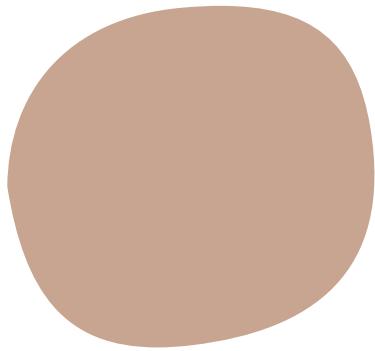


Trauma and Early Childhood Education

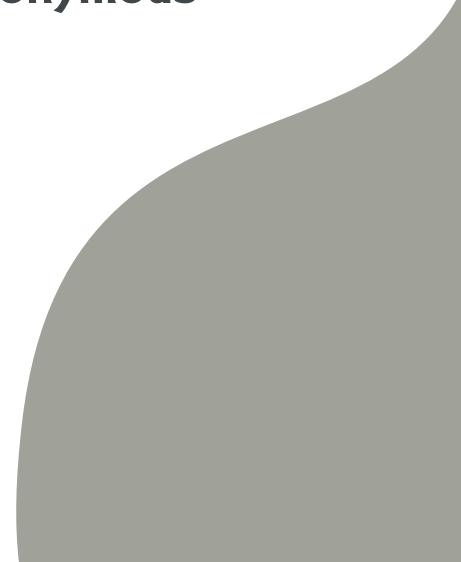
Elle Gross

School of Education, Colorado State University



“Sometimes the thing your students need most right now has nothing to do with what’s on the lesson plan.”

—Anonymous



Purpose of Study

Explore the relationship between **traumatic stress** and children's **behavior** in the classroom.

Explore **teacher preparedness** in regards to identifying traumatic indicators in the classroom.

Research question:

1. How do educators respond to traumatic indicators within the classroom?



Traumatic experiences in early childhood are related to increased risk of mental health issues, physical disorders, and substance abuse (Rishel et al., 2019).

According to my literature review, “...many teachers experienced difficulty supporting students in the following:”

- **After trauma has occurred.**
- When to seek **professional mental health advice.**
- **Locating resources** to find more information about traumatic stress (Alisic et al., 2012).

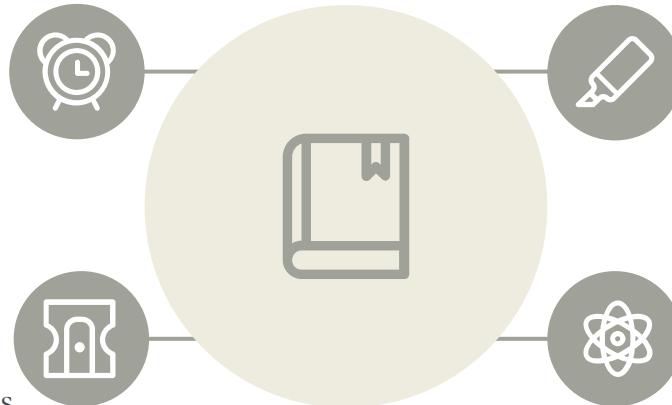
Summary of Literature Review

Traumatic stress

Trauma is **not** an individual event.

Trauma-informed schools

Trauma-informed systems understand the **relevance of trauma**, recognize traumatic stress symptoms and respond to the needs of their students (Roseby, & Gascoigne, 2021).



Teachers' roles

Children with traumatic stress may respond differently to a normal stress task and react in a way that triggers their basic survival responses.

Partnering with other professionals

School may be the only place available for students to receive mental health services.

Method

Setting & participants

- Beattie Elementary School
- **Two** first-grade teachers, and **five** first-grade students

Sampling

- Convenience sampling
- **Five**, first grade students ($n=5$, females=3, males=2)
- **Two**, first-grade teachers working at Beattie ($n=2$, females =2)

Data collection

Technique

- Google forms survey (questionnaire)
- Active and privileged observations.

Instrument

- ABC checklist adapted from Bijou, et al. (1968)

Quantitative & qualitative analysis

Quantitative data coded in excel:

- Frequency
- SD
- Variance

For **EACH event, behavior and consequence.**

Qualitative

- Survey questionnaire

Data Collection Tool

Appendix B: Adapted ABC Observational Checklist

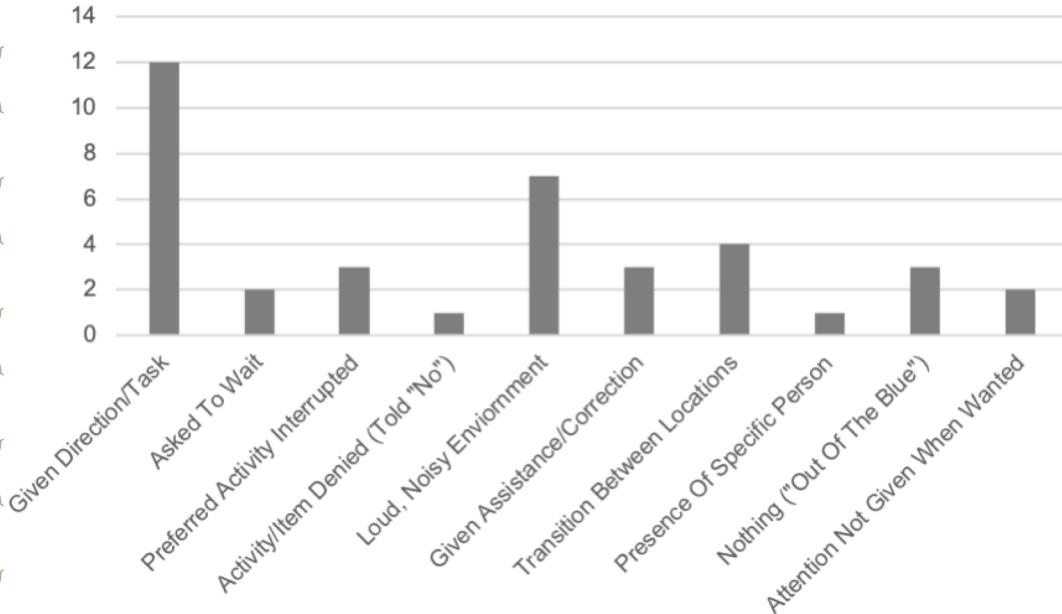
Date:	Antecedent Events: Description of what, where, who and how.	Behavior(s): Description of what behaviors occurred, intensity, duration.	Reflection (potential consequences): Description of what occurred following behavior, what changed in the environment, what were the responses of others.
Start:			
End:			
Total duration:			
Given direction task of activity	Walking around class	Physically guided to comply	
Asked to wait	Screaming	Ignored Problem behavior	
Preferred activity interrupted	Scratching	Kept demand on	
Activity/Item denied	Kicking	Interrupted/blocked and restricted	
Loud, noisy environment	Flopping	Left alone	
Given assistance/ correction	Bolting	Physically restrained	
Transition between locations/activities	Property Destruction	Verbal reprimand	
Attention given to others	Hits Self	Time-out (duration)	
Presence of specific person	Hits Others	Other:	
Nothing ("out of the blue")	Verbal Refusal		
Attention not given when wanted	Spitting		
Left alone (no current activity or attention)	Other:		

Adapted from Bijou, Peterson, & Ault (1968)

Results

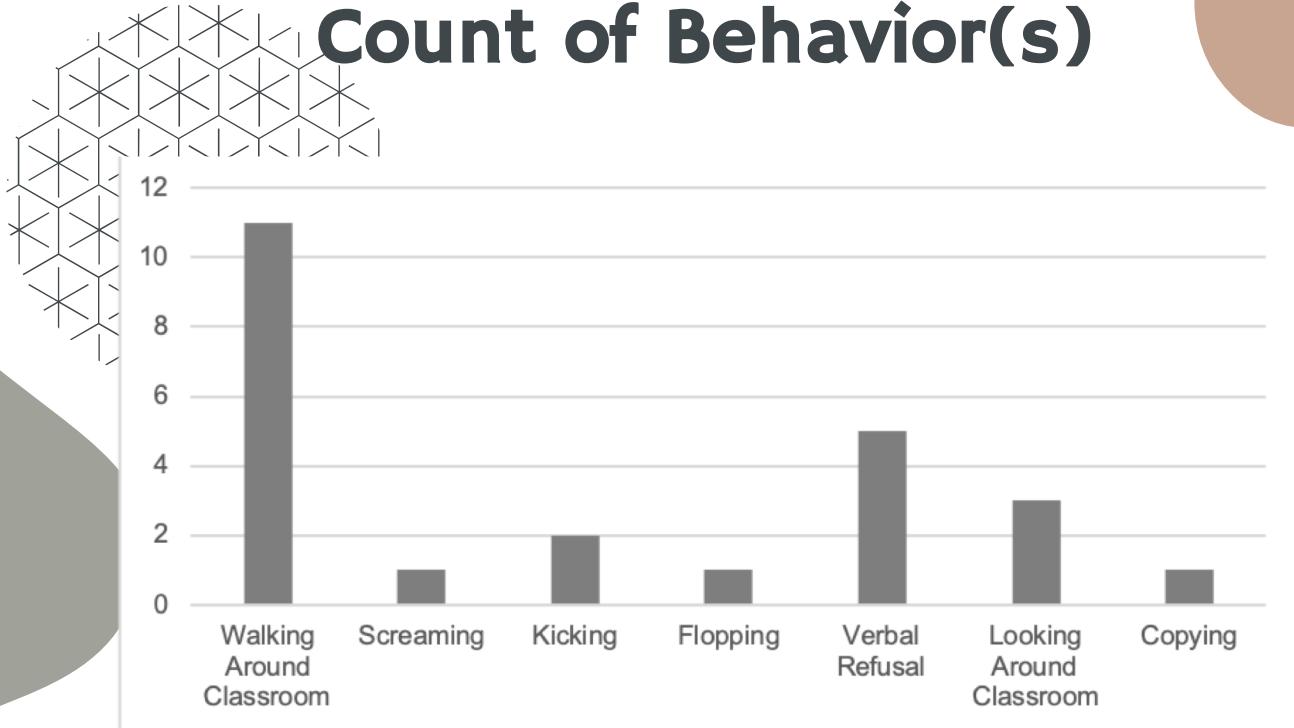
	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance
Events	4.5	5	1	3.26	10.69
Behaviors	5.21	3	1	4.76	20.69
Consequences	6.35	8	8	3.25	25.75

Count of Antecedent Events



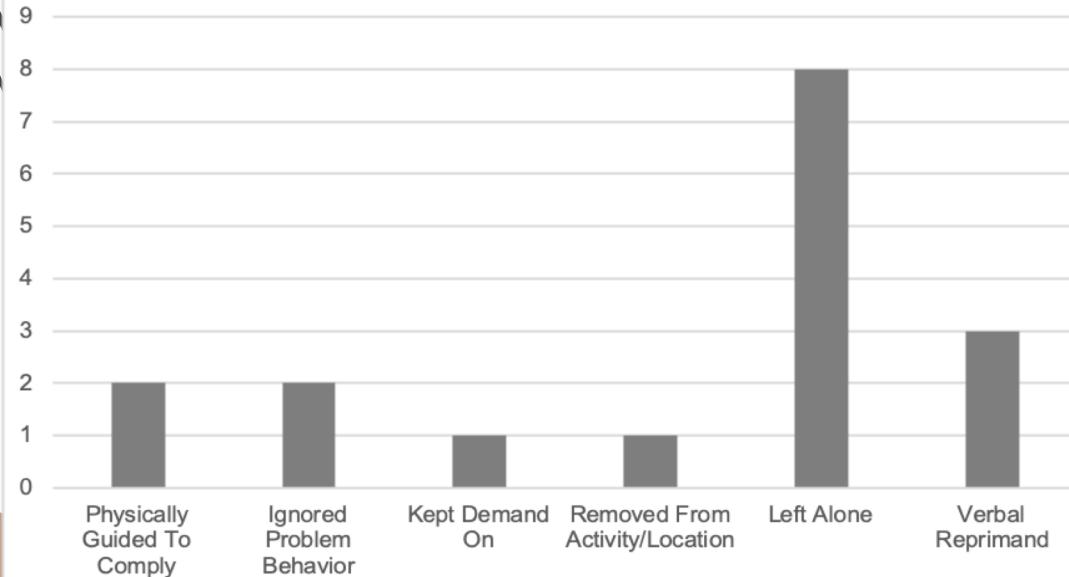
*This graph shows the frequency of events observed in children's **verbal and or nonverbal** behavior in the classroom.*

Count of Behavior(s)



*This graph shows the frequency of behaviors **as a result** of the antecedent event(s).*

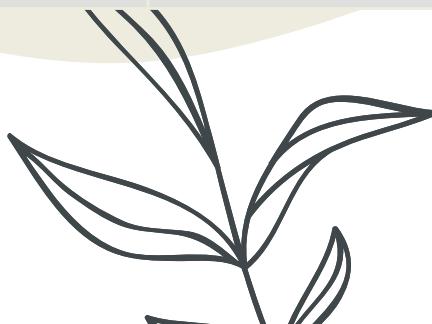
Count of Consequences



*This graph shows the frequency of consequences **as a result** of behaviors exhibited in the classroom.*

Themes

Case 1 Themes (Teacher 1)	Case 2 Themes (Teacher 2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ School counselor➤ Extra emotional support➤ Range of trauma indicators➤ No one size fits all.➤ Meet students where they are	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Identify needs and provide for needs➤ Keep routines and predictability➤ School counselor and mental health specialist➤ Alternative schedules



Limitations

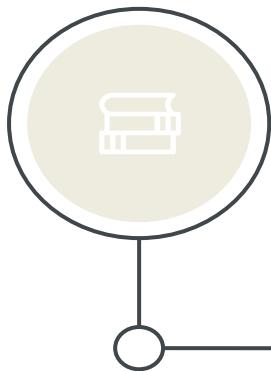
Student attendance

Small sample size

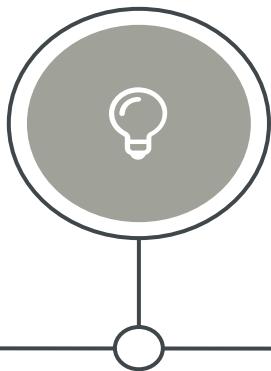
Limited timeline for data collection

Personal bias

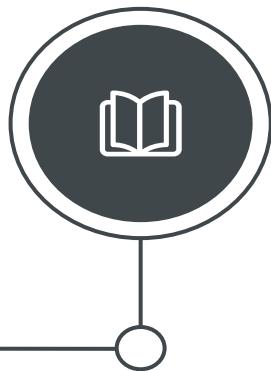
Conclusions



Students began exhibiting behaviors most when **given a direction or task**. This event triggered them to **walk around the classroom, look around, and/or verbally refuse directions.**



Students in this study were consequently **verbally reprimanded** and or **left alone** in response to their behavior(s).



School counselor(s), identifying needs, predictability, and emotional support were common themes in existing teachers responses for identifying traumatic indicators within the classroom.



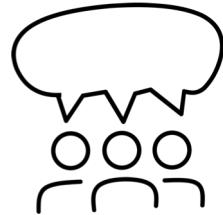
2x10 Relationship Building Intervention

Teacher selects student(s) and sets a goal to engage in a **2 minute** conversation with that student for **10** consecutive school days.

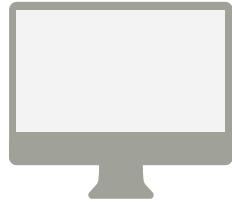
Consider students who...

- Respond positively to adult attention.
- Struggle to connect with peers (or adults).
- Struggle with emotional regulation, social awareness, and display disruptive behavior.

Action Plan



Promote ongoing discussions regarding traumatic stress in the classroom.



Continue exploring potential solutions for students possessing a history of trauma.



Continue conducting action research when problems arise within the classroom that affect student learning.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my instructor, Dr. Angela Lewis for her continued support and encouragement throughout this study.

My completion of this project would not have been possible without the statistical support and advice of my partner Jackson Piersee.



Resources

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