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PROMOTING RECOVERY IN TRAUMA AFFECTED CHILDREN: DEVELOPING A
SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOL FOR TEACHER
AWARENESS AND INTERVENTION

by

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A dissertation in practice submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to review research on childhood trauma, examine the psychological impact on student academic achievement, foster child resiliency, and develop a foundation for effectuating change through a school-based intervention program that concentrates on promoting recovery in affected children. Traumatic events are a very real part of life that becomes a societal problem when a very young mind has to cope with the aftermath of the event. Research on social-emotional learning, psychological resilience, and recovery methods all offer a vehicle for change that will significantly impact the child's life. Cultivating Resilience Through the Arms of Academics is a school-based professional development framework designed to educate teaching professionals on the psycho-social needs of trauma affected children while providing systematic interventions designed to help these children with the factors necessary for healing to the extent the public school system will allow. Schools are targeted to provide the interventions necessary for healing due to their extensive influence on the children they serve. This program will provide children with an emotionally safe environment thus establishing a school climate that is conducive for learning. The interventions in the program promote healing for trauma victims, assist teachers by providing strategies to engage the trauma affected students, and addresses the psycho-social competence and educational performance of all children in the educational population.

To my children, Jessica, Kathryn, Lindsey, Matthew, and Nicholas, who have been my heart,
soul, and purpose of this project.

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ANECDOTE

A young boy sat in his second grade classroom seemingly listening to the teacher as she recited the weekly reading lesson. His eyes focused on the wall behind the teacher as he slunk down in his desk, with carefully fixed eyes on a miniscule spot on the wall beyond her so she would think he was listening. He was thinking and thinking about everything other than the work at hand. His thoughts wandered from the anger within himself to the nightmare he had experienced the day before at visitation with Dad. His safe place at the baseball field was invaded by the smile of this angry man who forced himself on the team as a new coach. Feeling frustrated by the angry behavior after the game and the trickery that enabled Dad to become a coach, the boy continued to concentrate on the spot on the classroom wall, wondering how all of this was possible with an order of protection that expired a week ago. How did that go away? Did Dad change from last week to this week? Confused, the boy's heart began pounding so hard in his chest that he could hear the beats in his head as his thoughts raced became angry because of the betrayal he experienced. The boy's hands moved down the leg of the desk where he discovered the hole drilled for height adjustment of the desk. He carefully circled the hole with his finger and placed his pencil in the hole. As he continued to reflect on the happenings of the evening before, the rage inside him grew. The boy pressed down on the pencil and broke the tip off releasing some of the anger he held inside, as he continued to keep his eyes fixed on the spot behind the teacher.

Hearing the snap of the pencil break, the teacher sent the boy to the principle where his punishment was given. Once again, the teacher did not understand. Feeling more frustrated that no one understood him, the young boy served his punishment. He did not comprehend why none

of the adults in his life could see what he saw. Just yesterday, he had visited with the lady who was going to help him talk about his problem. He was able to play in the sand tray where he built a village. On one side of the village he was safe with his mom, sisters, and brother with Mini Mouse and the other “safe” people like Grandma and Papa and, on the other side of the village, were demons and monsters that were going to invade the “safe” side of the village. When the lady asked whom the large monster that was heading toward the safe side of town is, he told her it was Dad. She asked the boy what Dad was going to do and the boy told her that he was evil and was going to hurt the good people. “Didn’t that tell her everything?” thought the boy who continued the same fixed stare he had in the classroom. The boy had fallen in the trapdoor of depression and no one understood why he disassociated to detach himself from the reality of his severe situation. The teacher accused him of intentional defiant behavior. Didn’t she know that school was a “good” place to be? “Could she not see how much I enjoyed being with her and my friends?” the boy thought. As the boy’s frustration grew, he became more and more withdrawn as he continued to be wrongly accused of defiant behavior. He did not understand why no one saw his pain, his fear. Why they were accusatory of his lack of achievement? He was not disrupting class, he was quiet, and did as he was told. His bed-wetting was getting in the way of being on time to school and he had difficulty concentrating, but he was trying. The young boy wondered when anyone was ever going to “get it.” If they don’t believe that I am trying my hardest would anyone ever believe what “he” has done to me? Deep within his thoughts the boy pondered.

Mom shared the boy’s psych-educational evaluation assessment with the school authorities, indicating an average IQ, with a diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder,

disassociation due to an unbearable level of trauma, significant depression, and anxiety. These emotional issues interfered with sleep, school focus, concentration and achievement, ordinary play, everyday functioning, and appropriate developmental progress. The boy suffered from anxiety, rage, and flashbacks due to coping with the traumatic event and has been overwhelmed to the point of dissociation. Unfortunately, although momentarily sympathetic, school personnel continued to treat the boy with a lack of understanding. Consequences grew as his behavior intensified.

The traumatic event was yet to be discovered as the boy continued to keep it to himself; however, he stated to his therapist that “he has bad secrets that make him sad and mad.” The boy indicated to the therapist that he could not sleep and has difficulty getting to sleep; he stated that he “can’t focus.” He approached the sand tray slowly and methodically, without spontaneous play. The boy made a family drawing for the therapist and did not want to include his father. His sand tray indicated that the boy was fearful but included a panda bear covered by a teepee. The boy said, “the Panda Bear really needs protection, he feels better now that he is safe.” The boy is living with his mom and siblings where he is feeling loved and accepted. The boy wonders why Dad did the things he did when mom was at work and why he continues to have to visit with Dad even though he has told the authorities that he does not want to see him. Wasn’t climbing the tree outside 100 feet in the air enough for everyone to understand that there is something wrong? Having to relive the experience through the discipline process caused the boy to be re-traumatized, as he had to suffer consequences that “Dad” did not have to serve, even though he is the one who has caused the pain. The discipline process did not help the intrusive

thoughts to leave the boy's mind or help him to become an active participant in his learning; conversely, the boy's anger intensified. That boy was my son.

CHAPTER 1 THE PROBLEM AND ITS CLARIFYING COMPONENTS

Introduction

This study was inspired by a personal experience, beginning from my son's early years in school. Like many parents, I supported my son at home by helping with homework, but I had to surmount some difficult challenges as a single parent of a child that suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). His early educational experience was fraught with difficulty because many of his teachers perceived him to be deliberately non-compliant and lacking motivation, unaware that lack of attention and disassociation accompany PTSD. Year after year I received report cards with comments that read "great student" although the grades were failing. I often wondered why teachers did not look deeper into how to help this very loving child develop a sense of self-efficacy. It was this situation that prompted me to go back to school to become a teacher myself. As a teacher, I now hear other teachers voice frustration about students who display the same behaviors as my son, with no real understanding of who the child is and what emotional turmoil they are experiencing. I have had the same students in my class and have been successful in teaching them; the difference being I understand through my personal experience the needs associated with trauma-affected students.

In 2002, the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) was implemented, and with it came a focus on high stakes testing and accountability. As my son progressed through the grades, the focus of education became raising students' test scores rather than fostering a caring environment. With teachers having to follow strict curriculum guidelines with fidelity, the deeper personal needs of young students have been neglected. As educators, we sometimes

overlook the fact that we are teaching human beings from varying backgrounds with different social and emotional needs.

As a doctoral student, I entered this program with a general sense of what I would like to accomplish. I am passionate about helping teachers understand students who have had adverse experiences. As I have read about trauma and how it presents itself in the classroom, I have become convinced that is my calling to share my understanding of children who have suffered a traumatic experience by constructing a framework of in-service professional development for school staff. This program is designed to promote psychological resilience in children coping with trauma while addressing the social-emotional competencies of all children in the school environment.

Problem of Practice

The complex organizational problem I will address in this paper is the need for educator training to improve understanding of the academic, cognitive, and social-emotional needs of students who have experienced a traumatic event. Currently, our educational system suffers due to a lack of knowledge concerning the needs of trauma-affected students and a lack of opportunities to partake in training to address this deficit. My experience as an educator and my understanding of how trauma affects student learning and achievement lead me to conclude that awareness of the needs of trauma-affected students is vital to the improvement of child resiliency.

Trauma is defined as a deeply disturbing or distressing experience. Trauma affects the entire educational and familial support system, including students (both trauma-affected and

those who are not), parents, teachers, support staff and administrators (NCTSN, 2015).

Psychological resilience is defined as recovering and achieving normal developmental outcomes despite the experience of severe adversity or trauma (Tipton, 2013).

According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, students who are exposed to trauma affect the structure of educational organizations significantly. Unique behavior patterns leading to classroom disruption are inherent with trauma victims; these behaviors can cause stress among the student population as well as the educator population (Carlson, 2000). A national survey found that 85% of teachers and 73% of parents said that the “school experience of most students suffers at the expense of a few chronic offenders” (Public Agenda, 2004).

Teachers of students affected by trauma have an opportunity to begin the process of healing by responding productively to the trauma-associated behaviors. However, many teachers have not been adequately prepared to deal with the complex social issues that strongly affected these students (Bear, Schenk, & Buckner, 1992, p.42).

Effects of trauma on students include hypersensitivity, ongoing feelings of concern for their own safety and the safety of others, preoccupation with events that occurred during the traumatic episode, feelings of guilt or shame about what they did or did not do at the time of the event, constant retelling of the traumatic event, and an overwhelming feeling of fear or sadness (NCTSN, 2015). According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, a traumatic event can seriously impact the routine and process of teaching and learning. The potential for emotional upset and disruptive behavior associated with trauma negatively impact grade point averages, cause negative remarks to be placed in student records, and contribute to unusually high numbers of absences. These students may have increased difficulties concentrating and

learning at school and may engage in unusually reckless or aggressive behavior. The involvement of the school is critical in supporting students through the emotional and physical challenges they may face following an exposure to a traumatic event (NCTSN, 2015).

The role trauma plays in a student's academic life is significant. Educators need a resource base that provides them the information they need to understand how students experience traumatic events and express their lingering distress over the experience (NCTSN, 2015).

Today more than ever it is important to educate teachers on the affects of trauma in the classroom. Further exasperating the problem is the increased pressure teachers are placed under to meet the demands of high stakes testing and accountability due to NCLB (Vande-Corput, 2012). Additionally, most states have mandates in place for teacher evaluations that give teachers a VAM score partially based on student test scores. The child that does not have the ability to concentrate due to trauma is less likely to produce strong test scores. High-stakes testing in Florida is accompanied by a state-mandated ruling that includes students being held back for poor test scores and a reduction in funding to schools whose students struggle. Consequently, teachers have spent more time on test preparation than actually teaching content standards or using strategies to teach the "whole child" (Siemens, 2015). As a result, the child who has experienced trauma does not get his/her needs met in the way he/she needs in order to build concentration and focus. According to Siemens (2015), the formal educational system's focus is on standards, what we want students to know, mimicking content, and then administering standardized testing. Educators don't know their students or their home lives. We are teaching outside the existence of the student instead of fostering active participation and

engagement (Siemens, 2015).

It is estimated between 10% to 20% of children in the United States are exposed to domestic violence annually (Bonnie E. Carlson 2000). Additionally, it is reported that one in four female and one in six male children will be sexually abused by the age of 16 (Hopper, 2010). These numbers do not include children who have experienced homelessness, neglect, loss of a loved one, or mental abuse. These statistics direct our attention to the need to educate teachers on the overall effects trauma has on students.

The behavior of traumatized students acutely affects all other students sharing the classroom (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2010). Trauma in the classroom significantly affects the school culture by increasing referral rates, decreasing test scores, and increasing bullying, working against collaboration and the cohesiveness of the school environment (DeBellis, 2001).

In summary, NCLB, has created a situation in education where teachers have higher pressure to produce students who perform well on standardized tests, leaving behind the students who are unable, through no fault of their own, to memorize information and maintain focus. With an understanding of the role trauma plays in the academic setting, teachers can begin to uncover the child beneath the trauma and start helping these children to reach a deeper understanding of the material being taught and tested.

David Bornstein (2013) wrote in the *New York Times* that research indicates that highly stressful and potentially harmful events of a traumatic nature are more frequent than previously understood. Scientists are uncovering how trauma changes the mechanisms of the brain and body. The important implication is that punishing trauma-affected children for what is likely uncontrollable misbehavior is comparable to punishing them for having a seizure; it adds to their

suffering and makes matters worse. Untrained teachers may punish children for loss of control when they could be more productively getting to the source of the behavior problem.

State schools have the ability to change curriculum design and professional development to meet the needs of children from all backgrounds and to increase cognitive growth and development. If state schools took brain development into account when creating lesson plans, it could change the future of America; it could even potentially decrease the number of reported abuse cases (DeBellis, 2001). Therefore, this dissertation in practice entails the establishment of a professional development model for educating teachers on trauma and the limitations it creates in the children they teach, providing approaches to increase self-efficacy and memory growth in these students.

Significance of the Problem

Emotional and behavioral conflict caused by trauma disrupts the learning process and impede academic success by altering brain function. The contemporaneous achievement is difficult to tie to the actual trauma due to the methodological limitations that are connected to the sensitivity of the familial subject. (John: Families may not recognize that their child's poor achievement is caused by their traumatic experience due to the sensitivity of the topic. Domestic violence and trauma cases are underreported due to the sensitivity of the subject, confidentiality restrictions, and fear of the perpetrator (DeBellis, 2001). For example, it is estimated that a woman experiencing abuse is assaulted an average of thirty-five times before she will contact the police (Carnes, 1997, p. 10). Therefore, research into the academic performance and experiences of children who have experienced trauma must necessarily be incomplete. Another confounding

problem is that teachers' understanding of trauma is often limited to their background knowledge and personal experience because they have not had area-specific training in trauma.

According to Craig (2016) in *Trauma Sensitive Schools, Learning Communities Transforming Children's Lives*, schools have come a long way in normalizing other types of learning and behavior problems, but those that appear to be related to family functioning are approached more gingerly, if at all. School screenings for adverse childhood experiences or developmental histories that include questions about early traumatic experiences are seldom used in schools (p. 13). In the absence of this data, it is estimated that each year in the United States over one million children are diagnosed with a mental illness or disability that could be better explained by trauma (Leahy, 2015). As a result, many receive special education services or medication that do not meet their needs because they do not treat the underlying trauma (Craig, 2016). The lack of addressing adverse childhood experiences in screenings, coupled with the absence of knowledge in the area of neuroscience as it relates to educational reform, leads to the conclusion that very few classroom teachers or administrators have adequate knowledge of how trauma impacts academic and social mastery. Recent advances in neuroscience are not yet center stage in discussions of education reform. Despite being available since the 1990s, this research does not inform the nation's educational policies, nor is it discussed in educational journals or publications (Oehlberg, 2012). Additionally, very few school districts or colleges of education provide information about the effects of trauma on brain development, the implications for school achievement, and proven ways to compensate for the developmental problems trauma creates for young children (Craig, 2016). Concluding implications are that children who have

suffered a traumatic event or series of events are not likely to get their needs met in a way that promotes resiliency.

Exploratory Questions

1. How can I identify a student who is impacted by a traumatic environmental, cultural, or social influence?
2. How is human learning affected by trauma?
3. What differences exist between a student who has experienced a traumatic event and a student from a less traumatic environment?
4. What is the relationship between trauma and cognitive functioning?
5. How does a teacher's response to trauma-induced behaviors influence academic tasks?
6. How do behaviors of an educator influence and, in turn, possibly re-traumatize the trauma-affected student?
7. How does Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs influence how we educate the trauma-affected student?
8. How does self-efficacy impact the trauma student's motivation to learn?
9. How do situations in a child's life lead to drastic emotional responses?
10. How can an educator promote resiliency in students and take advantage of the plasticity of brain function to encourage growth?

Organizational Context

I will not be targeting a specific organization, but will instead be examining the need for a professional development program promoting resilience in trauma survivors that will be applicable to all educational establishments and will recognize the influence of teachers and schools in the lives of the students they serve.

Schools

Schools play a vital role in building resilience in the students they serve, as documented by a robust literature (Cohen, 2013; Henderson, 2007b; Ohio State University Bulletin 1999; Taub & Pearrow, 2013; Thomsen, 2007). Four dimensions of school climate are essential in creating an environment that will foster resilience. Cohen (2013) has broken them down into the following framework:

1. Safety: Clear, consistently enforced rules about physical violence and verbal abuse; feeling safe from physical harm; feeling safe from verbal abuse, teasing and exclusion;
2. Teaching and learning: Supportive teaching practices that include constructive feedback, challenge, and individual attention; social and civic learning;
3. Interpersonal relationships: Respect for diversity; social support of adults and peers.
4. Institutional environment to include: School connectedness and engagement; cleanliness, order, and attractiveness of facilities; adequate resources and materials.

Teachers

The teacher can play one of the most important roles in supporting the victims of trauma and child abuse. Teachers have a unique opportunity to begin the process of healing by responding to the behaviors displayed in a way that can increase brain capacity. However, many teachers have not been adequately prepared to deal with the complex social issues that have so strongly affected abused children (Bear, Schenk, & Buckner, 1992, p. 42).

Educators within the organization are faced with the task of stimulating the learner who is unable to focus due to intrusive thoughts of overwhelming trauma. Most often, these educators do not know that the child has suffered from trauma and become frustrated with the fact that none of the typical educational strategies have been effective in instructing the child. It is important for teachers to understand how trauma affects those who work with its victims because they are at considerable risk of developing burnout, secondary traumatic stress or compassion fatigue (Craig, 2016). Additionally, it is imperative that educators understand the relationship between trauma and the child's academic/social challenges, so they can utilize instructional strategies to promote an environment that supports resiliency. Once educators understand the premises and core components of trauma-sensitive service delivery, decisions can be made about the best way to integrate them into all aspects of the school day (Craig, 2016).

Providing educators with a new paradigm for interpreting students' misbehavior will lead to an understanding of trauma indicators that will arm teachers with strategies to support student resiliency. The secret to success doesn't involve the kids so much as it does the adults: focus on changing how teachers and administrators interact with children and, almost like magic, the kids stop fighting, acting out, or withdrawing in class. They're more interested in school, happier and

they feel safer (Craig, 2016).

According to Newton (2001), the symptoms of abuse in children include post-traumatic symptoms, depression, anxiety, guilt, fear, dissociation, eating disorders, substance abuse, regressive behaviors such as bed-wetting, runaway behavior, academic, and behavior ideations. These students come from a background of chaos and can't plan for the future; they live in the moment and only relate to the situations to which they have become accustomed (Newton, 2001). Educating the classroom teacher along with administration on the behaviors associated with trauma can only increase awareness of this widespread social and emotional disease present in our society, thus promoting student resilience and teacher understanding.

Additionally, the effects of abuse on children can be debilitating and are impacted by the response of the surrounding support system: teachers, therapists, and mental health counselors, in addition to the family of the victim. The stigmatization that accompanies the abuse is most often the focus on how members of the family handle the victim and the secretiveness of the abuse. The response of the victim's family has a tremendous effect on the healing outcome of the victim (Newton, 2001). Supportive responses from the victim's family and friends can go far to lessen the impact of the abuse while negative responses will compound the damage (Newton, 2001). A teachers' response to the trauma-stricken student substantially affects how responsive the student will be in the classroom. Increasing teachers' understanding of the nature of trauma and its effects on children is important in helping them manage their reactions to the experiences of the children whom they are responsible for educating (Craig, 2016).

Brain development is a dynamic process, with the brain retaining plasticity and capacity to adapt throughout the human life span. This ability to change offers hope that effects of early

trauma can be reversed later in life (NCTSN, 2009). With the right type of emotional support, traumatized children can regain their ability to achieve academic and social mastery (Craig, 2016).

Professional development that arms teachers with the knowledge, skills, and empathy necessary to support trauma-affected students is an obligation of the educational system. Classroom teachers have a unique opportunity to identify abused children and to start the healing process that will restore safety to their lives. Probably no adult is more trusted by children who have been abused than a beloved and caring teacher (Bear, 1993).

The understanding that teachers play a unique role in the recovery of children with trauma histories is supported by the growing recognition of trauma's effect on learning, as well as the brain's capacity to restore itself with the proper interventions, justifying their involvement in students' personal lives (Craig, 2016).

Factors that Impact the Problem

The outward and inward behaviors of students affected by trauma are very often misinterpreted as defiance, which may bring consequences that re-traumatize the victim. The zero-tolerance policies that have been put in place in an effort to control school violence are an example of the failure of educational reform to recognize trauma-induced behavior and deal with the behavior in a way that encourages healing and resilience. The policies impose severe penalties on children without regard for individual circumstances and often blur the boundaries between school and police authority; therefore, many schools now rely on law enforcement to handle minor misconduct (Elias, 2013). The zero-tolerance movement has not proved to be an

effective way to address behavior issues that stem from trauma.

Despite concerted efforts to effect reform, public schools continue to struggle (Craig, 2016). Educational reform has been focused on poor teacher performance, student economic disparity, and disconnect between traditional classroom instruction and the demanding social and economic environment of the 21st century (Cozolino, 2013). The high prevalence of unresolved trauma among student population goes ignored (Oehlberg, 2012).

The “silo effect” is a lack of communication and shared information between groups of an organization. This may be a possible explanation for some of the failure of education reform efforts, such as NCLB, which focuses on standards and test-based accountability (Zhao, 2014), and *Race to the Top*, which is designed to raise standards and improve teacher effectiveness. Neither was influenced by the wealth of neuroscience research currently available on the developing brain and its effects on children’s learning and behavior (Caine & Caine, 1990; Jensen, 2008; Willis, 2008); nor do they address the readily available explanations of the relationship between childhood adversity, neural development, and academic achievement (Craig, 2016).

The prevalence of trauma is a real problem among school-aged children at the national, state, and local levels (NCTSN, 2015). The fact that there is a link between trauma and changes in the brain has brought a new movement to implement trauma-sensitive schools throughout the nation. The trauma-sensitive schools movement represents a national effort to adapt trauma-informed approaches to educational reform (Craig, 2015). The instructional design can be formulated to promote neural development, provide positive behavioral supports, engage in collaboration with community mental health professionals, and ultimately create a school climate

that ensures safety for all children (Craig, 2015). Trauma-sensitive schools will enable children to restore resiliency, experience social connections, self-regulate, and ultimately learn. The goal is to promote the type of healing that leads children to become productive members of society while providing a safe learning environment in which all children can thrive.

Individual Backgrounds

A classroom is a group of individuals who come together aiming themselves toward a common goal. Although coming together for similar purposes, children in the classroom possess different backgrounds. These backgrounds can range from wealth to poverty and from love and nurturing to abuse and neglect. Why does this matter? There is a correlation between a child's domestic and cultural background and his or her developmental cognitive abilities. If a child's cognitive ability is lessened due to maltreatment, the child's ability to learn in the classroom is limited. There is no longer any doubt that violence and chronic exposure to toxic stress disrupt the process of normal child development (Perkins & Graham-Bermann, 2012).

Implications

Children who have experienced domestic violence have drastically reduced math and reading test scores compared with those who are not traumatized and have significantly more referrals for behavior. According to Carrell and Hoekstra (2010), boys who are traumatized and children from low-income families can have a negative effect on peers in the classroom. It is estimated that adding one trauma-affected male peer to a classroom of 20 students reduces all boys' test scores by nearly two percentile points (one-fifteenth of a standard deviation) and

increases the number of disciplinary infractions boys commit by 20% (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2010, p. 212).

A report conducted by the D.C. Children's Law Center (2015), concluded that children could be affected by a single event or by ongoing trauma. Trauma harms executive functioning and the ability to regulate emotions; it shapes how children's brains develop. Children who have been traumatized often feel unsafe and can't concentrate; they may be withdrawn or have strong emotional reaction to something seemingly harmless.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to design a professional development framework for the education of teachers about the behaviors associated with trauma, so as to provide strategies that can be incorporated into everyday learning.

Benefits of Educating Teachers on Trauma and Resilience Techniques

A professional development framework can educate teachers, administrators and support staff on the impact trauma plays in a person's life as well as successful strategies that can be utilized by teachers to educate the trauma-affected student in a way that supports the rest of the classroom population. Interventions to improve child achievement should focus on helping the child feel safe in his/her environment, improving coping and problem solving techniques and giving the child opportunities to express suppressed feelings and recognize the responsibility of the perpetrator (Bear, 1993). Extensive developmental research indicates that effective mastery of social-emotional competencies is associated with greater well-being and better school

performance, whereas the failure to achieve competence in these areas can lead to a variety of personal, social and academic difficulties (Eisenberg, 2006; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

Teachers are more effective and utilize professional development practices in their everyday work by changing their instructional practice when there is coherence and a focus on content knowledge. Meaningful change in the educational system requires building on the teacher's background knowledge and encouraging communication and collaboration among teachers who are striving to reform their instruction (Hill & Cohen, 2005). Goals for learning are ever changing as curriculum progresses. Professional development that is aligned with curriculum will enhance teachers' understanding of student thinking (Hill & Cohen, 2005).

Educating teachers and administrators to bring awareness of trauma throughout the educational environment provides an opportunity to promote healing in affected students. Children who experience trauma often remain in a heightened reactive "fight or flight" state. This can cause children to act out and be disruptive in home and in school, behavior for which they are typically punished (Wilder, 2013). There is a need for teachers and administrators to respond to the needs of students by reflecting on how they can change their own behavior to help students feel safe and in turn, ready to learn (Lehmann, 2013).

A pilot program was instituted at John A. Johnson Achievement Plus Elementary School that involved the adoption of a professional development training program for coaching, mentoring, and training school staff to understand trauma and its effects on children's ability to learn. After a year of training teachers, building positive relationships, and instituting adaptive strategies to meet the needs of individual students, the school experienced a change in the

students who had frequently acted out. They began to open up to other students and form relationships, display empathy, and self-soothe. “We shifted our focus to building relationships with students who are experiencing trauma outside of school. Building those relationships, we saw students who used to spend 85% of their time outside of the classroom because of behavior issues, reduce the out of classroom time to an hour a week” explains Patrick Karr, special education teacher at John A. Johnson (Wilder, 2013).

It is obvious that increasing student achievement is the ultimate goal of educators. Keeping this in mind, it is important that teachers are equipped with the knowledge of teaching more than just the standards that are outlined in the curriculum. It is imperative that teachers recognize that they are educating children who have diverse backgrounds and emotional conflicts that stem from outside the classroom. Schools can help by creating a framework for responding to emotionally struggling students in ways that are not punitive, but that encourage connection and foster resilience (Warshof & Rappaport, 2013). This can be accomplished through professional development training in our schools.

Teachers will achieve a greater understanding of how trauma biologically and behaviorally alters children and gain a new perspective on how children learn through professional development. Teachers can provide an environment that engages the student with hands-on learning activities that encourage creativity and communication through all academic disciplines, cross-curricular activities, and the arts. Important resources include the Social Emotional Learning techniques outlined in the Quint Professional Development Model: A Design to Effectuate Change in Educating Trauma Survivors and the professional development framework described in *Cultivating Freedom Through the Arms of Academics*.

Dissertation Plan

The professional development framework developed here will be informed by review of research and literature, independent survey, professional interviews, and my experience working with children in the public school system as an elementary teacher.

Significance of the Research Question

In my opinion, which concurs with the relevant literature, classroom teachers have limited understanding of how trauma affects student learning and would benefit from a professional development framework that provides a broader, clearer, more concise understanding of how the brain of a child operates when influenced by a traumatic event or events.

Methodology

The effectiveness of the professional development program designed in this dissertation of practice will be assessed using a mixed-method approach involving both qualitative and quantitative data from review of literature. Major goals include increased understanding of teachers' perceptions of traumatized students and of student behaviors associated with trauma.

The program consists of a series of seven professional development (PD) training sessions educating teachers about the effects of trauma on the student and the classroom. Teachers will learn to recognize behavioral patterns associated with trauma victims, brain function of the trauma victim, teaching strategies that aid in the education of a traumatized student, and ways to talk to parents or guardians. The evaluation process will be included in the

PD framework Cultivating Freedom Through the Arms of Academics, because the actual PD will not be implemented in this dissertation of practice.

The PD framework, Cultivating Freedom Through the Arms of Academics, will be submitted to professionals in the field of education, school counselors, school psychologists, and trauma psychologists for review and evaluation.

Goals & Expected Outcomes

The goal of this professional development design is to educate teachers about the influence trauma has on student achievement in the classroom and how to utilize teaching strategies that best effectuate learning.

Organizational Context

This is a case study of the causes of a complex problem of professional practice in Flagler County Schools, schools across Florida, and schools across the nation. The names of individuals who were interviewed for this study are pseudonyms to protect the identities of participants. Survey data will be collected anonymously. The theories and references are real. Owl Elementary School is located in Flagler County, Florida, a relatively small, close-knit community composed of middle to lower economic classes where the unemployment rate is 8.3%, 3% higher than the United States average (US Census, 2014). Florida has an unemployment rate of 5.5%, and the national unemployment rate is 5.3% (US Census, 2014).

The student body population of Owl Elementary School in the 2015-2016 school year is comprised of 48% male and 52% female, with three-quarters of the population identifying as

White and the other 25% of the population broken down into Hispanic, Black, and two or more additional races. The free and reduced lunch rate is at 59% running, close to the 58% state average.

History and Conceptualization (National, State, Local)

The organizational problem of the lack of educator training/understanding of the learning needs of a student after experiencing a traumatic event is depicted into the following four organizational frames (Table 1; Bolman & Deal, 2013).

In the 1960s the focus of professional development was on skills teachers could use to strengthen the basic operation of their classrooms. These skills were general, and included allocating class time, providing classroom demonstrations, assessing student comprehension during lectures, maintaining attention, and grouping students. The studies showed small to moderate positive effects of professional development on students' basic skills; in a few cases, reasoning skills also improved (Hill & Cohen, 2005).

In the 1990s the focus of professional development for teachers shifted to students' reasoning and problem-solving potentials rather than just the basic skills. Research indicates that this type of professional development influences a teacher's classroom practice significantly and leads to improved student achievement when it focuses on (1) how students learn particular subject matter; (2) instructional practices that are specifically related to subject matter and how students understand it; and (3) strengthening teachers' specific knowledge (Hill & Cohen, 2005).

Table 1

Organizational Frames of Problematic Lack of Educator Training

Type of Organizational Frame	Description of Organizational Frame
	No structure or policies are in place to address the needs of students affected by trauma.
Structural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Limited resources for students who have experienced trauma. (2) Teacher’s frustration with behavior patterns exhibited by trauma victims. (3) Behavior plan not in place to address specific student needs.
Human Resource	Teachers do not feel adequately prepared to identify the needs of trauma victims in the classroom.
Political	There is a political conflict associated with addressing this very sensitive issue.
Symbolic	The culture of the organization does not recognize trauma victims as a cell group with specific needs and accommodations.

Effective professional development includes a focus on system-wide improvement, collaboration, clear expectations, collegiality, caring, and respect (Elmore, 1997). According to Elmore and Burney, deep and sustained change requires that people to feel a personal commitment to each other and a willingness to manifest that commitment by demonstrating mutual care and concern.

Presently there is no professional development training addressing trauma and its effects on learning in Flagler County for general education teachers. The only professional development program related to trauma is one led by the Department of Children and Families targeting the teacher’s role in reporting abuse cases. Ignorance of trauma and its effects in Flagler County schools has resulted in frustrated teachers and misunderstood students.

National Policy

In *The Shame of the Nation*, Kozal (2005) provides deep insight into how children relate to the world around them and learn in response to their environment. Kozal's belief is that children will not excel unless they are made to feel valued and loved. A balance of equality and fairness must be present in each and every classroom throughout America if children are to become academically successful (Kozal, 2005). How does an educator provide such an environment if a traumatic event overshadows the thought process?

The *No Child Left Behind Act* requires that students be tested in reading and math in grades 3-8 and exceed state standards by 2014. The act was intended to close achievement gaps by providing a fair and equal opportunity to receive a high-quality education focusing on the following four pillars: accountability, flexibility, research-based practices, and parental choice (U.S. DOE). According to Jonathan Kozal (2005), NCLB has generated a situation that brings teachers to teach to the test, with a skill and drill scenario that robs children of their individuality, critical thinking skills, and humanity leaving children disempowered. Standardized testing does not measure the hearts of children, assess their curiosity about the world around them, or inspire them to want to learn (Kozal, 2005).

Efforts at the national level to increase student achievement by implementing legislative reform have been proven to be less than effective. NAEP claims that state performance indicators confirm that students are not learning and succeeding at the level expected by parents, taxpayers, and policymakers. According to a recent article, *Criticism of Public Education*, "some critics regard high-stakes tests as unfair, citing data showing cultural bias against students from low-income families and racial/ethnic minorities, who often perform lower in these

measures.” This data supports Kozal’s (2005) claim that legislative reform acts do not increase student achievement nationwide. This is the reason why children in our classrooms need to be seen as valued individuals with specific needs.

Reform acts are focused on developing content standards, altering the accountability processes of schools and teachers, and changing the structures by which accountability is governed. It is assumed that if this process is followed, school policy and organization will lead to a different kind of learning for students. What is missing in any reform act is the knowledge required for teachers and administrators to engage in a different kind of teaching and learning (Elmore, 1997). Professional development can provide this knowledge and serves as the main link connecting policy and practice (Elmore, 1997).

It is clear that professional development training on trauma is necessary for educators to equip themselves with knowledge and strategies to utilize when educating a classroom of students that includes one or more trauma victims. With the national prevalence of childhood trauma at 16.9% in 2012, we know that traumatic events happen to children, and American classrooms will have trauma-exposed students as part of their population. Table 2 contains information regarding child abuse reports confirmed each year in the United States: CDC Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE, 2012).

Table 2

CDC Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

Category	Prevalence (%)
Physical Abuse	28.3
Sexual Abuse	20.7
Emotional Abuse	10.6
Physical Neglect	9.9
Emotional Neglect	14.8

The ACE study reports that 6.3 million child abuse reports are taken each year. In 2012, 686,000 victims nationwide were maltreated, enough to fill ten football stadiums.

State-Level Policy

Congress enacted the *Education for all Handicapped Children Act* (Public Law 94-142) in 1975, in an effort to support states and localities in protecting the rights of, and meeting the individual needs young students with disabilities and their families. At the landmark of 25 years, the act was amended by Congress and became IDEA - the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, which required that trauma services be provided for affected students. Under provisions of Section 625(c)(2)(G), services are to be made available for students who have experienced a sustained case of trauma due to exposure to family violence (as defined in the section 320 of the Family Violence Prevention and Service Act). Public Law 94-142 offers a free and appropriate education for students with disabilities and assists states and localities in providing that education, ensuring that the rights of children with disabilities and of their parents are protected (Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975). Trauma-affected students are

nominally served by IDEA, but findings in the literature suggest that teachers are not adequately educated about trauma and the effects it has on a child's education (Bear, 1993).

For most states, training teachers about trauma is a missing piece in educational reform (ACE, 2015). In contrast, Massachusetts and Washington are two states taking the lead in recognizing the adverse effects of trauma on the ability of students to learn. The changes that have occurred at schools in Massachusetts and Washington should serve as a model for the other states. There is much work ahead at the policy level. "Helping educators understand that trauma is playing a key role in many of the problems they are seeing at school is going to require a movement" says Cole from the Coalition for Adverse Childhood Experiences.

A report initiated by the Child and Family Services Agency in Washington, DC states that there is no system-wide coordination of training or services as it relates to trauma and education. Trauma-sensitive schools can increase academic success by providing children an environment where they feel safe and enabling them to build supportive relationships with staff. Meanwhile teachers are trained to provide predictable and structured environments where students affected by trauma feel welcome and supported. If a student has an outburst, teachers are trained to examine the triggers and look for underlying causes. Suspensions and expulsions are discouraged (Chandler, 2015). A report conducted by the DC Children's Law Center (2015) found that, "Education reforms in the District will not fully succeed if schools do not address the trauma that students bring with them to class." The idea is to change the way educators think about students who have behaviors associated with trauma. According to Judith Sandalow, Executive Director of the D.C. Children's Law Center, "It allows teachers not to think, 'What's wrong with this kid?' but 'What's happened to this child?'"

Local Policy

Poverty has been linked to trauma. Children from poor families are more often exposed to chronic stress and traumatic experiences (Chandler, 2015). The National Child Traumatic Stress Network reports that traumatic events are more frequently encountered in settings characterized by urban poverty, decreased parental effectiveness, less warmth, limited understanding of child development and needs, increased use of corporal punishment and harsh discipline, and high incidence of neglectful and reactive parenting.

Table 3 displays the rates of poverty, homelessness, reported cases of trauma, unemployment, and access to free or reduced-rate school lunches in Flagler County, the state of Florida, and the United States. The data suggest correlations among the variables. An increase in unemployment and poverty will be met with an increase in domestic violence.

Table 3

Socio-Economic Data Related to Poverty in Flagler County, Florida

Cell Group	Flagler County	Florida	United States
Poverty (Ages 5-17 in families in poverty)	23.2%	23.5%	14.5%
Homelessness	4.5%	14.8%	5.7%
Reported Domestic Violence Cases	17.8%	18.9%	16.9%
Unemployment	7.5%	6.3%	5.3%
Free and Reduced Lunch in Schools	57%	58%	47.5%

Note: Adapted from “QuickFacts: Flagler County, Florida,” by United States Census Bureau, 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/12035>

Flagler County has an unemployment rate 3% higher than the state rate and 8% higher than national rate. The Family Life Center in Bunnell, Florida reports that the number of domestic violence cases has increased by 50% in the last four years and that domestic violence is underreported due to fear of the perpetrator and fear that children will be removed from the home.

CHAPTER 2 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Plan and Design of the Pilot Study

The problem of practice under study in this dissertation is the gap in the educational toolkit of teachers whose students have experienced trauma. There are currently no professional development opportunities offered to teachers and support staff related to this problem. Many of the stakeholders in schools do not understand or recognize the unique needs and behaviors of trauma-affected students, who often exhibit behaviors that are misunderstood as defiance and lack of cooperation. As a result, the risk of traumatic reenactment is increased, as well as the potential for further traumatization within the service delivery system (Harris & Fallor, 2001). Childhood trauma is widespread, and likely becoming more prevalent with time. According to Oehlberg (2012), schools are ignoring the prevalence of unresolved trauma among the student population. Despite concerted efforts to effect reform, public schools continue to struggle (Craig, 2016). Research provides multiple reasons for the struggles to reform education including poor teacher performance (New America Foundation, 2013), student economic disparity (Duncan & Murnane, 2011), and the apparent disconnect between traditional instruction and the demanding social and economic environment of the 21st century (Cozolino, 2013).

This pilot study is a qualitative and quantitative design consisting of one survey and two interviews. The survey was designed to measure the perception of participants on a scale of 1-4 from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Survey on Teacher and Staff Perception

The survey on teacher and staff perception was implemented to gain the perspectives of those directly impacted by the identified problem a survey was utilized as a means of data collection. Survey participation was randomly selected with the intention that social constructs of each participant will encourage participation on the thoughts, needs and ideas of their own professional learning and growth in teaching students who have experienced trauma.

Four targeted main areas of interest:

- Professional Development,
- Trauma and Academic Achievement,
- Teacher Comfort and Support with Trauma, and
- Resilience.

Each target area had sub-questions related to the topic. The framework in which the survey questions were asked were intended to indicate the needs specific to the teachers at Owl Elementary School. The information obtained will be used to inform the professional development framework in an effort to increase student achievement in children who experience adverse situations as well as the general population, as they too are affected by the behaviors within the classroom.

Interviews

An interview was conducted with the district representative that oversees Professional Development for Flagler County Schools. This interview provided information regarding the history of both the elementary and secondary, as well as how professional development is and

has been provided to the teaching community. Additionally, this interview provided information about goals and future direction for teachers.

An interview was conducted with the coordinator for the Family Life Center, Bunnell, Florida. These interviews provided information on the history of the county's need for student support when facing adverse conditions as well as provide valuable information on county demographics of children in need of educational support. Additionally, this interview provided information that will drive the strategic components and pedagogy of the professional development framework in an effort to serve the students of Flagler County Schools most effectively.

This multi-faceted design allows for an in-depth examination of the needs, perspectives, current and past practices of elementary, secondary teachers and support staff on their professional learning as it pertains to trauma.

Recruitment of Participants

Survey participants were recruited by this researcher from Owl Elementary School in the Flagler County school district. Participation in the survey is voluntary. Additionally, an interview with the district representative that supervises elementary and secondary professional development will be requested along with an interview with the coordinator for the Family Life Center in Bunnell, Florida. The duration of the interviews will be approximately thirty minutes each and will take place in the school setting. The participants will not be compensated for their participation in the survey or interview.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Elementary and secondary teachers and school support staff were invited to participate in the survey with approximately 95 possible participants. The solicitation included the purpose and significance of the study. If the candidate met the criteria, and chose to participate, consent was reviewed. If the candidate declined he or she did not participate in the survey. Qualtrics, an on-line survey tool, will be utilized to distribute the survey through the Flagler County Schools webmail. The responses were anonymous with no identification of the actual individual. The results were calculated by Qualtrics and data interpreted by this researcher. The survey questions were designed with the following guiding framework that was informed by the research literature embedded in this dissertation of practice.

Demographic Information

- Number of years teaching (and specify grade levels),
- Number of years working in education, and
- Ethnicity of the participants.

Data Management

Data collected from the interview did not disclose the identity of the participant(s). Pseudonyms were used throughout the report. All data were stored electronically.

Risks to Participants

Participants may feel uncomfortable disclosing their needs and perspectives on their own professional learning and growth. The identities of the participants are anonymous; therefore, the risk to participants is minimal.

Approval of the Study

Children are born with fundamental needs for connection, attunement, trust, autonomy, and love (Craig, 2016, p. 9). This study is designed to show how teachers can come to better understand trauma and its effects on childhood development influence so as to better serve the needs of their students. The researcher applied to the Institutional Review Board for approval to conduct this study (Appendix A).

Goals of the Framework

I intend to design a professional development framework that informs teachers of the effects trauma has on the cognitive development of affected children, offers strategies to catalyze improvement in student success, and provides students a classroom culture that fosters resilience.

The purpose of the pilot study developed herein was to review the significance of childhood trauma on children in a K-6 learning environment. It is my goal to research how trauma affects brain development, examine the psychological impact on student academic achievement, foster child resiliency, and develop a foundation for effectuating change through a school-based intervention program that concentrates on promoting recovery in affected children.

Traumatic events are a very real part of life that evolves into a societal problem when a very young mind has to cope with the aftermath of the event. Compounding this problem, teachers and school administrators are often ignorant of the presence and magnitude of trauma to which some of their students will have been exposed. “A belief in children’s innocent unawareness of the more vulgar aspects of existence makes it hard for teachers to accept the high prevalence of trauma and adversity in their students’ lives” (Craig, 2016, p. 17).

Research on social-emotional learning, psychological resilience, and recovery methods offers a recipe for positive change in the life of the trauma-affected student. Fruits of this research will come to life in the school-based professional development program that I am designing to educate teaching professionals on the psychosocial needs of trauma-affected children. Teachers and school administrators will be introduced to systematic interventions designed to help these children begin to heal. Schools, and in particular, teachers are well poised to help children overcome trauma due to their extensive influence on the children they serve. Trauma is not just a mental health problem, but also an educational problem that, left unaddressed, threatens the academic achievement of thousands of children (Craig, 2016).

This professional development framework will include material defining an emotionally safe environment, so that schools can foster a climate that is conducive to learning. The interventions developed in the framework are intended to promote healing for trauma victims, assist teachers by providing strategies to engage trauma-affected students, and address the psychosocial competence and educational performance of all children in the educational population.

In order to inform the professional development framework, a pilot survey was distributed to collect data on teacher and staff perceptions of their trauma-affected students. This survey assessed the ability of educators to identify trauma and integrate strategies that support trauma-affected students into the curriculum. It gauged how comfortable the educators would be with providing outside referrals to agencies that can provide support to the students.

The completed survey and interviews capture the professional learning needs and perspectives on current practices of elementary and secondary schoolteachers, administrators,

and support staff in a central Florida school district. By gathering needs and perspectives from these four sub-groups, a framework for enhancing current professional learning practices will be developed and proposed. The data collected from this study will inform the framework design, and will be presented to the school district for consideration and hopefully implementation.

There was no communication with participants prior to the pilot study to avoid biasing their responses. A post-discussion of the findings will be available for participants to view and will be sent electronically through the webmail at flaglerschools.com. The findings will also be disclosed and discussed with the principal of Owl Elementary School and the superintendent of the local school system.

This pilot study consists of one survey and two interviews. The survey measures the perception of participants on a scale of 1-4 with 1 indicating strongly agree and 4 indicating strongly disagree.

Survey on Teacher and Staff Perception

The purpose of the pilot survey is to obtain data and perspectives from those directly impacted by the identified problem; it provides valuable information that will drive the design of my professional development tool. This survey of teachers, administrators, and support staff assesses perceptions of student behaviors associated with trauma and allows participants to provide opinions on the professional development needs of the organization. The survey gathers information about participants' roles at Owl Elementary School, demographics of participants, and opinions on issues related to trauma (Appendix B). The survey was distributed using the

Qualtrics Survey Software distributed through the Flagler County web-mail and provided this researcher valuable insight into the specific needs of the organization.

Approximately 95 surveys were distributed to randomly selected individuals at Owl Elementary School on March 11, 2016 with results collected throughout the following week. Survey questions about everyday experiences assessed to what extent the participant believes each of a set of statements to be true, using a 1-4 scale with 1 indicating strong agreement and 4 indicating strong disagreement.

A total of 46 participants completed the survey, 48% of the initial pool. Tables 4 and 5 describe the demographics of the participants.

Table 4

Participant Demographics: Faculty, Staff, and Administration

Role in School		Number of Years in Role	
Teacher	81%	1-5	26%
Administrator	5%	6-9	9%
Guidance Counselor	2%	10-15	42%
Support Staff	12%	16-25	23%

Table 6 represents an inconsistency between the faculty demographics and the student body demographics. The faculty is represented by 98% white population, with a 2% Hispanic/Latino population compared to the student body with a 75% white population and the balance of 25% spread out over Black, Hispanic and two more races. This disparity along with

the high number of female population may indicate a need for a larger diversity in the faculty at

Owl Elementary

School.

Table 5

Participant Demographics: Grades Taught, Gender, and Race/Culture

Grades Taught		Gender		Race/Culture	
Pre-K	5%	Male	9%	White	98%
K-2	26%	Female	91%	Hispanic/ Latino	2%
3-5	38%			Black/ African American	0%
6	10%			Asian/ Pacific Islander	0%
All Grades	21%			Other	0%

Table 6

Participant Demographics: Grades Taught, Gender, and Race/Culture

School Population Characteristics	Owl Elementary School	State Average
Male	48%	49%
Female	52%	51%
Free & Reduced Lunch	59%	58%
White	75%	40%
Hispanic	15%	31%
Black	8%	3%
Two or more races	2%	3%
Asian	0%	0%

The following questions and data have been collected to inform the design of the professional development framework.

Professional Development

Survey Question: It is important to have a professional development program on the topic of *“resilience in educating students who have experienced a traumatic event.”*

Findings

Data: 56% Strongly Agree, 42% Agree, 2% Disagree, 0% Strongly Disagree

An overwhelming majority (98%) of educators, administrators, and staff at Owl Elementary School agree that it is important for their school to offer a professional development program on the topic of building resilience in trauma-affected students. Further, 93% of survey participants indicated that participating in professional development training to learn the behavioral signs and brain function of affected students will help in their everyday work with students (Table 7).

Sixty percent of participants did not think they had the opportunity to participate in a professional development that builds resilience in trauma-affected. Similarly, 57% of participants disagreed with the statement that prior professional development opportunities have adequately prepared them for working with trauma-affected students. This indicates a desire for a professional development opportunity that will provide strategies that can be infused into daily work practices. Survey data indicate that 81% of participating stakeholders feel they would benefit professionally from participating in a ten-month professional development program. The same percentage (81%) of participants indicated they would use an online component that would support classroom strategies for building resilience.

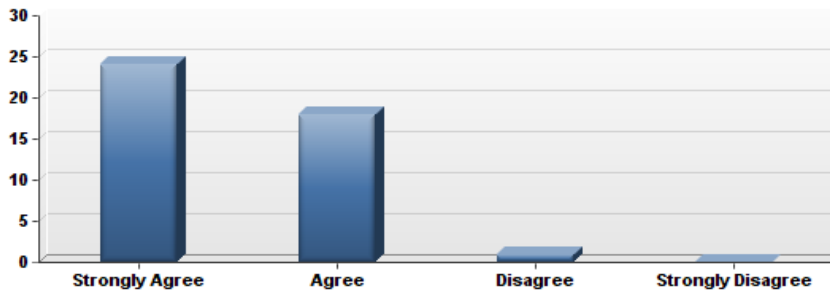


Figure 1. Professional development.

Table 7

Teacher Responses to Survey Question Related to Professional Development

Answers	Questions				
Participating in a professional development training to educate you on the behavioral signs, brain function and resilience strategies that target students who have experienced trauma or maltreatment will help you in your everyday work with students.	There have been professional development opportunities that have increased your awareness of student needs and in-turn helped you infuse strategies in your instruction or daily work routines that have proven to be successful when working with trauma victims.	There is an opportunity for professional development on the topic of building resilience in students who have experienced a traumatic event.	I would benefit from a Professional Development opportunity with a format over a 10-month period with one-hour sessions each.	I would utilize an online component tied to the PD as a support for classroom implementation .	
Strongly Agree/Agree	93%	43%	40%	81%	81%
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	7%	57%	60%	19%	19%

Trauma and Academic Achievement

Survey Question: Children who are exposed to a traumatic event are academically affected.

Findings

The vast majority (98%) of participating stakeholders at Owl Elementary School agree that children who are exposed to a traumatic event are affected academically. Nearly as many (93%) agreed with the statement that there is a correlation between trauma and low achievement scores (Table 8). They recognize that students who look disinterested in classwork are not necessarily bored with the material and acknowledge that it is possible for trauma can produce physical alterations in affected students (Figure 2).

Data: 77% Strongly Agree, 21% Agree, 2% Disagree, 0% Strongly Disagree

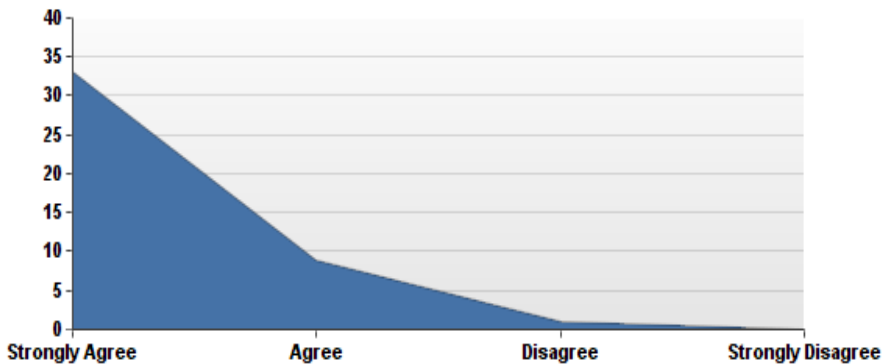


Figure 2. Trauma and academic achievement.

Table 8

Teacher Responses to Survey Question Related to Trauma and Academic Achievement

Answers		Questions	
	There is a correlation between trauma victims and low achievement scores.	It is possible for students who have witnessed or have been part of a traumatic event to have biological stress systems that have been altered (physical alterations).	All students who look disinterested in class are bored with the material you are presenting.
Strongly Agree/ Agree	93%	95%	5%
Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	7%	5%	95%

Teacher Comfort and Support with Trauma

Survey Question: You are made aware of students in your classroom who are involved in a situation when they have experienced a traumatic event.

Findings

The collected survey data on teacher comfort and support with trauma indicates that 78% of participants do not feel that they are made aware of students who have experienced trauma. Fifty-nine percent said that they feel supported by administration when dealing with situations that are related to trauma; 41% did not. This indicates a need to build a school culture where stakeholders feel supported by the leaders of the organization.

Slightly more than half (56%) of teachers were not comfortable providing parents with outside support services that can help the affected student. The same percentage of participants did not feel that they could readily identify students who have experienced a traumatic event. This data indicates a need to educate staff on the behavioral indicators of students who have

experienced trauma so that student behaviors are understood and not misinterpreted as defiance. Strategies can be put in place to help affected students (Table 9). Stakeholders will benefit from learning what outside resources are available to families in crisis so they feel confident when faced with the opportunity to provide information that will help the student and their families (Figure 3).

Data: 5% Strongly Agree, 17% Agree, 40% Disagree, 38% Strongly Disagree

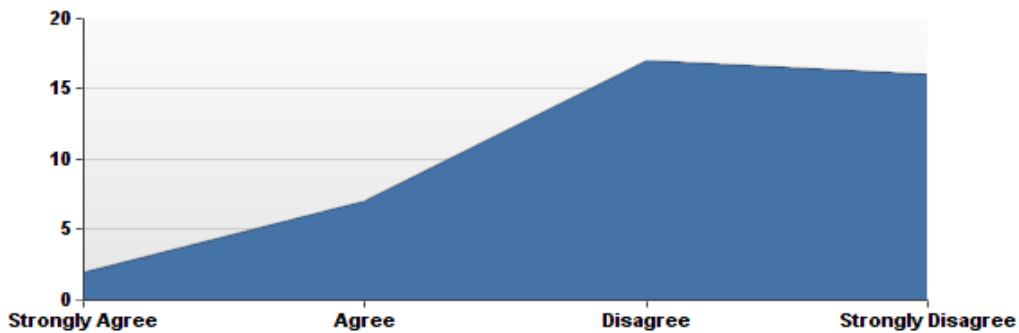


Figure 3. Teacher comfort and support.

Table 9

Teacher Responses to Survey Question Related to Teacher Comfort and Support with Trauma

Answers	Questions		
	You feel supported by your administration and colleagues when dealing with situations that arise from children who have experienced trauma.	I feel comfortable to provide important information to parents about outside support services.	I can comfortably identify students who are affected by trauma.
Strongly Agree/ Agree	59%	44%	45%
Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	41%	56%	56%

Building Resilience

Survey Question: The classroom environment influences how students build resiliency from trauma.

Data: 29% Strongly Agree, 60% Agree, 9% Strongly Disagree, 2% Disagree

Findings

The survey respondents acknowledged that the classroom environment influences how students build resilience from trauma. Additionally, 98% agreed with the statement that academic achievement is influenced by the culture of the classroom environment. Participants acknowledged correlations among classroom climate, resilience building, and student achievement. Providing a positive classroom environment and a safe classroom culture where all students feel valued and accepted is a practice supported by this data.

All but 2% of respondents acknowledged that adult behaviors in the classroom influence student responses. This information supports training staff to utilize strategies that help trauma-affected students, in part by providing a feeling of safety and continuity to the students. As a result, teachers will feel more confident and less stressed, and will understand how to recognize and respond to trauma indicators (Table 10).

Eighty-six percent of participants indicated that trauma victims benefit from recess. The great majority of stakeholders at Owl Elementary School recognized the necessity of occasional breaks from instruction (Figure 4).

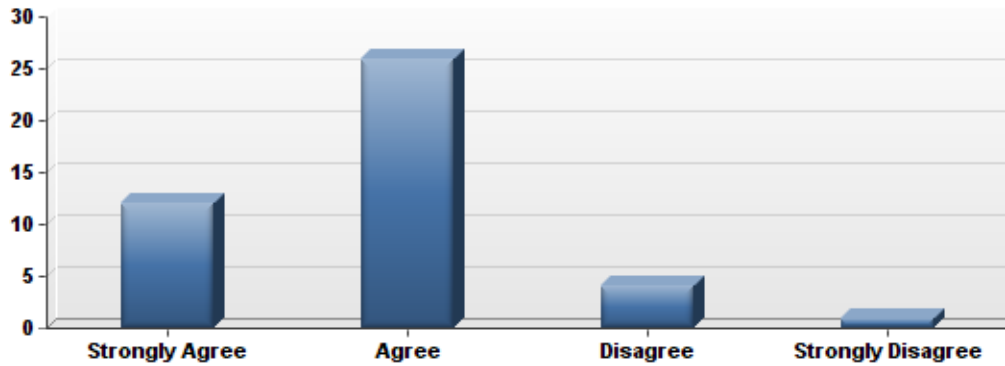


Figure 4. Resilience.

Table 10

Teacher Responses to Survey Question Related to Building Resilience

Answers	Questions		
	Behaviors exhibited by adults in the learning environment influence student responses.	Students who have experienced trauma benefit academically from recess.	The culture of the classroom and school environment can foster a feeling that increases academic achievement.
Strongly Agree/ Agree	97%	86%	98%
Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	3%	14%	2%

Becoming a Trauma Sensitive School

Survey Question: Owl Elementary School should become a trauma sensitive school.

Data: 40% Strongly Agree, 50% Agree, 10% Disagree, 0% Disagree

Findings

The respondents to the survey were in strong agreement (90% agreement) that Owl Elementary School should become a trauma-sensitive school. Ten percent disagreed (Figure 5).

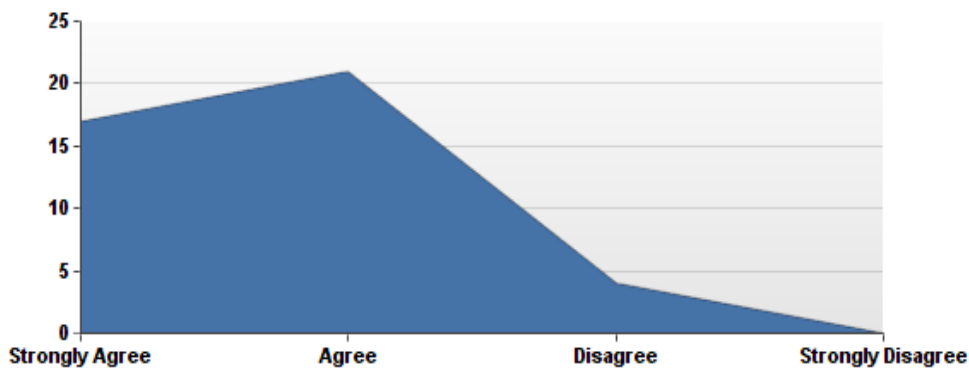


Figure 5. Trauma sensitive school.

Free Response Questions

1. What are your professional development needs that you feel will help you to increase your ability and awareness to work with students who have experienced trauma?

The response rate for this question was 83%. Responders stressed a need for in-service, face-to face professional development training to increase their ability to work successfully with students who have experienced trauma. Responses included the following terms and concepts:

- Different types of trauma
- Behavioral and academic indicators of trauma
- Identifying needs of trauma-affected students

- Classroom strategies to help affected students
- Community resources
- School resources
- Identifying students affected by trauma
- Strategies teachers can utilize to support students affected by trauma
- How to react to students affected by trauma
- Case studies
- Methods to handle specific scenarios

2. What would make professional development opportunities more engaging and meaningful to you?

There was a 76% response rate to this question. Responses included the following terms and concepts:

- Role playing
- Visuals
- Interactive
- Experience real life situations/examples
- Case studies, data, and resources
- Pertinent information that can be utilized to benefit students
- Practical resources and strategies that can be brought back to the classroom
- Grade level specific meetings, group collaboration during PD opportunities
- Realistic situations with useful information that can be utilized immediately
- Real life situations and appropriate responses

- PD that looks at “the whole child”
- Make & takes
- Hands-on, group work
- Real world application
- Teacher and presenter interactions
- Serious presentation in the context of our daily roles
- Activities that play out diverse examples
- Engaging
- Timed appropriately
- Offering them

3. What training do you think would be required to obtain knowledge on building resilience in trauma-affected students?

There was a 71% response rate to this question. Responses included the following terms and concepts:

- Trauma-informed care
- Cognitive/behavioral training
- Understanding the family dynamics of today’s home
- Strategies to use that build resilience
- Do not know
- Procedural training
- Coping strategies

- How trauma affects students: strategies to help
- Types of trauma
- How to talk to students to build resilience
- Signs of trauma, interventions, diverse manifestation
- How to identify students who have been affected
- How to work with students in the classroom setting to help them become successful

Findings

Overall, the findings of this survey indicate a desire for more professional development in the area of trauma. Participants indicate an understanding that students who have experienced a traumatic event are academically affected but are unaware of strategies that will help this group of students. They are not comfortable in providing outside resources for parents of students who have experienced trauma, indicating a need to include this information in the professional development model.

Survey respondents indicated that classroom climate, adult responses, and classroom culture are all important for helping trauma-affected students to achieve academic success. However, they also indicated a need to understand how to identify students who have experienced trauma and strategies they can utilize to achieve positive results. They do not feel comfortable in identifying students who have experienced trauma and do not feel that information as to which students have experienced a traumatic event is necessarily being shared with them. This indicates frustration among staff, who realize that they are in position to help students build resilience, but are unaware as to which students in their midst are trauma-affected.

Responses show an understanding of the need for professional development in the area of building resilience in trauma- affected students. Respondents voiced a desire to participate in a hands-on, interactive professional development program where strategies are offered that can help build resilience in students. The respondents indicated a need for the professional development to include case studies, collaboration, grade-level meetings, role-playing, community resources, school resources, information on brain development, and coping strategies for staff and students.

Interviews

Two interviews were conducted to provide information to guide construction of the professional development framework (Appendix C) contained in Chapter 3. Pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity of the participants and their responses.

Flagler County Schools

Flagler County district representative Lynn White, Executive Director of School and Community Engagement was interviewed initially. Ms. White has held many administrative positions over her 28-year career. This interview provided important information regarding the history of professional development opportunities offered to the district in general. According to Ms. White, the professional development decisions are based on the needs of individual schools, teacher input and school data. “When planning professional development it should be differentiated and based on the needs of individuals, personalized and fluid; constantly evolving. Continual feedback is necessary due to the constant cultural changes” (personal communication,

April 10, 2016). This past year there was one district-wide mandatory professional development module, related to the concept of growth mindset. All other professional development for the year was implemented on site of each school and determined by individual school needs. Ms. White indicated that professional development is necessary and should be research-based and apply to the needs of the organization. “I believe most teachers are natural learners, so it depends on the quality of the PD, not necessarily the topic. Best professional development has a coaching piece. Quality and not the topic; anything that is truly research-based with application is worth implementing” (personal communication, April 10, 2016).

Ms. White referred to social-emotional learning as an essential component that contributes to student success. She identified the need to have a balance of academic and social-emotional strategies to provide students with the individualized instruction they need to be successful; although to date, there is no specific professional development on the topic of social-emotional learning.

The interview indicated a lack of professional development in the area of understanding trauma and its affects on student achievement. As stated by Ms. White, “There is not a county-mandated professional development. Trauma Informed Care is offered only to ESE teachers, school deans, and paraprofessionals, and is mostly school-driven based on the individual school data” (personal communication, April 10, 2016).

Additionally, this interview provided information about goals and future direction for teachers. The district has recently undergone a restructuring that includes professional development on growth mindset, the idea that abilities can be developed and increased by hard work. This idea creates a love of learning and resilience essential for success and complements

social-emotional learning techniques. The adoption of growth mindset indicates a trend in the educational system of Flagler County that is open to the concept of social competencies associated with academic achievement.

Family Life Center

An interview was conducted with the Executive Director of the Family Life Center, Pat Smith, on Thursday, April 14th, 2016, which informed this researcher of the needs identified by the local non-profit social service organization specializing in domestic violence and trauma (Table 11). Ms. Smith supported the need for a professional development implementation on the subject of building resilience in students affected by trauma, and she offered the support of the Family Life Center as a resource during the professional development process. When asked if she felt it would be helpful to have a representative from the agency participate, she agreed. Additionally, she related that instructing educators about the dynamics of domestic violence and sexual assault would provide them with strategies for working with families in trauma. Ms. White indicated that part of the professional development for teachers and staff should include “current data and trends relating to domestic violence and sexual assault in Flagler County (personal communication, April 14, 2016).

Table 11

County Administrator Interview Protocol

Type of Question						
Demographics	Goals	History	Current	Perspectives	Needs	Additional Information
Please tell me a little about your current position and past experiences in education.	Please share the district’s goals for the professional learning communities.	Can you provide/share a general timeline of the district’s goals and outcomes for professional development of the districts teachers?	How do you ensure professional growth of Flagler County teachers? How do you ensure growth in current trends and research in education?	How do you feel teachers respond to current professional development sessions that are provided?	What needs do you have for the professional growth of teachers?	Is there anything else you would like to share?
How long have you been teaching? What grade levels? Coaching? Administration?	What are the professional learning goals for teachers? What goals do you expect teachers to meet after each PLC?	Types of professional learning for teachers. Have you ever offered a professional development opportunity for teachers to understand the affects of trauma on student achievement?	Do you currently offer any professional development opportunities targeting improvement on student behavior? Are you familiar with SEL and its benefits to the children of Flagler County? Do you currently offer SEL training to your employees?	How do you feel teachers would respond to a professional development on the effects of trauma on student achievement? Strategies to build resilience in students who have experienced a traumatic event?	Who provides input for the professional growth of teachers? School administrators? What are the needs specific to? (Content areas, behavior, and best practices?)	

Ms. White, Flagler County school administrator, reported that the Flagler County School board provides tutoring through her non-profit organization in an effort to assist affected students with their academic achievement. Her perspective has provided information that will drive the strategic components and pedagogy of the professional development framework in an effort to serve the students of Flagler County Schools most effectively. I will utilize the information I received through this interview to develop a greater understanding of the history of Flagler County's past use of professional development on the topic of trauma, how it has been implemented, and the elements it has included. This information is vital in providing a framework that will be instrumental in the development of a trauma-informed school.

When asked how teachers impact the emotional recovery of students who have experienced trauma Ms. Smith, Family Life Center representative, responded, "Teachers have a very special place in the hearts of the children they interact with. When children experience trauma, teachers can help mitigate the trauma with a compassionate, sensitive, and caring response. Teachers who respond in this manner help students with the healing process" (personal communication, April 14, 2016). Ms. Smith's statement supports inclusion of the social-emotional learning component of the professional development framework designed in Chapter 3.

Interview Framework

This multi-faceted pilot study design has allowed for an in-depth examination of the needs, perspectives, current and past practices of elementary, secondary teachers and support staff on their professional learning as it pertains to trauma.

After careful review of the data, the indications for a professional development opportunity on building resilience in trauma-affected students, is validated. The teachers are supportive of an ongoing and consecutive training that includes visuals, hands-on learning, is meaningful and can be applied to everyday teaching. The study demonstrates a strong awareness of the problem of practice and supports trauma sensitive issues.

The interview with the county administrator clearly indicates a lack of professional development in the area of trauma. Teachers specializing in the area of exceptional education are the only demographic in the organization that is offered trauma training. Additionally, the interview suggests the awareness that social emotional learning is important and supported by the administrator; however, social emotional learning is not offered as a professional development opportunity to teachers. The interview conducted with the local community trauma agency, indicated a strong need for the distribution of information on understanding children who have experienced a traumatic event. The agency representative supports the awareness of the importance of the role of the teacher.

The framework introduced in the next chapter has been designed with the intention of addressing all of the indicated needs of the stakeholders in the organization.

Table 12

Family Life Center Interview Protocol

Type of Question						
Demographics	Goals	History	Current	Perspectives	Needs	Additional Information
<p>Please tell me a little about your current position and past experiences in working with children with adverse childhood experiences.</p>	<p>Please share the centers goals for providing children with resilience opportunities.</p> <p>Solicit a diverse group of students to function as a focus group to provide input to FLC on attitudes and service needs.</p> <p>Explore involvement of middle school students.</p> <p>Explore potential involvement with Flagler County school system to influence curriculum content regarding DV and SV</p>	<p>Can you provide/share a general timeline of the centers goals and outcomes for future projects as it relates to school aged clients?</p> <p>Beginning discussion 9/2016</p>	<p>How do you ensure emotional and educational growth of children who are affected by trauma? Professional growth of Flagler County teachers? How do you ensure growth in current trends and research in education?</p>	<p>How do you feel teachers respond to the needs of children who are affected by trauma?</p> <p>This is dependent on the instructor. Some are receptive and helpful while others are inexperienced. Inconsistent would be the word I would use to describe this.</p>	<p>What needs do you have for the Family Life Center?</p> <p>FLC needs additional funding to help our part-time youth advocate become a full-time staffer. On-site childcare would be helpful. Volunteers who are willing to participate in the training and share their time with children directly in the shelter.</p>	<p>Is there anything else you would like to share that would inform a Professional Development Framework for teachers who are educating students who have experienced a traumatic event or series of events?</p>

Type of Question						
Demographics	Goals	History	Current	Perspectives	Needs	Additional Information
How long have you been working with trauma victims?	What are the professional goals for providing affected children with educational support?	Do you offer tutoring for school aged children who live at the shelter? What community support do you feel would benefit the academic achievement of your clients?	Do you currently offer any emotional services targeting improvement on student behavior? On academic growth?	How do teachers impact the emotional recovery of students who have experienced a traumatic event?	<p>Are your advocates trained to give educational support to school-aged children at the center?</p> <p>Not specifically educational support, they are trained to work with children who have sustained trauma.</p> <p>What would you like to see implemented into the Flagler County School system that will increase resilience in students affected by maltreatment?</p>	<p>Do you feel it would be helpful to have a representative from your agency or a similar agency present at a PLC?</p> <p>If so, what type of information do you feel would be most beneficial for your organization to present?</p>

This multi-faceted pilot study design has allowed for an in-depth examination of the needs, perspectives, and current and past practices of elementary and secondary schoolteachers and support staff related to professional learning on the subject of trauma in students.

CHAPTER 3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Purpose, Goals and Expected Outcomes

The purpose of this pilot study was to design a professional development framework to educate teachers about the behaviors associated with trauma and its effect on student achievement. After successful completion of professional development, teachers will be able to develop strategies and utilize best practices that can be incorporated into everyday learning.

Significance of the Pilot Study

It has been my experience that classroom teachers have limited understanding of how trauma affects student learning and would benefit from professional development training that will bring a broader, clearer, more concise understanding of how the brain of a child is altered if influenced by a traumatic event or series of events. With this training in their background, teachers will be able to help their affected students to build resilience.

Pilot Study

The pilot study gave this researcher the information needed to educate teachers on the academic effects of trauma, and it identified the needs of teachers, administrators and support staff. The pilot study informed the framework that is intended to bridge the gap of student achievement in those students affected by trauma.

Table 1 describes the demographics of the participants in the pilot study. The majority of participants are teachers (81%), with smaller numbers identifying as support staff (12%), administrators (5%), and guidance counselors (2%). Participants were overwhelmingly female

(91%); 9% identified as male. Participants were 98% White and 2% Hispanic/Latino. The majority of participants have been in their role for 10-15 years (42%), 26% have been in their roles 1-5 years, 23% have been in their roles 16-25 years, and 9% have been in their roles 6-9 years.

Figure 1 shows that 98% of participants strongly agree or agree that it is important to provide professional development on the topic of resilience in educating students who have experienced a traumatic event. Ninety-three percent of participants believed that participating in professional development training (PD) would help in their everyday work with students. When asked if PD had been offered in the past 60% disagreed; when asked if their past background of PD had successfully helped them to work with trauma-affected students, 57% disagreed. When asked if they would benefit from a PD structured as a one-hour session per month for ten months, 81% agreed; the same fraction (81%) agreed that they would use an online component tied to their PD for support in classroom implementation.

All professional development programs funded through the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* must not consist merely of one-day or short-term workshops or conferences. Furthermore, a study conducted by What Works Clearinghouse (a department in the Federal Institute of Education Sciences), found that effective programs included an average of 49 hours of training (Sawchuk, 2010). For these reasons, I have chosen to design my PD to run over a time frame of seven months. The PD consists of seven modules that build upon each other, with a bottom-up design. The bottom-up approach allows for modules to be linked together, building upon each other to successively add skills to the toolkit of participants, allowing them to better serve trauma-affected students. For each of the seven months of implementation, PD participants will

receive two hours of directed training, spend one hour in personal reflection, spend one hour collaborating with peers by writing to a blog and serving on teacher inquiry teams (1 hour monthly for seven months), and spend one hour examining a case study, for a total of 35 hours of development over the course of the school year. The PLCs will take place during the instructional day and the other requirements for the PD can be accomplished during teacher planning periods, with coach observation and modeling during instructional time. The goal is for participants to be able to incorporate the information learned during the PD into the daily curriculum. Professional development is most successful if it is sustained, coherent, takes place during the school day, and becomes part of teacher's responsibility, with a focus on student results (Wei et al., 2009).

As a result of literature review and the pilot survey, I determined that Owl Elementary School would benefit from professional development program dedicated to the topic of resilience in trauma-affected students. Survey participants indicated that they have not been adequately prepared through PD for students who have experienced trauma nor have they been prepared to build resilience in this population. Additionally, they have indicated that a PD opportunity over the course of a school year with an online component would be beneficial.

The designed framework includes a seven-month PD with an online support component to help teachers implement the strategies they have learned through the course of the program. The seven modules of the PD are as follows:

- Trauma
- Cognitive Function
- Autonomic Nervous System

- Neuroscience
- Social emotional Learning
- Resilience
- Mindfulness

Benefits of Educating Teachers Through Professional Development

A professional development framework can educate teachers, administrators, and support staff about the impact trauma has on a person's life and about strategies that can be used by teachers to educate the trauma-affected student in a way that also benefits the rest of the classroom population. Interventions to improve child achievement should focus around helping the child feel safe in their environment, improving coping and problem-solving techniques, facilitating opportunities for the child to express suppressed feelings, and recognizing perpetrator responsibility (Bear, 1993). Extensive developmental research indicates that effective mastery of social emotional competencies is associated with greater well-being and better school performance, whereas the failure to achieve competence in these areas can lead to a variety of personal, social, and academic difficulties (Eisenberg, 2006; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

Teachers more readily alter teaching methods and effectively integrate knowledge gained from professional development into their daily work when PD is characterized by coherence and focused on content. Building on the teacher's background knowledge and encouraging communication and collaboration among teachers who are striving to reform their instruction are necessary supports to encourage change (Hill & Cohen, 2005). Goals for learning are ever changing, as with the curriculum. Recently acquired knowledge of teacher learning and student

thinking has led to a new understanding teachers benefit most greatly from professional development that is strongly aligned with curriculum (Hill & Cohen, 2005).

Educating adults in schools so as to bring a trauma-informed lens to all aspects of the school environment offers an opportunity to promote healing from a traumatic experience. Children who suffer trauma often remain in a heightened reactive “fight or flight” state. This can cause children to act out and be disruptive in home and in school, behavior for which they are typically punished (Wilder, 2013). There is a need for teachers and administrators to respond to the needs of students by reflecting on how they can change their own behavior to help students feel safe and in turn, ready to learn (Lehmann, 2013). A teachers’ role in the lives of their students is one of a caretaker, healer, role model, and trusted mentor. According to the interview with the Family Life Center’s Executive Director, Pat Smith, “Teachers have a very special place in the hearts of the children they interact with. When children experience trauma, teachers can help mitigate the trauma with a compassionate, sensitive and caring response. Teachers who respond in this manner help students with the healing process” (personal communication, April 14, 2016).

A pilot program was instituted at John A. Johnson Achievement Plus Elementary School with a professional development training focused on coaching, mentoring, and training school staff about trauma and its effects on children’s ability to learn. After a year of professional development that involved training teachers, building positive relationships, and instituting adaptive strategies to meet the needs of individual students, dramatic change was seen in the students who frequently acted out. They began to open up to other students and form relationships, display empathy, and find inner calm. “We shifted our focus to building

relationships with students who are experiencing trauma outside of school. Building those relationships, we saw students who used to spend 85% of their time outside of the classroom because of behavior issues, reduce the out of classroom time to an hour a week” explains Patrick Karr, special education teacher at John A. Johnson (Wilder, 2013).

The ultimate goal of an educator is to increase student achievement through meaningful lessons and provide support as well as academic guidance. Keeping this in mind, it is important that teachers are equipped to teach more than just the documented curriculum standards. It is imperative that teachers recognize that they are educating children from diverse backgrounds, who have dealt with range of emotional conflicts that stem from environments outside the classroom. Schools can help by creating a framework for responding to emotionally struggling students in ways that are not punitive, but that encourage connection and foster resilience (Warshof & Rappaport, 2013). This can be accomplished through professional development training in our schools.

Teachers will achieve a greater understanding of how trauma biologically and behaviorally alters children and gain a new perspective on how children learn through the professional development framework. Teachers can provide an environment that engages the student with hands-on learning activities that encourage creativity and communication through the arts and social emotional learning techniques developed in the framework, *Cultivating Resilience in the Arms of Academics: A Professional Development Framework to Effectuate change in Educating Trauma Survivors*.

In Figure 2, Trauma and Academic Achievement, 92% of teachers and support staff agreed that children who are exposed to a traumatic event are adversely academically affected,

and 95% agreed that trauma alters students' biological stress systems. Participants overwhelmingly (95%) disagreed with a statement that students who look disinterested in class are simply bored with the content. These results suggest that trauma is affecting concentration and focus in students. All available indicators point to a strong correlation between trauma and academic struggles for affected students. There is no longer any doubt that violence and chronic exposure to toxic stress disrupt the process of normal child development (Perkins & Graham-Bermann, 2012). Biological changes to the brain of trauma-affected students leaves them at risk for reduced academic and social competence. Left unattended, these changes can affect their health and well-being not only through childhood, but into adulthood as well (Karr-Morse & Wiley, 2012).

In the area of Teacher Comfort and Support with Trauma, Graph 3 shows the great majority of teachers (88%) say that they have not been informed about the presence of students in their classroom who have experienced trauma. Thus, there is a need for the PD to include training teachers to be aware of behavioral indicators associated with exposure to trauma. A slight majority of participants (59%) felt that they received support from administrators and colleagues when handling a situation that arose from trauma-related behaviors, but a substantial minority (41%) did not feel supported, indicating room for improvement in the work environment in this matter.

Most participants (56%) were not comfortable with their ability to identify trauma-affected students and with providing information to parents about outside support services, suggesting that making teachers aware of external resources available to families of the trauma-affected student is an important part of the PD. As previously mentioned, an important part of

the PD framework is teaching educators how to identify behavior patterns associated with trauma; this will help them to identify trauma affected students and implement the appropriate strategies to build resilience.

In the area of Building Resilience, 89% of participants agree that classroom environment influences how students build resilience from trauma. Additionally, 97% agree that behaviors exhibited by adults in the learning environment influence student responses and 98% believe the culture of the classroom and school environment can foster a feeling that increases academic achievement. This data supports the need to provide children with a learning environment where they feel safe and accepted in an effort to increase academic achievement. To build resilience, a trauma-informed staff will utilize strategies to engage students and help them exercise self-management skills.

Children have the ability to regain resilience and strengthen the capacity to reshape their thinking. Early studies of resilience implied that there is something remarkable or unique about children who survive early trauma and go on to live productive, meaningful lives (Goldstein & Brooks, 2014). Schools have the ability to restore a mindset that is resilient. Working with the brain's neuroplasticity, teachers are able to cultivate children's inner strengths, increase their sense of connection with others, and improve their ability to self-monitor their behavior (Craig, 2016, p. 81).

Trauma-sensitive schools share the understanding that teamwork and responsibility for all students is shared with all participants in the organization. There is a shared understanding among staff that all students need to feel safe physically, socially, emotionally, and academically. Relationship building, self-regulation, academic competence, and the physical and

emotional wellbeing of all students are primary goals of all stakeholders. The trauma-sensitive schools movement is the result of a confluence of forces that are changing the way educators view children's academic and social problems (Craig, 2016, p. 5). In Figure 5, 90% of participants said that they wanted Owl Elementary School to become a trauma-sensitive school.

Theoretical Framework

Within the framework developed by *Cultivating Resilience in the Arms of Academics: A Professional Development Framework to Effectuate change in Educating Trauma Survivors*, the backward design principle has been used to focus on learning goals that begin with an end in mind. The professional development design will be aligned with the following three stages of development (Wiggins, Grant, & McTighe, 2005):

- Stage 1 – What is worthy and requiring of understanding? (Goals)
- Stage 2 – What is evidence of understanding?
- Stage 3 – What kind of learning experiences and teaching promote understanding, interest, and excellence?

The backward design model will be utilized to formulate a plan for the PD, which will be broken down into three key principles. These principles arise from the Powerful Learning Practice model (PLP): Professional Learning Communities, Personal Learning Networks, and Communities of Practice (PLP Network, 2015).

The Professional Learning Community principle is aligned with the Pratt Model, which supports an idea of cultural transformation where learning in one area will have beneficial effects in many other areas (Pratt, 1994, p. 9). It is my intent that educating teachers about how trauma

influences student achievement, providing them support in the classroom, and offering them strategies that can lead to a more rewarding classroom experience for all students will, in turn, lower student referral rates, increase test scores, and lead to a positive school culture. According to Pratt (1994), education is not a process of filling a vacuum or remediating a deficit, but providing the conditions in which people can develop their full potential. The primary vehicle for growth is human relationships, and the preferred learning mode is direct personal experience (Pratt, 1994, p.14). These ideas form a part of the theoretical basis underpinning my professional development model.

The second principle of the PLP, the Personal Learning Network component, will be addressed in the PD through a blog, in which teachers can share ideas they learned through the PD and indicate which strategies worked for them and which did not. Meaningful learning involves active participation and engagement (Siemens, 2015). Connectivism, as promoted by Stephen Downes and George Siemens, is a learning theory born of the digital age, where learning occurs through connections within networks via learner-centered approaches. Connectivism enables users to continually acquire new information and understanding. The principles involved are as follows:

- Learning and knowledge rests in diversity of opinions.
- Learning is a process of connecting specialized information sources.
- Capacity to know more is more critical than what is currently known.
- Nurturing and maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continual learning.
- Ability to see connections between fields, ideas, and concepts is a core skill.

- Decision-making is itself a learning process. Choosing what to learn and the meaning of incoming information affects decision-making.

I choose a blog as the mode of communication for the teaching community to share ideas, opinions, and strategies learned in the PD and their experiences dealing with trauma survivors because it is in collaboration that learning becomes concrete. Moreover, it is a vehicle for teachers to share ideas and help each other with situational issues and a place to unload some of the stress that comes with teaching students of trauma in an age of digital citizenship.

The third PLP principle utilized in the PD is Communities of Practice, where deep collaboration takes place. In this component a supporting colleague will visit classrooms to observe, answer teacher questions, introduce or reinforce strategies taught in the professional development and give feedback to teachers. In a personal interview with Lynn White, Executive Director of Community and School Engagement at Flagler County Public Schools, she vocalized, “The best professional development has a coaching piece.” Etienne Wenger, theorist in the field of social learning, supports the Communities of Practice model, in which groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, interact regularly to learn how to do it better. This practice is embedded in the PD through the discussion section of the monthly meetings, the blog communication, and through a google.doc communication where teachers can share activities that will enhance learning. The following visual model outlines the three areas of the Powerful Learning Practice model that I will use to frame my professional development:

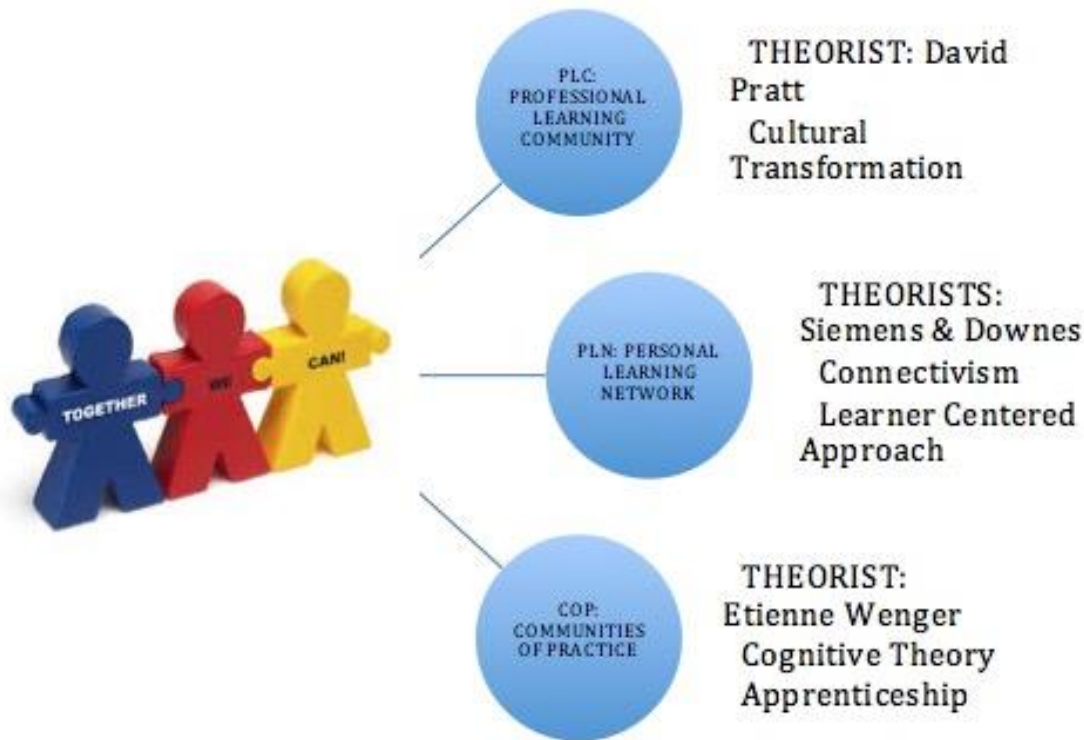


Figure 6. Powerful learning practice. Copyright 2016 by E. J. I. Sperber.

According to Lave and Wenger (1991) theories of situated learning are found in communities of practice where learning and practice go hand-in-hand in a social environment. The cognitive apprenticeship theory integrates professional learning in authentic workplace environments. I will be using these theories as a basis for my design, as it is evident that learning is achieved in social environments and, more specifically, professional learning occurs in the workplace environment where skills can be practiced and anchored in experience.

The Social Learning Theory of Albert Banduras will also be integrated in the design; his theory promotes the idea that people learn from one another through observation of behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes and are influenced by cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors. According to Bandura, “Most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from

observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action.” These ideas reinforce the theory-based practices of the PD design.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

The first step toward creating a curriculum designed for teacher professional development training to meet student need is recognizing and implementing social emotional learning techniques into every day classroom curriculum. Many students lack social emotional competencies, which are important for growth, academic success, behavioral development, and physical health. Social emotional learning can help to increase brain development in those affected by outside influences such as trauma.

In a national sample of 148,189 sixth- to twelfth-graders, only 29%-45% reported they had social competencies such as empathy, decision making, and conflict resolution skills, and only 29% indicated that their school provided a caring, encouraging environment (Benson, 2006). By high school, 40%-60% of students become chronically disengaged from school (Klem & Connell, 2004). Furthermore, approximately 30% of high school students suffer depression or engage in multiple high-risk behaviors (e.g., substance use, sex, violence, attempted suicide), which can interfere with school performance and jeopardize their potential for life success. Social emotional learning (SEL) programs significantly improve students’ skills, attitudes, and behaviors (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

Extensive developmental research indicates that effective mastery of social emotional competencies has been linked to greater well-being and better school performance, whereas the

failure to achieve competence in these areas can lead to a variety of personal, social, and academic difficulties (Eisenberg, 2006; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Weissberg & Greenberg, 1998). The findings from various clinical, prevention, and youth development studies have stimulated the creation of many school-based interventions specifically designed to promote SEL.

The SEL approach integrates competence, promotion, and youth development frameworks for reducing risk factors and fostering protective mechanisms for acquiring core competencies to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively. The proximal goals of SEL programs are to foster the development of five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2005). These competencies, in turn, should provide a foundation for better adjustment and academic performance, as reflected in more positive social behaviors, fewer conduct problems, less emotional distress, and improved test scores and grades (Greenberg et al., 2003). Over time, mastering SEL competencies results in a developmental progression leading to a shift from being predominantly controlled by external factors to acting increasingly in accord with internalized beliefs and values, exhibiting care and concern for others, making good decisions, and taking responsibility for one's choices and behaviors (Bear & Watkins, 2006).

Study of a professional development program conducted on SEL (Durlak et al., 2011) indicated a positive effect on teachers' success in the following six areas: SEL skills, attitudes,

positive social behaviors, conduct problems, emotional distress, and academic performance. The study showed that classroom-by-teacher programs were effective in all six categories. The program was not as successful where teachers were not the personnel conducting the intervention. The outcome for non-school personnel produced only three significant outcomes: improved SEL skills, more positive social attitudes, and reduced conduct problems. The conclusion was that school staff can conduct successful SEL programs and are more successful with student intervention than non-school personnel. This result supports the value of training our teachers through implementing professional development in SEL.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The professional development framework designed herein is also informed by Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow (1943) stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs. When the most basic need is met, a person seeks to fulfill the next one, and so on. According to the revised seven-stage model (Maslow, 1962), the rank order of importance is as follows: biological and physiological needs, the need for safety, the need to feel love and to belong, the need for esteem, cognitive needs, aesthetic needs, and the need for self-actualization. If the first four ranks in the hierarchy are not met, the child will be denied the ability to gain cognitive knowledge and meaning. In conjunction with examining Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs for student development, I plan to address human motivation and change through personal growth or self-actualization. Maslow (1962) believed that self-actualization could be measured through the concept of peak performances occurring when a person experiences the world for what it is, leading to feelings of euphoria, joy, and wonder.

Cultivating Resilience Through the Arms of Academics: A Design to Effectuate Resilience in
Educating Trauma Survivors

Introduction and Context

The purpose of this framework is to provide a professional development opportunity that will educate teachers in the definition of trauma, synthesize research targeting behavior indicators, and suggest implementation of strategies throughout the curriculum that will complement daily practice.

Cultivating Resilience Through the Arms of Academics is designed to support educators in fostering resilience in traumatized children. Included are best practices that benefit all children and can be used in any school to improve the wellbeing, psycho-social competence, and academic performance of all children in the school population.

Children are universally unique. If we look at them through glasses of the same color, they will falter and have no reason to bloom. However, if we attempt to realize their exclusive gifts, their self-worth will be the driver to success and accomplishment.

Ellen Ioannides Sperber (2015)

Rationale

Family stress indicators are evident when we see children enter our classrooms with sadness in their eyes, erratic behavior patterns, and dissociation from academics and personal relationships. Scientists are now suggesting that cognitive development is only half of the

education equation, with the other half being social and emotional development (GGIA, 2015). Research shows that people are born with an innate sense of goodness. The environmental factors that impact the transformation of these qualities cannot be the focus of the moral obligation a teacher has to educate the “whole child.”

Identifying a student behaviors that are reflective of a traumatic event, having an awareness that trauma alters brain function, and responding to the unique needs of students affected by trauma are the cornerstones to effective teaching not only of the trauma-affected students, but of the student population as a whole. This complex problem of trauma-induced behavior has a negative effect on the performance of the entire class, not just the trauma victim. A nationally representative survey found that 85 percent of teachers and 73% of parents said that the “school experience of most students suffers at the expense of a few chronic offenders” (Public Agenda, 2004).

Professional development in the area of supporting trauma victims, arming our teachers with knowledge, technique, and empathy, is an obligation of the educational system. Classroom teachers have a unique opportunity to identify abused children and to start the healing process that will restore safety to their lives. Probably no adult is more trusted by children who have been abused than a beloved and caring teacher (Bear 1993).

Teachers and administrators have enormously stressful work and are burned out, unable to tend to their own wellbeing; furthermore, most education professionals receive little to no training in SEL, although 83% reported they wanted some (GGSC, 2015). This professional development framework is intended to fill the educational gap that trauma has created and lead educators to a more prosperous, reflective, and moral delivery of state mandated curricula as they

develop their own social and emotional intelligence. Additionally, it is intended that, by synthesizing the information provided in this model, the growth of compassion, empathy, and happiness will begin to create a more positive classroom and campus culture.

Performance And Development Process

Effective development and performance processes are founded on three principles of PLP previously discussed:

1. Cultural Transformation – Professional Learning Community
2. Connectivism – Personal Learning Network
3. Cognitive Theory Apprenticeship – Communities of Practice

These three principles guide the development of the seven modules of content to which teachers, administrators, and support staff will be introduced during the professional development opportunity.

Applicability

Performance and development processes are applicable to teachers, administrators, counselors, and other support staff within the school organization. References to “teachers” in this and associated documents might include all of the above groups of employees.

Model

I have designed the Quint Cohesive Model to Professional Development Practice as an ordered sequence of learning experiences, starting with an introduction to the topic, followed by skillful experience and collaboration, implementation, professional reflection, modification, and

reimplementation (within the classroom) with a supporting colleague, leading into the introduction of the next topic. I have specifically designed the model to include all three principles of the Professional Learning Practices. This cyclical model has been designed to include all three principles of the Professional Learning Practices.



Figure 7. Quint Cohesive Model to Professional Development Practice. Copyright 2016 by E. J. I. Sperber.

Definitions

Teachers will understand the vocabulary associated with trauma and resilience.

- **Attachment Theory:** a psychological model based on a person's ability to develop basic trust in their caregivers and themselves.
- **Autonomic Nervous System:** the part of the nervous system responsible for control of the bodily functions not consciously directed, such as breathing, heartbeat, and digestive processes.
- **Cognitive Function:** the mental processes by which one becomes aware of, perceives, or comprehends ideas. It involves all aspects of perception, thinking, reasoning, and remembering.
- **Mindfulness:** acceptance, paying attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them.
- **Neuroscience:** the science that is concerned with the study of the structure and function of the nervous system.
- **Resilience:** the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress, the ability to "bounce back" from difficult experiences.
- **Social Emotional Learning:** a process for learning life skills, including how to handle oneself, others, and relationships. SEL helps us to understand our emotions and learn how to manage our feelings. The focus of SEL is on learning how to deal with situations in a constructive and ethical manner.
- **Trauma:** a deeply distressing or disturbing experience. Childhood trauma encompasses but is not limited to divorce, death of a loved one (which could include a pet), domestic

violence, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, physical abuse, alcohol/drug abuse, or witnessing violence in the community or on television.

Phase 1: Plan

The focus of the planning phase is to create a professional learning plan to guide the work of each administrator, teacher, and support staff member in their daily work with trauma-affected students. The performance and development plan is developed through collaboration and professional development

Objectives and Goals

Knowledge

1. Teachers will understand the definition of trauma.
2. Teachers will become aware that situations in a child's life can lead to traumatic and emotional responses.
3. Teachers will understand the cognitive and developmental processes that are influenced by biological, cultural, and social factors that are affected by trauma.
4. Teachers will become aware that human developmental processes adapt to cultural and environmental influences.
5. Teachers will reach a higher understanding that developing a student's internal motivation (self-efficacy) is a necessary component of student achievement.
6. Teachers will be able to recognize the characteristics of a student who has been exposed to trauma.

7. Teachers will understand brain function to deepen their knowledge of how information is received and retained in the memory.
8. Teachers will be able to identify the developmental differences in student learning when behaviors are displayed that are associated with trauma.
9. Teachers will understand that it is necessary to adapt instruction to meet the needs of the students influenced by trauma.
10. Teachers will realize that classroom environments are an important component in making students feel comfortable and safe.
11. Teachers will recognize the importance of relationships and understand the components of the Attachment Theory.
12. Teachers will recognize and understand the behaviors associated with PTSD.
13. Teachers will recognize that teaching the “whole child” is necessary to accomplish educational stability and build resilience in children.
14. Teachers will understand their behaviors can influence and trigger hyper-arousal in affected students and unintentionally re-traumatize the student.
15. Teachers will become aware of how their responses to trauma-induced behaviors in turn influence the student’s response to academic tasks.
16. Teachers will understand that 1 out of 4 school-aged children have been exposed to a traumatic event that can affect academic learning or behavior (NCTSN, 2008).
17. Teachers will acquire the knowledge of social emotional learning and the benefits it offers in teaching students who have experienced trauma and the general population of the classroom.

Skills

1. Teachers will be able to demonstrate the ability to recognize the needs of the “whole child”.
2. Teachers will differentiate instruction to accommodate the needs of students affected by trauma.
3. Teachers will demonstrate the ability to utilize SEL strategies within the classroom curriculum.
4. Teachers will have the ability to distinguish behaviors and characteristics of students effected by trauma.
5. Teachers will be aware and understand the importance of procedures to provide a safe and comfortable learning environment.
6. Teachers will evaluate the self-efficacy of an affected student to determine their ability to self-motivate.
7. Teachers will identify life situations that can induce trauma in students.
8. Teachers will summarize strategies that can be utilized/accomplished at school to promote the success of the trauma-affected student.
9. Teachers will develop appropriate educational and behavioral goals for the trauma-affected student.
10. Teachers will implement interventions using strategies to achieve specific educational and behavioral goals.

11. Teachers will demonstrate the ability to communicate in an appropriate and effective manner.
12. Teachers will identify opportunities to provide positive reinforcement so that students will be able to build self-efficacy.
13. Teachers will summarize strategies that can be used to influence independent thinking.
14. Teachers will demonstrate the ability to provide a school environment where trauma students feel and become an integral part of the school population.
15. Teachers will demonstrate interpersonal strategies based on neurobiology to learn, retain, and communicate effectively.
16. Teachers will demonstrate the ability to utilize effective listening skills.

Pre-Assessment

A questionnaire prior to Module 1 will be distributed to address preconceived ideas or misconceptions teachers may have on the subject of trauma and the students in their classrooms who have experienced a traumatic event. The pre-assessment is designed to elicit responses that evoke reflection on past/present misconceptions of student behaviors where they can self-reflect on past experiences and student/teacher interactions (Appendices D and E).

Process

Teaching the Whole Child

The Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development is a non-profit organization founded in 1943 and a global leader in developing educational programs. The ASCD supports a strategy termed “teaching the whole child” as part of their initiative to increase academic success for all learners. Teaching the whole child is an idea supported by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs; for traumatized children, basic needs such as safety are threatened, and so higher-level needs, such as self-actualization are unattainable until these more. The PD takes a bottom-up approach, with each new topic building upon the previous topic, beginning with trauma and ending with mindfulness. This PD framework supports teaching the whole child and aligns with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (See Visual Model), with the goal of providing an academic environment that promotes resilience opportunities and self-actualization for ultimate student success.

Visual Model

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, and their correspondence with the seven modules of the PD framework (“Cultivating Resilience Through the Arms of Academics”):

Table 13

Comparison of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and Cultivating Resilience Through the Arms of Academics

Maslow’s Hierarchy Of Needs	Cultivating Resilience Through The Arms Of Academics
Psychological Needs – Basic life needs (air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep).	Trauma -In what way does trauma impede psychological functioning and threaten basic needs?
Safety (physical & psychological) – fear of the unknown, importance of routine and predictability.	Cognitive Function – How does threatened safety affect cognition? How can educators provide an environment that will foster safety and psychological connection in the classroom?
Love and Belongingness – acceptance as a part of a group.	Autonomic Nervous System - How does the isolation of trauma trigger our biological stress systems? How does love and belongingness foster homeostasis?
Esteem Needs – respect of others, respect for self, and competence.	Neuroscience – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder – How does the narrowing of the hippocampus create memory loss and, in turn, create a lack of self-confidence and competence? How does regulation of emotional responses and hyperactivity debilitate PTSD students? Reactive Attachment Disorder – How does attachment affect esteem needs? Why do students who have an attachment disorder avoid people, relationships, lack healthy respect for self, feel helplessness and lack of self-worth?
Cognitive needs – knowledge, understanding, exploration, need for meaning and predictability	Social Emotional Learning How can social and emotional learning (SEL) help students effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions? How does SEL address the cognitive needs of students?

Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs	Cultivating Resilience Through The Arms Of Academics
Aesthetic needs – beauty, art, nature, symmetry, balance, order	<p>Resilience</p> <p>7 C's - Competence, confidence, connection, character, contribution, coping and control.</p> <p>How does project-based learning build the 7 C's?</p> <p>How does building resilience bring balance and order to daily classroom routines?</p>
Self actualization – realizing ones full potential	<p>Mindfulness</p> <p>How does the use of mindfulness practices provide a basis for self-actualization?</p>



MINDFULNESS

- Brain Repair
- Reduce Stress
- Boost Performance

RESILIENCE

- Seven C's:
Competence, Confidence,
Connection, Character,
Contribution, Coping,
and Control

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- Self Regulation
- Responsibility
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills

NEUROSCIENCE

- Post-Traumatic Stress
- Reactive Attachment Disorder

AUTONOMIC

- Stress-Tension Alerts
- Fight-Flight Response

COGNITIVE FUNCTION

- Altered State
- Behavioral Indicator

TRAUMA

- Understanding Trauma
- Academic Implications

Figure 8. Model of Cultivating Resilience Through the Arms of Academics and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Copyright 2016 by E. J. I. Sperber.



Figure 9. Mindful Matt. Copyright 2016 by E. J. I. Sperber.

Module 1: Understanding Trauma

The emphasis on this module is to bring a greater understanding to educators about the different types of trauma and the academic implications trauma brings to the classroom.

For children, there are many potential types of traumatic experience: loss of a loved one, environmental trauma associated with poverty and threatened survival, maltreatment, abandonment, betrayal, sexual assault, domestic violence, or neglect. When any one of these situations arises, it can affect a child's behavior and ability to learn. The complications of trauma in early life can be serious and manifest in many different areas of the child's development. Trauma's impact is most pervasive during the first decade of a child's life, these experiences serve the stage for lifelong unfocused responses to stress because chronic trauma interferes with neurobiological development (van der Kolk, 2005) and the development of core self-regulation capacities (Ford & Russo, 2006).

Trauma impedes psychological functioning and threatens basic needs by creating disconnection, dysregulation, disorganization, and isolation (Craig, 2016). Survival strategies are then personally developed to compensate for the child's confused state. They include hostile behaviors, disassociation, lack of focus, and inability to self-regulate.

Identifying key behaviors of trauma fall into three categories: flight, fight or freeze (Table 14). The following chart indicates the behaviors a child exhibits and the correlating response category (Souers & Hall, 2016).

Table 14

Children’s Behavioral Responses to Trauma: Flight, Fight, or Freeze

Flight	Fight	Freeze
Withdrawing	Acting out	Exhibiting numbness
Fleeing the classroom	Behaving aggressively	Refusing to answer
Skipping class	Acting silly	Refusing to get needs met
Daydreaming	Exhibiting defiance	Giving a blank look
Seeming to sleep	Being hyperactive	Feeling unable to move or act
Avoiding others	Arguing	
Hiding or wandering	Screaming/yelling	
Becoming disengaged		

Understanding that these behaviors are associated with trauma will help educators identify strategies that will build resilience instead of choosing the disciplinary path that usually only creates a power struggle. We should ask, “Is this willful disobedience, or could it be a response to a traumatic life event the student is struggling with” (Sours & Hall, 2016)?

Maslow begins with basic needs of food, drink, oxygen, temperature regulation, rest, activity, and sex as physiological needs that are basic to human survival. In this module, trauma robs the child of the basic needs for survival threatening the psychological basis for human development and learning.

Strategy For Teachers

Relationship Building: Begin to build a relationship with the student that will open the line of communication. Invite the student to come to your classroom to talk about math, school, life, or just eat (Sours & Hall, 2016, p. 29). Provide the student the opportunity to communicate their feelings.

Module 2: Cognitive Function

The importance of discussing cognitive function is to develop an understanding of how reasoning, memory, attention and language are altered due to the traumatic experience and provide strategies to increase cognitive functioning.

Language is the primary moderator between the child's inner self and the external world. It is the vehicle for children to communicate their thoughts and feelings. Early trauma threatens all aspects of language development (Craig, 2016, p. 47). When learning how to speak, children see pictures and caregivers give meaning to the symbolic representations. Children turn these pictures into mental images to bring meaning to them. They use language internally and "talk to themselves." This self-talk is an integral component of self-regulation and lays the foundation for higher-order thinking and problem solving (Craig, 2016, p. 48). The nature of trauma interrupts this process. Maltreatment in early childhood significantly affects the neural pathways in two regions of the brain that are vital to speech communication (Craig, 2016): Broca's area (located in the inferior frontal cortex) and Wernicke's area (located in the superior temporal gyrus). Cortisol released during stress affects these areas of the brain, causing children to be unable to form the words they need to communicate.

Literature suggests that children who have experienced trauma have cognitive abnormalities, including executive and attention deficits and deficits in short-term and working memory for both visual and verbal psychomotor speed (Castandeda et al., 2008).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs suggests that safety is the next most fundamental class of needs that must be met before learning can be accomplished. When children struggle with memory and language and face other cognitive deficits, they are left feeling unsafe and

incomplete. Maslow suggests fear of the unknown is inherent, and routine and predictability are essential for children to feel safe. When a child is experiencing trauma, the safety factor is removed and the child moves into the fight, flight, or freeze mode.

Strategies for Teachers:

1. **Routine Structure:** Teachers can provide a routine structure to their day to cultivate security. Creating a loving, nurturing, and caring environment in the classroom will help the child to feel safe. The teacher's ability to foster positive relationships and extend to physical aspects and emotional tone to the learning environment is critical. Teachers are most successful with traumatized children when they are able to establish themselves as a source of comfort and a secure base for exploration and learning (Craig, 2016).
2. **Multisensory Approach:** Using all the senses as conduits for learning allows for storage and retrieval in the areas of the brain less sensitive to stress (Craig, 2016). Visual, auditory and tactile approaches increase the ability to retain information. Hands-on learning techniques, project based learning, and collaborative learning are all multisensory instructional approaches beneficial to increase memory and cognitive function in students.
3. **Dialogic Teaching:** Using the power of conversation and dialogue can extend children's thinking and increase their understanding of things they are learning (Craig, 2016, p. 65). Dialogic teaching involves specific question and answer dialogue, feedback, exchanges in dialogue with teachers and peers, casual conversation, and informal discussion. Dialogic teaching harnesses the power of talk to stimulate and extend students' thinking and

advance their learning and understanding. It empowers the student for lifelong learning and active citizenship (Alexander, 2008).

Module 3: Autonomic Nervous System

Understanding the autonomic nervous system helps educators realize why students who have experienced trauma display specific reactions. Trauma isolates the victim, and the brain reacts by creating neurotransmitters to handle the extreme event through the autonomic nervous system. The autonomic nervous system is an involuntary system that regulates parts of the body that operate without us thinking about them. This includes breathing, heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature, digestion, metabolism, electrolyte regulation, bodily fluid production, urination, defecation, and sexual response.

The autonomic nervous system is broken down into two parts: the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. The parasympathetic system controls bodily function under ordinary circumstances; the sympathetic system takes over during more threatening conditions, and prepares the system for a dangerous or extreme situation. The sympathetic system at these times will increase heart rate and the force of heart contractions and widen (dilate) the airways to make breathing easier. It causes the body to release stored energy. Muscular strength is increased. The sympathetic system also causes palms to sweat, pupils to dilate, and hair to stand on end. It slows body processes that are less important in emergencies, such as digestion and urination (P. Lowe, MD, Merck Manual). When the sympathetic nervous system fires into action, the fight-or-flight response is initiated, breeding hyper-vigilance. For medical professionals, traumatized patients present a variety of challenges, including a dysregulated

autonomic nervous system, compromised ability to self-soothe, and a diminished capacity to form relationships with others (Quillman, 2013).

Children in our classrooms who have experienced trauma are in survival mode and are constantly on alert, ready to react to any extreme situation. They readily enter fight, flight, or freeze mode. Their hyper-vigilance puts them in a vulnerable position, where they may overreact to the mere perception of a threat, causing frequent deactivation of the left hemisphere in the brain (Craig, 2016, p. 53). This deactivation makes it challenging for the student to think critically, sequentially, and make connections to causal relationships (Craig, 2016).

Elementary school teachers are authorities to the students they work with as well as caregivers. Interactions with a child may activate a flight, fight, or freeze response if a memory is inadvertently triggered. It is important for the educator to understand that their relationship with students is multifaceted and is influenced by the trauma experienced by the student. For a child in a classroom, something as simple as the teacher raising his or her voice to get everyone's attention or being accidentally bumped by another classmate can steer that child into the neural pathway leading to fight, flight, or freeze. When triggered, the child's out-of-proportion emotional (and sometimes physical) reaction often makes no sense whatsoever to the teacher, making it difficult for him or her to respond appropriately (Greater Good Science Center, 2016). It is important for the teacher to understand the child might truly be reacting to a past traumatic event. In this context, the trauma-affected student is having a normal reaction to extraordinary duress (Sours & Hall, 2016).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs indicates that the next important building block to a child's ability to learn is love and belongingness. The autonomic nervous system can inhibit the ability

for a trauma-affected child to feel a sense of belongingness due to activation of the sympathetic nervous system and the involuntary reactions it creates.

Strategies for Teachers:

1. **Reaction:** When a child reacts in a flight, fight, freeze response, teachers can recognize the child is going into survival mode and react in a kind and compassionate way. Once you recognize the trigger, kindly and compassionately reflect back to the child: “I see that you’re having trouble with this problem,” or “You seem like you’re getting kind of irritated,” and then offer the child options. This will help the child gain a sense of control and agency and help him or her to feel safe once more (Dorado & Zakrzewski, GGSC, 2016).
2. **Transitions:** Creating calm, predictable transitions can help the trauma-affected (GGSC, 2016). Transitions are times when children might feel vulnerable with the uncertainty of what might happen next. They may associate this unpredictability with the trauma they have experienced. Predictability is the key for students to feel secure in their environment (Dorado & Zakrzewski, GGSC, 2016).
3. **Public Praise and Private Criticism:** Children who are punished for their behavior will commonly associate their punishment with memories of either themselves or a loved one being hit or verbally abused. Well-meaning corrections may trigger feelings of being “unlovable” and disconnected. It is important to reprimand trauma-affected students in a calm and loving way (Dorado & Zakrzewski, GGSC, 2016).

4. Flexible Groups: Using flexible groups for activities that involve student collaboration can help children gain insight into the complexity of their behavior and that of their peers (Craig, 2016, p. 73).
5. Opportunities:
 - a. Opportunities for children to change their personal narratives can help the trauma-affected student develop a “can do” attitude and make meaningful contributions to their classroom community (Craig, 2016).
 - b. Opportunities for students to care for the wellbeing of other people or animals can help students build empathy and gratitude. Best practice to shape caregiving behaviors slowly, starting with the care of plants or classroom pets (Craig, 2016, p. 72).
 - c. Opportunities to explore areas of content promote higher-order thinking skills. Frequent exposure to problem-solving helps children persist at difficult or challenging tasks (Craig, 2016, p. 73).
 - d. Opportunities that are collaborative in nature allow for peer interaction. When children experience themselves as valuable members of their classroom community they acquire new insights about their capacity to make positive changes in their lives (Craig, 2016, p. 73).

Model 4: Neuroscience

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a condition that can develop after seeing or experiencing a traumatic event. The disorder affects brain function by reducing the size of the

hippocampus, the amygdala, and the ventromedial prefrontal cortex of the brain. The hippocampus is responsible for memory; the amygdala is responsible for helping us process emotions, and the ventromedial prefrontal cortex is responsible for regulating emotional responses triggered by the amygdala (Bergland, 2013).

According to Bergland (2013), a narrowed hippocampus does not allow people to distinguish past and present experiences, and does not allow a person to record new memories and retrieve them later. Thus, trauma-affected children cannot remember what they have learned the day before. The amygdala is hyperactive producing fear and stress responses. This is why children who have experienced trauma are easily startled and exhibit fear to what should otherwise be non-threatening stimuli. Narrowing of the ventromedial prefrontal cortex reduces the ability of the brain to inhibit the impulses of the amygdala, causing a person to exhibit behaviors arising from fear, anxiety, and extreme stress even when faced with stimuli not connected to their experiences from the past; this is the area most responsible for trigger responses (Bergland, 2013).

People who have chronic PTSD have visions of images triggered by sights, smells, or tastes that remind them of the past traumatic event. People who suffer from PTSD have bodies that are chronically hyper-aroused; they tend to lack trust, experience physical problems, and have troubles in their interpersonal relationships. Their physiological and psychological adaptation to the traumatic event changes their identity, influencing the person's ability to make relationships. According to Dr. Van der Kolk, researcher at the Trauma Center at Justice Resource Institute, traumatized people live in a world very different from the rest of society. They see things other people don't see and their perceptions are distorted. They feel helpless and

give up because they feel that they cannot control their world, just as they were not able to control the traumatic event (Van der Kolk, 2012).

The age at which a child experiences trauma and the relationship the child has with the person who inflicted the trauma have tremendous influence on how severe the child's reaction to the trauma will be and how long it will take before healing begins. During a traumatic event, stress hormones are released, the frontal lobe of the brain shuts down, and the limbic system takes over, immobilizing the victim (Van der Kolk, 2012). People affected by trauma get stuck in fight, flight, or freeze mode, with their physical responses locking their mind into a pattern of reliving the event over and over again. Activating the imagination through problem-solving and play helps to give the child an opportunity to do something that helps him or her feel better by bringing them out of the past and into the present, mobilizing the traumatic event (Van der Kolk, 2012).

People who typically feel contented, attractive to others, and well-liked by those around them, are able to assess their daily experiences using cognition, logical reasoning, and classification to help them organize their world; those who have experienced trauma view the world differently, with feelings rather than logical cognition dominating their perceptions because portions of the brain responsible for analysis and organization are failing to function properly (Van der Kolk, 2012). Trauma patients have reduced levels of the neurotransmitter serotonin in the amygdala, causing the mind to be in a constantly reactive state (Van der Kolk, 2012).

Children who have not established healthy attachments to their parents or primary caregivers might have reactive attachment disorder (RAD). Reactive attachment disorder can

have a profoundly negative effect on the classroom experience, as the child who has not established trust within their most important dependent relationship will have difficulty trusting others and is unlikely to trust their teacher. However, children who experience attachment failures in their early relationships can learn to draw comfort and support from teachers (Craig, 2016). Thus, teachers play a critical role in the development of their students. Building trust between teacher and student is vital to the development of a working relationship and ultimately, student resilience. Children with attachment disorders display a variety of behaviors toward teachers that parallel their behavior toward their primary caregiver (Craig, 2016, p. 32). If the relationship with the primary caregiver has been compromised due to trauma, the relationship with the teacher will tend to follow the same pattern and negative behaviors will surface.

The quality of attachment in children's relationships affects their ability to express themselves and the neuroplasticity of their brains. Children who lack healthy attachments are not trusting and display behaviors in front of others that are related to their feelings toward their caregiver. Negative emotional experiences can epigenetically alter the neural architecture of the brain in ways that limit children's ability to trust others and themselves. Positive attachment relationships with teachers can help students compensate for early attachment failures. Positive experiences in school give them confidence they need to explore new concepts and behavior. Within this protective environment, children are able to reshape their perceptions of themselves and others (Craig, 2016, p. 43).

Strategies for Teachers:

1. Imagination activities: Activating the imagination by engaging students in the visual or theatrical arts can help children mobilize the traumatic event, moving them from the past into the present (Van der Kolk, 2012).
2. Problem- and Project-based Learning: Having children work on projects and solve real-world problems promotes reasoning skills and gives students the opportunity to make sense of their own learning. By collecting and analyzing information and making self-discoveries, students improve their cognitive skill. In problem-based learning, students work cooperatively to investigate a problem in their community, creating a real-world solution through the production of a concrete product. In project-based learning, students create the project that fits the learners' own interests and abilities. Scholastic reforms have exhorted the urgency to produce life-long learners; therefore, many curriculum experts favor the usage of problem- and project-based learning (Galvan & Coronado, 2014). This type of learning involves the process of thinking and does not focus on right or wrong answers, making all students feel accomplished. Appendix F contains a sample lesson plan for problem-based learning.
3. Reciprocal Play: Role-playing and cooperative play release endorphins, stimulates interactive brain-to-brain resonance, and facilitates pendulation between dysregulation and regulation (HealingResources.info).
4. Enrichment Activities: Enrichment activities provide children with opportunities to explore their interests and broaden their experience base by exposing them to alternative ways of imagining a future (Craig, 2016). There is a connection between the

neuroscience of trauma and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs; Maslow indicates esteem and respect for self and others, along with competence, are critical building blocks toward self-actualization. In this module, strategies are indicated to help children build self-esteem and competence through the arts, reciprocal play, problem- and project-based learning, and connection to enrichment activities.

Module 5: Social Emotional Learning

Social emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2016). Social emotional learning can be utilized as a tool in the classroom for helping students build self-regulation, responsibility, self-awareness, and positive relationships. It is a program that can be incorporated into daily practice to address the social intelligence of a child. Social Emotional Learning is grounded in the idea that all humans have an altruistic side. According to UC Berkeley professor Dacher Kelter, positive emotions such as compassion and awe are contagious and help bring out the good in ourselves and others. Research proves that children as young as 14 months old have an innate altruistic tendency. In an effort to build resilience in students, modeling behaviors consistent with altruism will help students to connect with this side of themselves. Educational practices and environments can be used to nurture the long-term wellbeing and happiness of students who, through their own experience of being cared for, will naturally care for those around them.

Five Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies:

- Self Awareness – recognizing one’s emotions and values as well as one’s strengths and challenges
- Responsible Decision Making – making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior
- Relationship Skills – forming positive relationships, working in teams, and dealing effectively with conflict
- Social awareness – showing understanding and empathy for others
- Self-management – managing emotions and behaviors to achieve one’s goals

Beneficial features of SEL approaches include explicit social and emotional skills instruction, the ability for integration with academic curriculum, an impetus to modify teacher instructional practices, improved attitudes about self, others, and school, increased positive social behaviors, fewer conduct problems, less emotional distress, and greater academic success (CASTLE, 2016).

Students who do not develop social and emotional skills suffer a fundamental disconnectedness; research shows that students lacking these skills more likely to become disengaged with their education and have difficulty learning. Lack of social and emotional skills is not restricted to the trauma-affected; by high school, 40% to 60% of students have become chronically disengaged from school. However, social and emotional skills development, through the production of caring and encouraging environments or positive interpersonal relationships, can bring change that renews engagement (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, & Schellinger, 2011).

Self-efficacy is built by utilizing SEL in the classroom. Albert Bandura has defined self-efficacy as the ability to succeed in specific situations and tasks. Self-efficacy plays a major role in how one approaches goals, tasks, and challenges (Bandura, 1977). In trauma-affected students, self-efficacy is depleted, and as a result, students do not feel motivated. Social emotional learning can help to build self-efficacy by increasing self-esteem, connection to self, gratitude, classroom connection, and positive relationships.

Classroom Strategies:

1. **Mindfulness Practice:** Mindfulness teaches students to pay attention in a particular way, observing the present and being aware of their bodily movements and functions. Taking time out of the day to practice mindful meditation can create a connection to autonomic body functions and an increase in self-awareness.
2. **Challenging Thinking Patterns:** How students think, particularly in reference to themselves, influences how they feel. When students express negative feelings, teachers can challenge their thinking to create a more positive outcome. This promotes resilience, and students who are more resilient are more academically successful (Price, 2013).
3. **Persistence and Determination:** Nourishing the ability to accomplish a task with focus, patience, and perseverance can help a student overcome obstacles to learning emplaced by trauma. Helping children set goals and praising them for their efforts is essential in creating a culture of determination.
4. **Empathy:** Empathy can be built in students by helping them to understand the importance of positive relationships. Teachers can accomplish this by providing opportunities for students to listen to others, help each other, and learn about other student's ideas.

5. Gratitude: Gratitude can be built by having students reflect on what portions of the class they enjoyed, which topics they would like to learn more about, and fellow students with whom they enjoyed working. This enumeration of positive classroom experiences can teach students about all they have to be thankful for. Research shows this practice encourages more energy and enthusiasm, reduces stress, and brings greater physical wellbeing (Price, 2013). There are connections between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and social emotional learning. Cognitive needs are met through practices that build understanding, knowledge, exploration, predictability, and a construct of meaning through personal experience and self-reflection.

Module 6: Resilience

Fostering resilience in students is possible due to the plasticity of the brain. Early studies of resilience suggest that there is something remarkable about children who survive early trauma and go on to live productive, meaningful lives (Goldstein & Brooks, 314). The brain's neuroplasticity allows children to increase connections with others, self-monitor, and identify inner strengths with the help of teacher intervention. Creating resilience in children involves developing their personal communication skills, internal locus of control, and social competencies, along with providing a supportive environment by controlling classroom tone and exercising skill in mentoring and behavioral interventions. Resilience is built by increasing internal competencies and is influenced by people with whom children interact with and by the activities in which they participate. Resilience does not grow overnight, but only through patience and perseverance over long time scales.

Bergland (2013) proposed that “7 C’s” are essential in building resilience:

1. Competence is the ability to know how to effectively handle situations. Fostering competence requires providing students with scenarios in which they can make choices, correct mistakes, and face adversity.
2. Confidence is the belief in one's own ability. Fostering confidence involves praise, positive reinforcement, and holding students to high expectations, so that they may develop trust in themselves and their abilities.
3. Connection is the sense of belonging to something bigger than one's self. Children who develop close ties within the classroom have a sense of belongingness to their school, their classmates, and the world around them. Connection builds values and increases the feeling of safety. Students with connection are more likely to make good choices and have a solid sense of security.
4. Character involves the construction of a moral sense of right and wrong and a commitment to integrity in dealings with others.
5. Contribution involves provision of aid to the wellbeing of others and reception of gratitude for these efforts. Students learn that giving feels good and are more motivated to involve themselves in the lives of others.
6. Coping is the ability to utilize healthy strategies to deal with stress.
7. Control is the understanding that we earn privileges and respect through our actions and choices and developing an avoidance of poor choices.

Teacher Strategies:

1. Positive Communication: The following six steps foster positive communication: listening, reassuring, validating, responding, repairing, and resolving. (Sours & Hall, 2016, p. 79).
2. Positive Environment: Teachers can create a culture of support in the classroom by providing students with an environment that is safe, nurturing, and responsive to the needs of children, so as to fulfill basic needs for comfort and reassurance. Teachers can maintain a balance between familiar routines and accommodations for individual needs by being flexible and responsive while providing opportunity for open and supportive communication.
3. Facilitating Expression of Feelings: Educators can help children by providing consistent messages of worth and safety (NCTSN, 2016).
4. Service Learning: Learning through projects that help others can lead children to develop increased adaptive capacity (resilience). Making a positive contribution teaches children they have something to offer the world, resulting in a child who feels worthy and self-confident (Craig, 2016, p. 83).
5. Respect for Others: *How would you treat a friend?* is an online activity (http://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/how_would_you_treat_a_friend) that helps students develop healthy social relationships and build resilience (Breines & Chen, 2013).

Resilience connects with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs by fulfilling the aesthetic needs of symmetry, balance, and order through messages of self-worth, safety, confidence, and familiar routines.

Module 7: Mindfulness

The practice of mindfulness is where Maslow's self-actualization takes place. When students are in touch with themselves, they have the capability of realizing their full potential. This module is the final chapter in building student resilience that will last throughout the child's lives. Children can be taught mindful self-awareness in an effort to strengthen the fibers of the middle prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain capable of modulating the terror triggered in the subcortical brain (Kaiser Greenland, 2010; Siegel, 2010).

Mindfulness is an essential tool students can use to promote their ability to become resilient in times of adversity. As stated by the Greater Good Science Center's Adam Hoffman, "A study suggests students will bounce back from academic challenges if they possess the skill of mindfulness – the non-judgmental moment-to-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, and sensations."

A Florida State University study (Hanley, 2016) published in the *Personality and Individual Differences*, measured and analyzed resilience, concluding, "More mindful people were more likely to find the benefit in adversity, which resulted in them believing themselves to be more efficacious after failing." The analysis of the study proved that students who practice mindfulness view adversity as an opportunity to believe in themselves and use the experience of failure to effectuate learning; therefore, utilizing the adverse experience to increase motivation and self-efficacy. Mindful individuals were more likely to engage in positive reappraisal, finding meaning and benefit in the adversities of daily life (Hanley, GGSC, 2016). In another study conducted by Hanley, the use of mindfulness practice in the educational setting also increases the ability to self-regulate emotions. The introduction of mindfulness training in

education will likely confer emotional regulation capacities as well as academic resiliency (Hanley, GGSC, 2016).

The ability to decipher the difference between one's self and one's feelings is the starting point for emotional regulation, in which children observe their emotions before they act on them. Emotional regulation reduces impulsiveness and allows children to make connections between their minds and bodies and self-regulate. As a child's capacity for emotional regulation increases, their executive functioning improves (Craig, 2016, p. 78), boosting academic performance and reducing stress. Mindfulness complements differentiated instruction. When a child realizes his or her full potential, their needs as a whole person become evident, and instruction can then be customized to their ultimate needs.

Teacher Strategies

1. Reflection: Brief "check-ins" and "breath breaks" can encourage children to become more aware of how they feel and how they can change negative feelings by redirecting their attention to something more positive (Craig, 2016).
2. Mindful Meditation Practices: Meditation allows students to clear their minds, cleanse their thoughts, connect to their bodies, and make connections that increase self-awareness. Examples of meditation resources:
 - a. Raisin Meditation has proven to reduce stress and anxiety that accompany daily life (Praisman, 2008). http://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/raisin_meditation
 - b. Compassion Meditation increases altruism by connecting with feelings of compassion, leading children to care for others and bringing peace, joy and

connection (Weng et al., 2013).

http://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/compassion_meditation

- c. Loving-Kindness Meditation promotes positive emotions, increases satisfaction with life and lowers depressive symptoms (Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek, & Finkel, 2008). http://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/loving_kindness_meditation
 - d. Walking Meditation improves psychological wellbeing by increasing children's control over thoughts, feelings, and actions, and allowing them to react to stressful situations in a constructive way (Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt, & Walach, 2004). http://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/walking_meditation
 - e. Body Scan Meditation decreases stress, improves wellbeing, and minimizes symptoms of mental illness (Carmody & Baer, 2008).
http://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/body_scan_meditation
3. Higher Order Thinking Practices: Challenging students to engage in different modes of thought can help them increase their ability to make connections.
 4. Yoga: Yoga can be used as a relaxation technique to meditate and self-reflect, bringing the body and the mind together.
 5. "Peekaboo" breathing: Peekaboo breathing is a technique that allows for self-regulation and a calmer body and mind. Place a small stuffed animal on your stomach while lying down. Breathe in and slowly so the animal rises with your belly. Continue to inhale until you can make eye contact with the animal. Hold your breath and slowly exhale, allowing the stuffed animal to rise, and say "peekaboo" to the animal. This exercise also allows the lungs to fill with the oxygen and calms body and mind, helping the breather feel safe;

the breathing technique can help the student escape the fight, flight, or freeze state (Sours & Hall, 2016).

Experience

1. Teachers will have the experience of practicing active listening and communicating.
2. Teachers will have the experience of feeling connected and part of a team.
3. Teachers will experience what it is like to capitalize on positive events.
4. Teachers will experience the human face of suffering through empathy practices.
5. Teachers will experience the positive experience of gratitude.
6. Teachers will feel the compassion of kindness and feeling supported.
7. Teachers will experience mindfulness practices and positive emotions that increase activity in targeted brain regions and help regulate emotions.

The Teachers

The curriculum is planned exclusively for teachers of grades K-6. The principles that are taught will be the same for all grade levels with varying activities to address the appropriate developmental stage of their students. The professional development model is designed to facilitate teacher learning in the arena of trauma so that they can better serve as a powerful source of information, compassion, and empathy for their students. This unique opportunity is intended to serve as a tool for understanding the effects of trauma, how trauma relates to brain function, and utilize activities/strategies that will engage the learner in a safe and caring environment.

Attitude

1. Teachers will develop an increased awareness of student behaviors in their classroom population.
2. Teachers will enjoy implementing practices that motivate students to be successful.
3. Teachers will utilize the knowledge they have acquired to create a cohesive, safe, and happy classroom environment.
4. Teachers will self-reflect on the practices they have learned in an effort to effectively educate the students in their classroom.
5. Teachers will feel supported by administration and their colleagues by communicating through a blog entries, receiving classroom support from a colleague, and attaining resources that reinforce positive instructional practices.

Context

Professional development courses are taught within the school environment during scheduled PD opportunities. This course is designed as an implementation practice that will be delivered over a seven-month period; enrolled teachers will benefit from obtaining a better understanding of the behaviors and brain function of trauma-affected students and will learn appropriate strategies for assisting students achieve educational goals. The PD will benefit the whole school while helping students develop a sense of their own individual strengths and value to the world. The strategies and activities outlined can be integrated throughout all areas of the curriculum to produce a positive school culture where a student's individuality, strengths, and weaknesses are embraced and his or her emotional and social needs are met, with an emphasis on educating the whole child.

Assessment

Understanding human development and the infestation of trauma in our society is not a prerequisite for teaching students how to read, write, compute, delve into history, or explore the practice of science. However, several indicators of educational and social dysfunction, including referral rates, violence in society and within schools, numbers of participants receiving free/reduced lunch, and high school drop out rates have all been increasing in recent years. Our children are being exposed to a greater volume of trauma than ever before (Bear, 1993). The primary reason for assessment in this curriculum includes: (1) receive feedback from teachers, focus their attention on understanding trauma-affected students and assist them in the integration of strategies that increase concentration and memory, and (2) to evaluate the effectiveness of this professional development model in an attempt to improve the program for future student improvement.

1. Teachers will reflect on a particular situation where a student in their class (past or present) was suspected by the instructor to have experienced trauma, and where now the teacher can recognize that the student had indeed presented trauma-associated behaviors. Teachers will reflect on strategies acquired during professional development that could have been used to achieve a greater understanding of these students and enhanced student success.
2. Teachers will investigate a case study by selecting a student within their classroom and making observations about the student, noting behaviors that match the profile of a trauma survivor. They will then devise strategies to implement in the classroom to help this and other potentially trauma-affected students.

3. Teachers will understand the negative effect trauma has on the classroom and identify appropriate strategies to respond to students' emotional needs in the wake of a crisis.
4. Teachers will be observed in the classroom by a colleague who can provide helpful suggestions related to educational strategies used in everyday lessons.
5. An assessment might be utilized to modify aspects of the curriculum to meet the individual needs a school might have due to particular demographics and area influences. It would also provide information on local support for, interest in, or opposition to education on the topic of trauma.

Teachers will be able to answer the following Essential Questions at the conclusion of this professional development course (Table 15).

Sequence of Instruction

The sequence of instruction in the professional development program will follow a seven-month progression, with each successive month building on what has already been learned. Participants will gain background knowledge about trauma, trauma-induced behaviors, and cognitive function in adolescents and then move toward developing strategies to build self-efficacy in students and increase the brain's functional ability to receive and store information.

Table 15

Essential Questions for Teachers a Conclusion of Professional Development Course

Module	Topic	Questions
1	Understanding trauma	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the definition of trauma? 2. How can I identify a student who is impacted by a traumatic environmental, cultural, or social influence? 3. How does Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs influence how we educate trauma- affected students?
2	Cognitive Brain Function and Altered State Due to Trauma	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the relationship between trauma and cognitive functioning? 2. How is human learning affected by trauma? 3. What differences exist between a student who has experienced trauma and a student from a traditional environment?
3	Autonomic Nervous System	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the autonomic nervous system? 2. How can my behaviors as an educator influence and, in turn, possibly re-traumatize the trauma influenced student? 3. How does a teacher’s response to trauma-induced behaviors influence academic tasks? 4. What strategies can an educator use to address behaviors that are evident in students who have experienced a traumatic event?
4	Neuroscience of Trauma	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are behaviors associated with PTSD? 2. How do I recognize if a student exhibits characteristics of PTSD? 3. What is the fight or flight response? How is it triggered?
5	Social Emotional Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is social emotional learning, and how do I implement it into my daily classroom activities? 2. How does self-efficacy impact the trauma student’s motivation to learn? 3. How can use of social emotional learning build resilience?
6	Resilience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the seven C’s? 2. How do the seven C’s build student resilience?
7	Mindfulness: Emotions, Empathy, Gratitude, and Compassion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does self-awareness impact resilience? 2. How can teachers model healthy coping strategies by closely monitoring their own emotional state and building mindfulness, empathy, gratitude, and compassion? 3. How does mindfulness complement differentiated instruction?

Social emotional learning practices are incorporated into the curriculum in an effort to provide a supporting scaffold of resources that can be utilized in the classroom. These practices are research-based and build skills that all students will benefit from, but also skills aimed

specifically at trauma victims to help them begin building a foundation for successful life skills (NCTSN, 2015).

Design Heuristics

In addition to the strategies embedded in all seven PD Modules, the following educational design heuristics should be followed. These heuristics are intended to inform the specific design components contained herein. I have designed the heuristics to focus on the challenges teachers face when teaching students who have been affected by trauma, in an effort to provide an opportunity to build resilience in the face of challenges that the learners face.

The design heuristics contained in this framework are for solving the problems trauma brings to the classroom. The heuristics include three areas of concentration: designation of curriculum materials for teachers, explanation of the rationale behind the recommendations made to teachers, and exploration of ways in which teachers can use their newfound understanding in their teaching (Davis & Krajcik, 2005). Use of heuristics will promote learning among teachers and provide an opportunity for reflection.

Design Heuristic's for PCK for Professional Development Practices

Design Heuristics 1—Supporting Educators in Engaging Teachers with Specific Knowledge of How Trauma Presents Itself in Students' Behavior.

Resources provided to teachers will outline specific behaviors displayed by trauma-affected students and will include research-based data to support the claims. Curriculum

materials will help teachers understand these behaviors and the significant role they play in identifying academic strategies necessary to promote learning.

Design Heuristic 2—Supporting Educators in Using Instructional Representations

Educators will understand how to use charts, PowerPoint, and multimedia to promote the understanding of pedagogically appropriate practices in the classroom with trauma-affected students.

Design Heuristic 3—Supporting Educators in Anticipating, Understanding and Dealing with Teachers' Ideas about Trauma.

Curriculum materials should help educators recognize preconceived notions held by teachers concerning the academic behaviors displayed by trauma-affected students in the classroom. Additionally, the materials will support the claim that all students have an internal drive to succeed that will emerge if they feel safe and accepted.

Example: Many teachers believe that students who are not engaged and are unmotivated when learning academic content are lazy and intentionally defiant; however, research has shown that students have an internal drive to succeed in an atmosphere where they feel safe and accepted.

Design Heuristic 4 – Supporting Educators in Engaging teachers in Questions

Curriculum materials should provide driving questions for educators to use as a framework for capturing teacher's attention and guiding them through the curriculum materials.

Design Heuristic 5 – Supporting Educators in Engaging Teachers with Analyzing Data

Curriculum materials will provide educators with approaches to help teachers collect, compile, and understand data and observations of students who have experienced trauma. The curriculum materials should provide rationales for why specific behaviors are evident.

Design Heuristic 6 – Supporting Educators in Educating Teachers About Research-based Practices and Strategies for Academic Success of Trauma-affected Students

Curriculum materials should support teachers in the use of strategies that have been proven to academically engage students who have experienced trauma. These materials will include a justification of the benefits of each specific practice and how the teacher can accomplish the practice successfully.

Strategies

- Curriculum: Educational curriculum materials will include a blog for teachers to consult that provides realistic solutions to everyday classroom problems associated with trauma, allows them to collaborate as they share strategies that have worked, and provides a broader understanding of how trauma affects everyday learning throughout the school district.
- Meditation: Teachers will lead a meditation or visualization to allow deep thought, empathy, and images to emerge.
- Behind Your Back: Teachers will practice words of affirmation behind the back of one chosen teacher. This practice will build positive feelings of worth and value.
- Journal: A journal of each teacher's experiences will be built over the course of the seven month module plan. As each journal experience is completed and shared, the teacher will

receive a piece of clothing to complete the framework image of “Mindful Matt” until all seven colors and pieces of clothing are complete.

- Card-Sort: Teachers will receive behavior cards and intervention cards. They will have the opportunity to sort cards in small groups and have discussions about why they choose the particular intervention for the behavior.
- Brainstorming: As a group, teachers receiving professional development can brainstorm interventions for hypothetical situations.
- Art: Teachers will be given paper and crayons with which they will make a drawing after hearing a story that evokes happiness. They will repeat the exercise for a story of extreme sorrow. They will compare the two drawings in an effort to realize how stress leads to negative thinking.
- Video: Videos will be employed as an interactive way to deliver information in a real context.

Individual Differences

Teachers in every classroom have a wide range of abilities and background knowledge that they take into the classroom. Trauma is perceived in different ways because of these varied backgrounds and preconceptions influenced by a diversity of experiences. It will be important to implement professional development training keeping these individual differences and perceptions in mind and differentiating instruction accordingly. Some areas in which teacher backgrounds will vary:

- Culture. The culture of the professional development modules should provide an atmosphere of collegiality, collaboration, and cooperative learning.
- Gender. The gender of the educator most likely influences perspectives brought by teachers into discussions. The facilitator should make every effort to insure discussions are led without bias.
- Disability. Handicapped teachers will not have a difficulty participating in this PD training. Accommodations will be utilized if needed.
- Learning Style. All students and teachers learn differently. In an effort to engage all learners, a variety of styles of instruction will be used in the administration of the PD modules. There will be a mix of individual and group work. Teachers will be encouraged to sit in a different seating arrangement at each session. Writing, reflection, dialogue, and visual stimulation through videos will be incorporated into each module. Additionally, activities will involve participants learning through the use of all five primary senses.

Resource Materials

A variety of materials are required for participants attending this professional development training. They are as follows:

- Book. Each teacher will receive a copy of *Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-sensitive Classroom* to be read and discussed as a study group at the end of the seventh module.

- Consumables. Each teacher will need a 1” binder with notebook paper for reflective writing, post-it notes, pens, copy paper, chart paper, felt-tip markers, and other materials as needed for specific activities.
- Printed Text. Text passages for comprehension and study and poetry, including anthologies will be distributed to participants.
- Digital Equipment. A document camera, a computer with internet access, and a projector will be needed over the course of the PD.

Curriculum Adaptation

This professional development framework can be adapted by curriculum committees, coaches, and administrators, to fit the needs of teachers and students of the organizations they serve. Due to the varying needs of schools across the district, cultural, cognitive, and environmental factors of each individual school should be considered. This curriculum is intended as a basic model for teachers to follow, and it can be adapted to the developmental needs of students at each individual grade level.

Curriculum Evaluation

This curriculum will be evaluated using several testing instruments to measure the effectiveness of the program. They include:

1. A cumulative case study completed by each participant, including behavior patterns, strategies that helped the child focus, and strategies that did not work
2. Evaluation of the program’s effectiveness by participating teachers

3. Classroom observation by program coaches
4. A scenario-based summative assessment.
5. Comparison of test scores with those of the previous year over the seven-month implementation.
6. Comparison of referrals to those of the previous year over the seven-month implementation.

Appendix G contains the Professional Development Rubric that measured the effectiveness of the program in helping participating teachers understand trauma and its effects on learning. This rubric is used in conjunction with the previously mentioned evaluation (B) to adjust the program to teachers' needs and strengthen any identified points of weakness.

Methodology

Teacher education on the subject of trauma will be accomplished through a series of seven professional development training sessions that educate teachers about the effects of trauma on students and the classroom. Participants will be taught how to recognize behavioral patterns associated with trauma and how the brain of a trauma victim functions differently from a typical human brain. They will be given strategies for teaching trauma-affected students and for talking to parents or guardians of these students. Teachers' perceptions of students who exhibit behaviors associated with exposure to trauma will be qualitatively assessed, analyzed, and synthesized both at the beginning and the end of the professional development program.

Implementation

Approval of the program should be obtained by the district prior to the beginning of development or adaptation of the curriculum. The curriculum represents an informative base for help teachers develop an understanding of trauma and how affected children are academically challenged due to the limitations and overwhelming experiences they bring with them to school. This professional development tool falls into the category of character education and can be utilized by all personnel in the school to bring about a keen awareness of the resources available for restoring safety and self-efficacy to students.

Resolution

Classroom teachers have a unique opportunity to identify abused children and to start the healing process that will restore safety to their lives (Bear, Schnek, & Buckner, 1992, p. 42). Due to the unique relationship between students and elementary school teachers, the teacher might be one of the most trusted adults in the lives of their students. Teachers thus have a unique opportunity to begin the process of restoring safety to the life of a trauma-affected student (Bear, Schnek & Buckner, 1992, p. 42). A professional development framework can educate teachers, administrators, and support staff about the impact trauma plays in a person's life and introduce strategies that can be utilized by teachers to teach trauma-affected students in a way that also supports the rest of the classroom population. Interventions to improve child achievement should focus around helping the child feel safe in their environment, improving coping and problem solving techniques, facilitating opportunities for the child to express suppressed feelings, and recognizing perpetrator responsibility. Teachers can provide an environment that

engages the student with hands-on learning activities that encourage creativity and communication. This professional development model is vitally necessary; this necessity arises from the complex issues surrounding trauma and its effects on student learning outcomes. Many teachers have not been adequately prepared to deal with the complex social issues that strongly affected abused children (Bear, Schnek, & Buckner, 1992).

Information documenting the deleterious effects of trauma on student achievement is woven throughout the professional development. The seven modules that include implementation of strategies teachers will learn to increase student achievement and raise teacher awareness of trauma and associated behaviors.

CHAPTER 4 EVALUATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

This dissertation in practice presented a complex problem of practice occurring at Owl Elementary School (pseudonym). A large percentage of teachers and support staff have indicated in the pilot study, the desire to become educated on trauma indicators and strategies to build resilience in students suffering from maltreatment or trauma; therefore, the need for educator training/understanding of the academic, cognitive, and social-emotional needs of students who have experienced a traumatic event is evident. The need exists due to the lack of knowledge, interest and opportunity to partake in adequate training on the needs of the trauma-affected student. The professional development framework consisted of five distinct constructs in the Quint Cohesive Model of Professional Development for each of the seven modules with the framework. They include:

- I. The Module Topic – The introduction to the topic of the module and background as to its importance.
- II. Action Experience and Collaboration – The actual professional learning community or PLC session where collaboration on the module topic is experienced and facilitated by a teacher support colleague, administrative staff member in the area of curriculum, or guidance counselor.
- III. Implementation and Execution – Teachers implement strategies learned through the action experience and collaboration session back to the classroom. A teacher support colleague assists the teacher in the implementation and makes suggestions based on the needs of the students and classroom environment.

- IV. Professional Reflection – Teachers reflect on their classroom experience and reflect on what worked and didn't work when implementing the strategies. Student success is measured and teachers make personal connections to the classroom implementation process.
- V. Modification and Reimplementation – Teachers modify their lessons and classroom environment to accommodate their students particular needs based on their professional reflection for each of the seven modules within the framework.

The goal of the professional development framework was to increase teacher's content knowledge on the subject of trauma and its affects on classroom environments and academic achievement, along with identifying behavior patterns and implementing resilience strategies through a series of learning activities to habituate this content knowledge into all facets of their teaching.

The professional Development framework herein includes important components that have been identified as important to the teachers, administrators and support staff through the pilot student conducted at Owl Elementary School. The survey identified that teachers wanted to know the different types of trauma, the behavioral and academic indicators of trauma and the methods needed to specifically handle situations presented in the school setting.

Goals of the Model

Designing the professional development framework, *Cultivating Resilience Through the Arms of Academics*, was intended to create a solution to the complex problem of practice by providing teachers of Owl Elementary School: content knowledge, the ability to utilize the

content knowledge to foster an environment to effectuate opportunities to build student resilience and increase cognitive functioning for affected students. Through this seven-month professional development model, teachers and support are trained on the affects trauma has on academic achievement, social competencies, and the school environment.

It is within the deliberate design of the framework for teachers to recognize the unique behavior and academic patterns of students who have experienced a less than ordinary experience. Additionally, the design encompasses strategies that can be utilized in the classroom to build resilience in students who have experienced a traumatic event or maltreatment. Built into the professional development design, is a support system for teachers that will assist in the implementation of strategies, along with an online component for conversation with peers and a teacher support colleague, thus, improving student resilience, academic achievement, and the culture of the school.

Target Audience and Benefit of the Professional Development

The purpose of this dissertation in practice is to design a model of professional development as a solution to the complex problem of practice affecting Owl Elementary School. A contextual analysis of Owl Elementary revealed that 98% of teachers feel it is important to have a professional development program on the topic of resilience in educating students who have experienced a traumatic event. Additionally 93% of teachers indicated that training on the behavioral signs, brain function and resilience strategies targeting students who have experienced trauma or maltreatment would help them in their everyday work with students. Ultimately students, teachers, and all other stakeholders of the organization will benefit from the practices

utilized in the professional development framework when implemented in an analytic and systematic approach.

One of the only professional development opportunities offered at the school level is a trauma-informed training, provided by Sednet, a multiagency network for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities. This program has only been available to a small population of special education teachers, guidance counselors and school psychologists driven by the individual schools themselves. The district has only begun to scratch the surface of trauma as they offered their first professional development this year on growth mindset. Consequently, the goal of this dissertation in practice was to design a professional development opportunity to increase teachers' content knowledge in the area of trauma, and increase their ability to utilize strategies that will effectively address building resilience in the classroom and ultimately increasing student achievement and lower student referral rates. Trauma is not a topic most educators want to think about but it is prevalent in modern society. Based on the survey conducted at Owl Elementary School, 56% of teachers are not comfortable to identify students who are affected by trauma. Additionally, 97% of teachers believe that adults in the learning environment influence student responses. 98% have indicated that the culture of the classroom and school environment can foster a feeling that increases academic achievement. The lack of transparency that surrounds the prevalence of trauma in the lives of young children and models of student-teacher relationships that are coercive and disempowering, creates an intimidating school environment for children with trauma histories, as a result, the risk of traumatic reenactment is increased, as well as the potential for further traumatization within the service delivery system (Harris & Fallor, 2001).

In order for changes to take place it is necessary for the school culture of the school to change and become open to the idea of becoming a trauma-sensitive school. Teachers at Owl Elementary indicated at a rate of 90%, the belief that there is a need for the school to become trauma-sensitive. This information attained in the survey conducted at Owl Elementary indicates the desire to change the current practices. Changes in school culture are necessary, teacher buy in essential, if the trauma-sensitive approach is going to become successful (Craig, 2016, p. 100).

The pilot study informed the framework by indicating the need for knowledge in teaching the “whole child”, working with trauma affected students in the classroom setting, understanding cognitive function, realizing the different types of trauma, in a professional development training that is on-going with hands on group activities with real world application. Additionally, the teachers indicated the need for support in the classroom with realistic situations that are relevant to the identified problem. For this reason, included in the model is a resource teacher to help with the identification of indicators and strategies to engage the learner.

Level 3: Flexibility of This Professional Development Model

As stated in Chapter 1 of this dissertation of practice, emotional and behavioral conflict due to trauma, affect the process of student learning and achievement by altering brain function and impeding academic success. The remedy to the problem of practice is to arm teachers with valuable information on trauma affects and provide strategies that can be woven into everyday curriculum. All seven of the modules in the professional development framework are designed to meet these needs. Teachers will begin by learning about trauma and the emotional effects trauma has on children in an effort to build resilience while participating in the seven-month

professional development. A bottom up approach was utilized and the modules will follow a sequential order. Shown in Figure 1, a flow chart is used to demonstrate the sequence of each module as they build on knowledge from the previous module. In each module the topic is introduced, teachers participate in collaborative exercises, plan to utilize strategies in the classroom, use strategies in the classroom and then reflect on their experiences. If teachers experience difficulty using the skills, they have the option of communicating with a teacher support colleague or talk to peers on an inter-net blog designed for teacher support.

A representative from the local trauma center can be invited to one of the modules to speak as an informative resource that will fortify the information presented in the module. The benefits of including this outside resource would be to further inform teachers of the community need for school interventions and to provide community-based resources that can be passed on to families in crisis.

Cultivating Resilience Through the Arms of Academics Sequence Model:

As teachers experience each model they will be given a reflection piece to be turned in before the next module. This valuable information will be considered as modifications for the program are indicated and changes in the program are implemented.

Anticipated Changes in Performance

The goal of this dissertation in practice was to design a professional development model for teachers. The goal of the professional development model was to increase the ability of teachers at Owl Elementary School to recognize trauma indicators, learn strategies that will build

a classroom environment conducive for the academic achievement for all students, and ultimately build resilience in trauma-affected students.

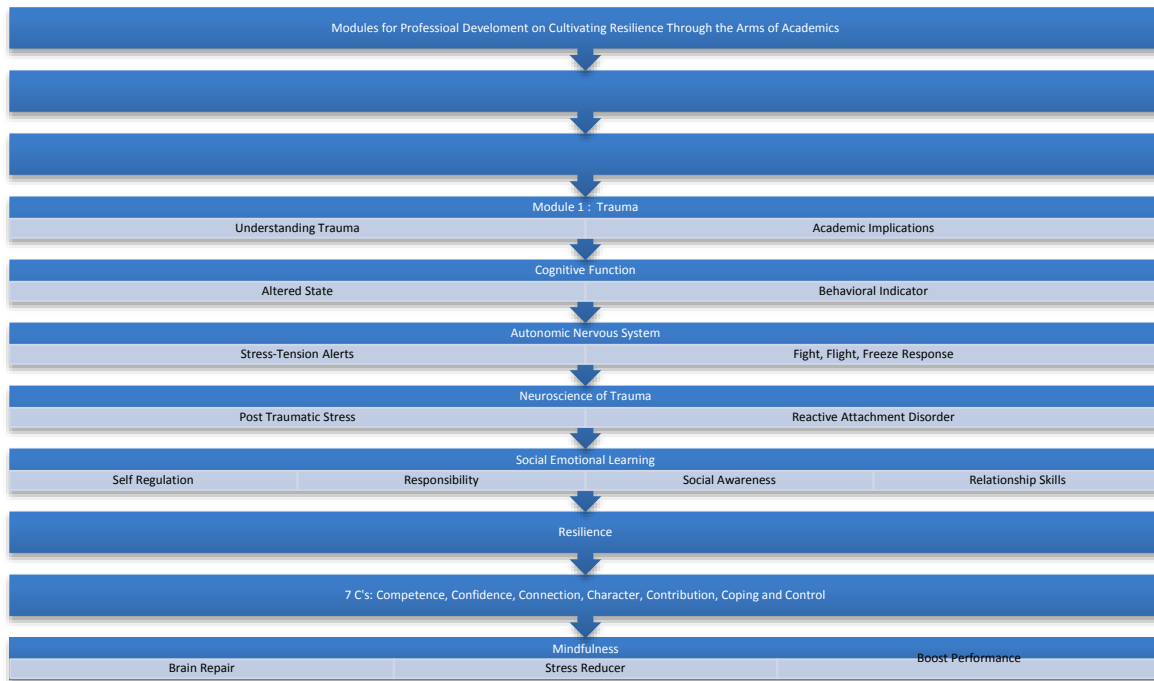


Figure 10. Module model.

Teachers like students need the ability to be guided in their learning, and need the ability to apply their knowledge over time to allow for new knowledge to become internalized as effective routines (Berliner, 2986; Clark & Peterson, 1984; Fuchs et al., 1994; Guskey, 2002; Norman, 2011). The anticipated changes in teacher performance will be reflected in the reduction of referral rates, increase in standardized testing scores, and increased growth rate over time in affected students. According to Craig (2016), trauma is not just a mental health problem; It is an educational problem that, left unaddressed, derails the academic achievement of thousands of children (p. 101). Therefore, the professional development is a necessary training

to allow for new knowledge to be presented to teachers, allows for coaching support, and gives teachers the ability to practice strategies that will provide an opportunity to build resilience in students.

The benefits of providing teachers with the resources available in this framework will be realized throughout the school community. The program is intended to increase school spirit, provide opportunities for collaboration, build a positive school culture where all stakeholders are accepted for their individual differences and feel valued as positive contributors.

When implemented, teachers will gain the knowledge necessary to identify when a child is displaying trauma behaviors and provide learning opportunities that will build successful learners. Educational strategies that build resilience for students affected by trauma while benefiting the classroom as a whole will be utilized in a way that is unique to each classroom environment. The interview conducted with the Flagler County representative indicated an understanding that social emotional competencies are important. Additionally, the interview indicated that trauma informed care is only shared with special education teachers. With the start of the 2014-2015 school year, the Flagler County school system converted to full inclusion with a response from the newest State guidelines outlined in Senate Bill 1108 that was passed and signed into law during the 2013 Legislative Session. This law now requires all teachers seeking a professional teaching certification the additional requirement of 20 in-service hours or one college credit in ESE instruction. Students identified as needing ESE or Students Exceptional Education services began being integrated into general education classrooms. This structural change in the state policy placed students who are more prone to trauma into the general education setting with all teachers identified as needing to have ESE training to become ESE

certified. Senate Bill 1108 was passed and signed into law during the 2013 Legislative Session. This law now requires all teachers seeking a professional teaching certification the additional requirement of 20 in-service hours or one college credit in ESE instruction. With the educational system following the path in the direction of full inclusion not only do exceptional education teachers need professional development in the area of trauma, with the indicators being that all teachers who will most possibly experience this student population. Therefore, the indicators are that the need for a professional development program for all stakeholders in the organization is essential especially with this most current event.

With the professional development framework actively in progress, the expected results the organization will experience to will begin to surface as teachers become comfortable with the implementation process in their classrooms. The pre-assessment measurement tool indicating teacher perceptions of trauma that will be administered at the beginning of the professional development will be revisited at the end of the modules in an effort for teachers to identify their growth throughout the process. Additionally, the activities within the classroom will concentrate on mindfulness practices with a focus o building self-efficacy in all students by providing an environment that is reflective while concentrating on the students' ability to self-monitor and self-regulate.

CHAPTER 5 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I began this course of study three years ago with the idea that I would utilize the information I have learned to change the current pedagogy used to teach students who have experienced trauma. It had been my professional and personal observation that there is a need to increase awareness of this problem that blights the educational system but generally does not get addressed due to its sensitive nature. A primary goal for me to bring to the attention of educators two important ideas: first, that trauma has a strong negative effect on academic achievement, and, second, that resilience can be realized in trauma-affected students if specific strategies are implemented in the classroom. However, I was uncertain about how to achieve this goal. It has been through the sequence of the doctoral program that I was able to identify the problem, research why children who have experienced trauma react with specific behaviors, and pinpoint research-based strategies that will foster resilience in the students served by the school system. I feel this program has helped me achieve this goal and has also empowered me to become the best educator I can be.

By broadening my knowledge of current educational practices, each course that I took on the degree path allowed me to narrow my focus in my quest to solve the problem of fostering resilience in trauma-affected students. I am better equipped to understand the culture of my school and its students. Additionally, as a researcher, I have learned how to interpret data, conduct both qualitative and quantitative research, and draw analytical conclusions, all in an effort to increase academic achievement for all students.

Implications

Owl Elementary School students need teachers to understand the implications of trauma and augment their individual teaching practices with the content they learn in the professional development framework contained in this dissertation in practice. Teachers need to use the knowledge they attain to develop and implement new teaching skills, strategies, and content knowledge in an effort to build resilience and ultimately increase academic and behavioral success.

Teachers will need to be given the opportunity to experience the teaching strategies and effectively implement them in everyday practice. This is why a teacher support colleague is a necessary resource and the modules are extended over a seven-month period. Teachers need to know how to put these techniques into practice until effectively mastered, with support along the way to monitor this mastery (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Guskey, 2002). Reconvening monthly gives teachers the time and opportunity to implement the knowledge they learn, reflect on how it is working, and come back together to discuss successes, problems, and concerns.

Previously utilized professional development at Owl Elementary School has primarily been focused on interventions and methods that are scripted. Teachers have not had an opportunity to explore the implications of teaching trauma-affected students due to the lack of professional development training in this area. This professional development framework offers teachers the opportunity to receive feedback and reflect on the dynamics specific to their classroom, simultaneously providing students the opportunity to grow academically and behaviorally.

Poor academic performance is not a new issue for schools; however, it is a currently growing problem that needs to be addressed. In the Compton Unified school district, students are currently involved in a class-action lawsuit against the district for failing to address the negative impact on their ability to learn caused by the trauma they have endured. The lawsuit is the first of its kind in the nation and identifies the district as being liable for “failing to address their problems and provide an appropriate education” and “failing to address the impact of trauma on student learning,” according to Watanabe (2016) in the *Los Angeles Times*. Thus, the issue of identifying complex trauma in the classroom as a disability under federal law will be explored and ruled on in the near future. If the lawsuit is successful on all points, teachers and staff will have to be trained to recognize trauma, schools will have to provide the support of mental health professionals to help students cope with the trauma, and behavioral discipline will transform from punitive to rehabilitative. The result of this lawsuit will set a precedent that will be recognized nationwide. The implication for the field of education is that trauma and its effects will receive focus as never before, with acknowledgement of the need for professional development frameworks such as the one developed herein.

Professional development requires time and resources; this particular framework has involves two-hour instructional modules complemented by three additional hours of work and study by the teacher every month for seven months, with each new module building on the previous one. Results of the implementation will not be realized immediately, but rather need to be followed and measured in future years. It is recommended that the framework be tried first at a pilot school, and after two years of assessment, it might be implemented district-wide.

Recommendations

This professional development framework is heavily based on theory and is developed to solve a real-world problem. Due to cultural and demographic differences in individual schools, a more in-depth analysis of the organization should be made when implementing this professional development. Considerations of the individual needs of teachers and students should be examined along with organizational limitations such as the use of contracted time needed to implement the framework.

Teacher buy-in is an important part of any successful professional development opportunity. Change can be difficult due to the unknown outcomes and the open-mindedness necessary for change to occur. Change is always met with resistance even when it brings about improvement (Craig, 2016, p. 104). This is why it is important to begin with a survey indicating teacher interest in the topic of building student resilience in the trauma-affected student population. Teachers who are “on the fence” about trauma-sensitive schools often do not feel equipped to handle the behavioral needs of children with histories of early adversity (Craig, 2016, p. 105). It is the intent of this professional development to empower these teachers by giving them the tools needed to effectively teach all children and to realize that the children with documented trauma histories will build resilience and ultimately experience academic achievement.

In order to best determine the effectiveness of this particular professional development framework, other models of professional development on the topic of building resilience to trauma-affected students would need to be conducted and the models compared.

This professional development framework was designed to be effective and feasible without requiring additional resources, staffing, or time beyond normal allocations for professional development. It is recommended that this program be facilitated by a teacher support colleague (teacher with advanced knowledge of trauma), an administrator, or a guidance counselor. The cost should be minimal, allowing for the program to be easily utilized and adapted to meet the needs of individual organizations. The school guidance counselor can act as a community liaison, establishing and maintaining connections with community programs that can help families in need during a crisis. These resources should be shared with teachers to further support the student by giving the families in crisis valuable information they can utilize to relieve the immediate pressure of trauma. Developing a positive school climate is necessary and can be achieved by parents, teachers, administration, and support staff working together to facilitate social and recreational activities as well as promoting school spirit.

The future of this professional development framework could be extended to higher-level education where pre service teachers are trained with the same content that is included in the current modules. The modules would be modified to accommodate a syllabus that addresses course-learning objectives and broken down into smaller class sessions. The undergraduate population of the university would be the target participants and the focus of the course would be to educate the new teaching community on the implications of trauma as it may appear in their future students. Training pre-service teachers on the academic reality trauma plays in the classroom will effectively prepare them for the challenges they may face on a day-to-day basis. Additionally, it will allow for a greater knowledge base of strategies to be utilized on a daily basis that will help close the achievement gap in the classroom.

Currently, there is a lack of training for pre-service teachers on trauma informed care and resilience building techniques. Infusing a class based on this professional development framework into the required class requirements at the higher education level will inform future teachers on resilience building techniques and ultimately increase student achievement as well as avoiding burn out of beginner teachers.

An additional component to the professional development framework can be a board game added into the modules. The game will be designed to mimic the Mindful Matt model and will include real-world student behavior scenarios. Teachers will have the opportunity to match a teaching strategy to the behaviors in order to move their pawn to the next space. This game will provide reinforcement of the modules while building familiarity of the subject matter and collaboration with peers during the professional development sessions.

It will be necessary for teachers, support staff, and administration to meet by grade level to discuss the needs of the school often during the first year of implementation. Classroom observations will be necessary to provide teachers with constructive feedback. These observations should be made by the facilitator of the professional development program and are to assist teachers in making the program successful.

There should be a school-wide effort to hold students to high expectations for achievement and behavior, positive behavioral supports in place, and clear rules and boundaries that are consistent throughout the school. Setting goals and establishing a plan to attain these goals allows students the opportunity to become successful and build self-efficacy and problem solving skills. Activities that foster school identity help students take pride in their school and build gratitude and appreciation for the school experience. There should be a school-wide effort

to embrace students for their individual differences with a sense of acceptance, belonging, and appreciation. Opportunities for creative expression should be presented in an approach that will foster freedom of expression.

A post-training survey should be utilized to receive teacher feedback at the end of each module, with a final survey on the effectiveness of the program in individual classrooms. These data should be utilized to make adjustments to the curriculum for the years to come.

Understanding how trauma impedes academic success and knowing how to adjust teaching techniques to accommodate the individual needs of students is the focal point of this professional development program. The knowledge gained should be utilized to increase resilience in students affected by maltreatment or trauma. Once resilience is gained, the freedom to learn will be embraced through The Arms of Academics.

APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138
To: Ellen Ioannides Sperber:
Date: February 26, 2016

Dear Researcher:

On 02/26/2016, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination
Project Title: PROMOTING RECOVERY IN TRAUMA AFFECTED
CHILDREN: DEVELOPING A SCHOOL-BASED
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR
TEACHER AWARENESS & INTERVENTION
Investigator: Ellen Ioannides Sperber
IRB Number: SBE-16-12066
Funding Agency:
Grant Title:
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Muratori".

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 02/26/2016 10:53:16 AM EST

IRB Manager

APPENDIX B
SURVEY

Survey

- (1) What is your role at Old Kings Elementary School?
 - (a) Teacher
 - (b) Administrator
 - (c) Guidance counselor
 - (d) Support Staff

- (2) Number of years in your role?
 - (a) 1-5
 - (b) 6-9
 - (c) 10-15
 - (d) 16-25

- (3) What grades do you teach?
 - (a) Pre-K
 - (a) K-2
 - (b) 3-5
 - (c) 6
 - (d) All grades

- (4) What is your gender?
 - (a) Male
 - (b) Female

- (5) What is your race/culture?
 - (a) White
 - (b) Hispanic or Latino
 - (c) Black or African American
 - (d) Asian/Pacific Islander
 - (e) Other

- (6) It is important to have a professional development program on the topic of “*resilience in educating students who have experienced a traumatic event*”.
 - (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree

- (d) Strongly disagree
- (7) Children who are exposed to a traumatic event are academically affected.
- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
- (8) All students who look disinterested in class are bored with the material you are presenting.
- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
- (9) You are made aware of students in your classroom who are involved in a situation when they have experienced a traumatic event.
- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
 - (e) Not applicable
- (10) You feel supported by your administration and colleagues when dealing with situations that arise from children who have experienced trauma.
- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
- (11) Participating in a professional development training to educate you on the behavioral signs, brain function and resilience strategies that target students who have experienced trauma or maltreatment will help you in your everyday work with students.
- (a) Strongly agree

- (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
- (12) There is a correlation between trauma victims and low achievement scores.
- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
- (13) It is possible for students who have witnessed or have been part of a traumatic event to have biological stress systems that have been altered (physical alterations).
- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
- (14) Behaviors exhibited by adults in the learning environment influence student responses.
- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
- (15) The culture of the classroom and school environment can foster a feeling that increases academic achievement.
- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
- (16) There have been professional development opportunities that have increased your awareness of student needs and in-turn helped you infuse strategies in your instruction or daily work routines that have proven to be successful when working with trauma victims.

- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
- (17) I feel comfortable to provide important information to parents about outside support services.
- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
- (18) Students who are on behavior plans can be given strategies to successfully manage their behavior in the school environment.
- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
- (19) The classroom environment influences how students build resiliency from trauma.
- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
- (20) Students who have experienced trauma benefit academically from recess.
- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree

- (21) I can comfortably identify students who are affected by trauma.
- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
- (22) There is an opportunity for professional development on the topic of building resilience in students who have experienced a traumatic event.
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
- If no, what training do you think would be required? (Free response)
- (23) What are your professional development needs that you feel will help you to increase your ability and awareness to work with students who have experienced trauma?
(Free response)
- (24) What would make professional Development Opportunities more engaging and meaningful to you? (Free response)
- (25) I would benefit from a Professional Development opportunity with a format over a 10-month period with one-hour sessions each.
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
- (26) I would utilize an online component tied to the PD as a support for classroom implementation.
- (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree

(27) Old Kings Elementary School should become a trauma sensitive school.

- (a) Strongly agree
- (b) Agree
- (c) Disagree
- (d) Strongly disagree

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW FRAMEWORKS

Interview Framework: Flagler County Schools		
Demographics	Please tell me a little about your current position and past experiences in education.	<p>How long have you been teaching? What grade levels? Coaching? Administration?</p> <p>My name is Lynn White and I am in my 28th year in education. I have been in administration for the past 6 years. I began my teaching career as an elementary teacher for 15 years, then became a high schoolteacher for 2 years, and then moved on to becoming a reading coach. I was then hired by the Flagler County School district as a secondary reading specialist, and then became a high school principle. I am now the Executive Director of Community and School Engagement.</p>
Goals	Please share the district's goals for the professional learning communities.	<p>What are the professional learning goals for teachers?</p> <p>The professional learning goal for teachers is determined by individual goals teachers set for themselves once per year. This drives the need for specific Professional Development and is determined by each individual school.</p>

		<p>What goals do you expect teachers to meet after each PLC?</p> <p>This is Individual to each school and should include the student support colleague to determine the identified needs of each school site.</p>
History	<p>Can you provide/share a general timeline of the district's goals and outcomes for professional development of the districts teachers?</p>	<p>Types of professional learning for teachers. Have you ever offered a professional development opportunity for teachers to understand the affects of trauma on student achievement?</p> <p>Not a county mandated PD. Trauma Informed Care is offered to ESE teachers, school deans, and paraprofessionals and is mostly school driven based on individual school data.</p>
Current	<p>How do you ensure professional growth of Flagler County teachers? How do you ensure growth in current trends and research in education?</p>	<p>Do you currently offer any professional development opportunities targeting improvement on student behavior?</p> <p>The two PD's offered are on the subject of Bullying & trauma informed care. It is a goal to include Social Emotional Learning in this type of training. Our district has increased our staff to one</p>

		<p>psychologist per school and one social worker per school to address the needs of students.</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning has been adopted by many schools to improve resilience in students and has increased academic achievement. Are you familiar with SEL and its benefits to the children of Flagler County?</p> <p>Yes, I am familiar and our profession benefits from SEL but there needs to be a balance of SEL and curriculum based instruction in order for it to work.</p> <p>Do you currently offer SEL training to your employees?</p> <p>Not specific SEL training. PD just for behavior interventions for students that are in RTI tiers 2 & 3.</p>
<p>Perspectives</p>	<p>How do you feel teachers respond to current professional development sessions that are provided?</p>	<p>How do you feel teachers would respond to a professional development on the effects of trauma on student achievement? Strategies to build resilience in students who have experienced a traumatic event?</p>

		<p>I believe most teachers are natural learners, so it depends on the quality of the PD not necessarily the topic. Best professional development has a coaching piece. Quality and not the topic... anything that is truly research based with application is worth implementing.</p>
Needs	<p>What needs do you have for the professional growth of teachers?</p>	<p>Who provides input for the professional growth of teachers? School administrators? All stakeholders have the input on this. Content area specialists? What are the needs specific to? (Content areas, behavior, and best practices?)</p> <p>Data, stakeholders for feedback and Teacher Support Colleagues . When planning professional development it</p>
Additional Information	<p>Is there anything else you would like to share?</p>	<p>should be differentiated and based on the needs of individuals, personalized and fluid; constantly evolving. Continual feedback is necessary due to the constant cultural changes.</p>

Interview Framework: Family Life Center		
Demographics	<p>Please tell me a little about your current position and past experiences in working with children with adverse childhood experiences.</p>	<p>How long have you been working with trauma victims?</p> <p>My name is Pat Smith, Executive Director of the Family Life Center. I am a mother of four and have a strong belief in educating our community about healthy relationships. My passion for working with hurting families, particularly children, comes from a history of personal experiences. I have been working with trauma victims for nearly 9 years.</p>
Goals	<p>Please share the centers goals for providing children with resilience opportunities.</p> <p>Solicit a diverse group of students to function as a focus group to provide input to FLC on attitudes and service needs.</p> <p>Explore involvement of middle school students.</p> <p>Explore potential involvement with Flagler County school system to influence curriculum content regarding DV and SV</p>	<p>What are the professional goals for providing affected children with educational support?</p> <p>We currently employ a part time youth advocate to provide children with an opportunity to discuss their feelings & thoughts on their current situation in a confidential setting. Our goal is to make this position full time.</p> <p>FLC will recognize and respond to the special needs of children who witness domestic violence in any effort to reduce or prevent cycles of abuse.</p> <p>Youth Participants will develop safety plans and acquire tools to develop safety plans on their own.</p> <p>Youth are encouraged to learn about dating violence, warning signs, bystander role and safety planning.</p>
History	<p>Can you provide/share a general timeline of the centers goals and outcomes for future projects as it relates to school aged clients?</p> <p>Beginning discussion 9/2016</p>	<p>Do you offer tutoring for school aged children who live at the shelter? What community support do you feel would benefit the academic achievement of your clients?</p> <p>Yes, we partner with the Flagler County School Board to provide tutoring.</p>

Current	How do you ensure emotional and educational growth of children who are affected by trauma? Professional growth of Flagler County teachers? How do you ensure growth in current trends and research in education?	Do you currently offer any emotional services targeting improvement on student behavior? On academic growth? We currently sub-contract with a mental health professional that provides onsite counseling to children and their non-offending parent. Staff assists children in the shelter with school homework, school projects and tasks.
Perspectives	How do you feel teachers respond to the needs of children who are affected by trauma? This is dependent on the instructor. Some are receptive and helpful while others are inexperienced. Inconsistent would be the word I would use to describe this.	How do teachers impact the emotional recovery of students who have experienced a traumatic event? Teachers have a very special place in the hearts of the children they interact with. When children experience trauma, teachers can help mitigate the trauma with a compassionate, sensitive and caring response. Teachers who respond in this manner help students with the healing process.

Needs	<p>What needs do you have for the Family Life Center?</p> <p>FLC needs additional funding to help our part-time youth advocate become a full-time staffer.</p> <p>On-site childcare would be helpful.</p> <p>Volunteers who are willing to participate in the training and share their time with children directly in the shelter.</p>	<p>Are your advocates trained to give educational support to school-aged children at the center?</p> <p>Not specifically educational support, they are trained to work with children who have sustained trauma.</p> <p>What would you like to see implemented into the Flagler County School system that will increase resilience in students affected by maltreatment?</p> <p>Allowing FLC to provide education to educators on the dynamics of domestic violence and sexual assault; this will assist them in garnering strategies for working with families in trauma.</p> <p>Enabling the Family Life Center to engage youth in conversations about healthy relationships, dating violence and sexual assault during the school day.</p> <p>Allowing FLC to distribute literature to all students about the definition of dating violence, domestic violence and rape.</p>
Additional Information	<p>Is there anything else you would like to share that would inform a Professional Development Framework for teachers who are educating students who have experienced a traumatic event or series of events?</p>	<p>Do you feel it would be helpful to have a representative from your agency or a similar agency present at a PLC? Yes</p> <p>If so, what type of information do you feel would be most beneficial for your organization to present?</p> <p>Current data and trends relating to domestic violence and sexual assault in Flagler County.</p>

APPENDIX D
MISCONCEPTIONS OF TRAUMA

Misconceptions of Trauma

(This pre-assessment will be administered by an on-line survey instrument. Teachers will be sent the URL and asked to complete the survey prior to the first PD Module for discussion).

- 1. A child is tapping their pencil on their desk causing a disruption. What is the cause of the event?**
 - A. The student is anxious and lacks focus.
 - B. The student is intentionally trying to receive attention.
 - C. The student is trying to aggravate the teacher.
 - D. The child is depressed.

- 2. A child in your class repeatedly forgets to bring his/her ID to school. They ...**
 - A. are being intentionally defiant.
 - B. honestly forgetful.
 - C. do not think its cool to wear to school.
 - D. misplaced it.

- 3. A child stares out the window during the lesson. He/she is ...**
 - A. Bored.
 - B. Unmotivated because they don't care about the lesson.
 - C. Disassociating.
 - D. Counting down the minutes until school is over.

- 4. A child in your classroom comes to school exhausted everyday. It is assumed that they...**
 - A. are up all night playing video games.
 - B. Does not have adequate parental supervision.
 - C. Unable to sleep due to nightmares.
 - D. Like to read all night.

- 5. A student in your class jumps when they hear a louder than normal sound. It is assumed that they...**
- A. Weren't paying attention and became startled.
 - B. Is easily startled due to a previous event.
 - C. Has hearing sensitivity.
- 6. A child enters your classroom and their behavior is that of a child several years younger. It is assumed that....**
- A. they are mimicking the behavior of a younger sibling.
 - B. they have regressed due to a traumatic event.
 - C. they are immature.
 - D. they are extremely spoiled.
- 7. A student in your classroom is tardy often. It is assumed that...**
- A. the child stays up all night and oversleeps.
 - B. The child's parents are not responsible enough to get them to school on time.
 - C. They lack motivation because every task seems like climbing a mountain.
 - D. They do not care about school.
- 8. A student in your classroom has excessive absences. This is caused by...**
- A. wanting to stay home and watch television.
 - B. They are often truly sick due to a low immune system.
 - C. The parents keep them home to do chores.
 - D. They pretend to be sick for attention.
- 9. A child has extreme emotional responses to an event. They become angry and aggressive. It is assumed that they are....**
- A. Acting out a traumatic event.
 - B. From a bad home.
 - C. Messed up.
 - D. Unfit for your classroom.

10. A child in your classroom acts out by singing the Star Spangled Banner while you are teaching a lesson. You become frustrated and....

- A. send them to the principal because of the disruption.
- B. Write them a referral for being disrespectful.
- C. Isolate them from the rest of the class so the disruption is removed.
- D. Have a conversation with them about how they are feeling.

11. A child does not hand in his homework. You ...

- A. assume he is being defiant and write a note home about the lack of participation.
- B. Give him the opportunity to complete it at school.
- C. Give them a zero and call it a day.
- D. Reprimand them and keep them from playing at recess.

12. A child stays to themselves in isolation. They do not play with others and do not make relationships with other students. It is assumed the student is...

- A. different and you leave them alone.
- B. Is self-conscious about themselves.
- C. Is untrusting due to a previous event.
- D. Is just a loner.

1. Teachers will reflect on a particular situation remembering when they had a student in their class (past or current) that they suspected had experienced a traumatic event or series of events. Teachers will construct a reflection on the behaviors they observed and strategies they used to instruct the student.
2. Case study of a particular student the teacher currently has or a pseudonym scenario.

APPENDIX E
FLORIDA DISTRICT STANDARDS

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Florida District Level Standards:

1.2.3. Learning Strategies: Professional learning uses strategies aligned with the intended goals and objectives; applies knowledge of human learning and change; and includes modeling of research- and/or evidence-based instruction, practice, and classroom-based feedback.

1.2.1 Learning Communities: The district supports and encourages professional learning in collaborative teams of educators.

1.2.2 Content Focused: Professional learning focuses primarily on developing content knowledge and content-specific research and/or evidence-based instructional strategies and interventions in the content areas specified and aligned with district and state initiatives.

3.2.8 District Support: The district recognizes and supports professional learning as a key strategy for improving teaching quality and student learning.

3.3.1 Implementation of Learning: The district provides a follow-up support system to facilitate implementation of professional learning in the workplace.

Established Goals (G):

1. Improve the ability of teachers understanding of trauma and how it impedes learning outcomes.
2. Improve the ability to analyze and interpret student performance data, and implement intervention strategies to differentiate instruction.
3. Increase knowledge and skills of students who have been or are currently affected by a traumatic event.
4. Introduce SEL and integrate initiatives from the Greater Good Science Center.

The Professional Development Framework will include:

- a. Develop standards-based and technology based curriculum.
- b. Design a curriculum that includes databased decision-making.
- c. Peer coaching/observation.
- d. Self-assessment using journals or learning logs.
- e. Training with individual peer groups (PLC).
- f. Personal Learning Network (PLN).
- g. Communities of Practice (COP).
- h. Action research project.

- i. Collaboration.
- j. Design Heuristics.
- k. Improve culture among teachers by building relationships.
- l. Differentiated instructional practices to meet the needs of different types of learners.

Understandings: (U)

Teachers will understand that...

- Student cognitive and developmental processes are influenced by biological, cultural and social factors that are deviated by trauma.
- Human developmental processes adapt to cultural and environmental influences.
- A student's internal motivation (self efficacy) to reach a higher understanding of the student's ability to self-motivate is an important part of student achievement.
- A child who has experienced trauma has biological stressors that alter brain function.
- Recognize the characteristics of a student who has been affected by trauma.
- Identifying developmental differences in student learning when displaying behaviors associated with trauma.
- Differentiating instruction is

Essential Questions: (Q)

- (1) What is the relationship between trauma and cognitive functioning?
- (2) How is human learning affected by trauma?
- (3) How can I identify a student who is impacted by an environmental, cultural or social influence where trauma is a variable?
- (4) What differences exist between a student who has experienced trauma and a student from a traditional environment?
- (5) How does self-efficacy impact the TS motivation to learn?
- (6) How can an educator differentiate instruction to accommodate the needs of the TS?
- (7) Are behaviors associated with PTSD similar as behaviors associated with ADHD?
- (8) How does Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs influence how we educate the TS?
- (9) How do my behaviors as an educator influence and in-turn, re-traumatize the TS?
- (10) How do situations in a child's life lead to drastic emotional responses?
- (11) How does a teacher's response to trauma-induced behaviors influence academic tasks?
- (12) What is the definition of trauma?

<p>necessary to accommodate the needs of the affected student.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Classroom environments are an important in making students feel comfortable and safe.➤ Behaviors associated with PTSD.➤ Recognize that teaching the “whole child” is an effective strategy to accomplish educational stability.➤ Teacher behaviors can influence and trigger hyper-arousal of effected students and unintentionally re-traumatizes the student.➤ Situations in a child’s life can lead to traumatic emotional responses.➤ Teacher’s response to trauma induced behaviors in-turn influence the student’s response to academic tasks.➤ Trauma is defined as a deeply distressing or disturbing experience (NCTSN, 2008).➤ 1 out of 4 school-aged children have been exposed to a traumatic event that can affect academic learning or behavior (NCTSN, 2008).	
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<p><i>Teachers will know... (K)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to identify student behavior that is reflective of a traumatic event. 2. Have awareness that trauma alters brain function. 3. How to respond to the unique needs of students affected by trauma. 	<p><i>Teachers will be able to... (S)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers will be able to demonstrate the ability to recognize the needs of the “whole child”. 2. Teachers will compare and contrast behaviors associated with PTSD and ADHD. 3. Teachers will differentiate instruction to accommodate the needs of students affected by trauma. 4. Teachers will demonstrate the ability to utilize SEL strategies within the classroom curriculum. 5. Teachers will have the ability to distinguish behaviors and characteristics of students effected by trauma. 6. Teachers will be aware and understand the importance of procedures to provide a safe and comfortable learning environment. 7. Teachers will evaluate the self-efficacy of an effected student to determine their ability to self-motivate. 8. Teachers will identify life situations that can induce trauma in students. 9. Teachers will summarize strategies that can be utilized/accomplished at school to promote the success of the trauma-induced student. 10. Teachers will develop appropriate educational and behavioral goals for the trauma student. 11. Teachers will implement interventions using educational strategies to achieve specific educational and behavioral goals. 12. Teachers will demonstrate the ability to communicate in an appropriate and effective manner. 13. Teachers will identify opportunities
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	<p>to provide positive reinforcement to build self-efficacy.</p> <p>14. Teachers will summarize strategies that can be used to influence independent thinking.</p> <p>15. Teachers will demonstrate the ability to provide a school environment where trauma students feel and become an integral part of the school population.</p> <p>16. Teachers will demonstrate interpersonal neuro-biology strategies to learn, retain, and communicate effectively (RIGHT BRAIN CONVERSATION).</p> <p>17. Teachers will demonstrate the ability to utilize effective listening skills.</p>
<p>Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence</p>	
<p>Performance Tasks: (T)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blog 2. Journal Reflections 3. Pre-Assessment – Misconceptions of Trauma 4. Post-Assessment 5. Observation by Coach 	<p>Other Evidence: (OE)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning outcomes of students. 2. Improved school culture. 3. Attitude of Teachers. 4. Interviews.

APPENDIX F
PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING PLANNING FORM

Template with Design Questions for Teachers (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006)

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Florida District Level Standards:

1.2.3. Learning Strategies: Professional learning uses strategies aligned with the intended goals and objectives; applies knowledge of human learning and change; and includes modeling of research- and/or evidence-based instruction, practice, and classroom-based feedback.

1.2.3 Learning Communities: The district supports and encourages professional learning in collaborative teams of educators.

1.2.4 Content Focused: Professional learning focuses primarily on developing content knowledge and content-specific research and/or evidence-based instructional strategies and interventions in the content areas specified and aligned with district and state initiatives.

3.2.8 District Support: The district recognizes and supports professional learning as a key strategy for improving teaching quality and student learning.

3.3.1 Implementation of Learning: The district provides a follow-up support system to facilitate implementation of professional learning in the workplace.

Established Goals (G):

5. Improve the ability of teachers to understand trauma and how it impedes learning outcomes.
6. Improve the ability of teachers to analyze and interpret student performance data and implement intervention strategies to adapt instruction.
7. Increase knowledge and skills of students who have been, or are currently, affected by a traumatic event.
8. Introduce SEL and integrate initiatives from the Greater Good Science Center.

The Professional Development Framework will include:

- m. Developing standards-based and technology-based curriculum.
- n. Designing a curriculum that includes data-based decision-making.
- o. Peer coaching/observation.
- p. Self-assessment using journals or learning logs.
- q. Training with individual peer groups (PLC).
- r. Personal Learning Network (PLN).
- s. Communities of Practice (COP).

- t. Action research project.
- u. Collaboration.
- v. Design Heuristics.
- w. Improving culture among teachers by building relationships.
- x. Differentiated instructional practices to meet the needs of different types of learners.

Understandings: (U)

Teachers will understand ...

- That student cognitive and developmental processes are influenced by biological, cultural, and social factors that are deviated by trauma.
- That human developmental processes adapt to cultural and environmental influences.
- That a student’s internal motivation (self- efficacy) to reach a higher understanding of the student’s ability to self-motivate is an important part of student achievement.
- That a child who has experienced trauma has biological stressors that alter brain function.
- The characteristics of a student who has been affected by trauma.
- How to identify developmental differences in student learning when students display behaviors associated with trauma.
- That adapting instruction is necessary to accommodate the needs of the

Essential Questions: (Q)

- (10) What is the relationship between trauma and cognitive functioning?
- (11) How is human learning affected by trauma?
- (12) How can I identify a student who is impacted by an environmental, cultural, or social influence where trauma is a factor?
- (13) What differences exist between a student who has experienced trauma and a student from a less traumatic environment?
- (14) How does self-efficacy impact the trauma-affected student’s motivation to learn?
- (15) How can an educator adapt instruction to accommodate the needs of the trauma-affected student?
- (16) Are behaviors associated with PTSD similar as behaviors associated with ADHD?
- (17) How does Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs influence how we educate the trauma-affected student?
- (18) How can the behaviors of an educator influence and, in turn,

<p>affected student.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ That classroom environments are important in making students feel comfortable and safe. ➤ Behaviors associated with PTSD. ➤ That teaching the “whole child” is an effective strategy to accomplish educational stability. ➤ That teachers’ behaviors can influence and trigger hyper-arousal of affected students and unintentionally re-traumatize the student. ➤ That situations in a child’s life can lead to traumatic emotional responses. ➤ That teacher’s response to trauma induced behaviors in-turn influence the student’s response to academic tasks. ➤ That trauma is defined as a deeply distressing or disturbing experience (NCTSN, 2008). ➤ That 1 out of 4 school-aged children have been exposed to a traumatic event that can affect academic learning or behavior (NCTSN, 2008). 	<p>potentially retraumatize the trauma-affected student?</p> <p>(10) How do situations in a child’s life lead to drastic emotional responses?</p> <p>(11) How does a teacher’s response to trauma-induced behaviors influence academic tasks?</p> <p>(12) What is the definition of trauma?</p>
<p><i>Teachers will know... (K)</i></p> <p>4. How to identify student behavior that is reflective of a traumatic event.</p>	<p><i>Teachers will be able to... (S)</i></p> <p>18. Demonstrate the ability to recognize the needs of the “whole child”.</p>

<p>5. That trauma alters brain function.</p> <p>6. How to respond to the unique needs of students affected by trauma.</p>	<p>19. Compare and contrast behaviors associated with PTSD and ADHD.</p> <p>20. Adapt their instruction to accommodate the needs of students affected by trauma.</p> <p>21. Demonstrate the ability to utilize SEL strategies within the classroom curriculum.</p> <p>22. Distinguish behaviors and characteristics of students affected by trauma.</p> <p>23. Have awareness and understanding of the importance of providing a safe and comfortable learning environment.</p> <p>24. Evaluate the self-efficacy of an affected student to determine their ability to self-motivate.</p> <p>25. Identify life situations that can induce trauma in students.</p> <p>26. Summarize strategies that can be utilized at school to promote the success of the trauma-affected student.</p> <p>27. Develop appropriate educational and behavioral goals for the trauma student.</p> <p>28. Implement interventions using educational strategies to achieve specific educational and behavioral goals.</p>
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	<p>29. Demonstrate the ability to communicate in an appropriate and effective manner.</p> <p>30. Identify opportunities to provide positive reinforcement to help students build self-efficacy.</p> <p>31. Summarize strategies that can be used to entice independent thinking.</p> <p>32. Provide a school environment where trauma-affected students feel that they are an integral part of the school population.</p> <p>33. Demonstrate interpersonal strategies based on neurobiology to learn, retain, and communicate effectively.</p> <p>34. Demonstrate the ability to utilize effective listening skills.</p>
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Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks: (T)

- 6. Blog
- 7. Journal Reflections
- 8. Pre-Assessment – Misconceptions of Trauma
- 9. Post-Assessment
- 10. Observation by Coach

Other Evidence: (OE)

- 5. Learning outcomes of students.
- 6. Improved school culture.
- 7. Attitude of Teachers.
- 8. Interviews.

APPENDIX G
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RUBRIC

When reviewing the Professional Development Framework for **Cultivating Resilience Through the Arms of Academics**, this Self-Assessment Rubric is used to ensure alignment to the Florida PD Standards. Schools can receive direct support from Administration & Coaches.

PD Plan Component	Evident	Emerging	Not apparent
Professional Development Team	Team members are identified and represent the faculty. In-service Facilitator as well as experts and teacher leaders are included on the team.	A PD team is identified but does not include key faculty.	There is no PD Team identified.
Needs Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student • Staff 	Student needs as determined by classroom level disaggregated data, teacher needs from Professional Growth Plans (PGP), and SIP were used to determine focus	The school uses a needs assessment instrument but does not use classroom level disaggregated student data or teacher PGPs to determine focus.	Needs assessments are conducted informally and/or not used to determine focus. The program is not aligned to SIP.
Objectives	Program objectives are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely. PD Plan objectives have a focus based on the needs data.	Objectives included but not expressed in SMART terms. (Specific & Measurable).	There is no clear PD objective and/or a method(s) to verify mastery.
Evaluation Strategies	Timely Program includes method(s) to verify 80% mastery. Planning, Formative and summative data collection tools are deployed throughout the PD program. Teachers conduct Action Research to evaluate effectiveness of newly learned practices.	Evaluation tools are used only at the end of training (80% mastery) and when coaching takes place.	The PD Plan does not include any type of evaluation tools and its effectiveness cannot be determined.
Focused and Sustained Time	PD Plan includes multiple hours and days of training over an extended period of time.	Multiple times are listed on a focus area but the entire faculty is scheduled to attend, regardless of their need.	Plan includes isolated events with no focus. One-day workshops are listed.
Resources	Trainers, coaches and materials are identified both from the faculty and from beyond the school.	On-site experts have not been identified as possible trainers/peer coaches.	Resources have not been identified.
Professional Development Strategies	Strategies are varied and appropriate to various staff needs. Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and Action Research are included in the plan. The plan includes use of technology and alternative delivery methods.	Appropriate learning strategies and Adult Learning Principles are used in some training; others are mostly traditional workshops. Technology is described as used occasionally.	Effective strategies and Adult Learning Principles are not used to deliver training. Workshops" are common. Technology is not considered for use in training.

Follow-up	Job-embedded opportunities for practice and sufficient support is described (through peer coaching, action research, PLCs, study groups, etc) until mastery is attained.	Some coaching and support is included in the plan, but the support described is not inclusive of all faculty or is widespread.	There is no evidence of support, coaching, or transfer of learning to the classroom in the professional development plan.
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