

# **The Team Leaders of Jumpstart: Investigating Collective Efficacy Among Members**

**Praxis Project Thesis: Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts — as part of the Community, Youth,  
and Education Studies Major at Clark University**

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## **Abstract**

This praxis project was conducted from October 2021-April 2022 at Jumpstart, a non-profit organization focused on providing language and literacy programming to preschool aged children. My goal was to provide recognition for Jumpstart and for the people who participate in it. I also wanted to investigate collective efficacy among team leaders to see if there was room for improvement. My hope was that if I could provide evidence that collective efficacy was positive for team leaders, that Jumpstart would create more opportunities for problem-solving and bonding among team leaders. Using interviews and audio recording from team planning meetings, I investigated evidence of collective efficacy among members. As a result, I found that team leaders enjoyed team planning meetings, which gave them opportunities to problem-solve and bond with other team leaders. My findings can be useful in the future because it can help Jumpstart plan programming for team leaders in the future.

## **Acknowledgements: The Team Behind This Project**

Jumpstart runs effectively through teamwork, and sessions cannot be done alone. The same can be said about my praxis project. There were so many people who helped me along the way, from bouncing ideas off of me to reading and making comments on my thesis. Because of this, I have many people to thank. First, I would like to thank Lynn Thompson, a member of my committee and the site manager of the Worcester Chapter of Jumpstart, for helping me with this process every step of the way. Lynn helped set up a time for me to recruit for my research and was the first to be enthusiastic about this work. Outside of praxis, Lynn has been someone I have been able to turn to for support throughout my four years of college and I will miss working with her at Jumpstart. I would also like to thank the three team leaders who participated in my research, I would have no project without you all and you are the stars of my work. Hearing your classroom stories and watching you grow as team leaders has made this project meaningful to me. Jumpstart was so lucky to have you this year and you will all be amazing youth workers in your respective careers.

The next person I would like to thank is my advisor and committee member, Sarah Michaels, for being so generous with her time both in and out of class, and for always being honest in her feedback. Thank you to Andrea Allen, my last committee member, for helping me make my paper more accessible through her suggestion of creating visual aids throughout the paper. I would also like to thank my family, my mom, dad, and Eri for being my biggest supporters in life. I would like to specifically thank my mom for being my trusted proofreader. Finally, I would like to thank my classmates for their support and all the laughs that we had. They were always able to cheer me up, even when times were stressful. I will miss our cohort and the time we got to spend together on Wednesdays from 9:00-11:50.

## **Chapter 1: Saying Goodbye — Introduction, Research Questions, and Significance**

This project grew out of my love for Jumpstart, and as a way to say goodbye to it after four years. Jumpstart has its own goodbye song that we sing with the students at the end of each session, but that did not feel like enough. Jumpstart has given me such amazing opportunities, such as representing the organization at the Profile in Courage award ceremony honoring Nancy Pelosi, where I met Congresswoman Pelosi, members of the Kennedy family, and several other politicians and public figures. Jumpstart has provided me with an outlet for my creativity, and the opportunity to use it in the classroom. I have learned practical skills, such as implementing lesson plans, classroom management practices, and storytelling. I have met amazing people through Jumpstart: teachers, teammates, students, and most importantly, friends. I also owe Jumpstart a thank you for putting me on the path of teaching and becoming a student of the education department at Clark. It seemed right to make my senior thesis about the organization that helped me get here.

With all that Jumpstart has given me, it was hard to come up with anything that would begin to pay them back. I knew that above everything, I wanted to give recognition to an amazing organization that has helped thousands of preschoolers across the country develop language and literacy skills needed for kindergarten readiness, and to the people that put this into practice. Because of all the time I have spent at Jumpstart I have worn several hats: team member, team leader, and this year half team leader/half team member. I have also worked in four different preschools in Worcester through Jumpstart: Webster Square Day Care Center, Millbury Street Headstart, and the Guild of St. Agnes on both Granite St. and Grove St. I have been able to meet so many Worcester residents and make so many friends from my time in these schools, and that would not have happened had I stayed on Clark's campus. The experience helped Worcester feel more like home to me, and it is one of the reasons that I want to stay in Worcester after graduation. I also feel that, as the lone Clark student who does Jumpstart, it is my duty to inspire Clarkies to join.

My interest in this research came from my personal experience feeling isolated as a Jumpstart member. During my first year at Jumpstart, when I was a freshman, I had a really difficult team leader. It seemed to me that she did not care about the work we were doing, and she did not care about getting to know us. Our team was not very bonded, and we had terrible communication. Because of this, we would show up to a session with either double of one

material, or with none of another material that we needed. It was very stressful at times, but I never confided in the Jumpstart director because I did not feel comfortable complaining or causing conflict. I was asked to be a team leader in my second year, and I was the only one from my original team who returned to Jumpstart that next year. None of us stayed in contact, which was a little sad for me; and it felt like a missed opportunity. I decided to be a better team leader and to make sure that I was able to facilitate relationship building in my team. I believe that I succeeded in this because after that school year my team had a 100% retention rate.

However, I still felt somewhat disconnected from my team because of my position as a team leader. Even though we were all friends, I was technically in charge of the group, and if there was a problem I was the one who had to address it. It made me wonder where the line between professionalism and friendship was. Perhaps I would have felt less alone in this if I had not had scheduling conflicts and been able to make the weekly team leader meetings with the director and the other team leaders. These meetings consist of problem solving and session planning. I still had a weekly one-on one-meeting with the director where we did this, but it was not the same as interacting with peers. Occasionally, another team leader would be in these meetings, but she was very busy and did not seem to want to waste time, so we never got to know each other. I felt again like I had missed an opportunity. I wondered if other team leaders had felt disconnected from their members because of their position and if they also wanted a connection with the other team leaders. I decided to do my praxis project on how team leaders form relationships with each other, and if forming those relationships helps them feel more supported at Jumpstart and more confident in their role as a team leader. I also wanted to use my project to recognize these amazing individuals. It is not an easy role; it is a delicate balancing act and a significant time commitment, and I commend those who excel at it.

Using Practitioner Inquiry methods, the questions I will be asking are:

**RQ1:** What do the team leaders think about team leader meetings? Do they support bonding? Do they promote “collective efficacy?”

**RQ2:** What happens during team leader meetings? Is there evidence of “collective efficacy?” Is there evidence of confidence, bonding, problem solving?

Using practitioner inquiry methods allows me the freedom of being able to ask the questions I want while also developing my own leadership style. The change I hope to inspire is two-fold. First, I wanted to provide recognition for these individuals, and to Jumpstart as a

whole, to my Clark audience who may have limited knowledge on both. Second, I intend to give what I learn from this project to the program's director in the hope that there will be useful information about what additional support team leaders need. Perhaps more opportunities could be created for the team leaders to work together in the future.

## **Chapter 2:Ethnographic Context**

### **2.1 What is Jumpstart?**

Jumpstart is a national early education organization that provides language, literacy, and social-emotional programming for preschool children from under-served communities. Each year Jumpstart recruits and trains 4,000 college students from across the country to go into the partner preschools and assist with the programming. Worcester has its own chapter of Jumpstart that runs out of Worcester State University. The Worcester Chapter director goes to all of the Worcester colleges' civic engagement fairs to help recruit students because the need is so high. That is where I first met her, when she came to one of Clark's fairs and recruited me. For preschools to be eligible for Jumpstart, the preschool has to be non-profit, 95% of the kids need to live at or below the poverty level, and the students must be aged 3-5. Jumpstart generally reaches out to preschools they feel could benefit from their services, but sometimes schools come to them. Jumpstart serves at many preschools throughout Worcester, including Webster Square Day Care Center, Worcester Child Development Head Start Millbury Street, and the Guild of St. Agnes on Granite Street and Grove Street. The days of operation for the Jumpstart session, where volunteers are in the classroom, are either Tuesday/Thursday 2:30-4:30 or Monday/Wednesday 2:30-4:30.

### **2.2 Jumpstart Team Leaders**

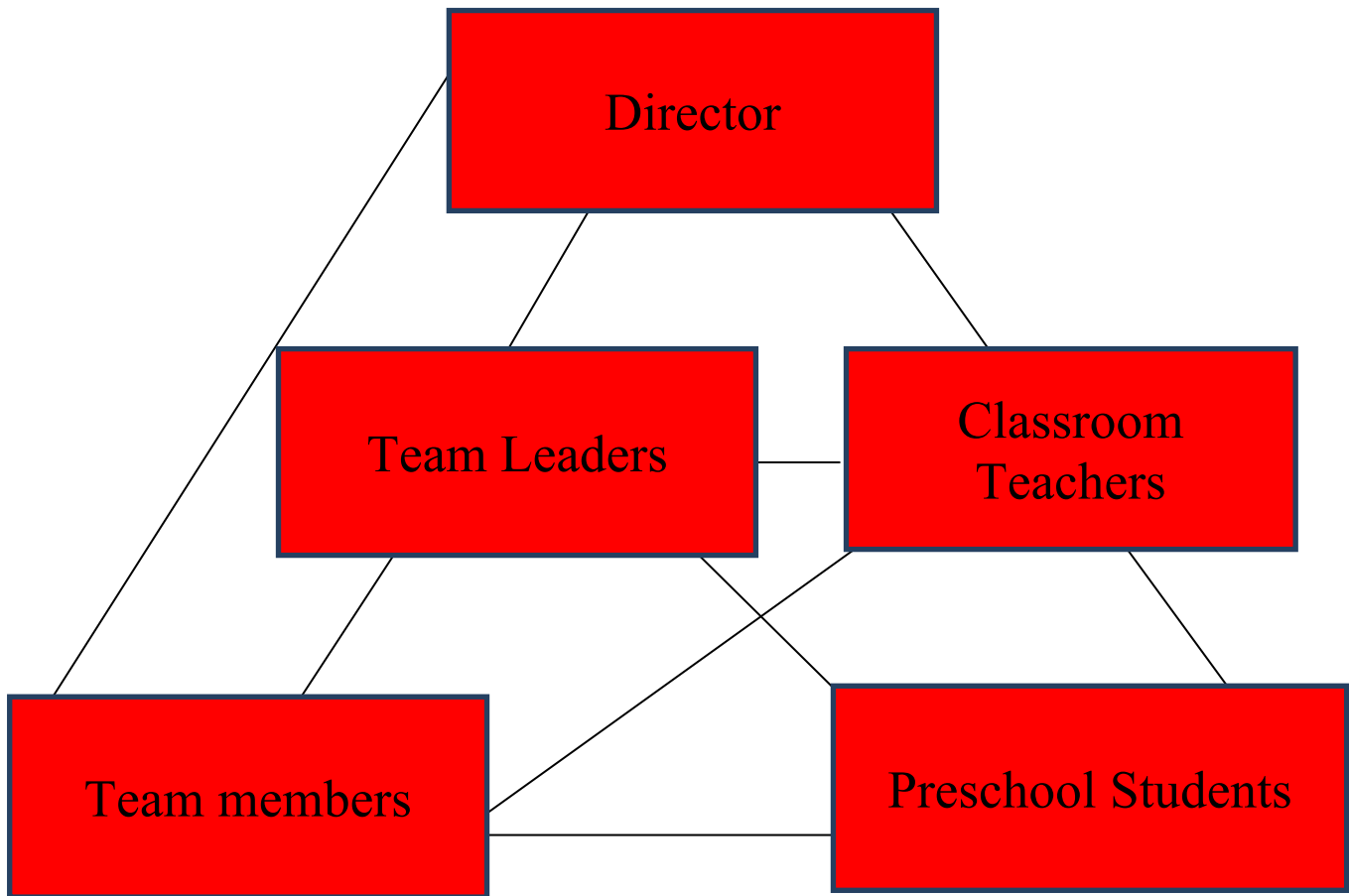
Once Jumpstart members are recruited, teams of 4-5 members are created. In each team there is one team leader and the others are team members. Team leaders are in charge of the team and they lead meetings to discuss how to implement sessions and review challenges/successes in session. Team leaders make action plans with members regarding ways to improve the session. They have weekly meetings with the Jumpstart director and serve as the bridge of connection between members and the director. Team members are in charge of gathering and making supplies for each session, as well as the actual implementation of the parts of session, such as

storybook reading and centers. Jumpstart team members meet twice a week to plan for these sessions. Even though the team leader leads meetings, all members are actively participating and making plans. Team members can also ask any questions they have about the implementation of session to the team leader. I am in my fourth year at Jumpstart; two and a half of those years have been spent as a team member and one and a half will be spent as a team leader. The participants I will be working with are mostly white, female-identifying college students, all from the local Worcester Colleges. Most of these participants are education majors or have some career goal that involves working with youth.

The focus of my research is on the team leader meetings, which take place in the director's office. The office is very small and there are often four team leaders who attend in person and one on zoom. Because of this, it is very cramped, and we all sit very close together. Everyone still tries to maintain some distance because of Covid-19, so the chairs are shoved into the three corners, the other corner is blocked by a shelf. The way the room is set up, the person on zoom can only see the one or two team leaders who sit in chairs in the specific corner the camera faces that week. Everyone has a good sense of humor about it and it seems to have helped break the ice and create a causal atmosphere.



**\*Figure 1-** The relationships of Those Involved in Jumpstart



### **2.3 How Does a Jumpstart Session Run?**

In order to understand a team leader’s duties, there must first be an understanding of how Jumpstart runs. The terminology used during a Jumpstart session is also important for understanding transcripts later on in the data analysis. The way Jumpstart runs is that there are two sessions a week and these two sessions are centered around a core storybook. Each week there is a new book and activities that relate to the book are implemented to extend students’ learning. Each session begins by greeting the kids and breaking them up into their reading groups. These groups are kept the same every week and consist of one Jumpstart member for 3-5 students. The reading segment lasts about twenty minutes and starts with the member going over the vocabulary cards with the students. There are always six main vocabulary words to cover

each week and three additional vocabulary words for dual language learners that relate to the story. The member then goes into reading the story. On the first day this reading is called “read for enjoyment” and this is when the member reads the story to the student while pointing out vocabulary and plot points. On the second day the reading is called “read to reconstruct,” and this is more student led. The member flips through the story while the students retell it and the member supports them in any gaps they need to fill. After the reading is the reading extension, which is a small group activity that relates directly to something that happened in the story. It can be something like acting out a scene, or making a prop of something from the book and letting students explore it. During this time, the team leader usually sets up the centers and takes attendance, but they may also take a reading group if they do not have enough members.

Once the reading segment is done, all of the groups are called to the rug for Let’s Find Out About It, which is a twenty-minute segment of group instruction. Let’s Find Out About It is a team leader’s biggest responsibility during session, since they take the lead on instruction. In the transcripts, the team leaders also refer to this segment as circle time, but they mean the same thing. The team leader starts by welcoming students on the carpet and singing a song. They then ask them about the story they just read/reread. They then introduce something that came up in the book that they are going to expand on. This is a very academic part of session and usually requires an informational book. For example, during the first week of Jumpstart we read *The Twins’ Blanket*, by Hyewon Yum. The book is about a set of twins outgrowing their old bed and needing a new one, so they also need new blankets. At one point in the book, they feel and describe the fabric of the blankets. This is a brief moment, but it brings up the topic of sense of touch. The two Let’s Find Out About It sessions of that week are all about sense of touch, to expand on what the book briefly touches on. The team leader will show an informational book to give background on the subject, and then may give a demonstration of something that relates to the topic. The team leader then explains the activity that the students will be doing in their small groups on the rug with their Jumpstart member. For the week of sense of touch, one of the activities is that the students will reach into a bag and have to guess what the object is based on how it feels. They are also encouraged to use words to describe how it feels while they guess. After the small groups are on the rug, the team leader brings everyone’s attention back to them and recaps what they learned. They also introduce the centers that they will have that day and dismiss members and students to start center time.

The center segment of Jumpstart lasts 50 minutes and consists of five centers: writing, books, art, puzzles and manipulatives, and dramatic play. These centers stay the same, but have different activities each week. Students are able to freely move between centers, but are encouraged to go to every center. The centers are based on themes related to the books in order to extend students' learning. The most relevant center to the transcripts is dramatic play. Dramatic play is a center where kids engage in themed play. Jumpstart members make/bring in props for students to play with based on the theme, and they implement vocabulary/moments from the story while they play. For example, during *The Twin's Blanket* week, dramatic play's theme is playing house. For that week, Jumpstart members bring in baby dolls and household objects that a baby might need. This week of dramatic play is referenced in a transcript later on. During center time, a team leader may be at their own center if they do not have enough members, or they may float around. Team leaders may walk around to help certain centers function or give their members support if they need help redirecting a student. After centers, the team leader calls everyone back to the rug for sharing and goodbye, which lasts about 10 minutes. During this time, the team leader recaps what the students have learned and then gives the opportunity for students to talk about what they did that day or show off something they made during centers. After this, the whole group sings the goodbye Jumpstart song, and the Jumpstart team leaves for the day. While it is important to have a general understanding of how Jumpstart runs in order to understand the paper, the two key parts of session discussed later on in the transcripts are Let's Find Out About It and dramatic play.

#### **2.4 What Does a Team Leader Meeting Look like?**

Since one of my research questions is on the team leader meetings, I will give an overview of the structure of the meetings. There is an official team leader meeting agenda given to us by Jumpstart, but in my experience, the meetings do not follow it closely. I have attached the official agenda at the end. The official team leader meeting document would be very redundant if it was closely followed week after week. It also does not make space for fun or relationship building. The way our meetings are usually set up is that we will start with a brief check-in. Normally each person will share how the session went that week and occasionally we will check in about our personal lives. Some weeks during the check-ins we talk about our classes/workload. The official team leader meeting agenda does not make space for this even

though I feel that it is a valuable part of our meetings because it allows us to get to know each other better.

The next part of our meeting is problem solving, which is what most of my transcriptions are about. I find this part of the meetings to be fascinating for several reasons. This is the part of the meeting where we get to work together and show support for one another. We also get to hear about each other's classrooms and the way that they run. This part of the meeting feels very personal because we can truly be a team. A lot of the problem solving is done by the director since she is the expert, but we all at least show support if we do not have suggestions. The last part of our meetings is planning for the upcoming session. This involves going through the session plan, discussing what materials are needed, and demonstrating centers. The length of this can depend on the session plan; some are more involved than others. The director is the one doing most of the talking at this point and we take notes and pictures of what she presents. Once the director has given us this information, we then synthesize it and present it to our team at our team planning meetings.

The last part of our meeting is reserved for questions about the session plan. We rarely have questions, so the time is usually used for more problem solving or bonding. The only document needed for our team leader meetings is the team planning agenda template, which is attached below. This document is used by team leaders during their team planning meetings with their Jumpstart members. At the end of each week, they are required to hand them in to the director. I do not like these documents either, I have my document that I created to use for my team. My document is clearer for materials sign up and center sign up. I made a google drive folder that all of my Jumpstart members have access to, so it is easy for them to see exactly what is going on in session. At the end of the week, I take that information and fill out the official Jumpstart document to give to the director.

Below, in Figure 1, is the official team leader meeting agenda provided by Jumpstart to be used by both team leaders and staff:

## Team Leader Meeting Agenda:

MATERIALS FOR MEETING:	
<p>Team leaders should bring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reviewed and prepped session plan</li> <li>● Prepped core storybook</li> <li>● Copy of the materials packet</li> <li>● Copy of the optional materials packet (if appropriate)</li> <li>● Session Plan Notes Tool (optional)</li> <li>● Any materials prep assigned</li> </ul>	<p>Staff Should bring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Weekly team leader meeting agenda</li> <li>● Two copies of the Reading Checklist</li> <li>● Materials needed for session plan review and demonstrations and closing</li> </ul>

<b>OPENING</b>	5 Minutes
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PURPOSE: Staff ensure team leaders have the context and goals of the meeting. Staff have an opportunity to communicate any completed or outstanding action steps.

### 1) Review Agenda

### 2) Action Steps Review

- Briefly review action steps from previous week's agenda; confirm completion or note follow-up in actions steps at bottom of agenda.

ACTION STEPS		
WHAT	WHO	BY WHEN

<b>SESSION PLAN REVIEW AND DEMONSTRATIONS</b>	60 Minutes
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PURPOSE: Staff ensure each team leader thoroughly understands the session plan, has an opportunity to practice some elements and receive feedback, watch others demonstrate different elements, and gain ideas from their peers on implementation.

**1) Session Plan Review and Practice**

- Review, demonstrate, and discuss the upcoming session plan beginning with the “*Purpose*” for each session element to understand what children will learn during the activities. Consider adaptations that will increase quality, support cultural relevancy, or help children meet learning goals.

**2) Oral Language Connections (5 minutes)** – Discuss strategies for supporting children’s oral language during session elements and activities. Prep for team leaders’ facilitation of oral language connections conversations during second implementation team planning meetings.

- The team leader will select **one** bullet from the list below to discuss with their team.
  - Did you hear children using target vocabulary during the Reading Extension? What questions did you ask to support their play?

<b>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT</b>	20 Minutes
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PURPOSE: Staff will engage team leaders in professional development, knowledge building, and problem solving dialogue, around intentional, pre-planned topics.

<b>CLOSING</b>	5 Minutes
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PURPOSE: Staff have a time allocated to quickly collect any needed paperwork, communicate announcements, and confirm next steps.

**1) Collect Documents**

- Collect team planning meeting agendas from each team leader

**2)Reminders/Announcements**

Read for the Record – Book and activity review

Member Time sheets

Member training

**3)Looking Ahead**

- Review preparation expectations for upcoming session plans and core storybooks.
- Provide a heads-up on the next meeting’s performance management topic and any preparation required.

**4)Action Steps**

- Staff and team leaders can write down any actions steps that come up during the meeting.

ACTION STEPS		
WHAT	WHO	BY WHEN

<b>SESSION PLAN &amp; CORE STORYBOOK PREP</b>	Team Leader Meeting (60 Minutes)
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**1) Session Plan Review**

- Thoroughly read through the session plan.
- Review purpose statements, activity instructions, and both team leader and member roles.
- Think about strategies to support children’s oral language development to share with members.
- Highlight or note any questions to bring to the weekly team leader meeting.
- Be prepared to practice activities, model roles, and/or lead demonstrations per directions from your manager.

## 2) Core Storybook Prep

- Review the story summary, vocabulary list and strategies to define vocabulary, and guidance for the appropriate read.
- The guidance in the session plan under each of the read strategies should be used as a checklist to ensure that each core storybook is prepped adequately prior to session and read successfully with children. Team leaders can use the *Reading Checklist* as a tool to support preparation.

\*End figure 2

## Chapter 3: Identity and Positionality

In this section I will discuss who I am and how it relates to this research. I am an insider in this research because of the three years I have spent with Jumpstart so far. Because of this, I feel that I have a good relationship with the director as well as with other Jumpstart members, and am in good standing with Jumpstart as a whole. My research focuses on relationships and trust, and I feel that I already have a good start. When I presented my research project and tried to recruit members for it, I was not a stranger to the people to whom I presented. I am also an outsider in a sense because I do not go to school with any of the other Jumpstart members. I am the only Clark student who serves. This means that I am a guest on Worcester State's campus and that they are hosting my research. This outsider status sometimes has a great effect on my work with Jumpstart. Jumpstart requires a variety of materials each session, and the closet with those supplies is in a dorm building on Worcester State's campus. The building requires a Worcester State ID card to get into the office that contains the supply closet. Worcester State members of Jumpstart can swipe into the supply closet whenever they want. I cannot get in unless a Jumpstart member swipes me in, and that makes being a team leader difficult when I have limited access to the supplies. It requires a lot more reliance on my team than other team leaders have.

While I conducted this research, I served as a team leader and attempted to facilitate relationship building not only with my own team, but also with the other team leaders. Establishing relationships with other team leaders was fairly new territory for me. I was the only team leader returning, so the people I worked with were also new to this. Because of this, I could relate to the participants in my research and we collaborated on team bonding ideas together. Because of my experience as both a team leader and member, I understand how relationship



building affects both sides. I remember feeling isolated my first year as a team member, and wanting my own team to not have that experience the next year. I believe that I understand what makes a good working relationship and that I should share that information with my peers through my research.

I have a unique position among the other team leaders because I am the only returning team leader. I am not the only one with Jumpstart experience, but I am the only one who has ever led a team. One of the other team leaders is one of my former teammates, two have had Jumpstart experience as a team member, and one is new to Jumpstart as a whole. Because of this, I find the team leaders looking to me for guidance. We have a group chat that they all ask a lot of questions in, and in the beginning, I was normally the only one who could answer. In a sense, the team leaders are sort of their own team, and I seemed to have a leadership position within it. This fascinated me and became the center of my research. I wondered if the team leaders acting as a team helped them feel more confident in the group's abilities to plan and problem-solve for Jumpstart, and in their own ability to lead their team, also known as collective efficacy.

My insider status is the reason I will be able to implement practitioner inquiry methods and reflect on my own leadership practices. I feel that my participants and I are on an equal playing field, even though I am the main researcher, because we all want to improve our leadership practices. I believe this will make my research better since all participants are working towards self-improvement to benefit Jumpstart. The identities that I bring to my work are that I am a white, female-identifying college student. I know that these identities come with great privilege and that I need to be aware of that in my research to make sure I am not unintentionally harming anyone. I hope that because I am an insider in my research and have a good relationship with the members of Jumpstart that that will offset some of that potential harm. I am also choosing to do my research with the adult participants of Jumpstart, and not the students we work with, so that my research will not affect my work with the students. I also want the participants in my research to feel ownership over the research. I do not want to do research on them, I want them to be active participants in our reflection of the year.

#### **Chapter 4. Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework is the framing of any research. It explains the concepts behind the research which gives an understanding of how the research was created and what it seeks to

explain. Finding a conceptual framework was a challenge for me. I wanted to find something fairly simple, to be sure that the reader could grasp it. After spending some time looking at academic journals, trying to find a term to encapsulate what I was looking for, I found it in an article by Tasa, Sears, & Schat, *Personality and Teamwork Behavior in Context: The Cross-Level Moderating Role of Collective Efficacy*. When I saw the term, I realized that this was the term that would tie all of my questions together: collective efficacy. Collective efficacy, according to Tasa et al., is the “the shared perception of team capability” (Tasa et al., p. 65). By this, they mean that the team members believe in the team members individually, and as whole, and its ability to function. Unpacking what collective efficacy means to me using the data I collected led to three key concepts that make up the definition and relate to Jumpstart: bonding, collaborative problem-solving, and confidence.

Putting together my conceptual framework has helped me to unpack some of the language I use every day, for which I have never before explored where I got the definitions. It seems odd to explain the concept of bonding; it feels like it should be obvious, but it is important to explain these definitions and how they relate to the concept of collective efficacy. My definition and understanding of bonding is when people attempt to build a relationship and find common ground to relate to each other. The goal of bonding is that the people feel a sense of belonging and support in a space or with a group of people. This sense of belonging is created by the time spent actively connecting/bonding with someone to understand them better. To build a relationship and have a sense of collective efficacy in a team, there must be a certain amount of bonding among people so they trust each other with their ideas. The next concept is problem-solving. If a team is to feel capable or have a sense of collective efficacy, they need to be able to overcome obstacles together. In this thesis, I look at both individual and collaborative problem solving, and examine what types of problems team leaders solve individually vs. collaboratively. The last key concept is confidence. By confidence I mean the feeling that one can accomplish something. I wanted the teams I work with to feel confident in their ability to work together and problem solve. Team leaders should also feel confident in their ability to lead their own teams. All of these terms overlap and connect with each other to form the definition of collective efficacy.

## Chapter 5: Literature Review

My literature review consists of three parts. The first part focuses on what has been said about Jumpstart as a program. Even though my research is focused on team leaders and their dynamics with each other, Jumpstart is the program with which they are working together to implement the curriculum. The literature on Jumpstart is important to look at because at the center of each team leader meeting is session planning. To understand my research, there must be an understanding of what Jumpstart is and how team leaders contribute to Jumpstart. The second part of my literature review focuses on what has been said about female-identifying college student leadership, and specifically their leadership among their peers, and working with nonprofits. It's worth noting that I could not find research that intersects all of these things, which is interesting since there are multiple organizations just on Clark's campus alone, such as All Kinds of Girls and Jumpstart, that have all of these qualities. The other program in Worcester that comes to mind when thinking of female leadership in the non-profit world is Girls Inc. Perhaps I am just around these types of programs more than most people, but the fact that I can name three programs that fit my description, yet could not find any research on other programs like them, seems strange. Because of this, I had to be less specific in my search. I searched for literature on female leadership, since in my experience Jumpstart has been female led. I also searched for literature on college students as leaders, since the focus of my research is undergraduates at Worcester State. The third part of my literature review is about collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is a central concept in this paper, so it is important to see what has been said about it and what gaps this thesis can fill. I also hope to fill a gap in the literature on how Jumpstart runs and female-aligned leaders working in non-profit organizations.

### 5.1 Jumpstart

Jumpstart has been around since 1993 and it runs in 15 states. Last year alone, Jumpstart served 13,035 students, so I was surprised about the lack of literature on it ("Results," 2021). On JSTOR I could only find one article that mentioned Jumpstart by name. This article is a newsletter from *American Libraries* that talks about a Jumpstart survey and gives a brief overview of the program. The title of the article is, "Jumpstart Survey Exposes Literacy Gap." It explains that Jumpstart is a nonprofit focused on early literacy intervention, and that Jumpstart programs like "Read for the Record" help raise awareness for the early childhood literacy crisis

in America (“Jumpstart Survey Exposes Literacy Gap,” 2009). This is the only academic source (outsider perception) on Jumpstart that I could find. This article is lacking because it talks about Read for the Record, but that only happens once a year and has nothing to do with Jumpstart’s regular programming. Luckily, on Jumpstart’s website, there is a list of publications. They consist of yearly annual reports and program evaluations.

Only one is directly relevant to my praxis project and research: “A Pilot Study of Social-Emotional Skill Measures for Jumpstart Preschoolers and Corps Members” (Buckley and Paek, 2017). It was published fairly recently and seeks to measure the social-emotional skills of both the preschoolers and college students they work with. For clarification, Corps members are the Jumpstart team members. We are called Corps members by Jumpstart because Jumpstart is funded through AmeriCorps. I refer to Jumpstart members as team members or team leaders because it is easier to differentiate between them, but the official title is Corps member. Much of the article focuses on the preschoolers, so I will be focusing on the part of it that has to do with the Corps members, because that is relevant to my research topic. The information found in this article is based on the post-service survey that members complete at the end of the year, so I have taken this survey three times so far. The way this service works is members self-report how much a statement resonates with them on a scale of 1-5, with one being completely disagree and five being completely agree. Some examples of these questions: “I continuously refine my personal goals about how I will best implement instructional/classroom practices with the children I serve,” and “I effectively use multiple strategies (e.g., breathing techniques) when I have a strong emotional reaction in the classroom (e.g., stress, anger) when implementing instructional practices” (Buckley and Paek, 2017, p. 34). However, this article was written before my service with Jumpstart began, so my answers are not part of this study. This article provides the demographics of Corps members from the 2016-2017 school year, and from my experience the makeup seems to be relatively the same now, based on what I have seen in my experience at the Worcester Chapter.

The majority of Corps members who took the survey are college students (95.7%), white (36%), and female (89%) (Buckley and Paek , 25). The only thing that surprised me from this was the percentage of white members. I would say the Worcester chapter of Jumpstart is 90-95% white, so that is a significant difference from the national survey. The survey results found that college students with two or more years of Jumpstart experience reported higher self-

management scores than members with one year of experience, meaning Jumpstart may help improve self-management skills over time (Buckley and Paek, 22). Self-management skills are skills such as time management and organization. This is relevant to my research because most of the team leaders this year have more than one year of Jumpstart experience. My research is about how team leaders build relationships with each other, which does require self-management skills. In order for a team to thrive, the team leader needs to be organized and keep things running smoothly. Where this data lacks is in not further differentiating returners from first year Jumpstart members, and not having separate data about team leaders vs. team members.

## **5.2 Female College Student Leadership**

The second part of my literature review is on college student leadership and female leadership. I reviewed both topics, since I could not find literature that combined both. Finding literature on female leadership was where I was able to discover the most information. I would like to note that Jumpstart is not exclusive to women, however, the majority of members are female-identifying and all of the team leaders in the Worcester chapter of Jumpstart are female-identifying. Because of this, I feel that gender is an important lens through which to view my research. The journal, “When is female leadership an advantage? Coordination requirements, team cohesion, and team interaction norms,” explores the advantages of female-led teams. Jumpstart encourages its members to employ asset-based thinking, so I wanted to choose an article that focused on the strengths of female leadership. The study found that teams with female leaders reported more cohesion and participative communication than similar teams run by men (1176). My research seeks to measure how cohesive various Jumpstart teams are, so that finding is significant. Where this research lacks is that it does not involve college students and it does not talk about the use of teams in a nonprofit organization.

The next article reviewed was, “Peer-Mentoring Freshmen: Implications for Satisfaction, Commitment, and Retention to Graduation.” This article only loosely relates to my project, but it was one of the only substantial sources I could find about college student leadership. Team leaders also act as peer mentors because their job is to help coach their teams, and team leaders are often older than the rest of their members. The study focuses on whether it would be helpful to freshmen to assign them peer mentors. All participants were part of a program to see if peer mentoring in the first semester would bolster the freshman’s attitude toward university life. The mentors were all seniors and were trained to participate. Data was taken from self-report scales

that measure 1-5, with one being the most negative and five being the most positive. The study found that peer-mentoring was related to satisfaction with the university, and that the quality of mentoring had to do with the overall satisfaction of the students (34). The study hypothesized that satisfaction was related to the intention to graduate, and the schools' retention rate. This is relevant to my research because Jumpstart team leaders' relationship with each other may encourage them to have greater commitment and satisfaction with Jumpstart, which may encourage them to stay with the program for more years and help boost Jumpstart's retention rate. The limitations of this article are that it is about business students who are getting class credit to participate in the mentorship program, and the study is about overall satisfaction with a university. My research is on a specific program and has people from multiple universities participating in it.

### **5.3 Collective Efficacy**

The term, "collective efficacy" has become a through-line in my thesis, from my title to the conclusion. I discovered the term in an article by Tasa, Sears, and Schat (2011) titled, *Personality and Teamwork Behavior in Context: The Cross-Level Moderating Role of Collective Efficacy*. Tasa et al. argue that individuals' personalities and their behavior within their team is dependent on the team's perception of its capability. They define this shared perception as collective efficacy which is, "a group's belief in their conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments" (Tasa et al., 2010). This shared perception of capability, also known as confidence, is a key lens in understanding collective efficacy. In their study, the participants were 471 business students randomly assigned to teams of 3-4 people and they were studied for eight weeks while they worked on a Human Resources simulation together. Participants were asked to rate their teammates' behavior and not their own. Teamwork behavior was measured on a seven-point scale. To measure collective efficacy, participants were asked to rate if their team could finish the simulation with increased difficulty. They found that collective efficacy, "moderated the relationship between agreeableness and interpersonal teamwork behavior (Tasa et al., 79)." This article inspired my thinking of my definition of collective efficacy because of the way it investigated teamwork. Teamwork is an important aspect of collective efficacy, which is what inspired my bonding subsection in my findings section.

Tasa investigates collective efficacy again in his article, *Collective Efficacy and Vigilant Problem Solving in Group Decision Making: A Non-linear Model*, with coauthor, Glen Whyte. This article was chosen because problem-solving is an important part of team leader meetings and it was important to investigate its relationship to collective efficacy. The article discussed the ways in which groups make decisions and how collective efficacy relates to the decision-making process and quality when problem-solving. The article says, “low collective efficacy, in contrast, leads to flawed decision making through a lack of ambition, motivation” (Tasa and Whyte, 2002). To research this relationship, 162 students enrolled in a class were split into teams and given an online simulation where they played the role of a cellular communication company’s top management team. Each team was given the same goal to achieve in the simulation and consisted of 13 rounds of decision making. After each round, participants were asked about their belief in their group’s ability to succeed in the next round (collective efficacy), these individual scores were then averaged to give the team’s score. This research found that collective efficacy does influence the way that group decisions on problems are made. This relates to my research because I view problem solving as a key concept in collective efficacy. This is because if a team feels confident in its ability to succeed, then one of those abilities should be problem solving. However, the limitations of this article are that this is problem solving in a different context, with students enrolled in a business class doing simulations. The participants in my research will be solving real problems that appear in their Jumpstart service.

My main takeaways from reviewing the literature related to my research are that there are a lot of gaps I need to fill. The first being on Jumpstart itself; there is a lack of literature on the way Jumpstart works that my research hopes to help fill. I think it is valuable to fill this gap not only through the data I collect, but through my personal anecdotes that help frame the research. Sharing information through personal experience can be very powerful and help connect the reader to what it is like to experience Jumpstart. The next gap I would like to fill is on female leadership; this is not an explicit research question, but it is important to consider the gender of the participants in my research, who are all female-aligned. Lastly, I would like to add on the body of research on collective efficacy because it is a really interesting concept to consider when studying group dynamics. It is also valuable to Jumpstart to see how collective efficacy impacts team leaders and what can be done to help strengthen it in future years. These takeaways have informed my research questions and have inspired my thinking on my key concepts.

## **Chapter 6: Methodology**

### **6.1 Epistemological Stance and Research Approach**

I view the world and my praxis site through a criticalist lens because the goal of it is positive social change. I resonate with the criticalist view that reality is shaped by power and that knowledge is non-neutral. Criticalists acknowledge and accept all of these inequalities and use their research for social change. They seek the truth through a holistic approach, which is looking at the experience through a deep understanding of context. In my research, I seek to highlight the experiences of the three team leaders I am working with. I want them to be able to speak their truth about their successes and failures, and how they collaborate with each other. My interest in collaboration among team leaders led to me wonder what collective efficacy might be in Jumpstart for team leaders, if problem solving together would make them feel more confident and supported in their role in Jumpstart, and if it would make them better Jumpstart members as a whole.

Using how I view the world helped me to understand which research method was best for this qualitative research, which was using practitioner inquiry methods. Practitioner inquiry is investigating something with an approach that can be defended, and is usually done within the practitioner's own practice (The General Teaching Council for Scotland). This resonates with me because I have questions that I want to investigate within my own practice at Jumpstart. Practitioner Inquiry methods are also often used by teachers because "teachers need to understand, through observation and inquiry, the various kinds of knowledge individuals construct as they engage with real phenomena" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999). I was interested in doing my research through observation and inquiry and investigating how individuals viewed themselves in their role at Jumpstart. Practitioner Inquiry feels like a personal method of research and allowed me to talk about the individuals I worked with.

### **6.2 Data Collection (Data Sources and Methods)**

To begin this section, I will introduce the three participants of my research who were generous enough to give me their time and were always flexible with their scheduling so I could meet with them. They are also impressive people and deserve a moment to be celebrated in the paper. The first participant, 01, is senior at Worcester State majoring in Communication Sciences and Disorders and a minor in Spanish for Health Professionals. She is attending UMass Amherst



to pursue a graduate degree for speech-language pathology. It is her third year at Jumpstart and her first year as a team leader. The next participant, 02, is a junior at Worcester State with a dual major in Elementary Education and Psychology. She is working towards becoming an elementary school teacher and this is her first year at Jumpstart. The last participant, 03, is also a junior at Worcester State with a dual major in Elementary Education and Math. She plans on pursuing a Master's in Education after her completion of her undergraduate degree and is working towards her goal of becoming a teacher. This is her third year of Jumpstart, but her first as a team leader.

My research consists of two methods: audio-recording team planning meetings, and interviews. Audio recording of the team planning meetings does not require any additional time from team leaders. They have very busy schedules, and even conducting the first interview consisted of a lot of back-and-forth between me and each team leader to find a time that worked. The recordings of the team planning meetings have made data collection easier. They have also proved to be valuable because these recordings demonstrate the team leaders being authentic and solving problems. In interviews, I can ask about how the participants solved a problem, and they can reflect on the past, which is useful, but there is something powerful about capturing problem solving in the moment. In total, I collected three audio recordings of team planning meetings, and I would have liked to collect more in the spring of 2022, but my schedule changed and I was no longer able to attend with everyone.

The part of my research that required active participation from the team leaders is the interview portion. I conducted two interviews with each Jumpstart team leader who signed up for my research. My research timeline was somewhat derailed because of the IRB and how slow participants were to sign up, so my data collection window was much smaller in the fall semester and I had to extend into the spring of 2022. These two interviews will be compared and analyzed to see how team leaders feel about the team leader meetings and their ability to problem solve. The interviews are useful because they give the team leaders space to reflect on their time at Jumpstart. Interviews also allow me to get to know each team leader individually and build a relationship with them, which is my ultimate hope for my project. I also feel that interviews give the individuals time to shine and be recognized for all of their hard work, which is another goal for my project. Below are some examples of questions I asked:

### **First interview Questions (December 2021):**

- Why did you want to become a Jumpstart Team Leader?
- Are you a first time Team Leader or a returner?
- What qualities do you think make a good leader?
- Which of these qualities do you possess, and which do you think you could work on?
- What do you like about being a team leader?
- What are some of the biggest challenges you have faced being a team leader?
- Do you think of the team leaders as being their own team?
- Does being close to the other team leaders make you feel more supported by Jumpstart?
- What is your favorite part of the team leader meetings?
- Would you change anything about the structure about the meetings? Would you add something?

### **Second Interview Questions (April 2022):**

- What is the biggest challenge you have faced this semester at Jumpstart?
- What were the steps you took to solve this problem?
- What types of problems are you more comfortable solving individually vs. ones that you seek out support for?
- What is your biggest accomplishment this semester at Jumpstart?
- How are the team leader meetings

## **6.3 Data Reduction and Analysis**

The beginnings of reducing the data and then analyzing it had many challenges. The way that I approached it was to get to know the recordings I had really well. This involved me listening to them all the way through multiple times. While I listened to them I created a log of key things that were happening in the recordings along with the times they happened. This made it easier to choose what segments to transcribe later. While I made these logs, I did some loose coding of themes that were popping up across recordings and I transcribed the segments associated with these codes which were: bonding, problem solving, and confidence. Once I had these loose codes, I used them to form my second interview questions in the hopes that it would help tie it all together. Later on in my research, during the spring of 2022 interviews, I learned how to do zoom generated transcriptions, so I had full transcriptions for my last three pieces of data, which was helpful because these interviews were key in tying up loose ends. In regard to data reduction, it was a blessing that not all of the team leaders participated in my research because it helped me to eliminate problems/audio segments where they did most of the talking. Once I had collected all of my data, I cross referenced these transcriptions to see the story that they were trying to tell.

My first research question was: What do the team leaders think about team leader meetings, do they support bonding, and do they promote “collective efficacy?” To answer this question, I compared what each team leader had to say about the team planning meetings using their fall and spring interviews. This was fairly straightforward to cross reference what each team leader said in both interviews and then compare them to each other. The second question was: What happens during team leader meetings, is there evidence of “collective efficacy,” is there evidence of confidence, bonding, and problem solving? This question was more challenging to answer because it required cross referencing not only the interviews, but also the team planning meetings. The way I did this is that I took problems that popped up in team planning meetings in the fall of 2021 and specifically asked the team leaders to reflect on them in their spring 2022 interviews. This allowed me to see not only how the problem unfolded in the moment, but how the team leader felt about it after the fact. In both interviews, I asked the team leaders directly about their relationships to each other, which made cross referencing what they had to say fairly straightforward. I would also look for moments in the team planning meeting where these relationships seemed evident.

## **Chapter 7: Findings**

### **7.1 What Do Team Leaders Think about Team Leader Meetings?**

My first research question asks: What do the team leaders think about team leader meetings, do they support bonding, do they promote “collective efficacy?” This question was answered through interviews with team leaders in December of 2021 and March-April of 2022. In this section, I will investigate what team leaders think about team leader meetings using data from the interviews done in the fall of 2021 and spring of 2022. Analyses of the interviews suggest that team leaders find team leader meetings helpful and a good outlet for problem solving. Team leader meetings with a group are more useful than a one-on-one meeting. Team leader meetings in the fall of 2021 provided an opportunity to discuss problems and come up with solutions. In the spring of 2022 team leader meetings shifted because of scheduling conflicts. I had my team leader meetings with one other team leader rather than the whole group. Because of this, I also asked team leaders about this shift and how they would compare the fall meetings to the spring meetings.

**Interviews in Fall 2021**

*During December of 2021 team leaders were asked their thoughts/ feelings about team planning meetings. These are their individual answers.*

**Segment 1**

<b>01</b>	I think it’s nice to have both outlets [her team and the team leaders], I don’t know there’s like three teams. It’s like the relationship with [the director] is one on its own like that bond with her. Then I think the team leaders have their own thing going- there’s just something nice about being like “oh gotta go to the team leader meeting on Fridays” I don’t know it’s like a VIP club.
<b>02</b>	I like having a support system in place where we can ask questions and get answers from each other. I just think that’s a good resource to have.
<b>03</b>	I think my favorite is just like hearing how other people's sessions are going because it's really hard for me to talk about that kind of stuff with my group because, like it doesn't like- We only know our experience and so being able to like see “Oh, what are you doing?” or “how are you keeping them engaged?” and you know just like advice that I think helps a lot and it's just nice to be able to talk through how our sessions are going. I definitely like just being able to vent a little, hear other people’s stories.

It’s worth noting that all the comments are positive. . The team leaders make clear that they enjoy the team leader meetings (with words such as “nice,” “I like,” “good resource,” “favorite,” “helps a lot”, “I definitely like”). They offer a multitude of reasons, but have interestingly different reasons. 01 says the team leaders are like a team (a VIP club) and also speaks highly of her relationship with the director, which is like another team. (For clarification, when she says she feels like she is part of three teams, the third team is her Jumpstart team.) The team leader meetings are a positive experience for her and feel like a club, and not just any kind of club but a VIP club. She mentions the notion of relationship and bond (in talking about the team with the director), and the specialness of the team leaders who “have their own thing going.”

02 speaks about the meetings positively, but in a different way than 01. She likes the fact that the team leader meetings can be a space to ask questions and come up with ideas together, focusing on problem solving. She focuses on the usefulness of team leader meetings (“support

system,” “get answers from each other,” and “good resource”), focusing on their functionality but not on the relationships or the bonds they create. Finally, O3 speaks specifically about her “favorite” part of the team leader meetings, which is telling stories and giving advice about sessions. She talks about how she only knows her own experience with her team, so being able to compare what the other team leaders are doing (“how other people's sessions are going”) is helpful to her. O3 also says she likes “just being able to vent a little” during the meetings, which shows that she feels a certain amount of permission to be herself (not guarded) indicating a kind of trust and closeness to the team leaders, and indicating that the meetings are not strictly business. O3 combines elements of both relationship and functionality as she speaks about parts of the team leader meetings that she enjoys. All three team leaders seem to enjoy and find value in the meetings.

### **Interviews in Spring 2022**

*During March-April of 2022 team leaders were asked to describe how their team leader meetings were going this semester*

## Segment 2

<b>01</b>	At the beginning of the Semester, I thought they were at 12:30 for some reason, so, then I ended up showing up at 12:30 and they were like wrapping up and then I was like oh like that's weird and then I realized that they're actually at 11:30 [laughs]. [The director] didn't tell me but she was like you're jumpstart in a bag, so you don't really need to come when 03 and 02 are talking because they're going to talk about in person, things that like aren't really relevant to you so then I was just like okay yeah that saves my time. If I can just like show up after and just talk with (the director) so I haven't been with them for a while, like I just had my first two last week and the week before like trying to get back into the in person thing, but they're sessions ahead of me.
<b>02</b>	It's just me, 03 and 01 in our meetings on Wednesdays and it's just helpful because we can have more of a discussion. We have more time to focus on our center or our groups. Rather than having a short amount of time to discuss everybody, so I think that's a lot helpful and then we're able to bounce ideas back on each other.
<b>03</b>	Our team leader meetings with just 02 and me and [the director] so that it's like a really good time to like, I think, because it's just the three of us it's been really good to like vent a little, but then also problem solve from there. Obviously it's more problem solving because [the director] is there, but it helps in that setting like we can kind of problem solve between the two of us and [the director] is there so it helps more.

01 seems to be an outlier here – as she wasn't present at most of the meetings, while 02 and 03 express similar sentiments about liking the fact that there are fewer participants (usually just her and 03) in the meeting. They both comment on the fact that the meeting is small – just the two of them with the director, and that they have more airtime (“more time to focus,” “because it's just the three of us,” “it helps in that setting”). 01 describes her different experience with the team leader meetings in the spring of 2022. Her classroom was closed, so she was doing remote programming which is called Jumpstart in a bag. Planning for Jumpstart in a bag is much different than planning for in person session, which is why 01 was not required to go to the meetings. 01 does say that she enjoys the extra time she saves by not going to a meeting that is

not relevant to her. However, now that she has recently started attending again since her preschool is allowing them in person again, 02 and 03 are multiple sessions ahead of her, so they are still talking about different things during the meeting. This semester, these meetings seem to be less valuable to 01 than they were last semester because everyone was on the same session.

02 talks about the meetings differently. She explains that it's "helpful" that she and 03 are together. She explains that the meetings are more focused now because it is just 01, 02 and 03 (and it was mostly just 02 and 03 the majority of the semester). This extra focus allows them to discuss problems more in depth than trying to give everyone a turn to talk. She also explains that they all get to bounce ideas off of each other, which shows that these meetings are effective and useful. 03 talks about the meetings as being useful because 02 is there and they are at the same school. She explains that it is nice to vent (themes of bonding), but also that is helpful to problem solve between the three of them. 03 also explains that she feels like she is at a point where she and 02 can do a lot of problem solving on their own, which shows their confidence in problem solving as leaders. Both 02 and 03 find the meetings to be more valuable now that they are in a smaller group and discussions can be more focused, while 01 finds them less useful because she is not at the same school/place in Jumpstart as them.

### **Team Leaders Comparing Team Leader Meetings from Fall to Spring**

*During March-April of 2022 team leaders were asked in interviews to compare the fall 2021 meetings to the spring 2022 meetings.*

## Segment 2:

<b>01</b>	Yeah no I missed, last semester's [meetings] with everyone because they're [referring to 02 and 03] at the same center, so they like, bond over that, and then I'm like uh like "aye." Because [02 and 03's preschool], so that just comes with its own set of problems.
<b>02</b>	I say they're pretty helpful now, and they were helpful last semester as well. I think it is still very beneficial that 03 and I are together.
<b>03</b>	I definitely feel like they are drastically different. I feel like the experience is completely different so like last semester, I felt it was much more focused on like the materials that we needed to get covered and we do that now, we do, but, so yeah. That was a lot more, just like material wise, and we would talk about concerns if we had them, but I felt like it wasn't as like specific to- It was hard, because we were all at different places all having very different experiences, and I think like this semester, it was such a blessing that me and 02 had the same time opening.

Above, 01 explains that she feels like the odd person out in her spring 2022 meetings because she is the only one who is not at the same preschool. She misses the fall 2021 meetings because there were other people that she could relate to. 02 says that both semesters were helpful, but that it is most beneficial that her and 03 are together. Even though 02 does not express a desire for whole group meetings again, she does talk about how she thinks the grouping of her and 03 is important, meaning that she still finds group meetings more beneficial than one-on-one. 03 talks specifically on how the content of the meetings has shifted. In the fall of 2021 the meetings were much more material based, while the spring they are more specific with discussing their preschool and the problems that come up. Like 02, 03 also seems to like the spring meetings better because of their ability to be very specific. She also echoes 02's point that it is helpful that they are in the meetings together. This shows that 02 also finds group meetings more helpful than one-on-one meetings even if it is just one other team leader.

## Conclusion

This section attempted to answer the first research question: What do the team leaders think about team leader meetings? Do they support bonding? Do they promote "collective efficacy?" Using the data, it can be concluded that all team leaders felt positively about the team planning meetings but seemed to like different things about the fall vs. spring meetings. The fall



meetings were larger and allowed for team leaders to interact with leaders from different schools while the spring allowed for smaller meetings that were both focused. Both semester's meetings were valuable, but the fall 2021 meetings seemed to promote collective efficacy more than the spring. This is because team leaders from different schools interacted more and there was more opportunity for bonding. This fall 2021 meetings laid the foundation of the team leaders' relationships with each other which allowed for problem solving both in and outside of meetings, which is a key concept of collective efficacy. The support system put in place by the fall 2021 meetings also allowed team leaders to grow confidence because they had the meetings to fall back on if they needed extra support. Team leader meetings seem to promote collective efficacy especially when they are larger meetings with team leaders from a variety of schools.

## **7.2 What Happens in Team Leader Meetings?**

The next three sections attempt to answer my second research question: What happens during team leader meetings, is there evidence of "collective efficacy," is there evidence of confidence, bonding, and problem solving? I present a set of transcripts from Team Leader Meetings that show that there is bonding that occurs both in and outside of Jumpstart, and that this helps team leaders problem solve. It also promotes a sense of collective efficacy because the team leaders feel comfortable enough to discuss problems, which helps them come up with good solutions.

## **7.3 Bonding**

Bonding is a key aspect of both collective efficacy and team planning meetings because it creates a foundation of trust which allows for team leaders to feel comfortable in the meetings. When they feel comfortable in the meetings, they may be more inclined to share problems they have in session. Having a relationship with the other team leaders may also increase their confidence because they know that they have a support system in addition to the director. Investigating bonding helps to see if the meetings promote collective efficacy since it is what creates trust in the meetings.

*This Transcript is from October 29th, 2021, and was the first official team planning meeting. In this meeting, we are discussing how our orientations at our partner schools wen at the beginning of the meeting. For context, Let's Find Out About is a group lesson done by the*

team leader every Jumpstart session. Also, in line 3 there are two conversations happening simultaneously.

**Transcript 1, Segment 1**

<b>Turn 1</b>	<b>Director</b>	Good, ok. Tell them about the little monkey wrench in the whole thing [looks at 02].	
<b>Turn 2</b>	<b>02</b>	Oh, um. We only can do one on one or like two on one, we can't do whole group instruction. So our Let's find out about it will be a center now [chuckles] and not like a circle time so... yeah.	
<b>Turn 3</b>	<b>Director</b>	<p>Did you hear that [non consenting person on zoom]? There at [preschool name] they cannot do group time activities. They have to do it in really small groups like one on one or two on two.</p> <p>[non consenting person on zoom] ...</p> <p>They didn't want the children that close together.</p> <p>[non consenting person on zoom] ...</p> <p>No, they do have the space they are just choosing not to do it.</p>	<p>[while the director speaks to the person on zoom]</p> <p><b>Kelly:</b> [to 02] that's odd</p> <p>[Other people give shocked noises such as exasperated sighs]</p> <p><b>02:</b> [to team leaders in the room] They said they wouldn't work.</p> <p>[looks at 03] You went in yesterday too. I met all brand new three-year-olds basically and they don't have the attention spans to be in a whole group.</p>
<b>Turn 4</b>	<b>02</b>	Yeah.	

First, the director prompts 02 to discuss a problem she had during her orientation with the whole group, which brings them into it. 02 then explains the problem, lightheartedly with a chuckle to the group. The director then goes even further to include everyone in the group by making sure the team leader on zoom heard it too. The director makes no effort to problem solve, it appears that she brought it up just to get discussion going among team leaders because it was the first meeting. This problem is also something that all team leaders can comfortably discuss because they all know what Let’s Find Out About It is. It is not preschool or student specific, it is something that every Jumpstart member has knowledge about, making it an accessible topic for group discussion. This strategy works because once the director’s attention is on the girl on zoom, the team leaders continue to talk to each other. I offer a show of support to 02 by saying that I think it is odd that her classroom will not allow her to do whole-group instruction. The other team leaders in the room echo this sentiment by expressing exasperated sighs. 02 then continues discussing the situation with the group of team leaders and looks to 03, who is at the same preschool, for support by stating that she went into the preschool that day too. The groups (the director and the girl on zoom, and the rest of us) naturally merge back together after 02 says “yeah” in line 4. This transcript is different from all the others because it has two conversations going on simultaneously, which does not come up in any other transcript of team leader meetings. At first glance, this transcript may seem like it would fall under the category of problem solving, but upon further inspection themes of bonding start to stick out.

Below, is the second part of the conversation:

**Transcript 1, Segment 2**

<b>Line 5</b>	<b>03</b>	Yeah, it’s not cause like you have really young kids and then like she was like also..
<b>Line 6</b>	<b>02</b>	Yeah, cause some just turned three.
<b>Line 7</b>	<b>Non-consenting</b>	....
<b>Line 8</b>	<b>02</b>	Yeah, they’re very young.
<b>Line 9</b>	<b>Kelly</b>	My class is like that too... really young
<b>Line 10</b>	<b>Director</b>	[To Kelly] Yeah you’ve got young...

In this part of the transcript, there are four speakers that did not have to be prompted to speak. 03 joins in on the conversation on line 5 after 02 addresses her in line 3. In line 5, 03

echoes what 02 has said about her students being really young, which is a show of support. It also shows that they have knowledge of each other's classroom situation because they work at the same preschool, showing that they are on the same page. In line 9, I try to show 02 additional support by relating to her struggle with having younger students. The director also echoes what I say in line 10, showing that she is aware of my struggle with having younger students, while also confirming it to 02.

I separated this part of the conversation from the first because of the shift in the atmosphere of the meeting. In the first conversation, the director has to prompt 02 to speak, but as the conversation goes on, more people chime in. This shows the growing comfortability and trust among team leaders because they are more willing to contribute to the conversation and to show support. There's evidence of bonding in this transcript. There was no real attempt to solve the problem, it was more to open up a dialogue early on in the first meeting. This transcript is also a good example of the team leaders showing each other support ("Yeah," "My class is like that too"), which is an important aspect of building trust and relationships among people. This transcript also indicates the beginning of relationship building and bonding among team leaders because it is the first time they have interacted in a team leader meeting.

### **Bonding Outside of Team Leader Meetings**

During the first and second interviews, team leaders were asked about their relationship with the other team leaders, since bonding is a key concept related to collective efficacy, as discussed in my conceptual framework. My research is focused on what happens during team leader meetings, but there was evidence that bonding was not limited to them.

*This transcript takes place during an interview with 03 on March 31st at 5:17. 03 and I were discussing a problem she was facing this semester, when I shifted gears to ask who she had discussed the problem with.*

## Transcript 2

<b>Line 1</b>	<b>Kelly</b>	Have you talked to this problem with like other team leaders or just with [the director]?
<b>Line 2</b>	<b>03</b>	I talked about it a lot with [non-consenting team leader] and 02 because she's also at my school. So we talked a lot about different struggles. Mostly like, more how the school is run, and like, that kind of stuff but also the struggles I've had with my team. Especially like, they're-they're both [referring to 02 and non-consenting] in one of my classes, so every time we have class, like we talk about it, we'll always have like a session, we just talked about jumpstart, how it's going and stuff.

In this transcript, 03 discusses how she and two other team leaders have relationships outside of Jumpstart team leader meetings. This is because the three team leaders all go to Worcester State together and have a class. Before or after this class, the three of them discuss things they have been struggling with at Jumpstart. By engaging with each other outside of Jumpstart, I see this as evidence that they have a genuine bond with each other and a desire for each other's success. There may be other instances of team leaders getting together outside of Jumpstart, but this is the only time it is mentioned in the recordings.

*In this transcript while talking about team planning meetings and relationships with other team leaders, 01 brings up the word bonding on her own and I immediately change gears to discuss what she means by that.*

### Transcript 3

<b>Line 1</b>	<b>01</b>	[referring to team leader meetings] There's bonding I would say.
<b>Line 2</b>	<b>Kelly</b>	Yeah, what do you think is bonding? How do you think we bond?
<b>Line 3</b>	<b>01</b>	I think just like sharing funny stories about session and being like "oh yeah that happened to me too!" Or like "my kids love the legos" or "my members do not do this." That takes it to a new level because your members can't relate when they don't show up or like don't do the material right. They don't see that side of it. No one else can relate except for each other and so I think that's a good bonding moment.

In the above transcript, 01 offers a definition of bonding that happens in team planning meetings, which is through storytelling. This backs up the first transcript in this section, which is one team leader discussing a problem they are having with their preschool with the whole group. 01 also talks about the uniqueness of the team leader position and how she enjoys having people she can relate to and hear their stories. Comparing this to Transcript 3 in this section, it can be said that team leaders enjoy having other team leaders to talk to and discuss issues of Jumpstart with. These conversations lead to bonding because there is a certain level of trust and respect needed to go to another team leader for support or advice. Comparing all four transcripts shows that discussing problems/stories that happen during session in team planning meetings promotes a sense of closeness among team leaders. They provide a space for team leaders to relate to each other over the responsibilities of their role.

#### 7.4 Problem Solving

A key aspect in my understanding of collective efficacy is both the group and individuals' abilities to problem solve. In Jumpstart, as in any classroom, there are a lot of opportunities for problem solving because no two kids learn the same way and they need different types of support. There have also been a lot of complications in the classroom because of Covid, which have required creative solutions. 01 and I faced complications returning to the classroom in the spring because of Covid. We both worked at different centers with the same parent company and they decided that they would not allow any more in-person volunteers until March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Because of this, 01 had no reason to attend team planning meetings since Jumpstart was being done remotely. To answer my questions about problem solving, I pulled problems that came up in team planning meetings in the fall of 2021 and asked the team leaders to reflect on them. I

asked them about a specific problem and then asked if they were satisfied with the solution that the group came up with, or if they felt there was room for more support. I also asked if there were additional problems that came up that they solved with the group. Below are some examples in both failures and success in problem solving during team leader meetings.

*This transcript takes place on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021. We were about to move on to the next part of our meeting, but the director asked if there was anything else someone needed to share.*

**Transcript 1**

<b>Line 1</b>	<b>01</b>	We had one kid that was very violent with the baby doll and then the teacher told him if you're mean to the baby doll one more time you're not gonna be allowed at this center. (Person 2: mhm)
<b>Line 2</b>	<b>01</b>	And then he pretended to drown the baby doll.
<b>Line 3</b>	<b>All</b>	[shocked noises]
<b>Line 4</b>	<b>01</b>	He put it under the sink to indicate that it... died.
<b>Line 5</b>	<b>Kelly</b>	Oh my god.
<b>Line 6</b>	<b>01</b>	And so we were like you need to move and then he moved to the hand tracing. And then he started doing red.
<b>Line 7</b>	<b>All</b>	[More shocked noises]
<b>Line 8</b>	<b>01</b>	We were like what is that? And he was like oh it cut and then.
<b>Line 9</b>	<b>Director</b>	Where are you?
<b>Line 10</b>	<b>01</b>	The [preschool name].
<b>Line 11</b>	<b>Director</b>	Talk to the teachers and get some ideas on what tricks that they use to redirect him but you are going to have to do a lot of modeling and redirecting. Like this is the way we treat babies, and tell him that things he is doing is hurting the baby, or that the baby is crying. You know that kind of stuff just modeling that play and then encouraging him to go to a different center.
<b>Line 12</b>	<b>01</b>	Yeah, the teacher kind of ignored it.
<b>Line 13</b>	<b>Director</b>	He's looking for a reaction from you is what he is doing, he is trying to do whatever he can to get you to react. The problem with just ignoring it is that sometimes it can escalate so you kind of want to talk about you know these are your choices here.
<b>Line 14</b>	<b>01</b>	Okay.
<b>Line 15</b>	<b>03</b>	That's a lot.
<b>Line 16</b>	<b>01</b>	Well he started to correct himself. Because I was working with him in the hand tracing and he was doing like he wanted to stay at that

		station, and I was like why don't you draw faces and go through different emotions. He kept doing angry faces and I was like why don't we try happy, excited and he started doing a ton of happy faces.
<b>Line 17</b>	<b>Director</b>	He's looking for a reaction so you spending that time with him and making that connection kind of eased him out of that.

In the above transcript, 01 makes a last-minute decision to bring up this problem she is having. Throughout the transcript, the other team leaders indicate shock, but offer no problem solving. The conversation mostly happens between 01 and the director. This conversation has an abrupt end because of the time pressure and is not revisited later on in the meeting. I remember this moment well because I had never seen a child behave the way that the boy did in the transcript. I felt like I had no way to help 01 deal with this situation and the only way I could provide support is just by listening and expressing concern.

*I follow up with 001 in this transcript about how this situation was handled on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2022.*



## Transcript 2

<b>Line 1</b>	<b>Kelly:</b>	How do you think that that problem [referring to the baby doll situation] was handled in the team leader meeting? Did you feel like it was solved for you by the director or did you feel like you came to the conclusion, on your own?
<b>Line 2</b>	<b>01:</b>	The idea of just ignoring it was just not my forte personally because, like he was doing it, and I was like okay like I'm just going to ignore it. But it just felt wrong because, the other kids were watching it and I wasn't stopping it. It seemed like it was just an awkward situation so then after I tried not doing anything and seeing, if he would cut it out. But then he, started doing other things with killing and like stabbing and stuff and I was just like I just went up to the teacher and I was just like hey he's just not being appropriate. Can we just give him a warning or something? Because honestly, it's just it's not cool with all the other kids and she's like oh yeah like I didn't even realize he's doing that. Sometimes he does that. So then, the teacher was able to like talk to him.
<b>Line 3</b>	<b>Kelly:</b>	Yeah that's good that she talked to him. Did he stop after she talked to him or did he just get pulled from jumpstart?
<b>Line 4</b>	<b>01:</b>	Yeah, so he stopped like with the dramatic play stuff every now and then something would come up in like alright he'd be like red is for blood, but that would be it. We couldn't say anything about that because it's true red is for blood.

*I later ask how the student is doing now and 01 explains that he is no longer in her class because he was moved up to Kindergarten in early March 2022.*

In this transcript, 01 admits that she feels the problem was not resolved after discussing it in the team leader meeting. She was told by the director in line 11 to talk to the classroom teacher, who was ignoring the behavior before. 01 first tried to solve the problem with the group but it was not enough and had to seek out another solution on her own. In this, she exhibits confidence in her position of a team leader by taking action and talking to her classroom teacher about this behavior. These transcripts show a missed opportunity for the team leaders to come together and help problem solve, since the solution is found by a combination of the director's advice and 01 talking to her classroom teacher. In the time I have spent at Jumpstart, nothing like this has ever come up with a child so this is a rare occasion. This is interesting to talk about because there is a range of problems that team leaders face and this exemplifies a more

complicated one that does not have an easy solution. It shows the failure in problem solving, which is just as important to talk about as the success.

*This transcript is from an interview done with 02 on April 1, 2022*

**Transcript 3**

<b>Line 1</b>	<b>02</b>	01’s preschool definitely seems a little more advanced than the students that I have so I’m like, what are you implementing and like how see how different the ages are. And then adjust how I would adjust my materials from my age group from her age group, even if she had an idea that really worked, I would still have to adjust it, but it was able to implement what she was doing
<b>Line 2</b>	<b>Kelly</b>	That’s awesome do you have any example of that?
<b>Line 3</b>	<b>02</b>	I would say, like with like circle time that let's find out about it aspect I was trying to figure out a way to include the let's find out about it into it, very briefly, so I was just asking her like what activities or methods of communication that she used that worked really well with her students to see if I could implement that with mine, since I was just transitioning into the circle time now.

This transcript is an example of more successful problem solving between team leaders. 02 not being able to implement Let’s Find Out About it, comes up in the first transcript from October 29th, 2021 in the bonding section, but its solution is talked about in the April 1st, 2022 interview. For context, 02 was recently allowed to start group instruction with her center, but was having trouble implementing it because her students are not used to whole group instruction. In the above transcript, she explains how she has 01 explain how she implements Let’s Find Out About It and then scales it down to use in her classroom. She asks 01 about what activities she implements and also how she communicates ideas to the students. This shows how highly she thinks of 01’s teaching because she is turning to her to learn how to be a better teacher and communicator. It also shows how 01 helps 02 problem solve because she answers her questions and explains her communication style. All of these moments show that the team leaders genuinely try to help each other through problem solving so they can all succeed, which is important to collective efficacy. If the team leaders are unable to help for whatever reason, they

still try to show their support for that leader while they try to solve it, which shows evidence of their bond.

### 7.5 Confidence

The last key to collective efficacy and whether or not the Jumpstart leaders have collective efficacy is confidence. Members of a team have to be confident in their ability to succeed in order to have collective efficacy. In the above transcripts, team leaders have showed that they feel confident in the advice and ideas that other team leaders have given them, but there needed to be further investigation of team leader’s perception of their own capability.

*To gauge team leader’s confidence, they were asked how they problem solve and whether they are more likely to solve a problem individually or collectively during their March-April 2022 interviews.*

#### Transcript 1

<b>Line 1</b>	<b>01</b>	I feel like a lot of things I just kind of like figure out on my own and then [the director] is like my backup and then like the team leader meetings are my backup backup.
<b>Line 2</b>	<b>02</b>	I would say, like issues with the kids I would do individually. I would be able to solve [those issues] pretty much by myself but it's like, once I saw an issue come up as a whole class that's when i'd be like okay so clearly what i'm doing right now isn't working for the majority of the kids. Then I would have come to [the director] and be like what might work a little better see if she had a different view than I did. So I would say, like more individual problems with children, I would do myself and then, once it was like a whole group of kids I would go to [the director].
<b>Line 3</b>	<b>03</b>	I mean a lot of the problem solving I do by myself to like littler things or like smaller things, but I think with [the director] it's a lot of how I'm running my team. That kind of problem solving or like if my team isn't kind of pulling their weight like and that's a problem.

These interviews were coded as confidence because each team leader feels comfortable enough to solve most problems by themselves, which shows their perception of their ability to lead. 01 exhibits a great amount of confidence in her ability to problem solve and is able to address most problems by herself. She talks to the director as a second opinion and the other team leaders are her last resort. This discovery may prove that team leader meetings are not necessary to her functioning as a team leader, but she has said that she has enjoyed them and

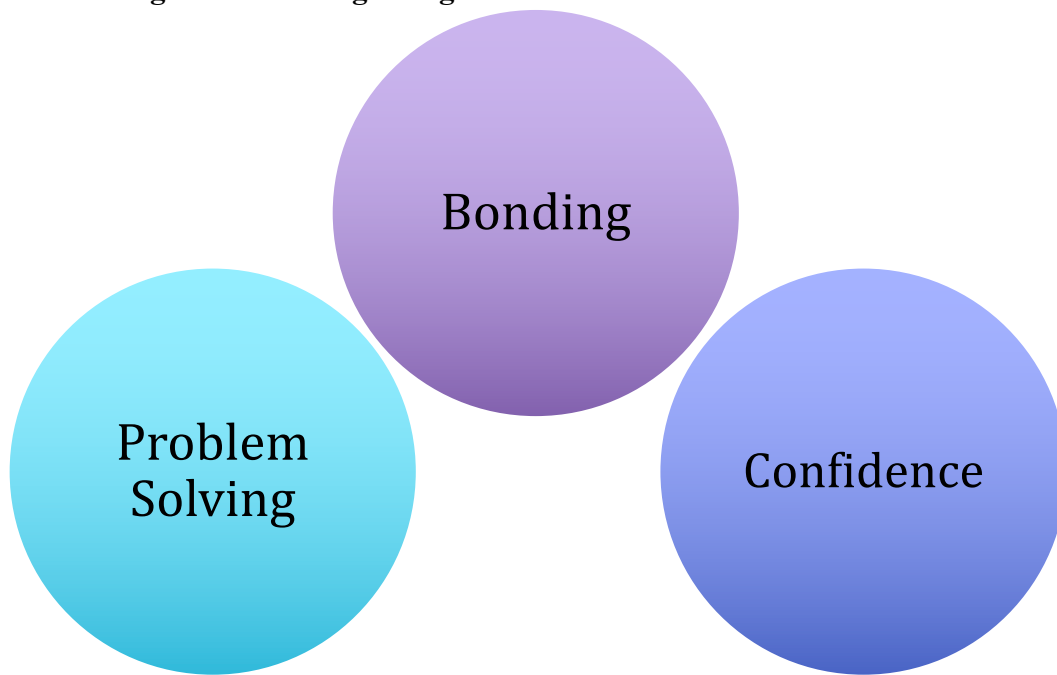
found them to be helpful in the past. Perhaps more confidence means that leaders need the meetings less. 02 also feels that she can solve many problems on her own and that she will go to the director if it is a whole class issue. She also does not mention the other team leaders in her response to the question. Like the others, 03 is confident in her problem solving ability and only goes to the director if she is having trouble running her team. It seems that all three leaders feel that they are capable of solving most of their problems by themselves, but need occasional support from the director. This section also highlights a gap in my research, since I have no earlier transcripts on this subject, there is no way to compare how team leader's confidence has changed over time. This gap is because my project has changed many times, so the first round of interviews did not cover the topic of confidence in problem solving, and this gap will be addressed later in the limitations section.

**Conclusion:**

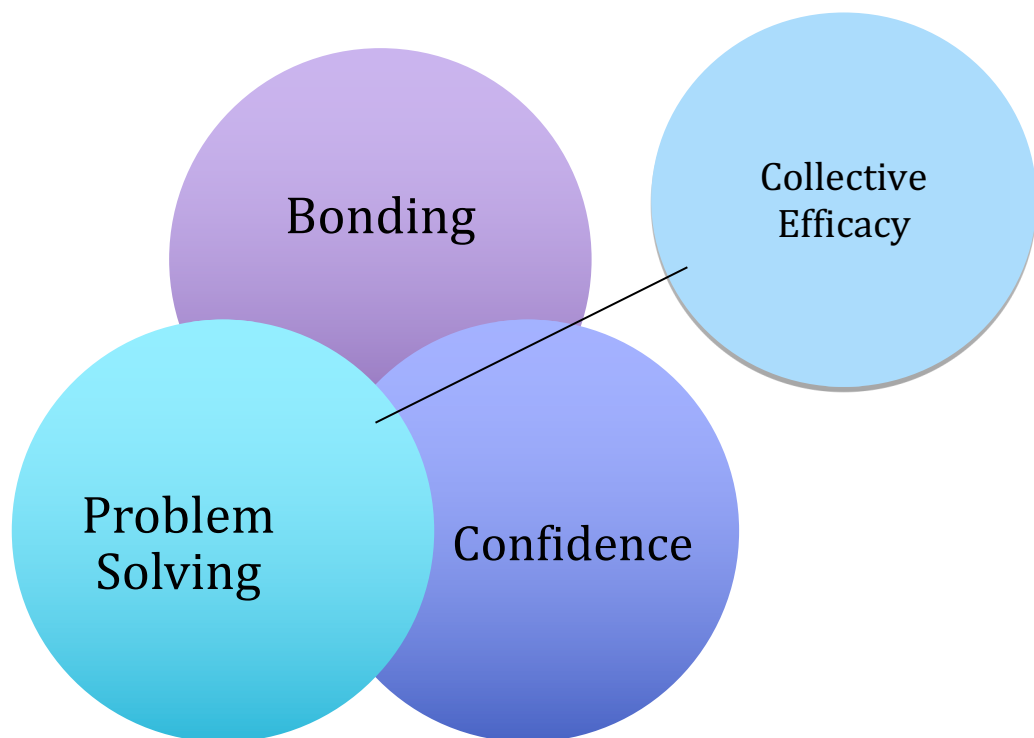
These last three sections attempted to answer my second research question: What happens during team leader meetings, is there evidence of “collective efficacy,” is there evidence of confidence, bonding, and problem solving? From looking at the data from interviews and team planning meetings it can be concluded that by the end of the year there was evidence of collective efficacy. The team leaders at the beginning of the year went from not knowing each other and not knowing how to be a team leader to becoming close and collaborating with each other. The team leaders developed their leadership through their collective efficacy because it strengthened their bonds, confidence and problem-solving skills.

The figures three and four below serve as a visual aid to help understand what happened to the Jumpstart team leaders over the past year. Figure three represents the beginning, when the team leaders did not have as much bonding, confidence, and problem solving skills, they needed to be built since they were just starting out. Over time, the team leaders built these skills with the help of the director and began practicing them with each other. They turned to each other both inside and outside of Jumpstart for advice, and gave advice in return. They also became more confident in their problem solving abilities and were able to eventually solve most of their problems independently. Figure four represents the end of the year, when team leaders grew in their positions and effectively used each other as a resource and confidant. When these qualities of problem solving, confidence, and bonding come together they create collective efficacy and allow for a team to flourish.

**\*Figure 3- The Beginning of the Year**



**\*Figure 4- The End of the Year**



## **Chapter 8: Conclusion**

### **8.1 Limitations/Further Research**

There were many obstacles and limitations that happened in this work. The first being the Covid-19 pandemic, which has had a big impact on both school and Jumpstart. Despite the pandemic being two years old, there are still challenges surrounding in-person programming. A few of the Jumpstart classrooms were closed for a few weeks because of Covid-19 and at other points in the semester classrooms would have to close for a week if there were active Covid-19 cases. These Covid delays caused the team leaders to miss certain sessions and eventually were on different sessions all together. This makes the team leader meetings confusing and why 01 did not have to go to team leader meetings in the spring 2022 semester until April. This affected my research because the team leader meetings did not occur in the same way that they did in the fall. The team leader meetings were also split into groups in the spring 2022 semester, which was another change from the fall. Because of this, it is unknown what team leaders would have said about the team leader meetings during the second interview if they had stayed the same. The other limitation is the way that this research changed from the beginning. My research questions shifted over the fall and spring semesters. Because of this, there were things that I wished I asked the team leaders in the fall, but did not because my research was different.

Despite these limitations, there was still good data and it has inspired my thinking on what further research is needed. My first wondering is if there is a relationship between confidence and the team leader meetings, specifically that is it possible that the more confident team leaders are, the less they need and find value in the team planning meetings. This research could also be continued by interviewing team leaders a final time at the end of the semester and their service with Jumpstart. Their whole year reflections may change or support what they have said before. This research could also be done again so it could be done the way I originally intended, with Jumpstart programming being in person and the team leader meetings being the same throughout the fall and the spring.

### **8.2 Final Words**

This work has meant a lot to me and has served as a way for me to say goodbye to both Jumpstart and to my undergraduate career. I have learned a lot about myself in this time and have pushed the limits of what I thought I could accomplish. There have been a lot of challenges in

this work and it has been a great source of frustration in my life, but that is what research is about. I am grateful for the support of Jumpstart in my project, working with the three team leaders made writing and transcribing for countless hours worth it. I hope that this paper helps readers have a deeper understanding of what Jumpstart is and the people behind it. I hope it inspires others to join Jumpstart or get involved in their community in other ways. The experiences and friendships I have had at Jumpstart will stay with me throughout my life and I hope to inspire people to seek out those experiences in their own lives. The only way to give Jumpstart a proper goodbye was to find a way to honor it, which I found through my thesis. At the end of every session, the members get together with the kids to sing the goodbye song together. It feels like the proper way to conclude this paper:

*Goodbye Jumpstart, goodbye Jumpstart, goodbye Jumpstart, it's time for us to part.*

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