

Journey to becoming a Trauma Informed School



Principal: Angela Girgis

Email: girgisa@nlcs.k12.in.us

Team Members: Danielle Martin & Jamie Roub

Lincoln Elementary School

Background Leading to this Inquiry...

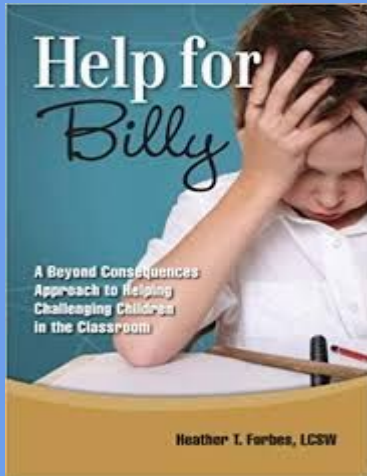


[Take the ACE Quiz \(Adverse Childhood Experiences\)](#)

<i>Grandparents as primary caregivers</i>	<i>Family drug use</i>	<i>High rate of unemployed parents</i>
<i>Incarcerated parents</i>	<i>Sexual, physical, or verbal abuse</i>	<i>Deaths in the family</i>
<i>Extreme poverty</i>	<i>Neglect</i>	<i>Divorce</i>

Purpose of this Inquiry...

*“How will our **classroom management** and **empathy** improve and change as we discover new understandings about childhood trauma?”*



*~Trauma Informed School
(Help for Billy by Heather T. Forbes, LCSW)*



Our Wondering...

We wondered how we could facilitate trauma informed professional growth amongst our teachers by taking the time to journal and discuss both online and in person via Educational Impact.



Our Actions...

STEP 1: All staff committed to becoming trauma informed through reading the book *Help for Billy*.

STEP 2: All staff committed to viewing, journaling, and discussing each module of learning through Educational Impact. (5 Modules)

STEP 3: All staff committed to implementing these best practices throughout our building discussing our successes and failures.

STEP 4: All staff understood that success would not happen overnight and would take the entire school year and beyond to accomplish.

Data Collection of Journal Entries...



Educational Impact Discussion Board

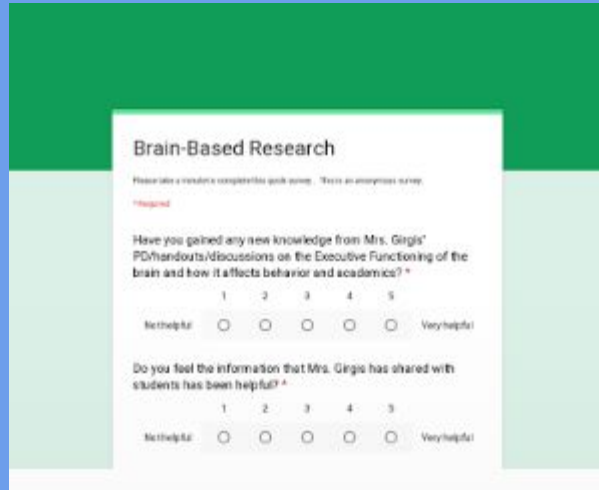
The screenshot shows a web interface for a discussion board. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs for 'Learner Dashboard', 'Video Library', 'Course Assignments', and 'My Plan'. A 'Search' button is located on the right. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'Discussion Board' and the main heading is 'Responding vs. Reacting: What's the difference?'. The instructions for the discussion board are: 'Take a moment to think about the difference between responding to a situation and reacting to it. What's the difference between the two?' and '1. Share your answer on the discussion board by clicking Add Entry to Discussion, below. 2. Click Post Comment and Mark Complete.' The discussion board contains three entries. The first entry is by 'Bridget Disque' on Jan. 2, 2019, at 3:50 p.m., with a '+Add Comment' link. The text of the entry is: 'When responding to the situation, you are able to teach them/help the student better understand what they are feeling and how to best handle those feelings the next time it happens again. When you react to the situation, you are not teaching the student how to handle anything. Most would react in a similar manner as the child and raise their voice, call the student out, and etc. This is not teaching the student anything.' The second entry is by 'Administrator Course' on Jan. 20, 2019, at 6:05 p.m., with a '+Add Comment' link. The text of the entry is: 'Yes!'. The third entry is by 'Administrator Course' on Jan. 20, 2019, at 6:12 p.m., with a '+Add Comment' link. The text of the entry is: 'Reacting is my natural response to respond how I would respond to my own children and this typically does not work with trauma students. It is not a bad response, but it is not effective with these types of students. It only pushes them to the edge and validates what they have heard all of their young lives. These students need us to connect relationship wise. Again, I have been practicing this with our EH kids (the most severe) and it truly works. Harsh comments, embarrassing reprimands, and not preserving student dignity only causes the student to further explode and demonstrate disrespectful behaviors.' The fourth entry is by 'Christie Maxwell' on Jan. 20, 2019, at 11 p.m., with a '+Add Comment' link. The text of the entry is: 'I think of reacting as raising my voice or responding with anger. I think of responding as putting a little more thought about my reaction. I know with my own children I have done both. I am sure I have reacted to students before, instead of thinking what can I

Data Collection...



- Grade Level Meeting Discussions (PLC)
 - Staff Meeting Discussions
 - All-school Ongoing Reflection

Data Collection...



Brain-Based Research

Please take a minute to complete this quick survey. This is an anonymous survey.

***Required**

Have you gained any new knowledge from Mrs. Giglio's PD/handouts/discussions on the Executive Functioning of the brain and how it affects behavior and academics? *

1 2 3 4 5

Not helpful Very helpful

Do you feel the information that Mrs. Giglio has shared with students has been helpful? *

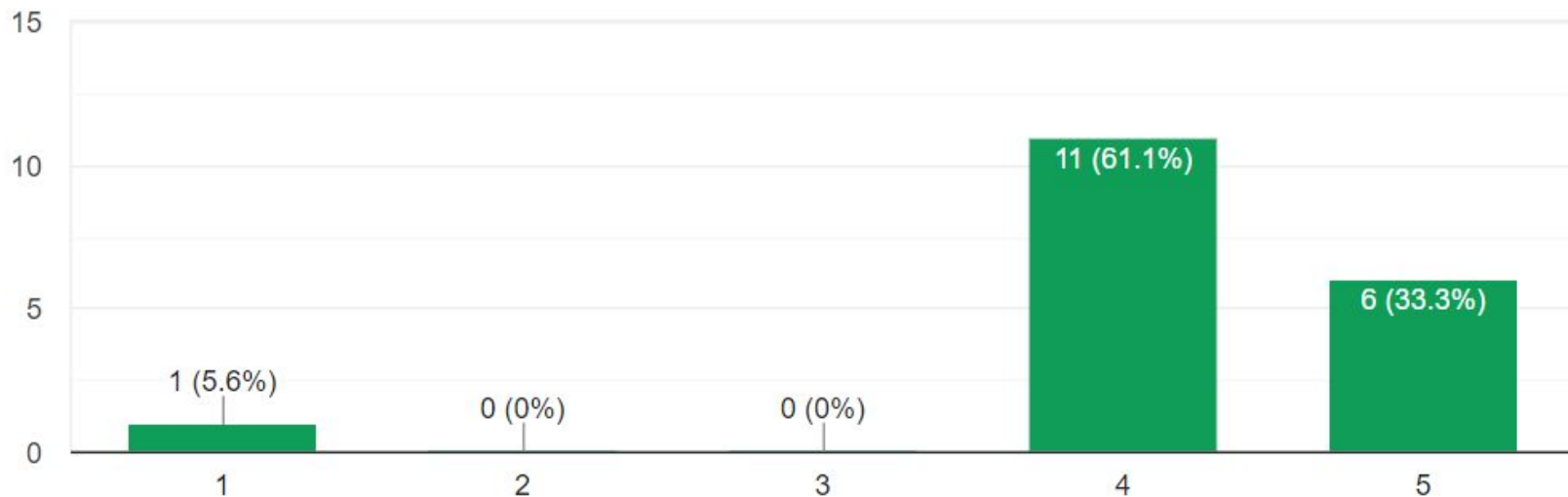
1 2 3 4 5

Not helpful Very helpful

Staff Google Survey

Do you feel the information that Mrs. Girgis has shared with students has been helpful?

18 responses



Results of Empathy Survey...

"This training and PD have opened my eyes to all the trauma a child can be exposed to. I feel my empathy and patience have increased as I deal with the Trauma students."

"I've tried to become a better listener. I try to show compassion because I feel they don't receive it at home."

"My empathy level has increased especially after learning what trauma does to the brain."

"I listen more to what the student is saying or NOT saying."

What do you feel has been the most helpful information that you have learned from our discussions on Executive Brain Functioning and how it affects behavior and academics?

"The information that has helped me the most is the 5 Teacher Strategies by Youki Terada on helping children retain what they have learned."

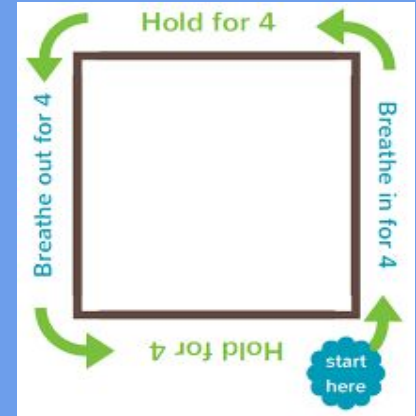
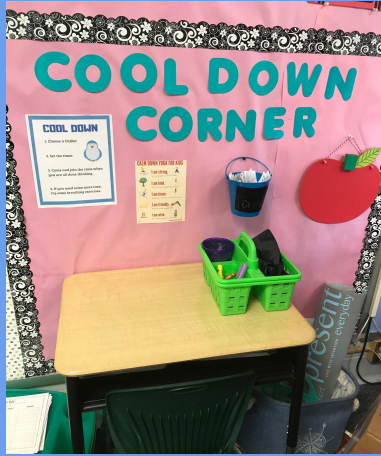
"The most helpful information for me has been the visual animation video of the staircase where interference between the lower area of the brain and the higher area of the brain hampers learning."

"How any brain can be changed. It may take a little longer or even be taught differently, but a child can better their brain power."

"I kept all of the information and can read it anytime. Just now, scientists are finding out much more about the brain than we knew before. To be on the receiving end of all this new information is exciting. The brain, and the entire body is a miracle of workmanship which most take for granted. The better we understand how "we" work, the better we can inform the next generation. Thank you."

Our Discoveries...

1. Respond vs. React
2. Establish Relationships
3. Model Empathy
4. Strategies



Where We Are Heading Next...

I have a **GROWTH MINDSET.**

I am in charge of how smart I am because

I can **GROW** my **BRAIN**

like a muscle by learning hard things.

I can achieve

ANYTHING

with **EFFORT** and

RIGHT STRATEGIES.

And when I fail or make a mistake,

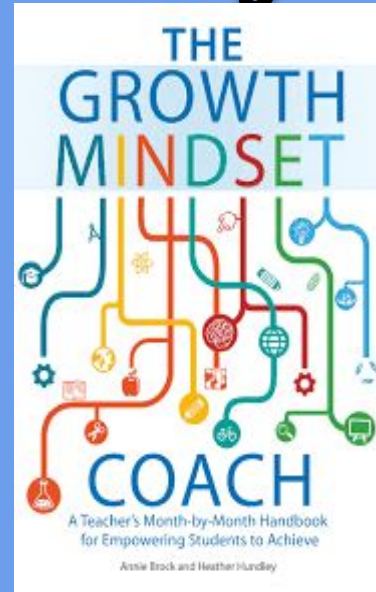
it is a **GREAT** thing, because

I can **LEARN** from them and

I GET BETTER!

Big Life Journal
www.biglifejournal.com

2019-
2020
School Year



Bibliography

Works Cited

Educational Impact: Staff Development for Educators, www.educationalimpact.com/programs/assignments/custom/323963/.

Forbes, Heather T. *Help for Billy: a Beyond Consequences Approach to Helping Children in the Classroom*. BookBaby, 2013.

Starecheski, Laura. "Take The ACE Quiz - And Learn What It Does And Doesn't Mean." *NPR*, NPR, 2 Mar. 2015,

www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/03/02/387007941/take-the-ace-quiz-and-learn-what-it-does-and-doesnt-mean.

Terada, Youki. "Why Students Forget-and What You Can Do About It." *Edutopia*, George Lucas Educational Foundation, 21 Sept. 2017,

www.edutopia.org/article/why-students-forget-and-what-you-can-do-about-it.



Journey to Becoming a Trauma Informed School

Principal Name: Angela Girgis

School Name: Lincoln Elementary

Team Members' Names: Danielle Marin & Jamie Roub

Principal's Email Contact: girgisa@nlcs.k12.in.us

Background Leading to Our Inquiry (Slide 2)

Our team was led to our inquiry of becoming a trauma informed school due to the high poverty and chronic-stressed students that were present in our school population. We found that our academics were increasing, but the constant misbehavior and interruption of learning was hindering our progress. We were realizing that many of our students came from homes that had experienced divorce, incarcerated parents, neglect, abuse of many kinds, death of a family member, unemployment, drug use, and grandparents as caregivers. Teachers were becoming frustrated and feeling helpless with their current approach to these students in need.

The Purpose of Our Inquiry (Slide 3)

Therefore, the purpose of our action inquiry was "How will our **classroom management** and **empathy** improve and change as we discover new understandings about childhood trauma?"

Our Wondering (Slide 4)

With this purpose, we wondered how we could facilitate trauma informed professional growth amongst our teachers by taking the time to journal and discuss both online and in person via Educational Impact.

Our Actions (Slide 5)

Our team took the following steps to conduct our AR cycle.

STEP 1: All staff committed to becoming trauma informed through reading the book *Help for Billy*.

STEP 2: All staff committed to viewing, journaling, and discussing each module of learning through Educational Impact. (5 Modules)

STEP 3: All staff committed to implementing these best practices throughout our building discussing our successes and failures.

STEP 4: All staff understood that success would not happen overnight and would take the entire school year and beyond to accomplish.

We took a school-wide approach to begin applying these best practices that we were learning. We had many successes and failures, but we learned from our mistakes and continued to share throughout the year. As the year progressed, we began to see what were the best practices for Lincoln Elementary. Buy-in slowly evolved as we began to see success in student behavior and also in how we approached discipline and classroom management.

Data Collection (Slide 6-10)

Our team chose to collect data in a variety of ways.

- Educational Impact Online Journaling and Discussion Board
- Grade Level Meeting Discussions (PLC)
- Staff Meeting Discussions
- All-school Ongoing Reflection
- Staff Google Survey

Our Data (Slides 6-12)

Our data confirmed through our discussions and survey that positive change had in fact occurred. Below are some excerpts from our teachers' journaling and Google survey.

"The trauma informed PD has changed my discipline approach by helping me to try to understand why a student is dysregulated instead of trying to control the dysregulation."

"I have changed my thinking from why is the student acting this way by trying to fix it to what can I do in the moment to improve my relationship with the student and calm his brain."

"I have completely changed my discipline and now respond instead of react."

"I believe my empathy level has increased especially after learning what trauma can do to the brain."

Our Discoveries (Slide 13)

Our team found the following to be the most important and critical facets of what we learned:

1. Respond vs. React
2. Establish Relationships
3. Model Empathy and Use Learned Strategies

Teachers expressed throughout the year how much more effective the use of responding to the student rather than reacting made such a powerful difference. Teachers were intentional to use this strategy each time a student began to act out. As students began to see our responses change, they began to change in a positive manner.

We always knew relationships were important, but our learning empowered us to see that building relationships was the first and foremost approach to reaching our students. Teachers used self-reflection and discussion to go deeper into what a meaningful student-teacher relationship should look like. Our relationships became more intentional and meaningful for both student and teacher.

Teachers had a strong desire to learn new strategies. Our data reflected how teachers had gained new skills to better understand and model empathy for our students. One teacher stated, "I no longer feel that I need to fix the student to get him to act a certain way. I listen more to what a student is saying or maybe not saying."

Where We Are Headed Next (Slide 14)

As we reflected back over this past year, our team was pleased to see many effective results from our AR project. We learned that we truly had a lot of learning to do when it came to educating and caring for our most challenging students. We learned that our teachers were grateful not only to learn more about our students, but also to learn more about themselves such as their own ACE scores (Adverse Childhood Experiences).

As we begin our new school year, we will continue to discuss and use the best practices strategies that we acquired through this project. We are ready to launch into a deeper understanding of growth mind-set in application to our trauma informed knowledge.

The journey this past year was not always easy and at times very uncomfortable as we had to often change our past practices. It was such an encouragement as an administrator to see an entire staff be willing to stretch themselves for the best interest of their students. One teacher made the comment, *"I am listening more and speaking less. I do morning greetings and classroom meetings along with having a classroom safe zone for my students. I care and am paying attention to my students."*

Last but not least, as an administrator I saw a decrease in office referrals due to teachers knowing how to better handle our most challenging students in the classroom without losing instructional time. This AR project was a powerful, positive change within our school.

Bibliography (Slide 15)

Works Cited

Educational Impact: Staff Development for Educators,

www.educationalimpact.com/programs/assignments/custom/323963/.

Forbes, Heather T. *Help for Billy: a Beyond Consequences Approach to Helping Children in the Classroom*. BookBaby, 2013.

Starecheski, Laura. "Take The ACE Quiz - And Learn What It Does And Doesn't Mean." *NPR*,
NPR, 2 Mar. 2015,

www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/03/02/387007941/take-the-ace-quiz-and-learn-what-it-does-and-doesnt-mean.

Terada, Youki. "Why Students Forget-and What You Can Do About It." *Edutopia*, George Lucas Educational Foundation, 21 Sept. 2017,

www.edutopia.org/article/why-students-forget-and-what-you-can-do-about-it.