. & Gamerman, O. (2021). Compassion in urban teaching: Process, Arenas, and Factors. *Urban Education*, 56(2), 318-343. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916685765>.
- Ouellette, R., Frazier, S., Shernoff, E., Cappella, E., Mehta, T., Lora, A., Cua, G., & Atkins, S. (2018). Teacher job stress and satisfaction in urban schools: Disentangling individual, Classroom, and organizational level influences. *Behavioral Therapy*, 49(4), 494-508. <https://doi.org:10.1016/j.beth.2017.11.011>.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Petrucelli, K., Davis, J., & Berman, T. (2019). Adverse childhood experiences and associated health outcomes: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 97. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104127>.
- Podolsky, A., Kimi, T., Darling-Hammond, L., & Bishop, J. (2019) Strategies for attracting and retaining educators: What does the evidence say? *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 27(38), 1-32. <https://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.27.3722>.
- Privata, A., Kuswando, P. (2021). Exploring English novice teachers' identity transformation Influenced by community of practice. *Journal of Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 9(1), 1-13.

- Ramli, S. F., Ismail, N., & Isa, Z. The evolution of A progressively graying staff: A bibliometric analysis. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 30(1), 28-51. ISSN 2289-9855.
- Ray, D., Angus, E., Robinson, H., Kram, K., Tucker, S., Haas, S., & McClintock, D. (2019). Relationship between adverse childhood experiences, social-emotional competencies, and problem behaviors among elementary-aged children. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Counseling*, 6 (1), 70–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23727810.2020.1719354>.
- Reilly, D., Duyar, I., McBride, J., & Williams, R. (2025). Influence of Teachers' secondary traumatic symptoms on their burnout, compassion fatigue, and intentions to resign in low socioeconomic status schools. *OBM Integrative and Complementary Medicine*, 10(1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.21926/obm.icm.2501016>.
- Reitman, G.C. & Karge, B.D. (2019). Investing in teacher support leads to teacher retention: Six supports administrators should consider for new teachers. *Multicultural education*, 27(1), 7-18. <https://EJ1250205>.
- Rose, D.M., & Loomis, A. (2024). Teacher burnout, student-teacher relational closeness, and the moderating effect of work stress-focused supervision. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 53, 1027-1039. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s106430-024-01651-7>.
- Ruslin, Mashuri, S., Rasak, M., Alhabsyi, F., & Syam, H. (2022). Semi-structured interview: A methodological reflection on the development of a qualitative research instrument in educational studies. *Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 12(1), 22-29. <https://10.9790/7388-1201052229>.
- Saladana, J. (2016). Goodall's verbal exchange coding: An overview and example. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 22(11), 36-29. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000362>.

- Schmidt, L. & Fosu, S. (2019). Teacher stress in urban classrooms: A growing epidemic. *Urban Education Policy and Research Annuals*, 6(2), 18-26.
- Sherfinski, M., Hayes, S., Zhang, J. & Jalilifard, M. (2020). Grappling with funds of knowledge in rural Appalachia and beyond: Shifting contexts of pre-service teachers. *Empirical and conceptual Studies*, 43(2), 106-127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2020.1755384>.
- Schepers O. (2023). Exploring the demographics of teachers who experience secondary traumatic stress. *BMC psychology*, 11(1), 181. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01217-z>.
- See, B., Morris, R., Gorard, S., & El Soufi, N. (2020). What works in attracting and retaining teachers in challenging schools and areas? *Oxford Review of Education*, 46(6), 678-697. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2020.1775566>.
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researcher's in education and the social Sciences*. Teachers College Press.
- Sevelius, J.M., Gutierrez-Mock L, Zamudio-Haas S, McCree B, Ngo A., Jackson A., Clynes C, Venegas L, Salinas A, Herrera C, Stein E, Operario D, Gamarel K. (2020). Research with marginalized communities: Challenges to continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic. *National Library of Medicine*, 24(7), 2009-2012. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-020-02920-3>.
- Silverio, S., Hall, J. & Sandall, J. (2020, January). Time and qualitative research: Principles, Pitfalls, Perils [PowerPoint Presentation]. The Sixth Annual Qualitative Research Symposium: Tick Tock: Unpacking the Temporal Aspects of Qualitative Inquiry.

- Skytterstad, R., Antonsen, Y., Aspfors, J., & Heikkinen, H. L. (2025). Reframing new teacher induction: Opportunities over deficiencies. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 155*, 104910. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.104910>.
- org/10.1007/978-1-449-1005-9\_285.
- Staehili, M., Mason, C., & Asby, D. (2023). *Assessing adverse childhood events (ACEs) in schools. Handbook of Adverse Childhood Experiences: A Framework for Collaborative Health Promotion, 67-80.*
- Staller, K. (2021). Big enough? Sampling in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Social Work, 0(0)*, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14733250211024516>.
- Sozen, P. (2018). Challenges of novice teachers. *International E-Journal of advances in education, 6(12)*, 1-5. <https://ijaedu.ocerintjournals.org>.
- Swerbenski, H. & Gary, S. (2020). Family social support buffers the intergenerational association between maternal adverse childhood experiences and preschoolers' externalizing behavior. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 90 (4)*, 489–501. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/ort0000451>.
- Theofanidis, D. & Fountouki, A. (2018). Limitations and delimitations in the research process. *Perioperative Nursing, 7 (3)*, 155-163. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2552022>.
- Thomas, C.L., Tancock, S.M., Zygmunt, E.M., & Sutter, N. (2020). Effects of a community engaged teacher preparation program on the culturally relevant teaching self-efficacy of preservice teachers. *Journal of Negro Education 89(2)*, 122-135. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/802549>.
- Tisdell, E. J., Merriam, S. B., & Stuckey-Peyrot, H. L. (2025). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.

- Tran, H. & Duo, J. (2019). An exploratory examination of what types of administrator support matter for rural teacher talent management: The rural educator perspective. *Education Leadership Review, 20*(1), 133-149. <https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000001216>
- Urban, W., Wagoner, J., Gaither, M. (2019). *American education: A history*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Usmani, S. S., Mehendale, M., Shaikh, M. Y., Sudan, S., Guntipalli, P., Ouellette, L., & Shoib, S. (2024). Understanding the impact of adverse childhood experiences on non-suicidal self-injury in youth: a systematic review. *Alpha psychiatry, 25*(2), 150. <https://doi.org/10.5152/alphapsychiatry.2024.231139>.
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 2017–18.
- van Manen & van Manen (2021). Doing phenomenological research writing. *Qualitative Health Research, 31*(6), 1069-1082. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323211003058>.
- White, S., Bourke, T., Mills, R., Mills, M., van Leent, L., Wood, C., & Readette, M. (2025). Career change teachers: solving the teacher shortage?. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 48*(1), 97-112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2024.2407546>.
- Wilson, N., Lee, S., Williams, J. & Lewis, C. (2024). Examining urban teachers' working conditions response to resilience following the results of Covid-19. *Journal of Urban learning, Teaching and Research, EJ 1428393*.
- Yeong, M. Ismail, R., Ismail, N. & Hamzah, M. (2018). Interview protocol refinement: qualitative research interview questions for multi-racial populations in Malaysia. *The Qualitative Report, 23*(11), 2700-2713. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3412>

- Ziaian-Ghafari, N. & Berg, D. (2019). The experiences of teachers working with students with exceptionalities. *Exceptional Education International*, 29(1), 32-53. <http://doi.org/10.5206/eei.v29i.7778>.
- Zavelevsky, E., Lishchinsky, O., Benoliel, P., Klein, J., & Schechter, C. (2022). Ecological school culture for novice teachers' retention: Principal's perceptions. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 21(4), 922-937. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2021.1879170>.
- Zhukova, O. (2018). Novice teachers' concerns, early professional experiences, and development: Implications for theory and practice. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education*, 9(1), 100–114. <http://doi.org/10.2478/dcse-2018-0008>

## Appendices

## Appendix A

### Email Recruitment Letter

My name is Robin L. Banks, and I am a doctoral student at National University. I am conducting a phenomenological research study to explore the influence of students' adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers in urban environments, possibly leading to burnout, fatigue, and resignation.

I am recruiting individuals who meet all of these criteria:

Eligible participants must be novice teachers with less than five years of professional experience in education and still working toward a standard professional teaching certificate. Participants must also be hired or recruited through a specific teacher residency program designed to train teachers to work in urban environments or possess an undergraduate degree in a field unrelated to education. Novice teachers must be full-time classroom teachers of children in the elementary grades and teach in one or more core subject areas such as reading, math, science, or social studies. Novice teachers involved in this study must serve as general or special educators, with children likely to be influenced by adverse childhood experiences due to circumstances beyond their control. Finally, participants must be willing to share and elaborate on their experiences as beginning teachers in urban settings with children likely to face adverse childhood experiences.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following activities:

You will be asked to engage in an initial telephone interview with me designed to establish a baseline of rapport. During this time, you will be asked a few brief questions about where you grew up and provide a description of your community. You will be asked about your school and educational experiences, including questions about grades, peer influences, and interactions with teachers. This initial telephone interview will be scheduled during a convenient time for your schedule.

Following the telephone interview, you will be scheduled to participate in two in-person, individual interviews. The first individual interview may take place in the school-based setting of your choice, such as a classroom, library, or planning room. You may also meet at an off-campus location, such as a coffee shop. Questions asked during the individual in-person interview will focus on the details of your experience related to the influence that the adverse childhood experiences of students can have on your experiences as a novice teacher. This interview will include key areas that can compound the social emotional experiences of novice teachers. These factors include the school setting, building leadership, mentorship, and support systems. You will be asked to share personal documents and physical evidence or artifacts that support your experiences. Forms of documentation may include, but will not be limited to, email communication, journals, blogs, notifications, and letters from those critical to your work as a novice teacher. The final interview will focus on the meaning that you apply to the details of your experiences and will allow you to reflect on what your experiences as a novice teacher in an urban school setting mean to you.

There will be no monetary compensation for your participation in this study, but refreshments will be provided for in-person sessions. Teacher supplies such as Flip-chart Sharpies, decorative note pads, organizers, magnets, colored paper clips, and felt writing pens will be given to participants to use in their classrooms as tokens of appreciation for engaging in this study.

If you decide to participate in this study, please know that your participation is voluntary and that you are free to end your participation at any time. If you meet the eligibility criteria for this study and are willing to elaborate on your experiences as a novice teacher in an urban education setting with elementary-aged children likely to face adverse childhood experiences, please use the contact information below.

Robin L. Banks, Doctoral Student  
National University  
robinbanks85@gmail.com

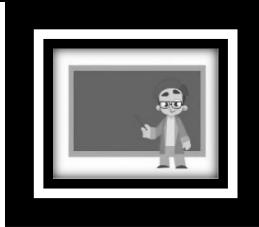
Thank you.

## Appendix B

### Recruitment Flyer

**Are you a novice elementary school teacher in an urban school setting?**

**If so consider participating in a research study designed to explore the social-emotional stressors novice teachers face while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences.**



Cartoon image of a teacher in front of a chalkboard with a pointer.

- Do you currently teach in an urban elementary school with students likely to face adverse childhood experiences?
- Do you have less than five years of teaching experience in an urban school setting.
- Are you a general or special education teacher in grades kindergarten through 5th grade?
- Do you provide full-time academic instruction in one or more core subject areas?
- Do you possess a conditional teaching certificate or participate in a teacher preparation program?
- Have you experienced burnout, fatigue, stressors and thoughts of resignation connected to ACEs?

*If you participate you will be asked to take part in three separate interviews over Zoom (or in person in a public space if so desired). Interviews will range from 30-45 minutes and will inquire about your background and what drew you to urban education. You will be asked about the details of your experiences and what those experiences mean to you as a novice teacher in an urban school setting with learners facing childhood adversities. You will be asked to share documents supporting your experiences which may include images, artifacts, and/or personal documentation during the second and third interviews via a confidential Google Drive. Identifying information for documents will be concealed or removed.*

Your participation in this study would be completely voluntary. If interested, scan the QR code to see if you qualify. For questions email [robinbanks85@gmail.com](mailto:robinbanks85@gmail.com) or 443 857 0598.

Robin L. Banks,  
Doctoral Candidate



## Appendix C

### Social Media Flyer



Illustration of a computer screen.

#### **Are you a novice elementary school teacher in an urban school setting?**

**If so consider participating in a research study designed to explore the social-emotional stressors novice teachers face while working with large numbers of students with adverse childhood experiences.**

- Do you currently teach in an urban elementary school with students likely to face adverse childhood experiences?
- Do you have less than five years of teaching experience in an urban school setting.
- Are you a general or special education teacher in grades kindergarten through 5th grade?
- Do you provide full-time academic instruction in one or more core subject areas?
- Do you possess a conditional teaching certificate or participate in a teacher preparation program?
- Have you experienced burnout, fatigue, stressors and thoughts of resignation connected to ACEs?

*If you participate you will be asked to take part in three separate interviews over Zoom (or in person in a public space if so desired). Interviews will range from 30-45 minutes and will inquire about your background and what drew you to urban education. You will be asked about the details of your experiences and what those experiences mean to you as a novice teacher in an urban school setting with learners facing childhood adversities. You will be asked to share documents supporting your experiences which may include images, artifacts, and/or personal documentation during the second and third interviews via a confidential Google Drive. Identifying information for documents will be concealed or removed.*

Your participation in this study would be completely voluntary. If interested, scan the QR code to see if you qualify. For questions email [robinbanks85@gmail.com](mailto:robinbanks85@gmail.com) or 443 857 0598.

PLEASE CONTACT ME ON ANY OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA SITES LISTED:

LINKEDIN

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/robin-banks>

INSTAGRAM

<https://www.instagram.com/neatandtidywriter/>

## Appendix D

### Consent Letter

My name is Robin L. Banks, and I am a doctoral student at National University (NU). I am asking you to take part in a research study about the influence of students' adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on the social-emotional experiences of novice teachers in urban environments, possibly leading to burnout, fatigue, and resignation.

You may participate in this research if you meet all of the following criteria:

1. Teach in an urban elementary school with students likely to face childhood adversities.
2. Have less than five years of teaching experience in an urban school setting.
3. Work as a general or special education teacher in grades kindergarten through 5th grade.
4. Provide full-time academic instruction in one or more core subject areas.
5. Possess a conditional teaching certificate or participate in a teacher preparation program.
6. Experienced burnout, fatigue, stressors, and thoughts of resignation connected to ACEs

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

**What you will be asked to do:** If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following activities:

1. Engage in a three-series interview protocol over Zoom (or in person in a public space if so desired).
2. Interview #1: Focused Life History Interview (30 minutes)
3. Interview #2: Details of the Experience (30-45 minutes)
4. Interview #3: Reflections on the Meaning of the Experience (30-45 minutes)
5. Engage in document submission including images, artifacts, and/or personal documentation to support the details of experiences and the meaning applied to experiences.
6. Submit personal and professional documentation of your experiences in electronic or hard copy form via a confidential Google drive where identifying information will be concealed or removed.

During these activities, you will be asked questions about:

- Your background and what drew you to urban education.
- Your daily experiences and what those experiences mean to you as a novice teacher in an urban school setting with learners facing childhood adversities.

**Risks:** There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with this study. You can still skip any question you do not wish to answer, skip any activity, or stop participation at any time.

**Benefits:** If you participate, there are no direct benefits to you. This research may increase the body of knowledge in the subject area of this study.

**Recording:** I would like to audio record your responses with Zoom during the interview. You can disable the video function of the online meeting platform at any time.

**Privacy and Data Protection:** I will take reasonable measures to protect the security and confidentiality of all your personal information. In addition to me, the following people and offices will have access to your data:

- My National University dissertation committee and any appropriate National University support or leadership staff
- The National University Institutional Review Board

This data could be used for future research studies or distributed to other investigators for future research studies without additional informed consent from you or your legally authorized representative.

**Mandated Reporting:** My professional role outside of NU requires me to report suspicion of child or elderly abuse, suspicion of possible harm to self or others, and committed crimes to the appropriate authorities.

**Confidentiality:** I will keep records of this study private and take reasonable measures to protect the security of all your personal information. In any report I make public, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. I will securely store your data for 3 years. Then, I will delete electronic data and destroy paper data.

**Taking part is voluntary:** Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may quit at any time.

**If you have questions:** Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at robinbanks85@gmail.com .

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) via email at irb@nu.edu.

## Appendix E

### Interview Protocol

The following interview questions are aligned with the research questions that guide this study. Please note that each participant interviewed will respond to the following questions with the understanding that participants are free not to respond or skip a question at any time. Participants also understand that this semi-structured interview is being recorded for researcher reflections, the accuracy of data reporting, and data analysis.

Participant 1 (code name or pseudonym)

Opening Statement: Hello (code name or pseudonym), thank you for voluntarily participating in this research study and answering a series of questions related to this topic. Thank you for signing and returning the consent form, which allowed me to proceed with this study. As a reminder, I will record the entire interview to help capture your thoughts and perspective. May I begin recording the interview?

We will begin with you introducing yourself and sharing some of your personal, demographic, and background information. This first interview is titled The Focused Life History. Please answer the next several questions to the degree that makes you most comfortable. Feel free to elaborate beyond the question asked.

1. Where did you grow up, and how would you describe your experiences growing up in an urban, suburban, rural, or small-town environment?
2. How would you describe your childhood and family experiences? What specific examples can you provide of how and in what ways you experienced your childhood and family environment?
3. How would you describe the neighborhood or community where you grew up and your overall experiences within your childhood community?
4. How would you describe your school and educational experiences, including grades, attendance, disciplinary concerns, and relationships with teachers and peers?
5. Did your school and educational experiences bring you to the teaching profession? If so, describe how. If not, what experiences brought you to teaching?
6. How and in what ways did your combined experiences bring you to teaching in an urban environment with students likely to be influenced by ACEs?
7. How has the context of teaching in an urban environment with students likely to be influenced by ACEs compare/contrast to your school, community, and family experiences?

We will now explore questions related to the details of your daily experiences. With the details of the experiences grounded in the reality of your experiences, you will be asked to support your experiences with personal documents and physical evidence or artifacts.

1. What is it like to teach in an urban environment with students likely to experience a range of adverse childhood experiences?
2. What is it like to work in your current school setting? Can you describe your daily experiences, including resources and building facilities, and how they influence you?

3. In what ways and how did your teacher residency program, new teacher institute, or coursework prepare you for the possible influence that the adverse childhood experiences of students can have on your social-emotional experiences as a teacher in an urban environment?
4. What influence does the surrounding community, including parents and caregivers, have on your experiences as it relates to how you are influenced by the ACEs of your students?
5. How important is social-emotional support from peers and colleagues in your work with students facing adverse childhood experiences?
6. What does social-emotional support for you as a novice teacher influenced by the adverse childhood experiences of your students feel like? What does it look like?
7. What is the significance of your interactions with your social support systems beyond your school environment and their role in how you may be affected by the ACEs of your students?
8. How and in what ways do these relationships sustain you in your daily school experiences relative to how student ACEs can influence you as a novice teacher?
9. What internalized coping mechanisms have you developed to cope with your daily experiences as it relates to serving as a novice teacher in an urban environment teaching a large number of students with ACEs?

The final set of questions will ask you to reflect on the meaning of your experiences as a novice teacher in an urban environment likely to be influenced by the adverse childhood experiences of your students.

1. What are your experiences with burnout and compassion fatigue, and what does it look like and feel like to you?
2. What is it like to experience burnout and compassion fatigue? How do you balance the contrast between the two?
3. How do you feel about the adverse childhood experiences of the students you teach?
4. What does the *cost of caring* mean to you as it relates to the influence that the adverse childhood experiences of students can have on your social-emotional experiences as a novice teacher?
5. What does it mean to be a novice teacher in an urban environment influenced by the adverse childhood experiences of the students you teach?
6. How do your experiences as a novice teacher in an urban environment reflect your desire to remain or not remain in your current school setting, where you are likely to be influenced by the adverse childhood experiences of your students?

Is there anything else you would like to add or discuss?

Thank you for responding to the questions and sharing your experiences.

## Appendix F

### Interview Protocol Matrix

Interview Questions	Research Question 1	Research Question 2
<b>Focused Life History</b>	What are the social-emotional experiences of novice elementary school teachers in urban environments as they support students with adverse childhood experiences?	How do novice teachers in urban elementary school environments cope with their feelings about the adverse childhood experiences of the students they teach?
Where did you grow up, and how would you describe your experiences growing up in an urban, suburban, rural, or small-town environment?	X	X
How would you describe your childhood and family experiences? What specific examples can you provide of how and in what ways you experienced your childhood and family environment?		X
How would you describe the neighborhood or community where you grew up and your overall experiences within your childhood community?		X
How would you describe your school and educational experiences, including grades, attendance, disciplinary concerns, and relationships with teachers and peers?		X
How did your school and educational experiences bring you to the teaching profession? If so, describe how. If not, what experiences brought you to teaching?		X
How and in what ways did your experiences bring you to teaching in an urban environment with students likely to be influenced by ACEs?		
How has the context of teaching in an urban environment with students likely to experience ACEs compare/contrast to your school, community, and family experiences?		X
<b>Details of the Experience</b>		

What is it like to teach in an urban environment with students likely to experience a range of adverse childhood experiences?	X	
What is it like to work in your current school setting? Can you describe your daily experiences, including resources and building facilities, and how they influence you?	X	X
In what ways and how did your teacher residency program, new teacher institute, or coursework prepare you for the possible influence that the adverse childhood experiences of students can have on your social-emotional experiences as a teacher in an urban environment?	X	X
What influence does the surrounding community, including parents and caregivers, have on your experiences as it relates to how you are influenced by the ACEs of your students?	X	X
How important is social-emotional support from peers and colleagues in your work with students facing adverse childhood experiences?		X
What does social-emotional support for you as a novice teacher influenced by the adverse childhood experiences of your students feel like? How does it feel?	X	X
What is the significance of your interactions with your social support systems beyond your school environment and their role in how you may be influenced by the ACEs of your students?	X	X
How and in what ways do these relationships sustain you in your daily school experiences relative to how student ACEs can influence you as a novice teacher?	X	X
What internalized coping mechanisms have you developed to cope with your daily experiences as	X	

it relates to serving as a novice teacher in an urban environment teaching a large number of students with ACEs?

### Reflections on Meaning

What are your experiences with burnout and compassion fatigue, and how does it look and feel?

X

X

Have these experiences led to considerations of resigning?

What is it like to experience burnout and compassion fatigue?

X

X

How do you balance the contrast between the two?

How do you feel about the adverse childhood experiences of the students you teach?

X

What does the *cost of caring* mean to you as it relates to the influence that the adverse childhood experiences of students can have on your social-emotional experiences as a novice teacher?

X

What does it mean to be a novice teacher in an urban environment influenced by the adverse childhood experiences of the students you teach?

X

How do your experiences as a novice teacher in an urban environment reflect your desire to remain or not remain in your current school setting, where you are likely to be influenced by the adverse childhood experiences of your students?

X

## Appendix G

### Codes, Interview Transcripts, and Research Question 1 Responses First Cycle Coding

Theme	Participant #	Quote
Research Question 1		
Teachers	1	Parents first teachers Relationships with teachers Absent teachers Teacher Inclusivity Substitute teachers
	2	Other teachers Novice Teachers x 2 Novice Teachers less valued New Teachers x 2 Absent Teachers Mentor Teachers listen
	3	Teacher Trainer No Veteran Teacher Support Veteran Teachers Unsupportive veteran Teachers
	5	Teacher Boredom Novice Teachers Neglected
	6	Teacher Trainer Novice Teacher Neglected Younger Veteran Teachers

Community	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsafe community</li> <li>Transient</li> <li>Decaying structures</li> <li>Surrounding community</li> <li>Police</li> <li>Sub-culture</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surrounding communities</li> <li>Unstable lives</li> <li>Good community partners</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After School Community Events</li> <li>Nice community</li> <li>Concerned community</li> <li>Community Connected to Veterans</li> </ul>
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High Needs Community</li> <li>Housing</li> <li>School community Collaboration</li> <li>principal bedrock of community</li> <li>high needs</li> <li>love community</li> <li>helpful community partners</li> <li>school and community</li> </ul>
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenic community</li> <li>Apathetic community</li> <li>Established community</li> </ul>
	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community events</li> <li>Big community school</li> <li>Community artwork (on walls)</li> <li>Multi-lingual community</li> <li>Love this community</li> <li>Community college support</li> <li>Farming community (for comfort)</li> <li>Community resource center</li> </ul>
Parents/Families	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parental frustrations</li> <li>Missing parents</li> <li>Grandmother caretaker</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent interruptions</li> <li>Demanding parents</li> <li>Cursing parents</li> <li>Threatening parents</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displaced mothers</li> <li>Unhealthy romantic relationships</li> <li>Moms abused</li> <li>Positive parent relationships</li> <li>Household dysfunction</li> </ul>

	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent volunteers</li> <li>Grandparent volunteers</li> <li>Parents not picking kids up after school</li> <li>Identify with immigrant families</li> </ul>
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents cannot support progress in school</li> <li>Parents as school partners</li> <li>Chosen family</li> </ul>
	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worry about immigrant families</li> </ul>
Major ACEs	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unstable shelter/housing</li> <li>Missing parents</li> <li>Community violence gangs</li> <li>Bullied</li> <li>Unmet basic needs</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical altercations</li> <li>Some live in shelters</li> <li>Stay with relatives</li> <li>Food insecurity</li> <li>Housing insecurity</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homelessness</li> <li>Displaced temporarily</li> <li>Abusive situations</li> <li>Neglect</li> <li>Incarcerated relatives</li> </ul>
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chronically absent</li> <li>Immigrant status</li> <li>Limited English</li> <li>Family translator</li> </ul>
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental and emotional problems</li> <li>ADHD</li> <li>Fighting, behavior problems</li> <li>Over diagnosed with disabilities</li> </ul>
	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worried children</li> <li>Chronic sadness</li> <li>Missing school</li> <li>Unstable lives</li> </ul>
Students	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Below grade level</li> <li>Engaging students</li> <li>Adult-like</li> <li>Sub-culture</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minority and marginalized</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various reading levels</li> <li>Childhood innocence</li> <li>Harsh adversities</li> <li>Running in halls</li> <li>Struggle with writing</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students distress</li> <li>Social needs</li> <li>Supporting students through their adversities</li> <li>Children suffer</li> <li>Parental abuse</li> </ul>
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food subsidies</li> </ul>
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behavior problems</li> <li>Academic struggles</li> </ul>
	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language barriers</li> <li>Boredom</li> <li>Old curriculum</li> <li>Culturally irrelevant materials</li> </ul>
Emotions	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High stress</li> <li>Burnout (state of)</li> <li>Physically/mentally done</li> <li>Worried</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional overload</li> <li>Fatigue/compassion fatigue</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fatigue</li> <li>Mental load</li> <li>Burnout</li> <li>Want to quit</li> <li>Guilt</li> <li>Low energy</li> </ul>
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extreme exhaustion</li> <li>Joy</li> <li>Caring</li> <li>Frustration</li> <li>Compassion satisfaction</li> </ul>
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detached</li> <li>In a bad place sometimes</li> </ul>
	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety</li> <li>Numb</li> <li>Mood shifts</li> <li>Fear of observations</li> <li>Bad nerves</li> </ul>

## Appendix H

### Codes, Interview Transcripts, and Research Question 2 Responses First Cycle Coding

Theme	#	Participant	Quote
Research Question 2			
Emotional Safety	1		Safe haven in rooms and offices Inclusivity feels good Love my teacher community Male administrator School Zen room Music Soft lamps Life saver
	2		Safe classroom for children Teacher best friend Fellow novice teacher Fun gossip Self-protection
	3		Mentor teacher's classroom Shared food and music Grade-level team Support
	4		At peace Trusting
	5		Teacher Friends Always a listening ear

	6	Fellow novice teacher Students Confidant
Personal Community	1	Zoom family dinners Spouse Father is a pastor
	2	Sister best friend Teacher friend, fellow novice teacher Family back home Sister-in-law College friend
	4	My spouse, my husband Mom, aunt, grandmother Kids (students)
	6	Son, son's girlfriend Family farm feels serene Rural community Neighbors are some of my close friends Friends Former teachers
Boundaries	1	Unplugging on weekends No lesson planning on weekends No grading
	3	Standing up to oneself Standing up to bullies Planned sick out
	4	Not staying as late Limiting support given to community Appointments for parents
	6	Vocalizing wrong actions of adults Hard conversations with school leader Limiting time after school with parents and students
Self-Care	1	Passions/hobbies Prioritize spouse

	2	Parent interruptions Demanding parents Cursing parents Threatening parents
	3	Displaced mothers Unhealthy romantic relationships Moms abused
	3	Journaling Back to dance class Music
	4	Desserts Time with spouse Shutting down computer-evenings
	5	Double dates Stop worrying
Stressors	3	Personal triggers Impoverished childhood Feels like PTSD Unintended consequences Administrative team
	2	Urban Blythe/decay Feeling bullied reprimands
	4	principal principal tantrums
	5	Volatile student behaviors Unannounced classroom visits School leader Cold veteran staff
	6	Missing students from school School leader Singled out by principal
The Why	1	The Lord's work

- A spiritual calling  
Want better for kids
- 3 Children from like backgrounds  
Sees self in children  
Kindred spirits teachers and students  
Social needs
- 2 Dedicated to working with students with ACEs  
Desire to protect vulnerable children
- 4 Shared cultural identity  
Understand family stories  
Understands barriers  
Value of an education for children  
Doing God's work with children
- 5 Cultural background  
Cares what happens  
Kids feel safe to unload
- 6 Trusting adult for children  
More than a teacher  
Rewarding  
Called to work with children facing trauma  
Preventing adversities

## Appendix I

### Codes, Interview Transcripts, and Research Question 1 Responses Second Cycle Coding

Theme	Participant #	Transcript Data	Code
Teachers	3	The teachers around me know things that I would not want to trouble my family with...	Teachers around me
		My family has never seen the amount of the tears I shed with my mentor teacher and the other teachers on my grade level team	Tears shed with other teachers
	2	Millie, the other novice teacher is an actual friend to me. I put them in the same category as I would all of my other lifelong friends.	Fellow novice, lifelong friend
Community	6	We (another novice teacher) are confidants who bond over the adversities of our students.	Bonded with teacher over student adversities
	4	It is an understanding of the values that people living in close proximity hold	Understand of values of the community My families' stories
	2	This shows that I am comfortable in their community. I support their community businesses	I am part of the community; the parents see me
	1	Taking the grandmother of one of my students to Walmart to get a few groceries allowed me to see the parents and the community in a new light through her eyes	See community in a new light
		My students trivialize community violence, and it upsets me. They found humor in a student being attacked by another group of students	
Major ACEs	2	I found out that one of my best students and her mother were temporarily living in her mom's car	Unhoused and temporarily displaced
	3	Our school has a food pantry that opens up to the entire community. I never realized how many of my students struggle with not enough to eat	Food pantry Communities and parents not having enough to eat
Students	1	I do not know what I am doing. I have so many students below grade level (in reading). I would like for someone to teach me how to teach them.	Many students below grade level
	5	I have been put in harm's way when my high-flyers have meltdowns.	Harm's way High-flyer meltdowns

		Staplers and other objects have been thrown at me	Objects thrown
	4	Most of my students struggle with the language while finding the content foreign to them.	Struggle with language
Emotions		They also worry about parents and family members and deportation	Family and deportation
	6	I am anxious all the time. I was not like this before I started teaching	Anxious all the time
	1	I found myself extremely depressed after being placed on a PIP (improvement plan) with no real support.	Extremely depressed
	4	I find joy in those small breakthrough moments and wins with my students	Joy, breakthrough moments

## Appendix J

### Codes, Interview Transcripts, and Research Question 2 Responses Second Cycle Coding

Theme	Participant #	Transcript Data	Code
Emotional Safety	3	We [the teachers] hand off our emotional baggage to one another, and it helps that I do not feel like I burdening my colleagues. Being surrounded by a majority of veteran staff members makes me feel extremely safe	Emotional baggage handoff Feel extremely safe
	5	Food and music in my best friends classroom prevented my meltdown	Prevented meltdown Best friends classroom
	2	I know that I am safe and feel supported when I hang out in my friend's classroom. The safety I feel is not based on words, but it is the energy of care and protection that I feel	Safe and feel supported Energy of care and protection
Personal Community	6	I am fortunate to have great neighbors and friends who support me, including a friend who taught for almost 20 years	Great friends and neighbors
		I have my son and my home community when I worry too much over the safety of my students and their families	Son and home community
	2	My sister-in-law is the person with whom I feel the safest.  She is my community of one where I am allowed to be my authentic self without being judged	Sister-in-law; safest Community of one
Boundaries	4	I have learned to place time limits on emails, lesson planning, and responding to the parents of my students	Time limits
	1	After that [experience with [burnout], I placed boundaries and limits on everything associated with teaching	Experience with burnout Time limits and boundaries
Self-care	4	I have learned to prioritize myself by pausing before my body forces me to do otherwise. I enjoy a decadent meal	Prioritize myself

		I practice meditation and yoga	Meditation and yoga
	1	I went back to visiting Black art exhibitions at museums	Black art exhibitions
		I participate in writing workshops	Writing workshops
	6	I never miss regular salon appointments or massages after my hair started thinning	Regular salon appointments
Stressors	6	I felt extremely stressed and overwhelmed having to do a presentation for a class after teaching all day or staying up at night writing papers and preparing useless presentations to get certified	Extremely stressed and overwhelmed Useless presentations
	1	I am triggered by the person who is supposed to lead me to becoming a better teacher	Triggered by my [school] leader
	5	The behavior contract I had been implementing was upended with by my principal informing me that the contract did not with the school's behavior initiatives	Contract upended by principal School behavior initiatives
	3	My principal's dismissiveness ignites each and every one of my triggers	Each and every trigger
The Why	1	My father reminds that I am doing the Lord's work supporting children through their adversities	Doing the Lord's work
	6	This is a higher calling	Higher calling
		I did not choose this career, it chose me	Career chose me
	3 and 4	I am committed to supporting children who share my same aesthetic and cultural background(s) through their childhood adversities	Same aesthetic Cultural backgrounds

## Appendix K

### Initial Clusters and Codes Leading to the Study's Themes

*RQ 1:* What are the social-emotional experiences of novice elementary school teachers in urban elementary school environments as they support students with adverse childhood experiences?

<b>Cluster I</b>	<b>Cluster II</b>	<b>Cluster III</b>	<b>Cluster IV</b>	<b>Cluster V</b>	<b>Cluster VI</b>	<b>Cluster VII</b>	<b>Cluster VIII</b>
<i>Worker</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Childhood</i>	<i>Phones</i>	<i>Kids</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Experiences</i>
Social worker	Teacher influence	Low-income community	Good childhood	Unlocking phones	Just little kids	Food insecurity	Different experience
previous work	substitute teacher	community violence	childhood misery	cell phone problems	Desperate kids	Food scarcity	Mirrored experiences
hard-working	volunteer/retired teachers'	unsafe decaying communities	interrupted childhood experiences	altercations over phones	Hardened kids	Food desert	childhood experience
preventive work	parents first teachers	rebuilding communities in transition	childhood adversity	stealing phones	Siblings My Kids	Hungry Weekend food packs	adverse childhood experiences
	cursing teachers	gentrified communities	housing instability	source of negative experience			
	finished teacher certification	immigrant community	unhoused homelessness	social media			
	Trusting/teachers	community culture/pride	couch surfing				
	Teacher mentors	community investment					
	Teacher best friends	community partners/stakeholders					
	Teacher silos						
	Teacher mentor/coach	underserved marginalized communities					
	Teacher friends	partnerships advocates					

**RQ 2:** How do novice elementary school teachers working in urban education environments cope with their feelings about the adverse childhood experiences of the students they teach?

<b>Cluster I</b> <i>Family/Friends</i>	<b>Cluster II</b> <i>Collegial Support &amp; Non</i>	<b>Cluster III</b> <i>Avoiding Burnout</i>	<b>Cluster IV</b> <i>Triggers</i>	<b>Cluster V</b> <i>The Reasons Why</i>	<b>Cluster VI</b> <i>Emotions</i>
Working class family, middle-class family, future family, family interactions, college-educated family members	Friends at work New teacher mentor After school snacks Inclusivity bonding socialization Working in a colleague's room	Self-care Deep breathing Yoga Sleeping Days off Setting boundaries Friends and neighbors Nurturing community members Showing concern for students they teach Sharing food Pets Favorite Food Binge watching Dancing Mindless chatter	Principals Leadership Students Poor choices, conscious parental choices Time (pressures of...) Neighborhood scuffles, neighborhood drama Certification Curriculum Childhood adversities Rodents Student adversities, good student, share student ACEs	Immigrant children Marginalized children Black children Poor children Children facing ACEs Shared identity Addressing personal PTSD through working with children with ACEs Teaching for impact Providing children with peace Heart for children with similar backgrounds saving children	Humiliation Anger Sadness Stress Worry Oversleeping Not enough sleep Depressive state Pride Warmth Breakthrough moments

