

# Teaching Students Struggling with Trauma: A Qualitative Investigation of Impact upon Curricular Goals

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### Teaching Students Struggling with Trauma: A Qualitative Investigation of Impact upon Curricular Goals

[Michael Emmart](#)

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#### Department

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#### Chair

Michelle B. Goodwin

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#### Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand the impact of childhood trauma upon curricular goals for elementary school teachers in the northeastern United States. A qualitative effort was employed in an effort to examine the lived experiences of teachers working with students affected by trauma. Data were collected from interviews with six female elementary school teachers (mean experience: 18.3 years) working within what might be characterized as a small urban district, with the interview transcripts analyzed according to processes provided by Moustakas (1994). All of those interviewed were able to identify numerous students within their classrooms (past and present) who had experienced a trauma, from sexual victimization to abandonment, and noted that these experiences often manifest themselves in behaviors that are disruptive to the delivery of instruction. Teachers reported on great lengths in attempting to support and manage students struggling in the aftermath of trauma; however, most of these efforts are characterized as trial-and-error with none of the participants able to identify having received any formal training on how to best support these students. Teachers reported an increasing amount of aggression among these students over time, with the issue becoming a growing concern in recent years due to a corresponding escalation in disruptive behaviors that interrupt or cease instruction.

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discovered the answer, prepared a report and gave presentations in class; they searched school library, internet and classroom resources for information. It was found that 2 student groups gave very impressive and sophisticated presentations on the topics they chose. However, the student-centered teaching project was stopped by the school principal because the regular school curriculum was not covered at the same time. Among the qualitative studies, three examined the psychological impact of the application of the student-centered teaching approach upon students. away from teacher-centered teaching to a more student-centered classroom (Cu-ban, 2001; Semple, 2000). Beliefs are filters that guide teachers during instructional and curricular decision-making (Pajares, 1992; Prawat, 1992). Beliefs thus affect how teachers implement innovations. Beliefs largely determine how and why teachers adopt new teaching methods (Golombek, 1998), or adapt to new classroom environments, processes, and goals. Nevertheless, most of these studies have relied upon surveys and on self-reported data from teachers (Judson 2006; Willis, Thompson, & Sadera, 1999). Much less knowledge is available on the extent to which teachers' actual class-room practices are aligned with their educational beliefs on teaching and learning. Students get inter-mingle with different peer groups during these activities which satisfy the needs of socialization, self-assessment and self-identification. Extra-curricular activities requires sacrifice and control which ultimately helps in grooming your balanced personality. Field trips, travelling, and tour helps to know about other places, people, customs and cultures. These activities provide the opportunities to adjust themselves with other people. It helps in the proper channelization of physical health. Extra-curricular activities provide motivation for learning.