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HOW DOES TRAUMA INFORMED TEACHING IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING?

A MASTER'S THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BY

KEITH ENSTAD

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

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BETHEL UNIVERSITY

LITERATURE REVIEW: HOW DOES TRAUMA INFORMED TEACHING IMPACT  
STUDENT LEARNING?

KEITH ENSTAD

MAY OF 2022

APPROVED

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## Abstract

This literature review will explore the impact of a trauma-informed approach on students' ability to learn. The reader will learn about key terms and definitions that are used throughout the literature. The following literature review explores studies and research done on trauma-informed programs that have been implemented in schools, foster care, and juvenile delinquent centers. The research and studies explore if trauma-informed training has had any impact on students' learning, or educators' way of teaching. The literature review concludes with any limitations of the research and data. There has not been many studies done in regards to trauma-informed education, which has been a limiting factor throughout the literature review. However, many positive elements have come about through the data and research that has been done, and further research is highly suggested.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

Educators have the opportunity to change the way education is organized for students in a way that supports them in a more holistic way than has ever been done before. Education is changing, and with change, adaptation needs to be at the forefront of how education can get better and do better for all. Educators need to begin to shift their mindset from thinking and teaching to a more collaborative approach and acknowledge students for entirety (Hurless & Kong, 2021). Studies have been done where educators change their approach and mindset to teaching, to a more positive approach and acknowledging the trauma students have gone through in order to better their practice (Brunzel et al., 2019).

Trauma-informed education has become very popular in recent years. The goal of exploring this topic is to see if trauma-informed education works, or if it is a fancy term that has been used in education. A study from the Children and Youth Services Review, entitled, "Student Perspectives on How Trauma Experiences Manifest in the Classroom", provides insight into the minds of our youth and their perspective (West et al., 2014). The study takes into consideration the voices of youth who have been involved within the court system, and how it affects their learning throughout their education (West et al., 2014).

Educators are another focal point for trauma training and how this education can impact their practice as well. A study by Kim et al. (2021) conducted with 112 educators provided insight into trauma training for educators and explored whether it had any effect on their well-being. Trauma-informed teaching does not just address how educators can help their

students be more successful in the classroom, but also how educators can be successful themselves as well.

### **Rationale**

The system of education is failing students in America. Each year, in the United States, 1.2 million students drop out (U. S. Department of Education, 2021). That is a student every 26 seconds or 7,000 students a day (U. S. Department of Education, 2021). Childhood trauma is considered a public health threat and can have a significant impact on children's emotional and social well-being (Lancaster, 2021). Youth who are involved in the courts can suffer major trauma and stress which can negatively impact their success within the school system and academics (Day et al., 2015). Day et al. (2015) reported that post traumatic stress disorder is more prevalent within individuals who are in foster care and the juvenile justice system (Day et al., 2015). Schools are a core piece to a child's life and early intervention that provides support and mental health (Berger, 2019). A trauma-informed approach provides a holistic view of the child and provides a whole view of everything the child has experienced (Hurless & Kong, 2021). How can teachers expect the most from students when they are just trying to survive the day? Our world has gone through many events in the past few years that no one could have ever predicted. Our educational system needs to adapt to the needs of our students and our educators.

The studies and journals in this paper provide insight into both the eyes of the students and the eyes of the educators and show how trauma informed education is a critical piece to the puzzle of educating our youth.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are important to this literature review and will be defined within the context used in their source.

**Classroom Strategies:** Classroom strategies are pedagogical tools that educators use and implement to create an environment that is both conducive to learning and safe for students (Carello & Butler, 2015).

**Gatekeeping:** Gatekeeping is an activity that prevents individuals who have been exposed to traumatic information that they may have experienced in the past. In turn, when this comes to light, an individual may be able to continue to participate in the activity or assignment if a modification is made due to the understanding of the student's experience within that given topic (Carello & Butler, 2015).

**Intervention:** Interventions are tools educators use to assess different ways of teaching and to remove educational barriers that have an impact on students learning in the classroom (Crosby et al., 2019).

**Minority Group:** A group of students who are the smaller population of other students and may have different backgrounds than the majority (Berger, 2021).

**Multi-tiered:** This term is used to describe several layers of used interventions that vary in type from mild to more intensive in nature (Crosby et al., 2019).

**Pedagogy:** Pedagogy is a teaching method that incorporates different practices and different strategies to refine their skills (Brunzel et al., 2019).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: This term describes students who have dealt with trauma and are still seeing those effects in their daily lives, which are impacting several areas of their lives, such as school, behavior, and emotional wellbeing (Berger, 2019).

Refugees: People who have been forced to leave their country because of war, or danger. (Berger, 2021) .

Retraumatization: Individuals seeing or experiencing trauma previously experienced through other events that are not related but are triggering to the individual (Carello & Butler, 2015) .

Secondary Traumatic Stress: Being exposed to other individuals' traumatic experiences which in turn affects the individual who hears the other person's story even if they are not directly affected (Carello & Butler, 2015).

Trauma-Informed Education: A practice paradigm where teaching is a positive practice that considers the traumatic experiences of students' lives, and creates an environment that creates a safe space for the students to learn (Brunzel et al., 2019).

Wellbeing: The whole person's emotional and physical health (Carello & Butler., 2015) .

### **Guiding Questions**

Throughout this literature review, the following question is explored, “How does trauma informed teaching impact student learning?” This literature review will explore how data supports this paradigm and practice through research amongst students and teachers.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review will provide research and scholarly work done to show the effects of trauma-informed teaching. This chapter categorizes the literature into the following sections: introduction into trauma-informed programs, educational challenges within the foster care, juvenile justice, and court systems, introduction into trauma-informed care, creating a positive classroom environment, and trauma-informed techniques, and skills.

### **Introduction to Trauma-Informed Programs**

The following section reviews trauma-informed programs that have been developed and implemented.

#### **Heart of Learning and Teaching Program (HTL)**

A study by Day et al. (2015) analyzed the trauma-informed curriculum called Heart of Teaching and Learning (HTL), used an intervention at a residential charter school that works specifically with students who were in the Juvenile Justice System and foster care. Youth who are often involved in the courts can suffer major trauma and stress, which can negatively impact their success within the school system and academics .

Day et al. (2015) reported that post traumatic stress disorder is more prevalent within individuals who are in the foster care and the juvenile justice system. Individuals who are 18 and older and who were foster children have a 20 percent higher risk of dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than those individuals who were not within the foster care system. Female youth demonstrate reactions that are gender specific and different than their male

counterparts, which can affect their social and mental skills differently than men (Day et al., 2015)

According to the data within the study, early trauma negatively affects young people's ability to self-regulate and can cause attachment issues, which can have lasting impact on academic success (Day et al., 2015). Schools are considered a gateway for mental health support for students because of the resources within the school. Schools could implement more trauma-informed training and support for students throughout the school day. The key with trauma-informed education is that the educational system the students go through have staff members and teachers that acknowledge the trauma that the students have gone through (Day et al., 2015).

The study takes the viewpoint of ecological theory (Day et al., 2015). Ecological theory is based on a child's development and interactions within the environments around them. The school used the Heart of Teaching and Learning Technique (HTL); however, it was a modified version of the technique. The original version of HTL is based on three principles: compassion, resiliency, and academic success. The basis of the approach is to support students and not to argue with students and to teach through compassion (Day et al., 2015).

All the participants within the study were victims of abuse and neglect and were all students that were in a residential facility (Day et al., 2015). There were a total of 70 participants and 66% were African American, 20% white, and three percent Hispanic. The study was a survey given to the students and had them provide feedback on teachers, prior to trauma informed training and after training. The research question that was explored in the study was

what factors trigger negative moods or enhance positive moods and what are students' perceptions of staff responses to behaviors in the academic setting. The participants included 45 female students who were enrolled in a Residential Facility in a Midwestern state from September 2013 to July 2014. The study does not indicate the name of the residential facility (Day et al., 2015).

The results of the study indicated seven main themes that were identified by students (Day et al., 2015). These themes are classroom dynamic, family issues outside of the school environment, specifically students' home environment prior to coming to residential treatment, interpersonal behaviors and challenges, and recommendations to improve school climate, peers, residential treatment staff, and teachers. The results indicated that students feel that staff and teachers do not respond in a positive manner when behavior challenges arise. Students also report that they do feel bored in classes and that teachers do not respond in a timely manner when students are struggling (Day et al., 2015).

Data within the study stated that about 427,000 adolescents, and children are put into the foster care system each year. The foster care system has unique challenges, specifically for children. The following analysis of this study is about young women specifically living in urban environments (Crosby et al., 2019). The study analyzed young women living in the foster care system and the Juvenile Justice system. The question was asked if being in a trauma-informed setting has any impact on children's success in a school environment (Crosby et al., 2019). Interviews and surveys were given to measure the impact of these young women being in a trauma-informed school environment. The study also took into account race and ethnicity to see

if that had any impact on the results (Crosby et al., 2019). Data within this study says during 2014 there were over a million arrests made of individuals within the juvenile justice system. According to the data within the study, young women make up more than half of the children within the foster care system. Young women typically experience more effects of PTSD within the foster care and juvenile justice system because more attention usually gets focused on the males within the system (Crosby et al., 2019).

The study was conducted was done through the framework of the attachment theory (Crosby et al., 2019). Attachment theory as used within the study is based on the theory that human development is based on the interactions children have with their caregivers (Crosby et al., 2019). Clara B. Ford Academy, a charter school that operated between the years of 2012 and 2015. Students' age ranges were from 14 to 18 years of age and they were primarily African American. The school had utilized an intervention teaching program called *The Heart of Learning and Teaching*, which is a curriculum that is specifically designed to help teachers work with students who were in the juvenile justice system and students who have dealt with significant trauma. The study hypothesized that students who were in a trauma informed setting would have a reduction of stress symptoms (Crosby et al., 2019).

The results indicated that students experienced less trauma symptoms such as aggressive behavior, talking back, and isolated behavior while being in a trauma informed setting than they had prior to being in that setting (Crosby et al., 2019). The findings also suggested that being in a trauma-informed school setting provided a positive environment and increased positive



relationships within students and staff members which led to lower behavior issues. The study suggested more research is needed in the area. (Crosby et al., 2019).

### **Trust Based Relational Interventions**

Purvis et al. (2013) researched a method of trauma-informed care called Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI). TBRI is a model that is used for caregivers specifically to help at-risk children who are in the foster care system. The three principles of TBRI are Empowerment- attention to physical needs, Connection-attention to attachment needs, and Correction-attention to behavioral needs. The principles are specifically designed so the caregiver and the person being cared for, can create healthy ways of interacting and healing. This method of trauma-informed training has been used in schools, orphanages, foster care systems, and churches (Purvis et al., 2013).

Complex developmental trauma is prolonged long term trauma that has caused chronic stress within someone, also referred to as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Purvis et al., 2013). Purvis et al. indicated that studies have shown children within the foster care system are more likely to be exposed to long term trauma and may not develop healthy emotional coping behaviors. According to the article there is a scarcity with how PTSD gets treated due to the fact that the Desk Reference of the Diagnostic Criteria from DSM 5 does not specify how trauma is different from chronic to acute trauma (Purvis et al., 2013).

There are three principles that should be applied when working with individuals with complex developmental trauma: empowerment, connection, and correction (Purvis et al., 2013). These three principles that are described within the article have been shown to have a positive

impact on both the caregiver and the individual that is being helped. TBRI training started 14 years ago at a camp that works specifically with kids who are in the foster care system. The goal of the three principles and the method of this trauma-informed approach is to teach children how to be self managers through learning how to regulate their emotions and be in charge of themselves. TBRI is a useful method to assist children with trauma because it promotes self confidence and positivity. For adults, TBRI provides steps to encourage positive change with attachment styles (Purvis et al., 2013).

### **Trauma-Informed Elementary Schools**

Teaching students how to work through issues that arise and problem solving are critical skills in helping students and educators also need to know how to problem solve and work through issues in life (Lancaster, 2021). Teaching self efficacy is pivotal for educators and is the premise of Lancaster's work. Being exposed to trauma has studies linked to negative health outcomes, and has studies and data to support that notion. Childhood trauma specifically is considered a public health threat and can have a significant impact on children's emotional and social well-being. The findings of the study indicated that more research needs to be done about self efficacy within educators, and also students (Lancaster, 2021).

Lancaster (2021) worked to implement Trauma Informed Elementary Schools (TIES). TIES is a program which provides intervention to students in early education who have been displaying signs of chronic stress and trauma within the classroom. The key to the TIES program is that every staff member is trained before the school year begins so everyone has an

understanding of the program. The goal of the program is for staff to increase their own skills and knowledge of how to work with students with trauma (Lancaster, 2021).

Students have a difficult time coming to school and not being able to separate the outside world from the school environment (Lancaster, 2021). The study showed that students do not have the ability to come to school and leave their outside lives at the door. Having staff well prepared to work with students who may struggle or have behavior issues is critical in making sure that all students can be successful even with a traumatic history. Further research should be done, but there should be baseline data and post data to indicate if training is successful, which was not presented within this study (Lancaster, 2021).

The trauma-informed method known as Trauma-Informed Elementary Schools (TIES), which stands for Trauma-Informed Elementary Schools (Rishel et al., 2019). Rishel et al. (2019) noted the main purpose of TIES is to provide early intervention to children who are showing symptoms of chronic stress, or long term trauma such as low energy, racing thoughts, forgetfulness, and irritability . Classrooms are designed specifically for students that are showing symptoms of chronic stress, and it is school specific (Rishel et al., 2019). The classrooms provide a school liaison that works directly with the educators to help educators notice the symptoms and the signs of students who are showing signs of chronic stress. Within the article there is a study that showed the effectiveness of the TIES program and the effectiveness of the method (Rishel et al., 2019).

The study obtained baseline data at the beginning of the study and post data to see if there is any effectiveness of the TIES method. The study indicated that classrooms with TIES

implemented had significant positive results compared to classrooms that did not have TIES implemented. The study concluded that TIES programs had positive effects from baseline data to post data, and data suggests that TIES programs are effective to have in schools. From the beginning of the school to the end of the school year, the TIES program showed an increase in emotional support, classroom organization, compared to other participating schools, which showed a decline in emotional support, and classroom organization. The program is effective due to the training and staff support to recognize signs of stress in order to be able to implement early intervention. The results were positive but should take into consideration that there were a limited amount of participating schools in the study (Rishel et al., 2019).

### **Riroriro Program**

The following study provides insight into students who were having behavior challenges prior to a program intervention (Hunter-Dehn, 2021). The intervention that was used within the study is called the “Riroriro Program”, which is a program that is created specifically for students who have dysregulated behaviors, and have been exposed to very unstable environments, and very high stress situations (Hunter Dehn, 2021). The study is done within schools in New Zealand and was done in an early childhood setting (Hunter-Dehn, 2021). The data within this study indicates that traditional discipline in schools such as suspensions, and expulsions, have found to not be a supportive method for changed behavior for students who have experienced trauma (Hunter-Dehn, 2021). With that information, several schools within the region are exploring alternative ways to work with students who struggle with behavior and emotional regulation (Hunter-Dehn 2021).

The elements that were brought into the classroom were trauma-informed training, trauma-informed lessons, teacher training, mental health supports within the classroom, and therapy in order to assist students in gaining the skills in order to be a part of the general education classrooms (Hunter-Dehn, 2021). The pilot program was focused on 6 students, and varied (Hunter-Dehn, 2021). Each of the students had experienced or have seen some sort of trauma in their life, such as emotional or physical abuse, and neglect (Hunter-Dehn, 2021). All of the students in the pilot program were not meeting the expectations academically, and had significant struggles with being able to regulate their emotions (Hunter-Dehn, 2021). The school built a specific classroom, that was built with the supports needed, for the pilot program (Hunter-Dehn, 2021). The students worked on emotional regulation through songs, art, and other modalities (Hunter-Dehn, 2021).

The results and findings of the study were broken down into 4 different categories: emotional regulation, interpersonal skills, academic achievement, and trauma informed school (Hunter-Dehn, 2021). The results of the study indicated that the students were better at regulating their emotions, and that behavior had significantly decreased, however academics did not have significant change (Hunter-Dehn, 2021). However, the study indicated that these students are still more prepared for the general education classroom now, than prior to the intervention (Hunter-Dehn, 2021). The limitations of this research is the limitation on participators, and there wasn't a significant base mark (Hunter-Dehn, 2021).

## **Trauma-Informed Care (TIC)**

Carello and Butler (2015) provided insight into the past two decades of clinical observations and reports that show being exposed to or being involved with traumatic scenarios can increase an individual's risk of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, specifically in regards to students, and also school social workers, who work closely with those students (Carello & Butler, 2015). The terms Secondary Traumatization, and Secondary Traumatic stress are terms that will be used interchangeably throughout this review. Both terms define where an individual such as a social worker or teacher is exposed or hears a story of a traumatic event, but also experiences the emotions, and cognitive symptoms of going through trauma, without actually going through the event (Carello & Butler, 2015).

Vicarious trauma, which will be used to not confuse between the interchangeable terms. There is some evidence that trauma training can also cause vicarious trauma within individuals who are receiving the training, such as teachers, social workers, and even students (Carello & Butler, 2015). According to the data, 66%-94% of college students indicate that they have experienced at least one trauma event, and 9-12% of Freshmen students meet the criteria for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (Carello & Butler, 2015). The picture behind traumatic material within our course work and curriculum, so educators need to be aware of how we are presenting information to students (Carello & Butler, 2015). This is very important because even though the trauma may not be directly related to the students, they can be impacted by Vicarious Trauma, which can also impact their learning, and the learning environment that they are in (Carello & Butler 2015).

The authors reiterate the fact that we as educators need to reexamine our practice and to ensure that our students' emotional safety is at the forefront, and we take methods in order to prevent Vicarious Trauma from happening (Carello & Butler 2015). Trauma Informed Care (TIC), which was created by Harris and Falloot to improve how we present information to others, within the educational system but also within our clinical settings (Carello & Butler 2015). There are also 5 principles that are identified within the article that are very important in regards to creating and maintaining Trauma Informed Care (Carello & Butler 2015). The five principles are the following: ensuring the individuals or groups safety, establishing trustworthiness, maximizing choice of care, or what the individual would like to focus on, maximizing collaboration, and prioritizing empowerment (Carello & Butler 2015). According to researchers all of these pieces are critical when working with individuals who have experienced significant trauma (Carello & Butler 2015). The most important principle of the five principles is ensuring the emotional and physical safety of the individual (Carello & Butler, 2015). Several different clinical educators who have documented their experiences teaching Trauma Informed Care Courses, and have provided their feedback on what they feel is most important for students success (Carello & Butler, 2015). Most of the Clinical Educators cited that self care, responding to student feedback with positive feedback and creating positive networks within the classroom, and the classroom are crucial to student success (Carello & Butler 2015). The author's also talk about how instructors could be triggering students, even if it is not intentional (Carello & Butler, 2015). The author suggests that teachers take a more relational approach to teaching to enhance a positive learning environment and that promotes positive and healthy relationships (Carello & Butler, 2015). In conclusion, the article displays reasoning behind why trauma informed teaching

is more than just training and why we as educators need to take into account each aspect of the teaching process in the classroom (Carello & Butler, 2015)

### **Trauma-Informed Positive Education Model**

Adapting is a key element with trauma-informed education and changing the way educators work in the classroom (Brunzel et al., 2019). The next study that was reviewed is regarding how a different Pedagogy approach which is influenced by Trauma Informed Positive Education Model (TIPE), and its effects within the classroom on students dealing with trauma, and also how it affects teachers perspective on their own teaching strategies (Brunzel et al., 2019). The premise of the study was how a group of teachers within the elementary and secondary grades changed their way of teaching after going through training that involved TIPE (Brunzel et al., 2019). Eighteen teachers were a part of the study, and the studies duration was over an entire year. The study does not indicate any information about any of the teachers in regards to age or how much experience they have within education (Brunzel et al., 2019). Over the course of the year, the teachers were analyzed on how they changed their approach to the classroom, behavior management, curriculum and lesson planning (Brunzel et al., 2019). Teachers were also interviewed and also examined within classrooms by observation (Brunzel et al., 2019). The goal within the actual training was to assist the teachers in being able to have the tools in order to help the students improve their own learning in the classroom and strengthen their own abilities as students (Brunzel et al., 2019). The data within the study was qualitative data that was used, and there were two themes that came about within the study. The themes were conclusive that TIPE training within the educational system provides a pathway to improve



positive interactions within teachers and students (Brunzel et al. 2019). The findings show that TIPE training can provide teachers with better tools in order to improve their strengths in being able to bridge the gap between students and teachers, especially students who have dealt with traumatic experiences (Brunzel et al. 2019). The study also concludes that Trauma Informed Training has a positive impact on both the teachers within the classroom, but also the students themselves (Brunzel et al. 2019)

### **Mindfulness**

Mindfulness is becoming part of the classroom to allow students to find calmness and teach emotional regulation strategies (Duane et al., 2021). The following journal talks about a movement of middle school teachers across the country, and there is a movement where these educators are trying to implement a practice known as mindfulness ( Duane et al., 2021). The literature expands on the notion that mindfulness can bring a positive impact to students within the classroom, however if not used correctly, mindfulness can be damaging to students (Duane et al., 2021). Mindfulness can be an effective tool within the classroom, however educators should have trauma informed training before implementing mindfulness within the classroom (Duant et al., 2021). The reasoning behind this notion is because without the acknowledgement of individuals' experiences, mindfulness could be triggering for some students (Duane et al., 2021). Main takeaway from the journal is that mindfulness could have a great impact with students inside the classroom, however educators should have trauma informed training prior to implementing a mindfulness practice within the classroom (Duane et al., 2021).

## **Specialized Programs for Refugees**

Special programs have been implemented into schools for refugees who have gone through significant trauma and need specific support within the school environment. The next review is an analysis of a study done on refugees who were placed in schools that have specialized designed programs specifically for students who have experienced trauma (Barrett & Berger, 2021). The study consisted of interviewing six different teachers who reported their perspectives on the different events and challenges that came up during their time working with the refugee students (Barrett & Berger, 2021). The term refugee used in this study is defined as individuals who are forced to leave their country, not by choice, but for safety and survival due to the environment that they are living in. According to data shown in this study, 50% of refugees that flee from other countries are adolescents or children under the age of 18 (Barrett & Berger, 2021). The study indicates that the multiple traumatic experiences refugees can experience can have long-term effects on their physical and emotional wellbeing having to live through war in their countries, and difficult living conditions (Barrett & Berger, 2021).

Barrett and Berger (2021) talk about the intention of trauma-informed education, and the reason behind implementing it in the schools. However, the study does point out the limitations of literature on how teachers actually work with students with significant trauma, and refugee students (Barrett & Berger, 2021). The intention of this study was to expand on this research and be one of the first studies to dive into the perspectives and experiences of teachers (Barrett & Berger, 2021). This study was conducted in a school in Australia, and gathered information from teachers who worked specifically with refugee students who experienced significant trauma

(Barrett & Berger, 2021). The guiding questions within this study are the following: What are the experiences in relation to supporting trauma exposed students from a refugee background? What support and practices are available to teachers to help to support refugee students who have been exposed to trauma? (Barrett & Berger, 2021). There were six teachers, all women, who participated in the study, and they were all from Victoria, Australia (Barrett & Berger, 2021). Each participant had the same five questions, and then had different follow-up questions depending on how they responded to the initial questions.

The results and analysis of the Barrett and Berger (2021) qualitative study were based on a thematic analysis process to examine if there were any trends or patterns within the responses from the participants (Barrett & Berger, 2021). The results of the study indicated seven different themes that appeared through the interviews. The themes are as follows: characterization of trauma-related behaviors observed at school; development of trusting relationships between student and teacher; the role of the teacher and additional considerations when supporting students from refugee backgrounds; the right school context to enhance refugee student wellbeing and teacher experience; sharing of relevant background and trauma information; challenges due to external factors outside of the control of teachers; and support and training needs for teachers regarding refugee students (Barrett & Berger, 2021). The conclusion of the study provides insights into real life experiences of teachers who worked specifically with refugee students, and themes emerged on what each teacher collectively thought would be important for support to be in place for students who have experienced significant trauma (Barrett & Berger, 2021). The information that was found would be helpful to educational

facilities, educators, and school leadership as a resource to help provide correct support and resources for refugee students who have experienced trauma (Barrett & Berger, 2021).

## **Foster Care, Juvenile Justice, and Court System**

### **Educational Challenges in the Foster Care System**

The following journal article examines the foster care system, and specifically how trauma informed care can help support those within the foster care system, and how they navigate the world of college (Hallet et al., 2018). Many challenges exist for individuals who grow up in foster care such as, lack of coping skills, being exposed to different types of abuse, and significant traumatic events (Hallet et al., 2018). Another risk factor that individuals in the foster care system have to face is instability within home life and supportive resources (Hallet et al., 2018). The instability that affects individuals within the foster care system, has shown to affect their academic ability, specifically with writing, math, and english (Hallet et al., 2018). With all these factors that are in place that make it difficult for individuals within the foster care system, colleges could implement programs that assist individuals who don't have the support or resources to navigate the path to college (Hallet et al., 2018). Foster care programs have been attempting to increase their stability with resources for individuals looking into college programs, but there is still a significant lack of resources (Hallet et al., 2018).

The work of this Hallet et al. (2018) is to try to promote through data inventory and surveys given that more colleges should implement more programs to provide more resources that help guide students through the college process for those that would need it (Hallet et al., 2018) A study was conducted and was focused primarily on a foster care system located in

California (Hallet et al., 2018). The study interviewed 15 participants, all who were in the foster care system (Hallet et al., 2018). The findings of the study had a few different themes, and the most common was students navigating the college world, wanting a better life, but struggling to survive in the current moment (Hallet et al., 2018). There were 3 factors that affected how the students framed their thought processes about themselves and measured their motivation to continue and persist in their program (Hallet et al., 2018). Residential instability, abuse and neglect, and social network disruption, are things that are common within students from the foster care system (Hallet et al., 2018). The results and conclusions from this study was that the students from the foster care system all believe that going to college is an important thing in order to better themselves and their lives (Hallet et al., 2018). The students also talked about the lack of a social network and support which make it very difficult to navigate the college system and beyond (Hallet et al., 2018).

The class can be a sacred place, where in order for students to be able to learn, they have to feel safe emotionally and physically. The following section explores trauma-informed practices and studies that have occurred within the classroom. Crosby (2015) shared how trauma can impact an individual's wellbeing psychologically, and affect learning (Crosby, 2015). The article concludes with the findings of their own research within Trauma Informed Education (Crosby, 2015). The article is written by Shantell Crosby, and it is titled, "An Ecological Perspective on Emerging Trauma-Informed Teaching Practices". The article's framework is based on Ecological Theory, and that individuals' experiences are formed through their relationships within their family and their community (Crosby, 2015). The article indicates that 25% of children encounter traumatic experiences within their childhood such as physically,

mentally, or sexually abusive, and trauma within children is very prevalent (Crosby, 2015). Several populations of youth children are at an even higher risk of being exposed or having to deal with trauma such as, children of color, lower socioeconomic status, or the foster care system (Crosby, 2015). Children of color, specifically, can also be at greater risk, especially if they are in environments with consistent violence, which can have life long lasting effects on their well-being (Crosby, 2015). Children that are in the foster care system also display more symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress than children that are not in the foster care system (Crosby, 2015). Even into adulthood, individuals who were in the foster care system are 20% more likely to have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Crosby, 2015). In regards to the Juvenile Justice System, close to 90% of Juveniles reported that they have experienced significant trauma (Crosby, 2015). There have been numerous reports and literature written about how trauma can affect a student's learning within the classroom (Crosby, 2015). The article also explains that trauma can lead to specific academic deficits throughout childhood, and into adulthood (Crosby, 2015). Maltreatment can lead to lack of social skills, and behavioral problems such as internalizing feelings, or externalizing feelings with very grand outbursts (Crosby, 2015). Trauma has also been connected to higher rates of suspensions, drop outs, low grades, and test scores (Crosby, 2015). Schools have a unique opportunity where they have huge impacts on students' lives, and can implement trauma informed interventions, in order to provide resources and support for students who have been through significant trauma (Crosby, 2015).

Trauma Informed practices do need to be accepted by all teachers, administrators, and mental health professionals within the school in order for it to be successful (Crosby, 2015). Trauma Informed teaching practices can enhance the learning environment and are linked to

higher success rates within students, and lower stress and burnout rates within educators (Crosby, 2015).

In conclusion, the article provides great insight into how trauma affects our youth, and can have lasting effects on our children, well into adulthood if support is not provided (Crosby, 2015). Our school systems have great opportunities that are supported by research to change the way we teach and help out students strive in a positive manner (Crosby, 2015). Classrooms can be very vulnerable places for students, but the key to trauma-informed training is to create a safe space for all children. The following journal that was reviewed provides insight and support as to why trauma-informed care has a place within the class. Trauma-informed care is the term that is used within this context and will be used within the literature review for this specific journal.

### **The Impact of student Involved in Court System**

Children have voices, and educators can learn just as much from the students as students can learn from educators. West et al. (2014) provided insight into the minds of our youth and their perspective. The study is taking into consideration the voices of youth who have been involved within the court system, and how it affects learning and education (West et al., 2014). The research question is whether or not court-involved youths have had an impact on student behavior, specifically behavior of “anger emotions, aggressive behavior, environmental influences, and any other triggers” (West et al. 2014, p.59). The goal of the study is about 39 teenage girls ages from 14-18, and collecting input on what causes their behavior and what they think would be good changes for them in an educational setting (West et al. 2014). The importance of this study is to point out that Trauma-Informed Education is crucial within the

educational system and that the youth voice is an important part of that solution (West et al., 2014). The study is a qualitative study that takes the perceptions and feelings of young individuals with varying ages to gain a perspective on their educational experience (West et al., 2014). The studies were done by interviews of the random individuals within the study, who were broken down into six different focus groups (West et al., 2014). The summary of data came back with a few themes that were noted throughout the study and the findings of what the students provided. One aspect was that students' own sensitivity to trauma and what needs were within the school setting (West et al. 2014). Some students have awareness of their behavior and peer behavior, and students have specific ideas on how to create solutions within the classroom (West et al. 2014). Students were also able to identify triggers that were from previous education experiences, and believe this was the cause of emotional outbursts (West et al. 2014). Schools can benefit from these findings and can create interventions that would be more beneficial due to the student input (West et al. 2014).

### **Alternative Discipline**

Education systems have relied on suspensions and expulsion for decades. The following study analyzes an alternative discipline action known as Monarch Room (MR), specifically designed for female students within the court system (Crosby et al., 2018). The study indicates that court involved youth have higher suspension rates, and higher rates of expulsion from schools than students who are not involved within the court system (Crosby et al, 2018). Research has shown that students that are involved within the court system have lasting negative effects that impact their academic success such as, drop out rate, and failing classes (Crosby et al,



2018). Studies and data have shown that school suspensions most likely do not lead to anything positive or reduce the negative behavior (Crosby et al, 2018).

The study consisted of all female students who were enrolled at Clara B. Ford Academy. A charter school that works specifically with younger women who are involved in the courts, and have experienced abuse, neglect, and home removal (Crosby et al, 2018). The study indicates that about 141 students, which is about 35 percent of the total population of the school made it to the Monarch Room during the time of the study (Crosby et al, 2018). The Monarch Room is a room that is run by trauma informed staff that is available to students throughout the day if students feel that they need to calm down, or go somewhere to de-escalate (Crosby et al. 2018). The study took a survey from the students and asked how they felt about the Monarch room, and what their feelings were about it, was it helpful, and how was their mood after they used the Monarch room (Crosby et al. 2018). The results of the study indicated that out of the 9 students who were suspended, two of the students were Monarch Room users and the 7 others were not (Crosby et al, 2018). The results indicated that the students who used the Monarch Room were having less suspensions and behavior problems than students who were not utilizing the Monarch room (Crosby et al. 2018).

### **Trauma-Informed Care**

The following literature explores the impact of trauma-informed training and effects within the educational setting.

### **Student and Staff Relationships**

Staff and students relationships are an important element to having a positive environment within the school. Douglass et al. (2020) analyzed five different inner city schools that work with early childhood to see if trauma informed training had any impact on the relationships between the students and the staff. The trauma informed training model that was talked about within the study is called the Breakthrough Series Collaborative, which is a model that helps bring in new sciences and skills for the individuals within the system (Douglass et al., 2020) The study focused on three different aspects within the school system. The first level that was analyzed was the individual level, which consists of students, staff members, and administration (Douglass et al. 2020). The next level that was explored during the study was the classroom (Douglass et al 2020), The classroom can be arranged in different ways which can impact a students experience, and can also be triggering depending on what is in the classroom (Douglass et al 2020). Organizational levels was another phase that was looked at within the study (Douglass et al. 2020). The study indicates it is important to look at the school and how things are organized within staff, such as paraprofessional assignments and protocols with students to ensure staff and students have a positive relationship (Douglass et al. 2020). The study also indicated that how classrooms are organized and set up can have a great impact on students' comfort within the classroom (Douglass et al. 2020) The results of the study indicated that trauma informed training did have a positive effect within the schools (Douglass et al, 2020). The study did show positive effects such as more empathy with regards to students from teachers and staff, and a positive school climate (Douglass et al. 2020). The studies results also indicated that trauma-informed training would benefit from being started at the organizational and

administrative level in order to have positive implementation and coordination between educators and students within the building (Douglass et al. 2020).

Support systems are key elements when working with students who have experienced trauma. The following study is based on implementing a multi-tiered system in order to help provide better support for students in school who struggle with behavior issues, who have experienced trauma (Berger, 2019). The intention of this study was to be one of the first studies to expand on trauma-informed teaching and how to provide more insight on whether it could be effective within the classroom (Berger, 2019). The results of this study stemmed into publications of other studies to help expand on this vision (Berger, 2019). The findings within this article and the other 13 publications regarding the same insight, concluded that more research needs to be done, and that it would be required in order to provide more insight into the actual question (Berger, 2019). The study analyzed programs that were implemented within schools that supported students who experienced trauma (Berger, 2019). The study was the first of its kind due to the lack of studies that have actually explored if multi tiered supported programs actually work (Berger, 2019). The results indicated that there were positive elements such as better academic performance and lower behavior issues with students who were in the program (Berger, 2019). The students who were in the program also showed an increase in positive relationships with peers and staff members (Berger, 2019). However, even though the study brought out significant results, and expanded into further research, the research is limited within this study and further research is needed and strongly suggested (Berger, 2019).

Positive relationships have shown to improve students behavior and academic success within the school environment (Parker, 2021). Trauma-informed programs within schools have been shown to have successful outcomes, however, there is little research on what exactly can be helpful or what hinders trauma-informed programs within schools (Parker, 2021). The article explores several other citations that explore different elements that show what can be done to have a successful trauma informed program within the school system (Parker, 2021). The research that has been done shows children with severe trauma can have lasting negative effects on their functioning within the school system and society (Parker, 2021). Research showed that students with trauma have increased behavioral issues and struggle with life outside of the school environment (Parker, 2021). Trauma as a young child, can cause disruption within brain development, and emotion regulation, which can lead to behavior issues and mental illnesses (Parker, 2021). Without early intervention and trauma that has gone untreated, children can have devastating effects that can last long term (Parker, 2021).

It is very important that trauma-informed practices be inherited and implemented especially at the childhood and elementary school levels (Parker, 2021). One of the main factors of trauma-informed programs within schools is the positive relationships between the students and staff to ensure a safe environment for the student (Parker, 2021). There is strong support that all teachers should be trained in trauma-informed care, as they can implement their training within the classroom (Parker, 2021). There has been specific research to understand how trauma can trigger the same response hormonally as the human stress system, and can have lasting effects both physically and psychologically (Parker, 2021). In conclusion, early intervention is

key to success with trauma-informed programs within the school system, because waiting too long can have lasting irreversible effects for the student (Parker, 2021).

The increase of awareness around trauma and the impact it has on students, especially developmentally (Milsom & Rumsey, 2019). The impact of trauma can have negative effects that can severely impact a child's development, and can cause difficulties within academics and behavior (Milsome & Rumsey, 2019). Trauma has been shown to affect students' completion rate in high school and lowers motivation to go to school (Milsom & Rumsey, 2019). The premise of the article is around how social workers can implement trauma-informed interventions with students (Milsome & Rumsey, 2019). Improvement plans are plans that each school makes across the country and provides different parameters of what their goals are each year. High school graduation rates are always on the top of the list when it comes to improvement plans for schools (Milsome & Rumsey, 2019). The interventions that are presented within the article are for Social Workers, in hope to improve a students school experience, especially if they are struggling with chronic stress (Milsome & Rumsey, 2019). The article indicates data that shows students who have experienced trauma have a significant higher dropout rate compared to students who have not experienced trauma (Milsome & Rumsey, 2019).

Schools cannot prevent trauma, however the more they are aware of the signs and symptoms, the earlier schools can recognize and intervene (Milsom & Rumsey, 2019). The variables that help indicate whether a student has experienced trauma are things such as discipline history, academic history, and attendance (Milsom & Rumsey, 2019). The article talks

about the importance of staff being able to recognize students who are showing signs of trauma, and being able to intervene earlier (Milsom & Rumsey, 2019).

## **Creating a Positive Classroom Environment**

### **Student Empowerment**

It is paramount that students feel included in the classroom, because it creates a sense of safety for the students (Field, 2016). Behavior concerns in the classroom have become more prevalent and are steadily increasing (Field, 2016). The idea of empowering students through trauma informed Art therapy where they can express their feelings and emotions through a positive outlet (Field, 2016). A key element to take into consideration is that students, especially students who have come from different schools, and backgrounds, may have a more challenging time fitting in, or a lack of identity within the school (Field, 2016). Psychoeducational Therapy is the approach that is explored within the literature and helps teach individuals to learn and recognize symptoms of trauma. Utilizing art therapy and trauma informed therapy in order to create a safe atmosphere which focuses on the student becoming empowered within themselves (Field, 2016).

The idea is to have an environment where students can have activities that promote positive actions which lead to positive behaviors in smaller groups (Fields, 2016). One difference that is mentioned between this type of intervention compared to group therapy is that therapy groups are attended more often, and these classrooms are promoting more positive self empowerment activities (Field, 2016).

The impact of changing the environment within the classroom for students and the effect it can have on students (Minahan, 2019). The article talks about how trauma within students is possibly one of the biggest health threats that our students are facing today (Minahan, 2019). Trauma can have a lasting impact on young children, and can cause children to not learn how to properly express emotions in a healthy way (Minahan, 2019). In the article, the author explains that if students do not feel safe within the classroom or the school environment it is impossible for them to learn (Minahan, 2019).

Teachers need to have a more understanding approach to their students, and not to take students' reactions personally (Minahan, 2019). Educators whom have an understanding of trauma, and the impact it can have on the students have better outcomes with students who display behavior issues (Minahan, 2019). A metaphor was used to explain a way of how to understand a student that has experienced trauma. The author explains that if educators look at students as pop cans, when people shake pop cans and they get opened, soda goes everywhere (Minahan, 2019). Students can be like pop cans, educators cannot tell if a student has been shaken up by something or has been through something, until the trigger or can gets opened up (Minahan, 2019). The thought that students with trauma may have a difficult time in the classroom and may also come off as defiant and disrespectful (Minahan, 2019). Educators should take an active role in having thoughtful actions when working with students who have experienced trauma (Minahan, 2019). Working on relationships with the students and creating a safe environment should be prioritized as it will lead to a positive outcome (Minahan, 2019).

Pedagogy in health promotion written by Harper & Neubauer (2021) titled, “Teaching During a Pandemic: A Model for Trauma Informed Education and Administration”. The premise is bringing to light a model that has different elements surrounding how educators, administrators and students have been impacted by the Pandemic (Harper & Neubauer 2021). Two key elements the author points out is that our thought processes and disruptions within our cognitive thought have been greatly impacted across the board without educators, students, and administrators (Harper & Neubauer 2021).

Harper & Neubauer (2021) points out specifically that Covid-19 is a very unique event that has caused trauma across the board, and the people that are helping those going through trauma, are also going through a traumatic experience themselves (Harper & Neubauer 2021). The model that the authors are presenting is based on four elements that need to be in place, which are, realization about the trauma, recognition of the basic signs of trauma, a response, and a process for resisting re-traumatization (Harper & Neubauer 2021). The conclusion of the article is that schools should implement this model, due to the fact of the trauma and uniqueness of what we have all gone through with the pandemic.

Covid-19 had a lasting impact on everyone worldwide and created challenges that educators and students were not prepared for (Pica-Smith & Scanell. 2021). The increasing conversations in regards to race and how students are navigating through the challenges of differing opinions on such a delicate topic of conversation (Pica-Smith & Scanell, 2021). The pandemic caused schools to close, and that some of the students who were living at the university were homeless overnight (Pica Smith & Scanell, 2021). The topic of race is at the



forefront of many emotional conversations and that the movement can be very difficult for some people to work through (Pica-Smith & Scannell, 2021). The literature explored Black or African American, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) students specifically and how students who identified as BIPOC explained how they have experienced extreme trauma with the events that took place the last couple of years and how it will have a lasting impact on them (Pica-Smith & Scannell, 2021). The literature concluded that the notion that educators need to take into account everything that is going on within students' lives, and that each person has a different experience than the next (Pica-Smith & Scannell, 2021). The literature provides a discussion of how to work with students who were struggling with the recent events and also the topic of race (Pica-Smith & Scannell, 2021). The article concludes that as educators, support within the classroom is critical and that building a relationship provides a more positive outcome (Pica-Smith & Scannell, 2021).

### **Creating a safe environment**

An educator's perspective can hinder how educators view students (Altieri Jr. et al., 2021). Physical Education teachers have a different classroom than other teachers within a school building as well as a different perspective on how classes are run. Usually the expectation for students is to bring a change of clothes for gym class that would be athletic in nature in order to participate within the classroom. What if students did not have certain athletic clothes or athletic shoes? The article expands on the notion of teachers becoming students of their students (Altieri Jr. et al., 2021). The article Altieri Jr. et al. (2021) dives into the different traumatic experiences that students face such as, violence, poverty, and historical trauma (Altieri Jr. et al., 2021). The article talks about how all students can experience trauma regardless of gender, age,

religious background, and cultural background. To expand on that, students can go through very similar traumatic experiences but it may be different depending on the students background. The journal supports not only Physical Education teachers but also others within the field of education to expand on their own practice of Trauma Informed Education within the classroom (Altieri Jr. et al., 2021). The Journal provides ways for P. E. teachers, and how they can practice to improve their own well being, and ways to model positive behavior for their students (Altieri Jr. et al, 2021). The article concludes that Physical Education teachers do see students within different parameters during the day, and provides insights on how Physical Education teachers can role model positive environments, but also provide a safe environment for students (Altieri Jr. et al, 2021).

Understanding how to work with students and how to recognize the symptoms of trauma is critical to the success of school staff members (Hurless & Kong. 2021). The recommendations that Social Workers should use when working with the Emotional Behavior student population (Hurless & Kong. 2021). Data in the article indicates that the symptoms that align with Emotional Behavior Disorder, also align with individuals who display traumatic stress and anxiety symptoms (Hurless & Kong. 2021). Educational outcomes are affected by students who display symptoms with Emotional Behavior Disorder and stress-trauma symptoms (Hurless & Kong, 2021). Data within the article also suggests students who experience trauma outside of school can display behavioral challenges within school, and high levels of discipline (Hurless & Kong, 2021).

Hurless & Kong (2021) explains that taking a trauma-informed approach to working with students with trauma indicators, is a holistic approach that takes into account every aspect of the student (Hurless & Kong. 2021). The article suggests that schools increase their awareness and diversity to create a safe environment for students, and reduce chances of prejudice and judgment (Hurless & Kong. 2021). Meetings can be more effective with a positive approach when taking into consideration the students' entire life and what they are currently dealing with and family life (Hurless & Kong. 2021). Social Workers, and other educators can use positive language to enhance the school experience for students who are indicated as Emotional Behavior disorder (Hurless & Kong, 2021).

### **Trauma-informed Techniques and Skill**

#### **Instruction Techniques**

Instructors should look at their teaching as it can cause retraumatization with students who have been exposed to trauma (Carello & Butler, 2014). Re-traumatization is also known as post-traumatic stress disorder (Carello & Butler, 2014). When instructors present information that is related to a traumatic experience, students can experience that trauma without going through that experience again (Carello & Butler, 2014). The idea is that instructors would present information that could possibly trigger students in order to assist them with handling traumatic situations, and working with others in regards to trauma (Carello & Butler, 2014). Instructors should be more mindful of how they present information to the students in order to not cause students to be retraumatized indirectly (Carello & Butler, 2014). Teaching strategies should be

prepared so that it takes into consideration all factors within the environment in classroom settings and how the instructors present the information to the class (Carello & Butler, 2014).

New teachers getting into the field of education would benefit from trauma-informed training and the positive elements it provided (Harrison et al. 2020). The following study analyzes work that was done over 3 years of time, and analyzes how trauma informed training has impacted new teachers getting into the field (Harrison et al. 2020). The study is about teaching the effects of trauma and the impacts it can have on people, and new teachers are being taught the information (Harrison et al. 2020). The goal of the study is to create a way to help individuals who are being trained on traumatic experiences be able to work through the mental process even if they did not experience the trauma first hand (Harrison et al. 2020). The results show that individuals can still deal with the impact of trauma second hand, and would benefit from a training program on how to work through things such as being trained on traumatic experiences (Harrison et al. 2020).

The individuals in the study were exposed to several different elements of trauma and work events that had happened in the past (Harrison et al. 2020). Several events were brought forth during the training such as the Holocaust, and other world events that were very tragic (Harrison et al. 2020). The results of the study were that trauma informed training was very necessary for individuals learning about traumatic experiences, in order to be able to handle secondary trauma (Harrison et al, 2020).

## **Effects of trauma-informed training**

Staff members who have been trained in trauma-informed care have been shown to have the skills to work with individuals who have experienced trauma (Felt & Loomis, 2021). The study was conducted in a pre-school setting and compared the skills of staff members and if trauma-informed training had any impact on how staff were prepared to work with children who have experienced trauma (Felt & Loomis, 2021). There were 111 staff members that were a part of the study and several groups of staff members were represented. The breakdown of the staff members were 49% Lead Teachers, 20% Assistant Teachers, and 27% were all other staff members including Administration and classroom aides (Felt & Loomis, 2021).

The question explored whether prior trauma-informed training made any impact compared to individuals with self-training, self-reflection, and experience working with students with trauma (Felt & Loomis, 2021). The findings indicated that trauma-informed training is not created equal across the board and will not prepare each person equally (Felt & Loomis, 2021). The results indicate that self-reflection and the staff's attitude towards trauma-informed training has the biggest impact because it has a direct correlation with their attitude and outlook with students (Felt & Loomis, 2021).

Trauma-informed training provides techniques and information for teachers to connect and work with students who have gone through traumatic events (Alisic, 2012). The study was a qualitative study which analyzed 21 elementary school teachers' ages from 22-55 years of age, and varied experiences from little to no experience teaching or in their first year of teaching, all the way to 30 year teachers (Alisic, 2012). Within the group that was studied there were five men

in the group, and 16 women teachers that were interviewed (Alisic. 2012). The interviews were organized in a summative analysis, and consisted of interviews with several different questions (Alisic. 2012). One of the studies themes were that teachers felt fairly confident in being able to work with students who have had dealt with traumatic experiences, however, a theme was consistent with each teacher feeling that more training on the subject of traumatic informed training was important (Alisic. 2012). Each of the teachers had similarities with dealing with challenges regarding burnout, and behavior management in regards to students with trauma, and challenges with what may be the best approach for each student (Alisic, 2012). The study concluded that schools, and education systems could provide more tailored training for teachers, depending on their own individualized strengths with students (Alisic, 2012). At the time of the article, the findings concluded that more research would be beneficial and needed because the topic of trauma informed training within education is a very understudied but important topic (Alisic, 2012).

Educators are another focal point for trauma training and how it can impact their practice. A study done on 112 educators provided insight into trauma training for educators and to see if it had any effect on their well-being (Kim et al., 2021). The foundation of the study was to implement a Social Emotional Learning tool called MindUP, and see if the tool had any impact on teachers as the tool did have a positive impact on students (Kim et al., 2021). MindUP is a mindfulness tool that was used on students to help with behavioral issues and improving executive functioning (Kim et al. 2021, p. 56).

The study was a mixed-methods study, which included both quantitative and qualitative data. Out of the 112 educators that were a part of the study, 71 of the teachers were provided the intervention, and the others were a control group with no given intervention (Kim et al., 2021). The results showed that the teachers who were a part of the intervention group showed significant decreases in emotional stressors and greater sense of satisfaction (Kim et al., 2021, p. 55). The study showed there is a need for trauma informed training not only to assist students going through trauma, but also for educators to be able to withstand the high stressors of the profession (Kim et al., 2021)

### **Self Care**

Educators and the need for them to also take care of themselves. Educators have a difficult task navigating and helping children who have experienced trauma (Luther & Mendes, 2020). The article indicates the importance of working with students and that should be primary, however, in order to provide continued support, educators need to also have continued support (Luther & Mendes, 2020).

A review of 10 teachers that were surveyed regarding the major challenges that they faced within the classroom working with students who experience trauma (Luther & Mendes, 2020). The educators that were interviewed all work within k-12 schools who have implemented trauma-informed teaching practices (Luther & Mendes, 2020). The article indicates that adults, specifically educators, and also parents will need to have continued positive relationships, which will help alleviate chronic stress (Luther & Mendes, 2020). The conclusion of the article suggests

that schools could implement more programs and resources in order to provide support for educators which could reduce burnout (Luther & Mendes, 2020).

In conclusion, trauma-informed programs have supporting data that provided positive results for students when the programs were implemented. Trauma-informed training is supported by research that staff and student relationships also improve and have positive effects. The following chapter summarizes the literature review, reviews the limitations of the literature, professional application, implications of further research and the conclusion.



## **CHAPTER III: CONCLUSION**

### **Summary of Literature**

The literature review had five themes to guide the reader throughout. The first section focused on trauma-informed programs that have been implemented and studied. The second section focused on the educational challenges for students who were in the foster care, juvenile justice, or court system. The third section analyzed literature that focuses on trauma-informed care within the educational system. The fourth section focuses on literature that aligns with creating a positive environment for students. The final section describes trauma-informed training techniques and skills for educators.

The literature review analyzed studies and data directly related to programs that were implemented in schools such as TIES, Riroriro, and TIS. The data indicated that schools that had programs implemented showed significant progress and results with their trauma-informed programs. The research and data also indicated that early intervention is critical to helping children who have been through trauma (Carello & Butler, 2015). The research and data explained that educators also need training on their own self care, as working with children and trauma can be stressful (Carello & Butler, 2015) .

The data and research revealed that long term trauma has severe implications on children's development and can cause significant challenges to children long term (Purvis et al. 2013). The data and research also showed that children that are brought up in the foster care system have a higher risk of dealing with trauma and challenges throughout life (Purvis et al, 2013). The research also indicated that behavior issues that cause discipline problems within schools could be stemmed from previous trauma, but staff members and teachers may not be

prepared to deal with such issues (Day et al. 2015). The research also indicated that trauma-informed care and education is important not only for children but also for educators to be prepared to handle delicate situations and have a holistic approach to work with children in trauma (Day et al. 2015).

The research indicated that staff who were trained in trauma-informed teaching focused on the whole student and learned to take a holistic approach to teaching (Kim et al., 2021). The research also indicated that students will not learn unless they feel that they are in a safe environment, and feel safe physically and emotionally. The data indicated that educators must also be aware of how information and what information they present to students does not cause retraumatization (Kim et al., 2021).

### **Professional Application**

The most important aspects of the literature review are the positive outcomes that have come out from various studies in regards to trauma-informed teaching. The data showed that trauma-informed educators take a different approach in the classroom, which has a positive outcome with students (Felt & Loomis. 2021). The main point that has been expressed throughout this review is that trauma-informed education takes the entire student into perspective and is very relational based. Trauma-informed education would be a game changer for all schools and educators and most importantly students if it were implemented.

Implementing trauma-informed education and modalities would provide an environment that promotes safety and positivity which would greatly benefit students' ability to learn.

The research has shown that when classrooms and educators apply methods of trauma-informed teaching, significant positive change occurs (Lancaster, 2021). There are

several different methods that have been implemented into the classroom such as Trauma Informed Elementary Schools (TIES) (Lancaster, 2021). TIES is a trauma-informed program, specifically made for elementary children to have early intervention for students who are showing signs of chronic stress and symptoms of trauma. Another implemented program is Trauma Informed Positive Education (TIPE) (Brunzel et al. 2019). TIPE is specifically designed for training educators on how they change their classroom to a positive safe space for students (Brunzel et al. 2019). Trust-Relational Intervention (TBRI) is another trauma-informed application (Purvis et al. 2013). TBRI is training that is specifically made for caregivers who work with children in the foster care system (Purvis et al. 2013). The training provides a positive environment for both the caregiver and the student (Purvis et al. 2013).

### **Limitations of the Research**

Within each of the reviews that were covered, there were common themes for limitations of research. The limitations of research indicated that the field of trauma-informed care and education is still fairly young and there has not been tons of research up to this point, however with the data and research that was analyzed, further research is strongly recommended. The research that was excluded from this review was an opposing view to trauma-informed education and teaching. The question that is being explored in this thesis is if trauma-informed teaching has any effect on students' ability to learn. Throughout the literature, it was noted that there is very limited research in trauma-informed education even though it has been strongly recommended to be researched. It was noteworthy to find that trauma-informed education is not as wide spread or accepted amongst most schools.

Another aspect to the research that was a limitation was not having baseline information and post information in studies. The research still indicated that there were positive outcomes, however the study did not provide information prior to the study or after it (Lancaster. 2021). The studies suggest having baseline data and post data to get accurate results of studies.

### **Implications for Future Research**

With the positive aspects of the data and research that has been indicated in the literature that has been reviewed, it would indicate that further research is needed. Further research could expand more data to support having more trauma-informed training for educators. Having more trauma-informed training would assist educators in being able to be better equipped to work with students with significant trauma. The findings that have been discovered provide insight that trauma-informed education could have a greater impact on students not only academically but also long term in their own lives. Research has shown that students are unable to learn if they do not feel safe physically and emotionally, which supports the notion that there is space for trauma-informed practice within schools and that it would be beneficial for students' learning and academic success.

The main question that did arise during the literature review was why is trauma-informed education not streamlined more if it has such positive outcomes? Another question that was not addressed was exploring if trauma-informed education was done with individuals who did not have behavior issues or symptoms. Most of the data in the review was

tailored towards individuals with behavior issues. More research is needed and would be interesting to compare results from urban schools and rural schools.

### **Conclusion**

The question of this thesis was “How does trauma informed teaching impact learning?”. The literature that was reviewed and analyzed described several different applications of trauma-informed care that has had significant data, which supports trauma-informed care methods in the classroom. The idea that education can change and educators can change practice in order to provide a better opportunity for students to excel in education is something that should be continually explored (Brunzel et al. 2019).

Research and data supports the notion that trauma-informed training can impact a student's learning because it takes into account the whole student (Kim et al. 2021) . A holistic approach with a focus on positive relationships has shown to have positive results for students and staff (Kim et al. 2021). There have been several different modalities that were reviewed within this paper that showed positive results when trauma-informed methods were provided in the classroom (Lancaster. 2021). Not only do students benefit from these methods, but staff do as well. Times are changing and educators need to adapt to the world that works best for its students (Hurless & Kong. 2021). Overall, the question of whether trauma-informed teaching has any effect on students' ability to learn is supported by the literature even though there is suggested further research.

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