**Abstract & Introduction**

This exploratory case study seeks to explore middle level teachers’ perceptions of their ability to educate and support students who have experienced trauma. More than ever, children are experiencing events in their life that can potentially cause traumatic responses. Little research has been explored regarding teachers’ perceptions of their ability to educate and support students who have endured traumatic stress, in the middle level, grades 6-8. This study is in progress, beginning in fall 2020, and participants are located in an urban middle school in Connecticut. The researcher utilized a criterion sample of 11 middle level teachers of all core content areas (English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) and conducted semi-structured interviews and teacher open-ended reflective prompts to better understand teachers’ perceptions. Additionally, the researcher collected demographic data through a brief questionnaire. Data will be analyzed in and across cases for emerging patterns and themes using the constant comparative method.

**Rationale**

Approximately 40% of American children will have at least one traumatic experience by the age of nine (Finkelhor et al., 2007). Additionally, the researcher collected demographic data through a brief questionnaire. Data will be analyzed in and across cases for emerging patterns and themes using the constant comparative method.

**Statement of the Problem**

- Students who have experienced trauma are becoming more prevalent and is common across sociodemographic characteristics and educational settings (Merrick et al., 2018).
- While many children are experiencing a stressful situation with COVID-19, those who have been exposed to other adverse events in childhood are at an increased risk of struggling during and after this crisis (Steinberg, 2020).

**Benefits of Research**

Understanding middle school teacher perceptions on how to educate and support students who have experienced trauma could positively impacting overall student achievement.

**Research Questions**

- In what ways do middle level teachers understand childhood trauma?
- How are middle level teachers supporting students who have experienced trauma?
- In what ways are middle level teachers receiving educationally based supports/trainings to work with students who have experienced trauma?
- How do middle level teachers understand relationship building with students who have experienced trauma?

**Research Design**

The exploratory case study will include a criterion-based sample ( Patton, 2015) of grade six to grade eight teachers from a middle school in an urban district in Connecticut. The research design is that of an exploratory case study as there is no pre-determined outcome and the research is based on the desire to gain an extensive and in-depth description of a social phenomenon (Yin, 2014).

**Data Collection**

- Teacher Demographic Questionnaire (~ 5 mins)
- Researcher Generated Semi-Structured Interview Protocol (~60-90 mins)
- Open-Ended Reflective Prompts (~20 mins)
- Existing Documents
- Researcher Journal

**Methodology**

- The purpose is not to evaluate or test a hypothesis, but rather to convey the “lived” experience of individuals ( Patton, 2002).
- For the purpose of this study, each teacher will represent its own case and criterion-based case selection will be implemented ( Patton, 2015).
- Each case is a grade 6, 7 or 8th grade core content area teacher.

**Limitations**

- This study is limited in that only a single school site is selected for this exploratory study.
- Additionally, the site is an urban district in the Northeast that has a high population of students who receive free and reduced lunch and are English language learners.
- This study is being conducted during the 2020-2021 school year, which is in the middle of a global pandemic which could impact the number of teachers who are willing to participate and share their experiences.

**Key Terms**

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Trauma
- Trauma Informed Schools

**Dissertation Timeline**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>Defend Proposal and apply to IRB for permission to conduct study.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>Write Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of dissertation</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2020 - January 2021</td>
<td>Identify and confirm participants in study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2021</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
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<td>Spring 2021 - Summer 2021</td>
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<td>Summer 2021</td>
<td>Write Chapters 4 and 5</td>
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<td>Defend Dissertation</td>
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