

## FROM SHAME TO MINDFULNESS AND SELF-COMPASSION: A TEACHER'S JOURNEY TO GREATER SELF-EFFICACY

Patricia L. Akpan & Peggy J. Saunders  
Weber State University  
Ogden, UT, USA

**Abstract:** *Shame, an emotion based upon individuals' belief that they, alone, are not good enough – influences their sense of efficaciousness, which directly affects their lives. This study examined how learning mindfulness and self-compassion skills changed one teacher's self-efficacy and impacted the classroom environment. Using mindfulness and self-compassion to address feelings of shame creates opportunities to manage emotions with objectivity and clarity. The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran Hoy, 2001, 2014), and the Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003) were administered to the participant before and after the study to determine any changes in self-efficacy and self-compassion. Classroom observations and teacher interviews were also conducted. Results indicated an increase in self-efficacy, particularly in classroom management and ability to modify lessons to fit the needs of individual students. An increase in self-kindness and self-compassion were also shown.*

**Keywords:** teacher self-compassion, teacher self-efficacy, teacher mindfulness

### Introduction

Shame is an emotion based on fear - the fear of disconnection and uncontrollability (Baldwin, Baldwin, & Ewald, 2006; Cross & Hong, 2012). Shame elicits painful and powerful emotions such as mental confusion, fear, lashing out, judgment, and/or the desire to withdraw or hide (Brown, 2007). Shame inhibits individuals' ability to believe they can be successful (Brown, 2012).

In contrast, self-efficacy is the belief that people are capable of effectively performing a task, suggesting a perception of personal control (Baldwin et al., 2006), and are influenced by experiences of mastery, vicarious experience of others' success, social persuasion, psychological and emotional states, and physiological well-being (Baldwin et al., 2006; Finnegan, 2013). According to Bandura (1997), those beliefs affect people's actions, efforts, perseverance in adversity, and levels of success. Teachers with high self-efficacy possess added trust in themselves and expect to provide successful instruction that will produce greater student achievement (Finnagan, 2013; Stephanou,

Gkavras, & Doulkeridou, 2013).

Unfortunately, feelings of shame can inhibit teachers' abilities to build their self-efficacy. Because teachers' sense of efficaciousness impacts their confidence in their ability to effectively instruct students, self-efficacy will, in turn, directly affect student outcomes (Finnagan, 2013; Stephanou et al., 2013). Feelings of shame can have detrimental effects on both teachers and students (Finnagan, 2013).

Self-compassion specifically targets shame by encouraging people to extend genuine kindness toward themselves and recognize that everyone is imperfect and experiences feelings of failure (Germer, 2009; Germer & Neff, 2013; Neff & Dahm, 2015). Acknowledging a present moment of suffering can increase clarity and perspective on the magnitude of one's emotional pain, which helps create a more positive state of mind (Neff, 2003, 2011). Practicing self-compassion develops an awareness of self-judgment, allowing educators to identify methods to improve and feel competent without harsh self-criticism (Neff, Hsieh, &

Dejitterat, 2005; Neff, Kirkpatrick, & Rude, 2007).

If educators are not mindful of their physical responses to shame, it is difficult to recognize that shame is at the core of the other painful emotions they are experiencing in the moment (Brown, 2007). Not addressing shame can lead to a devalued sense of self-worth and success which can lower educators' sense of self-efficacy and affect the quality of their instruction. Ineffective teaching consequentially produces lower student achievement (Stephanou et al., 2013).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this single-subject, qualitative case study was to (a) explore the changes in a teacher's self-efficacy after learning mindfulness and self-compassion skills and (b) describe any impact on the classroom environment when mindfulness and self-compassion were practiced by a teacher. Although not originally part of the study, a third purpose arose: helping the participant, who was experiencing serious problems and challenges with his teaching, feel less shame and become more mindful in his teaching practices and in his interactions with students.

### **Method**

A qualitative case study approach was chosen as the research method. A qualitative case study allows a researcher to explore and interpret complex, real-life phenomena within a specific situation through the use of multiple sources of data (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 1994). (The term "researcher" in this article refers to the first author; the second author served as an advisor, mentor, and editor.) The five-week study (beginning in the last week of September through the end of October, 2016) utilized four different data sources: (a) the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale [TSES]* (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2014), which is a 24-item, 9-point Likert-type scale that includes questions regarding teachers' beliefs in their

ability to handle difficulties presented in the classroom; (b) the *Self-Compassion Scale [SCS]* (Neff, 2003), which is a 26-item, 5-point Likert-type scale that includes questions regarding how people typically act toward themselves in difficult times, such as self-criticism and perspective of the situation; (c) observations in the classroom; and (d) interviews, which incorporated training in self-compassion and meditation. The scales were administered pre- and post-intervention to assess changes in self-efficacy and self-compassion. Classroom observations took place once a week for approximately one class period. The interviews and training sessions were combined and lasted approximately one hour. During each session, the researcher provided the participant with feedback from her observations of his teaching practices, demeanor, and attitude in the classroom as well as student participation, attentiveness, and conduct. The researcher also conducted an interview with the teacher to find out how he was doing and feeling in relation to his meditation and self-compassion practices. Following the short interviews, the researcher led the teacher in meditation and self-compassion exercises (Center for Mindful Self-Compassion, 2017). A fifth data source – practicing formal meditations at home – was to be part of the interview discussions, but the participant did not complete the assigned meditations on his own until the final week of the study.

### **Participant**

The participant (Brian, a pseudonym) was a 56-year old Caucasian male who had 26 years of teaching experience and was teaching mathematics at a U.S. public high school. He had a reputation among some of the students, teachers, and administrators for not being proactive in teaching. He was selected as the participant because the researcher built a rapport with him while working as a tutor in his math class and through a variety of conversations during the previous school year. During these conversations, Brian mentioned on several occasions feeling shame about being unable

to motivate students to participate in class and about feeling like he was a “lousy” teacher. However, Brian also demonstrated how much he cared about the students’ personal and academic success.

**Brian’s situation.** Brian agreed to participate in the study in August, 2016. The school year began at the end of August. During the third week of school, and while the researcher was awaiting the university’s institutional review board’s permission to begin the study, Brian was suspended for three days without pay from his teaching job because he called students in one of his classes, “a bunch of assholes.” This incident happened the week before the research began. Brian was given the option to not participate in the study, but chose to continue with the hope that being involved might help address related issues and challenges. During the study, Brian was placed on remediation. While one purpose of remediation is to improve an educator’s teaching performance, it is also the beginning process to terminate a teacher who is not performing well. Again, Brian was provided with the option to withdraw from the study, but chose to continue. Brian remained on the remediation plan for the rest of the 2016-2017 school year. Because of these added stressors, Brian did not complete many of the meditations that were assigned as homework.

**Findings**

Each week during this five-week study, the

researcher observed Brian’s classroom, took field notes, facilitated meetings to introduce Brian to self-compassion meditations and exercises (Center for Mindful Self-Compassion, 2017), and interviewed him about his progress. Both his self-efficacy and self-compassion scores improved at the end of the five weeks as evidenced by the scale results. These interventions proved timely given Brian’s suspension and remediation.

The observational and interview data were analyzed using NVivo software. Several themes emerged from the qualitative data, including the stress he felt from the administration and his reactions to researchers’ feedback from their observations, interviews, and self-compassion exercises/meditations.

**Sense of Efficacy Scale and Self-Compassion Scale Results**

Although Brian’s self-efficacy scores are in the middle of the nine-point scale, averaging 5.13 on pre-assessment and 5.75 on post-assessment, he did show improvement in all three areas measured (see Table 1). His greatest improvement in self-efficacy was in the instructional strategies category (+1.13), particularly in regard to adjusting lessons and assessment strategies to individual needs. His classroom management self-efficacy was the second highest improvement score (+0.87), particularly in controlling disruptive behaviour.

Table 1  
*Pre and Post Scores on Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale*

	Pre	Post	Change
Student Engagement (includes questions 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, & 22)	5.13	5.25	+0.12
Instructional Strategies (includes questions 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 23, & 24)	5.75	6.88	+1.13
Classroom Management (includes questions 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19, & 21)	4.38	5.25	+0.87
Average	5.13	5.75	+0.62

Scale is based on a 9-point Likert-scale where 1=nothing, 3=very little, 5=some influence, 7=quite a bit, and 9=a great deal. For questions and scoring guide see <http://u.osu.edu/hoy.17/research/instruments/#Sense>. Scale and scoring guide used with permission from A. Woolfolk Hoy.

Table 2 illustrates how Brian’s self-compassion scores increased from low (scores in the 1 to 2 range) to moderate (scores in the 2.5 to 3.5 range). The two items of particular note are the increase in self-kindness with a positive change of 1.2 and a

decrease in self-judgment of 0.8. Brian did not improve in the mindfulness category and his score for over-identified with self-shaming went up instead of the preferred decrease.

Table 2  
*Pre and Post Scores on the Self-Compassion Scale*

	Pre	Post	Change
Self-Kindness (includes questions 5, 12, 19, 23, & 26)	1.8	3.0	+1.2
Self-Judgment* (includes questions 1, 8, 11, 16, & 21)	4.0	3.2	-0.8
Common Humanity (includes questions 3, 7, 10, & 15)	2.0	2.8	+0.8
Isolation* (includes questions 4, 13, 18, & 25)	3.8	3.0	-0.8
Mindfulness (includes questions 9, 14, 17, & 22)	2.8	2.8	--
Over-Identified* (includes questions 2, 6, 20, & 24)	3.3	3.5	+0.2
Average	2.3	2.8	+0.5

Scale is based on a 5-point Likert-scale where 1=almost never and 5=almost always. Those items with an \* are reverse coded. For questions and scoring guide see [http://self-compassion.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Self-Compassion\\_Scale\\_for\\_researchers.pdf](http://self-compassion.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Self-Compassion_Scale_for_researchers.pdf). Scale and scoring guide used with permission.

**Emerging Themes from Observations and Interviews**

Four major themes emerged from the analysis of the data: (a) administration, (b) personal reactions, (c) classroom environment, and (d) belief in mindfulness and self-compassion. The theme of administration had two sub-themes: lack of support and negative impact on student success. The theme of personal reactions also had two sub-themes: verbal and emotional.

**Administration.** Throughout this study, the largest impact on Brian’s sense of teaching self-efficacy was verbal input from administration regarding his teaching skills and a lack of administrative support with student behaviour management. One concern he continually expressed was the negative impact administrative choices had on students. Although Brian was put on suspension immediately before the study

began and was subsequently put on remediation, his sense of self-efficacy had long before been affected by his administration, a source of social persuasion (Finnegan, 2013; Gallant, 2013; Goddard & Skria, 2006). He reported receiving constant negative verbal input, and claimed he was always being told what he was doing wrong rather than what he was doing right.

**Lack of support.** In addition to negative verbal input, Brian’s biggest grievance seemed to be a lack of support, which is considered a critical factor influencing one’s ability to cope with stress (Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, Bonus, & Davidson, 2013). He repeatedly commented that students never received repercussions from the school’s administrators for their behaviour, which Brian felt undermined his disciplinary approach within the classroom. Cell phone use in class is one of the major problems teachers have faced at this particular high school. Brian frequently asked the students

to put their phones away, but to no avail. When he lost his temper and told students they were acting like “a bunch of assholes,” he was suspended, but the students remained unpunished for their behaviour that contributed to the situation. As Brian explained, “I feel like the administrators have cut my legs out from underneath me. There is no support.” He also explained how on more than one occasion, the principal came to observe him in class, noted the usage of cell phones, but never said anything to the students himself. Brian felt the principal’s actions reinforced to the students that there were no repercussions for cell phone use. In another example, Brian sent a group of students to the office after they threw pencils and a book at him. The students returned to class shortly thereafter without punishment for the assault.

**Negative impact on student success.** Though his frustration level with student behaviour was high, Brian’s love of teaching was apparent in the compassion he expressed for the students’ well-being, something he felt the administration lacked. In every interview, he mentioned how he disagreed with the teaching and testing processes that were implemented at his school, arguing that they did little to help the students. As Brian explained, “I think we’re screwing the kids that are really good, that could be excelling, using their imaginations, having fun with it, maybe learning something. . . . And the kids that don’t care about it yet, or their brains haven’t really clicked on yet in that sort of way. I don’t think we’re doing them a good job either.”

In regard to testing, Brian believed that the students are over-tested, and that those tests did not usually have a significant effect on their grades. He said, “What happens with the kids that get a really high score on this test? When it comes down to it, nothing. What happens to the kids that score really low? The same thing.” Brian felt there was a better way for administration to handle the situation.

Brian also believed that moving kids on to a

more difficult math class was part of what causes student misbehaviour. He stated,

I guess it’s a state law that they have to be in their grade level core classes. . . .but that’s ridiculous, because now we have kids, like in Math II, and it’s one of the reasons why the kids are acting the way they are. Because they haven’t passed a math class in three or four years. And they keep getting pushed forward.

Brian saw how such negative impacts generated suffering and shame among students, a realization that increased his feelings of compassion for the students (Neff et al., 2005).

**Personal reactions.** Because of Brian’s remediation status at the school, his journey with mindfulness and self-compassion was both difficult and timely. In the beginning Brian was skeptical and hesitant that the self-compassion practices would help him in any way with his teaching practices. He expressed his uncertainty but thought the practices might at least help him. He stated, “I don’t know. Maybe it will. There’s definitely room in there for that. Yeah, it might make me more aware.” However by the end of the five weeks, Brian’s verbal, physical, and emotional reactions to these stressors, changes in the classroom environment and student participation, and the evolution in his teaching practices transformed. His final comments in the last interview were, “I really don’t doubt anymore that it [self-compassion and mindfulness] works, because I think it’s the power of your mind over your mind. . . . That’s what controls everything.” It seemed that the mindfulness and self-compassion skills he was learning were making a positive difference.

**Verbal.** In the beginning of the study, Brian frequently used sarcasm, but by the end of the study he was making fewer such statements. Brian’s comments toward the students grew from being somewhat demeaning to being positive and encouraging. During the first observation,

when one student conveyed his boredom, Brian responded, “Only boring people get bored.” By the end, he praised the students for working hard and explained he needed to start providing them with more challenging warm-ups because of how well they were doing.

Additionally, his comments toward himself also evolved positively. In the beginning, self-demeaning comments were frequent. In the first observation, he stated that he makes a lot of mistakes. His statements about his teaching and capabilities were consistently negative. However, by the last observation those self-demeaning remarks had diminished. Brian began incorporating self-compassion when he said, “I know I’m not the greatest teacher here, but I’ve been here a long time and I’ve done a lot of good too.”

**Emotional.** The negative verbal input that Brian has received the past several years, especially from administration and students, has taken an emotional toll on him, added to his sense of shame, and led him to wonder how much longer he could continue teaching. The feeling of wanting to give up has been documented as a coping method to avoid stress (Neff et al., 2005). In the first interview, Brian mentioned that idea twice. One time he said, “I feel like I’m getting worn down.” On another occasion he said, “I’m to the point now where I feel like I’m just getting old and I need to finish. And I’d like to finish strong, but I don’t know.” In the end, he was not beating himself up as much and was staying calmer under stress as evidenced by his “power of your mind over your mind” comment above and the researcher’s in-class observations. This reaction was also evident in his increased scale scores for self-kindness (Neff, 2003) and self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, 2014).

**Classroom environment.** In the beginning, the classroom atmosphere was chaotic — students were having personal conversations, some were wandering around the room, a few were yelling out the windows, and over half of the students were on their cell phones

throughout the entire class period. During the last observation, the classroom environment had shifted and most of the conversations in class involved students explaining the math steps to their peers. Although there was still talking and personal conversations among students, the atmosphere was less chaotic than it had been in the past.

During the second observation, the power went out. Because he could not use the document camera, Brian taught while moving around the classroom and found that class participation improved. During the last observation when he was teaching at the front of the room, 17 out of 20 students were listening to the instruction and responding to questions. At one point, the students had stopped working and started talking again. Instead of showing frustration in his tone and body language, Brian, without a sarcastic tone, said he liked them. Afterward, the students began to pay attention to the lesson. His self-efficacy scores in classroom management and instructional strategies confirm these observations (Tschannen-Moran, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, 2014).

**Belief in mindfulness and self-compassion.** Being mindful of what is happening in the present moment is essential for developing self-compassion (Germer, 2009; Germer & Neff, 2013; Neff & Dahm, 2015). In the end of the study, Brian believed mindfulness and self-compassion had made a difference in his teaching and stated, “I really don’t doubt anymore that it works, because I think it’s the power of your mind over your mind. . . . That’s what controls everything.”

### Summary of Brian’s Journey

Brian was going through a particularly rough patch in his teaching career especially since he had just been placed on remediation. The research study was designed to explore and improve Brian’s self-efficacy through meditation and self-compassion so that he could learn to show genuine kindness toward himself (Germer, 2009; Germer & Neff, 2013; Neff & Dahm, 2015). Although we did

not know a remediation plan would be in place when we designed the study, we observed that our feedback and training in meditation and self-compassion contributed to a slight improvement in Brian's overall self-efficacy and self-compassion during his remediation.

It was clear throughout the study that Brian's self-efficacy was hindered by the shame he felt, a finding similar to what Finnagan (2013) and Stephanou et al. (2013) found in their studies. In many of the interviews, Brian expressed anger at the administration and at himself. He had lost the ability to believe he could succeed (Bandura, 1997; Brown, 2007; 2012).

Brian's development of self-compassion was hindered by the short time-frame of the study and by his inability to practice the meditation exercises at home. Because of the difficulties at school, Brian spent most evenings self-judging rather than working on his meditations. He was unable to separate his shame from his humiliation. As Klein (1991) stated, "People believe they deserve their shame; they do not believe they deserve their humiliation" (p. 117). Although it was observed in the classroom and noted during the interviews and trainings that Brian's self-efficacy and self-compassion did improve during the five-week study, overall he was unable to gain clarity on his emotional pain, including the humiliation of being placed on remediation (Neff, 2003, 2011).

## Conclusion

Although generalizing from a single person case study would be inappropriate, the themes and issues that emerged from this case study could affect any teacher. Because teachers are positioned as care-givers, a role that can take an emotional toll and lead to burn-out, they must learn to give themselves the same care and compassion that they give to others if they are to remain effective in their role (Flook et al., 2013). In this way, teachers' self-efficacy is contingent on their emotional well-being (Baldwin et al., 2006; Cross & Hong, 2012; Gallant, 2013; Stephanou, 2013), self-compassion, and mindfulness (Flook et al., 2013; Germer, 2009; Neff, 2011; Neff & Dahm, 2015).

Because research that examines both self-compassion/mindfulness and the different roles people play in schools – administrators, teachers, staff, and students – is minimal, it is suggested that continuing research be conducted with these varying constituencies. Although this study indicated that using mindfulness paired with self-compassion assisted in coping with shame and negative emotions, every case might have different results. Recommendations for further research of self-compassion and mindfulness in schools include the following: a larger sample of participants; conducting the research for a longer period of time; pre-identifying teachers, administrators, or students who have low self-efficacy and self-compassion who might benefit from the training; comparing that group to those who do not identify as having low self-efficacy and self-compassion; and assuring that the participants commit to daily meditations.

## References

- Baldwin, K. M., Baldwin, J. R., & Ewald, T. (2006). The relationship among shame, guilt, and self-efficacy. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 60(1), 1-21.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: W.H. Freeman and Company.
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR13-4/baxter.pdf>.
- Brown, C. B. (2007). *I thought it was just me (but it isn't): Making the journey from "what will people think?" to "I am enough"*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.
- Brown, C. B. (2012). *Daring greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead*. New York, NY: Avery.
- Center for Mindful Self-Compassion. (2017). *Guided meditations and exercises*. Retrieved from <https://centerformsc.org/practice-msc/guided-meditations-and-exercises/>
- Cross, D. I., & Hong, J. Y. (2012). An ecological examination of teachers' emotions in the school context. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28(7), 957-967. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2012.05.001
- Finnegan, R. S. (2013). Linking teacher self-efficacy to teacher evaluations. *Journal of Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives in Education*, 6(1), 18-25. Retrieved from [http://jcpe.wmwikis.net/file/view/Finnegan\\_Linking\\_Efficacy\\_to\\_Evaluations.pdf](http://jcpe.wmwikis.net/file/view/Finnegan_Linking_Efficacy_to_Evaluations.pdf)
- Flook, L., Goldberg, S. B., Pinger, L., Bonus, K., & Davison, R. J. (2013). Mindfulness for teachers: A pilot study to assess effects on stress, burnout, and teaching efficacy. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 7(3), 182-195. doi: 10.1111/mbe.12026
- Gallant, A. (2013). Self-conscious emotion: How two teachers explore the emotional work of teaching and learning. In M. Newberry, A. Gallant, & P. Riley (Eds.), *Emotion and school: Understanding how the hidden curriculum influences relationships, leadership, teaching and learning* (pp. 163-181). Bingley, England: Emerald Group Publishing.
- Germer, C. K. (2009). *The mindful path to self-compassion: Freeing yourself from destructive thoughts and emotions*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Germer, C. K., & Neff, K. D. (2013). Self-compassion in clinical practice. *Journal of Clinical Psychology: In Session*, 69(8), 856-867. doi:10.1002/jclp.22021
- Goddard, R. D., & Skria, L. (2006). The influence of school social composition on teachers' collective efficacy beliefs. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 42(2), 216-235. doi:10.1177/0013161X05285984
- Klein, D. C. (1991). The humiliation dynamic: An overview. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 12(2), 93-122. doi:10.1007/BF02015214
- Neff, K. D. (2003). The development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self*

- Neff, K. D. (2011). *Self-compassion: The proven power of being kind to yourself*. New York, NY: William Morrow.
- Neff, K. D., & Dahm, K. A. (2015). Self-compassion: What it is, what it does, and how it relates to mindfulness. In Ostafin, B. D., Robinson, M. D., & Meier, B. M. (Eds.), *Handbook of mindfulness and self-regulation* (pp. 121-139). New York, NY: Springer, New York.
- Neff, K. D., Hsieh, Y. P., & Dejitterat, K. (2005). Self-compassion, achievement goals, and coping with academic failure. *Self and Identity*, 4(3), 263-287. doi:10.1080/13576500444000317
- Neff, K. D., Kirkpatrick, K. L., & Rude, S. S. (2007). Self-compassion and adaptive psychological functioning. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 41(1), 139-154. doi:10.1016/j.jrp.2006.03.004
- Stephanou, G., Gkavras, G., & Doulkeridou, M. (2013). The role of teachers' self- and collective-efficacy beliefs on their job satisfaction and experienced emotions in school. *Psychology*, 4(3A), 268-278. doi:10.4236/psych.2013.43A040
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing and elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 783-805. doi.org/10.1016/S0742051X(01)00036-1
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2014). *Teachers' sense of efficacy scale*. Retrieved from <http://u.osu.edu/hoy.17/files/2014/09/TSES-+-scoring-zted8m.pdf>
- Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

### Authors

**Patricia L. Akpan** earned her MEd from Weber State University in Curriculum and Instruction. She has practiced mindfulness for several years and has studied *Mindful Self-Compassion* under the founders, Kristin Neff, PhD and Chris Germer, PhD. Patricia can be contacted at: trishakpan@gmail.com.

**Peggy J. Saunders** earned her PhD from the University of Utah in Educational Leadership and Policy. Her research interests include professional learning communities and teacher induction/retention. She is a long-time member of ISfTE. Peggy can be contacted at: psanders@weber.edu.