"Can we keep blogging?":
Analyzing Blogging in a Grade Six Classroom as a Trauma-Informed Practice for Students and Educators

by

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A thesis submitted to the

School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in partial

fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Education

Mitch and Leslie Frazer Faculty of Education

Ontario Tech University

Oshawa, Ontario, Canada

February, 2024

Thesis Examination Information

Submitted by: Heidi M. Allum
Master of Arts in Education

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An oral defence of this thesis took place on December 1st, 2023 in front of the following examining committee:

Examining Committee:

Chair of Examining Committee	Dr. Bill Hunter
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Examining Committee Member	Dr. Ann LeSage
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The above committee determined that the thesis is acceptable in form and content and that a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by the thesis was demonstrated by the candidate during an oral examination. A signed copy of the Certificate of Approval is available from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Abstract

Trauma-informed practice is a high-profile term in education, with multiple definitions and implementation strategies for classroom practice. Through phenomenological and case study methods, this study examines how one teacher uses blogging as a trauma-informed practice micro-move. Through blogging, trauma-informed practices address student safety, choice, and empowerment. The teacher changed trauma-informed practices based on student feedback from students' blogs. Results showed that blogging could be a trauma-informed practice. The teacher made subtle, yet powerful, changes in practice based on student feedback through blogging. More research is suggested for implementing trauma-informed micro-moves in the classroom and their impact on student well-being.

Keywords: trauma-informed care, trauma-informed practice, blogging, feedback, teacher practice

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis consists of original work of which I have authored. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Heidi M. Allum

Statement of Contributions

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication. I have used standard referencing practices to acknowledge ideas, research techniques, and other materials that belong to others. Furthermore, I hereby certify that I am the sole source of the creative works and inventive knowledge described in this thesis.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is a work of love and labour and could not have been completed without my incredible support group. My family, especially my two children, Rayleigh and Eric, were patient with me while I wrote on the weekends and evenings and between full-time teaching.

I want to thank my friends in the trauma-informed research world. What started as a blog about my experiences with childhood trauma has led me to this thesis. Thank you for always reading, editing, and reviewing my work.

Thank you to Dr. Jennfier Laffier, my supervisor, for sharing her expertise and knowledge with me. She was so incredibly patient with my frantic emails. Thank you for believing in my work and me.

Thank you to my students, past and present, for constantly pushing me to be a better teacher. I am so fortunate to have learned more from you than you ever learned from me.

To the incomparable DJ Patti Kane. Your soulful house music was the thrust and backbeat of this writing. Thank you for sharing your talent.

Finally, a huge and excellent thank you to my husband, Mike. On writing days when I texted, I can't do this; you were always one step ahead in believing me. You never doubted I could finish this thesis.

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Chapter One: Introduction

In the last decade, trauma-informed practices have entered the academic world with fervour (Burdick & Corr, 2021; Maynard et al., 2019; Stipp & Kilpatrick, 2021). The focus on trauma grew exponentially during the COVID-19 pandemic as teachers and students shifted to online learning (Harper & Neubauer, 2021). This sudden change in learning modes caused teachers and students to experience negative impacts on their mental health and performance (Harper & Neubauer, 2021; Horesh & Brown, 2020). Due to COVID-19, students experienced stress, anxiety, and depression (Hoersch & Brown, 2020). Recent research on how trauma impacts children highlighted the importance of trauma-informed care practices at school (Horesh & Brown, 2020). This is especially necessary as COVID-19 is a childhood trauma (Horesh & Brown, 2020). Childhood trauma is defined as "...when a child experiences an actual or threatened negative event, series of events or set of circumstances that cause emotional pain and overwhelm the child's ability to cope." (Barlett & Steber, 2019, para 4). Trauma can affect children's development, social relationships, and learning (Burdick & Corr, 2021; SAMHSA, 2022), which can cause cognitive impairments, social challenges, and impaired self-esteem. Younger children may experience detachment, dysregulation of emotions, language delays, and difficulty focusing (Burdick & Corr, 2021). Childhood trauma impacts all aspects of self-identity, how they learn, and what they perceive. Childhood trauma affects "...how children view themselves, other people, and the world." (McConnico et al., 2016, p. 37).

In the Ontario public education system, children spend six hours a day for eight months at school. Thus, education providers need to be aware of the impacts of trauma (Baweja et al., 2016). Given the potential impact of trauma on learning and performance, schools could benefit from an increased focus on trauma-informed care. Hopper et al. (2010) note:

Trauma-Informed Care is a strengths-based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. (p. 82)

Consequently, it is imperative to develop a comprehensive understanding of how trauma impacts individuals and how the educational systems we engage with can potentially and actively re-traumatize or induce trauma.

One method to reduce trauma is to provide trauma-informed care (TIC) in the classroom. TIC is proactive by creating a safe and welcoming classroom, teaching and providing strategies to regulate emotions, and offering students choice (Brunzell et al., 2022). It includes teachers viewing students with a strengths-based lens and unconditional positive regard (Brunzell et al., 2022; Hopper et al., 2010). When TIC is a guiding principle in school, it is considered trauma-informed education. It is important to remember that TIC is "...not an intervention, and it does not have an endpoint. It is a process and a holistic way of working that involves understand-ing and attending to the specific needs of individuals with trauma-affected childhoods." (Hobbs et al., 2019, pgs. 1-2). TIC means educators may not solve or stop trauma from occurring; instead, they need to be flexible and grow as trauma-informed practitioners, as every trauma need is different. An ecological approach, where elements of place, systems, and environment take into consideration trauma-informed practices, suggests that the school, community, teachers, and families are all essential in trauma care (Baweja et al., 2016; Crosby, 2015; Hobbs et al., 2019).

Trauma-informed education includes practices by teachers, administrators, and schools that promote the goals of trauma-informed care. Trauma-informed practice (TIP) is a framework of care and support that practitioners may use for those in their care. The goal is to provide

safety, choice, and empowerment through understanding the impacts of trauma (Record-Lemon & Buchanan, 2017). Trauma-informed practices within a school should include the understanding and awareness of the trauma a child might potentially have experienced. Implementation examples could be creating a structured, safe and predictable environment, creating connections and relationships, providing student choices, and fostering their interests and strengths (Brunzell et al., 2022; Cunningham, 2021; Moore & Begoray, 2017; Venet, 2021).

A sense of empowerment is also fundamental to trauma-informed practices (Alvarez, 2020; Hannegan-Martinez, 2019; et al., 2010; Trauma et al., 2014). There are several ways teachers can create empowering, safe, and caring environments to support students with trauma, such as fostering relationships with students by understanding their strengths, interests, and aspirations (Barlett & Steber, 2010; Brunzell & Norrish, 2021; Cole et al., 2013; Crosby et al., 2018; Ludy & Perry, 2010). Teachers can also create opportunities for students to foster relationships with other students through collaborative projects or purposeful grouping (Champine et al., 2021; Gherardi et al., 2020). Empowerment promotes giving students choice, voice and influence in the classroom (Brunzell & Norrish, 2021; Crosby et al., 2018; Venet, 2021). Input from students on how and what they want to learn provides a facet of choice. Finally, opportunities for self-expression allow trauma-affected students to explore who they are, and express their needs and wishes (Bassuk et al., 2017; Dutro, 2011; Ginwright, 2018; Jones, 2012; Larios, 2020).

Research indicates that self-expression benefits mental health and trauma-informed care (Larios, 2020; Kearley et al., 2021; Wolpow et al., 2009). Self-expression allows people to find their voice through their experiences and shared stories and gather a sense of identity (Dutro, 2011; Larios, 2020; Pinhasi-Vittorio, 2018). Through self-expression, people can synthesize and

express emotions, find self-confidence, and communicate and find support within their communities (Duane et al., 2020; Dutro, 2011; Hannegan-Martinez, 2019; Stipp & Kilpatrick, 2021; Venet, 2021).

Writing is one form of self-expression that can support students with trauma or act as a protective factor if future traumas arise (Batzer, 2016; Granic et al., 2020; Kirk et al., 2017; Wissman & Wiseman, 2011). Choice and self-expression are valuable writing outcomes (Creely, 2020) and are essential to learning and developing one's sense of self and mental health (Ginwright, 2018; Pinhasi-Vittorio, 2018). Writing, which includes immersing in self-reflection and creativity, could lead to a place of healing for a trauma-affected person (Creely, 2020; Dutro, 2011; Larios, 2020). Writing could also be a preventative measure for trauma (Batzer, 2016; Larios, 2020; Pinhasi-Vittorio, 2018). If a person can use writing as a place of reflection, then they could begin to learn about their self-stressors and preventative and effective responses to potentially traumatic events (Venet, 2021).

In this digital age, some people express themselves through blogging, a form of digital writing. O'Byrne & Murrell (2014) define blogging as an open social software system that allows users to easily write and insert images and web links. O'Byrne and Murrell (2014) stated that schools commonly use blogging to support students' literacy and communication skills, critical thinking, and creativity. For example, students might use a blog to demonstrate an understanding of a topic they are learning in mathematics or health class. Students could use a blog as a portfolio for displaying their art images or reflections. Fellow students and their teachers could then comment on the blog, creating a cyclical conversation leading to self-reflection. However, like any other form of self-expression, there is potential for negative impacts from blogging. For example, blogging may lead to re-traumatization by uncovering experiences or welcoming public

feedback (Nagel & Anthony, 2009). Both the positive and negative effects of blogging are discussed in Chapter Two.

Through a literature review and qualitative design method, explained further in Chapter Three, this study provided insights into the impact of trauma-informed approaches on students' well-being. This study examined a case study of myself as a teacher, and the effects of trauma-informed care practices have on my professional growth. This supports the development of evidence-based practices and interventions to support creating trauma-informed educational environments (Duane et al., 2020; Horesh & Brown, 2020; Sonu et al., 2021) for all students and schools.

To understand how students value trauma-informed practices, teachers need to listen to students' responses about trauma-informed practices implemented in the classroom. As Koslouski and Stark (2021) state, teachers lack awareness of the impacts of trauma-informed practices on their students. Missing in the research is the student perspective on how trauma-informed practices affect their learning, well-being, and overall school experience. Generally, academic performance is the critical indicator of success in implementing TIP (Chafouleas et al., 2015), not a student's thoughts or feelings about their school experience through a trauma-informed lens. This study endeavoured to analyze data on how students' responses to blogging as a trauma-informed practice, and examine how educators can use student feedback to refine their TIP.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

As of 2022, the Government of Canada states that 64% of Canadians have experienced a traumatic event in their lifetime (Government of Canada, 2022). Though this statistic is not specific to children or youth, with over half of the population experiencing trauma, we must

acknowledge that over half of Canadians, at one time or another, will be affected by trauma. Trauma affects multiple aspects of a person's life: physically, academically, socially, and emotionally (Champine et al., 2022; The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2008). As people navigate their daily lives, employing trauma-informed care could be beneficial. Trauma-informed care includes a person's right to feel safe, have choices, and feel empowered (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014). This is especially true in potentially vulnerable sectors of society, such as health care and education, where one relies on the expertise of others. Having trauma-informed practices inherent to these vulnerable sectors is uncommon (SAMHSA, 2014). Nonetheless, research shows the value of trauma-informed care as a foundation for all human services (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014).

While school is an excellent environment to implement trauma-informed practices, school is also a setting where trauma can be inflicted, or a person can be re-traumatized (Skarstein & Shultz, 2018). Some examples of education causing trauma can be bullying, feelings of inadequate academic understanding, exclusion of peers, or experiencing discrimination based on race, gender, or sexuality (Gaffney, 2019; Jones, 2012). The curriculum used in a classroom could in itself be inherently traumatic (Gaffney, 2019). Consider the perspective of a Black student who does not see themselves or their history being represented in history textbooks. Their voice and experiences of being Black in Canada are confronted with a white and Eurocentric curriculum. Trauma could be present in this situation, especially if the student has no one or no way to express their concerns safely. Students may also feel ostracized by their peers if they speak out against the curriculum (Gaffney, 2019).

Retraumatization can also manifest at school through exclusion and bullying and through how teachers and peers approach traumatized students. For example, if a student experiences

abuse and a teacher raises their voice, this may create stress for that student (Howard, 2019).
That student may then find it difficult to focus and concentrate, and may miss vital information
to ensure success in the class. A student in this predicament may demonstrate unwanted
behaviours in the classroom, such as yelling out or acting aggressively, which may perpetuate a
cycle of punishment. That student may be removed from the classroom and, therefore, miss
curriculum content and opportunities to create relationships with peers (Petrone & Stanton,
2021).

Applying trauma-informed practices to support learning could assist students who have
experienced trauma and students who may be at risk of trauma throughout their lifetime.
Research shows that trauma-informed teaching and practices support student success (Howard,
2019; Martin et al., 2017). Martin et al. (2017, p. 964) stated that "taking the steps to restore a
child's life after exposure to violence is not a luxury; it is a necessity." Nevertheless, several
obstacles are standing in front of completely utilizing trauma-informed care. Teachers need to
implement trauma-informed practices that are research-based. Well-intentioned teachers may
cause re-traumatization, as they understand trauma-informed care as solving a student's problem.

Educator attitudes toward learning and implementing effective trauma-informed practices
remain an obstacle (Alisic, 2012; Howard, 2019; Parker et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2019).
Teachers, who are critical individuals in students' lives, have a responsibility to promote and
practice trauma-informed care (Dutro, 2011; Ginwright, 2018; Kirk et al., 2017; Ludy-Dobson &
Perry, 2010; Venet, 2021; Wissman & Wiseman, 2011). Nevertheless, teachers express
reservations about implementing trauma-informed approaches. Among these is a lack of
professional development that supports teachers' learning and understanding of trauma, a lack of
long-term support in classrooms, and fears of not being able to actively and accurately support

trauma-affected students while meeting the daily demands of teaching (Alisic, 2012; Baweja et al., 2016; Venet, 2021).

Secondary trauma and burnout were common among teachers, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic (Brunzell et al., 2022; Stipp & Kilpatrick, 2021; Venet, 2021). Due to a lack of long-term support and knowledge and a fear of burnout, educators frequently struggle to adjust to various trauma-informed programs (Alisic, 2012; Howard, 2019; Parker et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2019). According to Alisic (2012), instructors perceived TIP as "another stress" to learn about and use in classroom practice. Furthermore, teachers felt unsupported after attending TIP professional development (Howard, 2019), and external services such as social work, administration, and the community provided insufficient assistance (Alisic, 2012; Howard, 2019; Parker et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2019). These challenges can lead to a lack of implementation fidelity and hinder the effectiveness of trauma-informed programs in schools. Additionally, educators may struggle to find the time and resources needed to fully integrate trauma-informed practices into their teaching, further exacerbating their feelings of burnout and frustration.

A further challenge that Maynard et al. (2019) recognized is the shortage of evidence-based research on establishing trauma-informed techniques in teacher education and practice. According to Howard (2019) and Jacobson (2021), the data reported in the current study is anecdotal and does not specify which trauma-informed activities link to a beneficial outcome. A teacher, for example, may follow numerous trauma-informed strategies but cannot specify which is deemed most helpful in terms of positive impact in the classroom. The existing body of research lacks specific and successful interventions (Alvarez, 2020; Overstreet & Chafouleas, 2016; Petrone & Stanton, 2021; Venet, 2021). To develop effective trauma-informed practices,

more research on specific strategies and their outcome is needed on trauma-informed practices from teachers' and students' perspectives.

We need to know what is working to develop viable classroom TIP interventions. Alisic (2012) recommended that successful TIP be monitored through observational note-taking and conferences with students to understand better how teachers implement TIP successfully. Studies are needed to explore cases of successful interventions as well as examine the barriers teachers experience.

Another hurdle to incorporating TIP is that student trauma is not always observable (Phifer & Hull, 2016). A prevention-based, universal approach, which includes assuming the best intentions for all people, extending grace, and acknowledging that students have complex experiences (Cole et al., 2013) and are valued, could overcome this barrier (Venet, 2021), as all students in the class would receive trauma-informed care.

Researched preventative strategies concentrate on fostering resilience to lower the likelihood of trauma in the future, whereas intervention strategies concentrate on providing focused support to individuals who are struggling (Venet, 2021). Instead of focusing on potential preventative measures or understanding how trauma affects mental, social, and emotional well-being, the research describes (Alisic, 2012) that many in-school trauma educational programs target disruptive behaviours with reactive solutions. Follow-up support focuses on what happened rather than what could have been implemented before the disruption (Gherardi et al., 2021).

Most trauma-informed practices were reactive, transient, and not shared with the teacher; they were typically developed and used outside the classroom (Anderson et al., 2021; Howard,

2019). A collaborative and all-encompassing approach to trauma in schools and classrooms is recommended (Alvarez, 2020; Ginwright, 2018; Venet, 2021). This approach could involve community circles to foster relationships, considering a person's religion and culture as part of their healing process, and learning about the social factors, like poverty, perpetuating traumas.

The lack of student perspectives and responses to TIP techniques in the classroom is an additional barrier to TIP application. Within one study, West et al. (2014) addressed how pupils felt about their teachers. Specifically, they claimed that research indicated that disciplinary approaches are not trauma-informed, and children still think instructors should be strict. West et al. (2014) questioned how well students understood discipline in general and repercussions beyond punitive measures.

Students must first comprehend what trauma-informed practices include before asking about their opinions of them. According to Koslouski & Stark (2021), students ought to provide feedback on trauma-informed practices so that teachers can modify their methods in response, potentially improving teachers' responsiveness to students' needs. Literature should include studies wherein educators directly adjust trauma-informed practices in response to student input. Thus, this study aimed to establish a trauma-informed classroom prioritizing student advocacy. This included how a teacher directly addresses student input and the particular trauma-informed practice of blogging to offer safety, choice, and empowerment.

Brunzell and Norrish (2021) stated the classroom has the potential to be a safe, accepting place with healing power through relationship building, positive affirmation, and assisting students in achieving academic goals. Although research is beginning to explore evidence-based trauma-informed care in schools (Carello & Butler, 2015), several areas require attention, including understanding how students experience and feel about trauma-informed practices

(Alvarez, 2017), which TIPs are most effective for students and how teachers modify their practices based on student feedback. Without addressing the knowledge gap, we may be unable to identify the precise and effective trauma-informed practices that increase students' well-being and academic success in classrooms.

Trauma-informed practices could be helpful for all students navigating their educational careers. However, there is a gap in the existing research on specific and compelling trauma-informed practices.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This study addressed some of the previously identified research gaps by investigating student perceptions of trauma-informed practices in the classroom and how student feedback might shape teacher pedagogy. This information can help teachers develop as trauma-informed educators by providing insight into using practical TIP in the classroom.

This study investigated a specific type of universal trauma-informed practice, blogging. Writing can help people feel better by promoting self-expression and identity (Boniel-Nissim & Barak, 2013), contemplation (Haq, 2017), empowerment, and healing journeys (Larios, 2018). As a result, this study aimed to investigate student blogging as a trauma-informed practice. The research was conducted in a Grade 6 classroom in a suburban public elementary school in Southeastern Ontario. The student participants blogged with me, their teacher, and this study's researcher during the 2021–2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic. In these roles, I gathered weekly student input and conducted professional reflections on how the students' comments influenced my trauma-informed care and practice instruction. The student input from their blogging activities was gathered to understand better how it helped trauma resilience and

wellbeing and the curricular writing process. Based on the input, I evaluated, reflected, and altered practices.

Research indicates that teachers often feel overwhelmed with learning and implementing trauma-informed education (Alisic, 2012; Baweja et al., 2015; Howard, 2019; Sonsteng-Person & Loomis, 2021). However, understanding one teacher's perspective on implementing TIP and how it impacts teaching has the potential to support other teachers in their professional development journeys. As such, I coined, defined, and studied the term micro-move in a trauma-informed context. I was curious about how teachers implemented immediate and regular changes to their teaching program based on student feedback. These purposeful moves I called micro-moves. Therefore, this study explored how micro-moves were used to develop and refine trauma-informed practices. According to Koslouski & Stark (2021), "intentional teacher actions that prioritize the learning of students experiencing adversity and trauma are critical for the success and well-being of these students." (p. 450). What could these intentional teacher actions be? How can teachers implement trauma-informed practices seamlessly into their curriculum and classroom practice? This call to action is essential for educators to understand, and this research hoped to find results that teachers can implement in their classrooms. This study focused on blogging as the method of obtaining feedback from students, which led to conversations and strategic implementation of changes implemented in the classroom based on students' needs.

The overarching research inquiry guiding this study focused on how blogging can be both a trauma-informed practice within a classroom while simultaneously supporting teacher development of trauma-informed practices. The research questions that guided this study are:
1: How do students in an Ontario Grade 6 classroom experience blogging as a trauma-informed practice (TIP) that supports their wellness?

2: How can a teacher develop their trauma-informed pedagogy based on reflective practice?

These questions sought to bridge gaps in the research by eliciting direct and immediate input from students on their perceptions of blogging as trauma-informed practice and recording how I, as a teacher, responded with various micro-moves in direct response to students' feedback.

1.3 Positionality Statement

I grew up living through complex childhood trauma. Neglect, alcoholism, and parental mental health struggles were a regular part of my childhood and teen years. Aspects of school were safe havens, as the rules, predictability, and continuity eased my traumatic experiences. I excelled academically. My trauma behaviours were dissociation and avoidance, as I was quiet, kept to myself, and did not question expectations (conflict avoidance). I avoided joining clubs and teams, or inviting friends to my home. I was not aware at the time, but I struggled socially and emotionally. I felt that teachers did not understand or notice what I was going through, and, as such, I felt anger toward them for not helping me.

Entering my Bachelor of Education program, I wanted to help and save students who experienced trauma. I envisioned myself walking into a classroom and being able to discern struggling students immediately. I would listen to and be there for them, call the appropriate community services as needed, and say, truthfully, "I know what you are going through." However, through reading, professional development courses, and interviews and conversations with trauma-informed experts through social media, I learned that trauma impacts everyone differently. Educators cannot save students from the long-term traumatic impacts of their experiences. I was not saving anyone, nor was trauma always apparent like I thought it would be. I learned how to implement trauma-informed practices with more purpose. To do this, I needed to do more research.

I pursued this personal and professional journey from 2015 to 2018. I learned that trauma-informed practices could benefit all students, not just those directly affected by trauma. Fast forward to 2020, and we found ourselves amid a global pandemic. In light of COVID-19 and the universal stress it produced (Horesh & Brown, 2020), looking at education from a trauma-informed lens was important (Horesh & Brown, 2020). As an educator, I wanted to create a safe and empowering classroom. I completed workshops and professional development sessions, enrolled in a graduate course, and joined book clubs about trauma-informed education. I endeavoured to learn how to collect student input on what they considered safe and empowering. In order to focus on safety, choice, and empowerment, I required a framework that would assist in organizing what trauma-informed practices would appear in students' blogs. Qualitative methods provided flexible data collection and analysis methods (Creswell, 2014).

1.4 Nature of the Study

This research study used qualitative methodologies, including phenomenological and case studies, to understand if blogging was a trauma-informed practice and how I, as a teacher, would change my trauma-informed practices or implement micro-moves based on student feedback. Phenomenological method techniques are described in full in Chapter Three, and it is critical to understand that this entire data collection process was a case study, as I collected interviews, conference notes, and observations from all participants throughout the study.

This study included a Grade 6 class of 25 students through the 2021-2022 school year, with blogging participation from all students. A qualitative study was preferred due to the sensitive and ever-changing nature of the classroom (Creswell, 2014). Mohajan (2018) defines qualitative research as collecting non-numerical data to fully interpret it to comprehend a particular group in their natural surroundings. Data can include interviews and surveys, and

spontaneity is embraced to understand people's perceptions (Mohajan, 2018). Teachers collect

student work samples, conferences, and observations for assessment as well as, in this case,

research objectives; as such, the classroom is a student's natural setting, which could be a safe

place for them to discuss their thoughts and ideas. As a research approach, I used

phenomenology and case studies. These will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Aside from the WHO's definition of trauma (2022), the fundamental framework for this

research was the The Foundations of Trauma Informed Care (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014)

concepts of safety, choice, and empowerment. Through how and what students shared on their

blogs, I used blogging to provide safety, choice, and empowerment. A component of trauma-

informed care not expressly articulated in Trauma Informed Oregon is the Trauma Informed

Care Foundations (2014), which are prevention initiatives. I used blogging as a trauma-informed

preventative strategy for students to explore and express themselves.

As a result, Venet's (2021) study supports Trauma Informed Oregon's (2014) work by

emphasizing the value of preventative trauma-informed practices, such as blogging, and how

they benefit all students. SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Administration)'s Six Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Care (2104) and other frameworks

that supported this research will be defined.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks aid researchers in their work by highlighting current theories the

study seeks to broaden (Gelso & Bhatia, 2012). This study aimed to investigate and expand on

existing trauma theories. The following theories guided the research: (1) trauma (3) The

Foundations of Trauma Informed Care Framework (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014), (4) The six

principles of trauma-informed care (SAMHSA, 2014), and (5) Equity-centered trauma-informed

education (Venet, 2021). This introduction provides a brief review of various theories. They are, however, discussed in greater detail in the literature review.

1.5.1 Trauma

The World Health Organization (WHO) defined a modernized concept of trauma in which trauma is acknowledged as a unique and varied experience. The term "trauma" refers to the "response to a stressful event or situation (of either brief or long duration) of an exceptionally threatening or catastrophic nature" (WHO, 2022, F43.1). There are crucial components of this terminology and perspective for trauma studies. According to WHO (2022), one distinguishing trait of trauma is that it generates great fear, horror, or helplessness. What triggers severe fear or helplessness varies from person to person. According to WHO (2022), trauma can result from a direct or indirect experience, as well as an actual or imagined threat to one's or another person's physical integrity. This perspective points out that trauma can be different for each person because it depends on how they perceive events or situations.

1.5.2 Trauma-Informed Care

Harris and Fallot (2001) popularized trauma-informed care in the medical field. They proposed in their foundational article on the construction of a trauma-informed service system that such a system is one in which personnel understand how traumatic events negatively affect behavioural health and are committed to responding to those requirements. Staff who get education and training can help to prevent client (re)traumatization (Harris & Fallot, 2001). Their continuous work in the field resulted in a definition of trauma-informed care (TIC).

Trauma-Informed Care is a strengths-based framework that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors and opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. (2010) (Hopper et al.). This

foundational study on TIC resulted in particular frameworks for practitioners in the helping professions. This study employed three trauma-informed care frameworks, which are now outlined.

1.5.2.1 The Foundations of Trauma Informed Care by Trauma Informed Oregon (2014). The Foundations of Trauma Informed Care Framework (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014) was created to guide practitioners in using trauma approaches with clients. This framework recognizes that traumatic experiences can "terrify, overwhelm, and violate" an individual (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014, para. 1), causing a loss of safety, empowerment, and sense of worth. Therefore, trauma-informed care focuses on restoring a sense of "safety, power, and worth" (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014, para. 1). Figure 1 highlights that the foundation of TIC is an understanding of trauma and a commitment to recognizing and addressing trauma. Once that basic understanding and commitment exists, organizations or individuals can create environments that promote safety, power, and self-worth. Policies, practices, and procedures can help ensure these are developed for individuals. For example, the right column of the chart highlights how self-worth can be developed through respect, compassion, and mutuality.

Figure 1

Trauma Informed Care and the Foundations of Trauma Informed Care Graphic

Image Credit: Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014
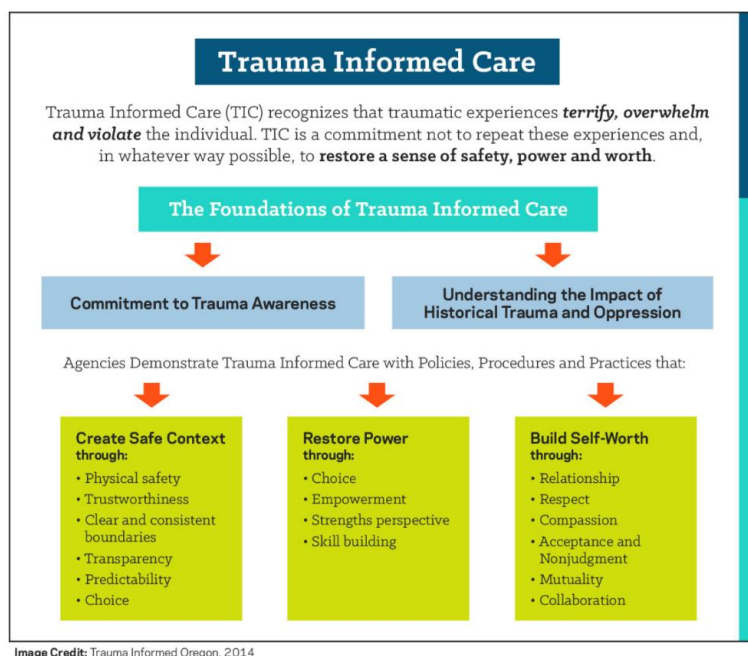
For this study, I was particularly interested in three principles of safety, choice, and empowerment. I regularly try to promote these principles in my classroom.

1.5.2.2 The Six Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Care by SAMHSA (2014). The SAMHSA's Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative Workgroup developed a framework for the behavioural health specialty sectors, but that could also be adapted to other sectors, such as child welfare or education, that have the potential to ease or exacerbate an individual's capacity to cope with traumatic experiences. A trauma-informed approach reflects adherence to six fundamental principles: (1) safety, (2) trustworthiness and transparency, (3) peer support, (4) collaboration and mutuality, (5) empowerment, voice, and choice, and (6) cultural, historical, and gender issues.

Figure 2 depicts the six key principles and how they are not meant to be used as a list of items to be completed, but as a connective series of constant reflective practices that must be

reviewed, monitored, and reworked based on need (SAMHSA, 2014). When organizations or

practitioners follow and promote each of these principles, it can help foster healing and resilience

for those affected by trauma (SAMHSA, 2014). I was especially interested in the key themes of

safety, choice, and empowerment, which are also addressed in the Trauma Informed Oregon

(2014) framework. These are major themes in my own teaching style.

Figure 2

The Six Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Care by SAMHSA (2014)
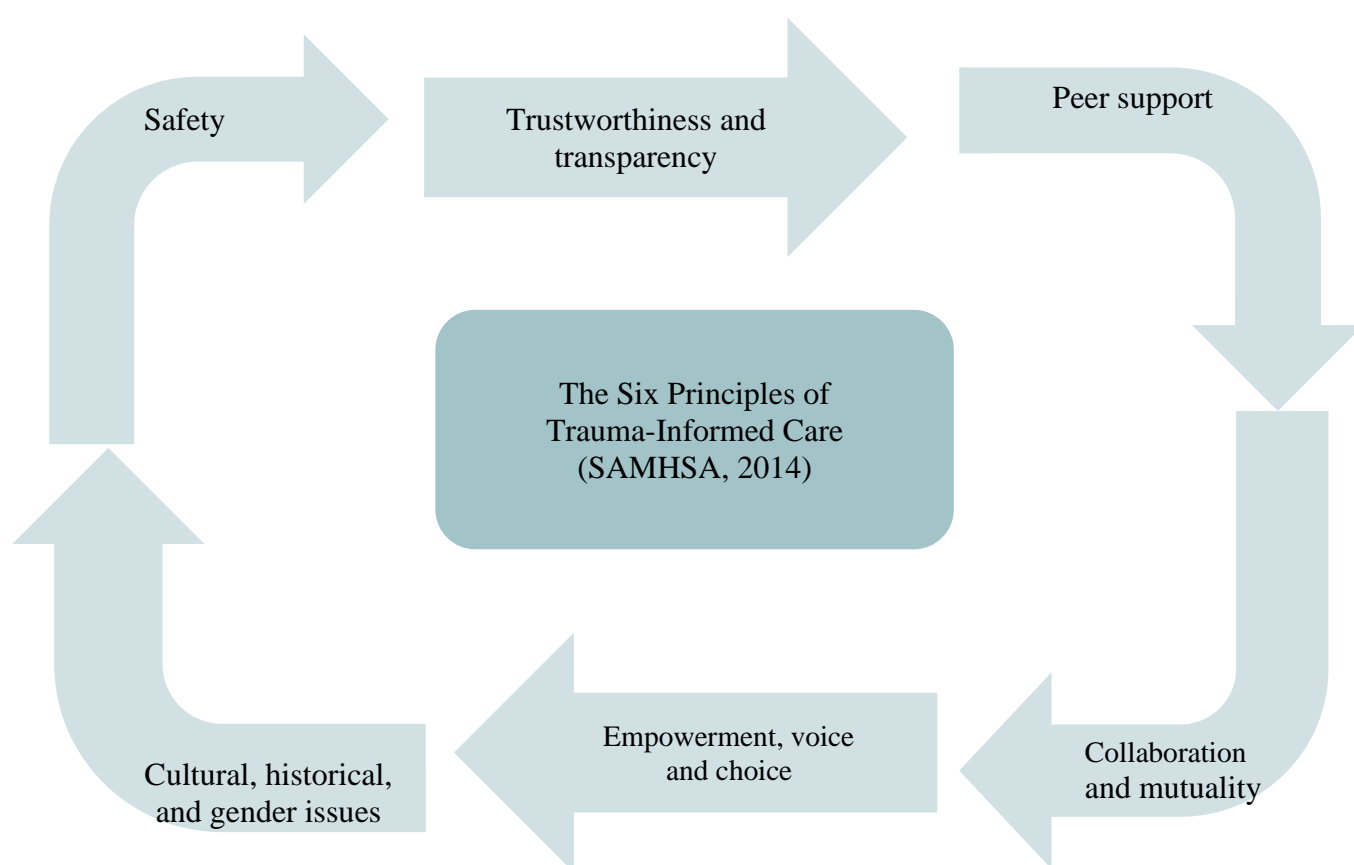
1.5.2.3 Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education by Venet (2021). Venet

expanded on the framework created by SAMHSA (2014) to investigate how the six principles of

trauma-informed care could be applied to all pupils more equitably and universally. Venet

established 'equity centred trauma-informed education' in 2021. Trauma-informed treatment was

considered a preventive measure at the heart of all practices in this approach. Trauma-informed care can benefit all students in educational settings. Venet (2021) recommended that educators include equity in their practice, standards, and procedures when focusing on the six principles. This theoretical framework was chosen because it is consistent with my teaching style and interest in inclusive classroom practices.

1.6 Summary

These trauma theories are crucial to this research. The WHO (2022) basic concept of trauma is critical for understanding the experiences of adolescents in schools. Trauma-informed care theories and frameworks aid in understanding trauma-informed care's main features that promote student welfare. The purpose of this study was to reflect on and expand on these theories in order to enhance trauma-informed practices in educational settings.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Many terms require succinct definitions in the context of the research. The terms that require these contextual explanations are defined here.

1.7.1 Blogging. Blogging is recording one's thoughts, feelings, and ideas on a web-based platform, such as WordPress or Wix, to share them with others. To be more exact, it is "...an open social software system that interacts easily with other social software and digital media, making it simple to incorporate web links, text, images, video and link with other blogs." (O'Byrne & Murrell, 2004, p. 927). The concept of blogging can shift, and the goal determines the output (O'Byrne & Murrell, 2004).

1.7.2 Choice. Choice provides a trauma-affected individual as much agency over their healing circumstances as feasible as one of the three emphases in the Trauma Informed Oregon

The Foundations of Trauma Informed Care (2014). Examples of choice include, in a trauma-informed setting, the ability to choose when and how to complete a task.

 1.7.3 Empowerment. According to Trauma Informed Oregon The Foundations of Trauma Informed Care (2014), empowerment stresses the rehabilitation of confidence and self-esteem. Affirmative and positive feedback and encouragement of a person's strengths and interests are all part of providing possibilities for empowerment. Finally, empowerment occurs when students understand their abilities and capabilities (Brunzell et al., 2022).

 1.7.4 Feedback. I used the Ontario Ministry of Education's Growing Success document throughout the thesis to define feedback (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). All K-12 Ontario educators use this document for assessment purposes. Growing Success indicates that descriptive feedback is part of the formative assessment process, where specific, timely, and detailed feedback is ongoing and meaningful (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Feedback is specific information on work progress and what next steps are required. Feedback can be from peers or educators, verbal or written, but it should be consistent, timely, and specific. A teacher's feedback should be explicit, and students can apply the suggestions independently.

 1.7.5 Micro-moves. I developed the term micro-move, which refers to small, daily acts a teacher actively engages within their classroom in response to student input. Micro-moves are based on instant feedback and observations and are intended to foster community, safety, and connection in the classroom. These can support trauma-informed care paradigms (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014). According to Alvarez (2017), some examples of micro-moves include noting and naming student struggles and trauma and any social, emotional, and ecological impacts; addressing the why of a student's behaviour rather than penalizing it; and offering support and opportunity to pursue interests.

My receptions and reactions to the trauma-informed practice of student blogging were the micro-moves unique to this study. Because writing is a curricular expectation in the Language Curriculum of the Ontario Ministry of Education for Grades 1-8 (2016), using it as a trauma-informed practice in an academic topic seems appropriate. Previous research has looked at trauma and critical witness in the literacy classroom and using literacy strategically to process and heal trauma (Dutro, 2011). I employed the micro-move of analyzing comments on students' blogs for this study and directly responded to student needs and feedback in a cyclical way. Using a micro-move required regular self-reflection of my actions as a teacher and how students reacted to lessons and methods I used in class.

1.7.6 Safety. Another focus from Trauma Informed Oregon (2014) is safety. Safety is defined as a person's physical and emotional well-being in any environment. In the classroom, safety is provided by developing trust between teachers and students and between students and their peers.

1.7.7 Trauma. SAMHSA (2014) defines trauma as:

individual trauma as an event or circumstance resulting in physical, emotional, and/or life-threatening harm. The event or circumstance has lasting adverse effects on the individual's: Mental health, physical health, emotional health, social well-being, and/or spiritual well-being. (para 2)

Trauma affects each person differently and, as a result, can manifest differently (Phifer & Hull, 2016).

1.7.8 Trauma-Informed Care. Trauma-informed care includes being trauma-aware and understanding how a person's experiences with trauma can encompass all aspects of their life (Hopper et al., 2010). Ensuring a method of service to meet the trauma-affected persons' needs is

paramount (Hopper et al., 2010). In the classroom, Venet (2021) suggests preventative trauma-informed measures educators can use for students; for example, having flexible learning choices and options benefits all students, regardless of trauma experience. Venet (2021) asserts that having unconditional positive regard for students is essential for trauma-informed care classrooms. This means caring for students, developing and encouraging students' strengths, and developing their sense of value in the classroom.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter, I provided the rationale and definition of micro-moves, and used this term to understand how my trauma-informed practices are perceived by students through blogging. I explained theoretical frameworks that support trauma, including SAMHSA's Six Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Care (2014), The Foundations of Trauma Informed Care (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014), and Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education by Venet (2021). I provided definitions of key terms that will be used throughout this paper.

In Chapter Two, this thesis will review specific studies on trauma, trauma-informed practice, blogging, and feedback. Gaps in research will be uncovered. The methodology for the study and data collection methods will be described in Chapter Three. Chapter Four will analyze the data's findings, with Chapter Five reviewing the data and making recommendations for further research and practice.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In this chapter, I will describe how literature was collected, and then review five critical foci of literature pertinent to this study, which are: (a) trauma, (b) trauma impacts on student learning, (c) trauma informed-care, (d) trauma-informed education, and (e) teacher development as trauma-informed practitioners.

2.1 Documentation

I focused my literature review search on two databases: Ontario Tech University's OMNI academic search tool and Google Scholar. I limited my searches to peer-reviewed academic journals, narrowing my initial search time limit from 2000-2023 to 2007-2023 to ensure I focused on the most recent research. Keywords used included "trauma," "trauma-informed care," "trauma-informed education," "trauma-informed practice," "student safety," "student voice," "student empowerment," "writing feedback," and "teacher development in trauma-informed care." I began my Boolean search with the keywords "trauma-informed" AND then added "student safety" AND "classroom" to reduce initial search results. I then replaced, for example, "student safety" and added "student empowerment", which I hoped would narrow my search results. If I searched using "student" before empowerment, I would remove "student" if very few results were found. When I searched "trauma-informed" AND "student safety" AND "school" in Ontario Tech University's OMNI search engine, 182 results were found. Adding the filter of peer-reviewed journals elicited 92 results on trauma-related content. Other articles appear that are specific to blogging, writing feedback, and are not specific to trauma. I disregarded any articles that did not pertain to Kindergarten to Grade 12 contexts. This chapter will now discuss what was found in the literature based on the five areas noted at the beginning of this chapter.

2.1.2 Trauma

Almost two-thirds (64%) of Canadians (Burczycka, 2017) have experienced at least one potentially traumatic event in their lifetime. In addition, one in every four (24%) Canadians has suffered some form of physical abuse as a child (Heidinger, 2022). Physical abuse as a child, on the other hand, is merely one sort of trauma. Childhood trauma can be defined as "...when a child experiences an actual or threatened negative event, series of events or set of circumstances that cause emotional pain and overwhelm the child's ability to cope." (Barlett & Steber, 2019, para 4). Given the classroom context and the number of children a teacher encounters during their career, it is reasonable to expect that educators engage with many traumatized students. Furthermore, the numbers and broad definition of childhood trauma justify the importance of trauma-informed care in schools. The WHO (2019) concept of trauma was utilized as the overarching trauma term for this thesis; however, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) definition of trauma is equally instructive and addresses many facets of trauma. As per their website, trauma is defined as:

> an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. (SAMHSA, 2019)

However, trauma affects more than an individual; the "effects of traumatic events place a heavy burden on individuals, families, and communities." SAMHSA (2019), para 1. Many people in a collective event, such as war, natural disaster, or community violence, might be influenced by trauma (Bates, 2023).

2.1.3 The Impacts of Trauma on Learning

Abundant research exists concerning the harmful and long-term impacts of trauma on learning (Alvarez, 2020; Brunzell et al., 2022; Champine et al., 2022; Cole et al., 2013; Harper & Nebauer, 2020; Howard, 2019; SAMHSA, 2019). According to The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), trauma and learning behaviours can manifest in many ways. The type and severity of the trauma, the availability of support networks surrounding the traumatic event, and the victim's age (NCTSN, 2008) are all factors that may determine how trauma affects learning. In middle school or junior grade levels (grades 4-8), trauma may manifest at school through anxiety, decreased attention, a change in academic performance, and/or angry outbursts (NCTSN, 2008). Visible trauma-related behaviours may include dissociation, personal boundary problems, language development difficulty, and sensorimotor issues (NCTSN, 2008). As McConnico et al. (2016) note, "Traumatic experiences may directly affect memory, language, emotional, and brain development, all of which interfere with mastery and acquisition of new skills" (p. 36). These traumatic responses have been primarily observed in children who experience complex and early trauma (Burdick & Corr, 2021; Perry et al., 1995; Perry et al., 2003).

Teachers' reactions to a child's outward trauma can impact the classroom, and a teacher may discipline a student for their outwardly disruptive behaviour (Crosby et al., 2018), not understanding the underlying traumatic cause of the behaviour. As a result, the student may be labelled 'negatively' by teachers and students (Jacobson, 2021). The negative label can create more turmoil in the student's education experience. Nevertheless, the underlying traumatic cause of the behaviour remains unexamined, and the child continues to struggle in school settings (Blitz et al., 2016; Crosby et al., 2018; Hannega-Martinez, 2019; Phifer & Hull, 2016; Venet,

2021). By contrast, a child who is experiencing or has experienced trauma can appear "fine" (Crosby et al., 2018; Perry, 2003), or they may be overly attentive to their schooling, seek perfectionism, and even excel. Therefore, the neurological impact of trauma is beneficial for teachers to understand. Perry et al. (1995) explain that the brain is in "fight, flight or freeze" during trauma. Morton (2022) adds that the trauma brain uses its energy to survive and constantly watches for danger (hypervigilance); thus, learning can be hindered and slowed.

Trauma can negatively impact student engagement and create issues in all aspects of school (Howard, 2019). Trauma impacts cognitive learning and leads to a lack of motivation, disengagement, and a sense of loss of self and confidence at school (Howard, 2019; Skarstein & Schultz, 2018). A person's sense of self-worth can be diminished, and they may disengage from school. Thus, they could feel ignored and misunderstood, develop unhealthy peer relationships, or feel that they have failed (Alvarez, 2017; Cunningham, 2021; Ginwright, 2018; Horowitz, 2015; Skarstein & Schultz, 2018). Trauma-informed practices applied to all may help address these challenges.

2.1.4 Trauma-Informed Care and Practices

Educators should understand how trauma affects students' learning and well-being and how it materializes differently for each student. Literature specific to trauma-informed care practices was reviewed, explicitly focusing on three of Trauma-Informed Oregon's (2014) principles: safety, choice, and empowerment.

Trauma-informed care works to recognize traumatic experiences and commits to restoring safety and worth (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014). More specifically, understanding includes awareness of the prevalence and complexity of trauma, that trauma impacts physical, emotional, social, and mental well-being, and that current systems can unintentionally re-

traumatize (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014). Hopper et al. (2010) explain further that trauma survivors require safety and choice. For teachers, a strengths-based approach is paramount and includes giving choice. A strengths-based approach includes seeing the talents and interests of students and including those in daily classroom interactions. This allows the trauma survivor to identify and participate in areas of interest, determine how they want to develop, for example, self-regulation skills and include their input on learning tasks (Hopper et al., 2010; Brunzell et al., 2022). This takes time, coaxing on the teacher's behalf, and understanding that empowerment after trauma is a journey and requires grace and empathy.

Trauma-informed care practices include awareness of the complexities and nuances of trauma on individuals. All organizations and institutions should implement trauma-informed care practices as standard care practices (Bassuk et al., 2017). This encompasses compassionate care for all, and in an education setting, this includes *all* students. Venet (2021) addresses trauma-informed care as a preventative, not a reactive, measure. Schools and classrooms can have a significant impact on student well-being and have the potential to be places of healing and self-discovery (Baweja et al., 2016; Blitz et al., 2016; Brunzell et al., 2022; Crosby, 2015; Dutro, 2019; Phifer & Hull, 2016). As Ginwright (2018) states, we want students to see what is "right with them" rather than be identified by "what happened" to them.

Research is beginning to connect trauma-informed practices to curriculum standards. As an educator, this is an optimal relationship, as performing trauma-informed practices through curriculum assists students in seeing themselves represented and creates a haven for challenging conversations (Dutro, 2011; Wissman & Wiseman, 2011). In particular, research (Moore & Begoray, 2017) discusses using read-alouds and writing to create space for testimony (sharing personal complex stories) and witnessing (listening to others' challenging experiences). For

instance, when reading a picture book about death, students dealing with the repercussions of death can find themselves in the book and have their emotions and reactions to the death validated. Even students who have not experienced the death of a loved one can empathize and form connections with those who have, thus fostering peer-to-peer relationships. These connections are essential to trauma-informed care (Hopper et al., 2010; Ludy-Dobson & Perry, 2010; Stokes, 2022; Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014; Wall, 2021; Wolpow, 2009). Creating a place for trauma-informed care in the classroom is the ultimate goal. Ideally, we want students to feel safe sharing challenging experiences, listening, and empathizing with others' complicated feelings. This can support the development of relationships and prevent future and potential traumas as support systems evolve (Martin et al., 2017; Venet, 2021).

The above examples focus on trauma-informed practices in the classroom; however, Gherardi et al. (2020) discussed how schools are focused on the cognitive awareness of trauma, rather than the systemic aspects of school that can re-traumatize. Policy changes are required by school boards to actively resist re-traumatization, which would enhance a sense of safety overall and build trauma-informed school systems rather than independent classrooms.

2.1.5 Students' Need for Safety

School can be a traumatizing place as there are pressures of academics (school work, grade performance, tests), peer relationship challenges (gaining and losing friends) and social exclusion (Alvarez, 2020; Baweja et al., 2016; Gaffney, 2019; Jones, 2020; Petrone & Stanton, 2021). The curriculum content, subject, and resources a teacher uses can be traumatizing (Jones, 2020; Gherardi et al., 2020). Consider, as an example, Indigenous students who never learn about Indigenous historical perspectives because it is rarely mentioned or discussed in the curriculum. These students may feel unsafe to inquire about a lack of representation in the

curriculum and, thus, feel ostracised (Jones, 2020). Trauma-affected students require safety to approach teachers with any issues or queries.

Another safety method is developing a strong support system, which includes socializing and collaboration with peers (Alisic, 2012; Brunzell et al., 2022; Chafouleas et al., 2016; Jacobson, 2021; Maynard et al., 2019; McConnico et al., 2016; O'Neill et al., 2010). Creating a classroom where students work collaboratively in different situations and can navigate respectful discourse leads to healthy relationships (Brunzell et al., 2022; Jacobson, 2021).

Research determined student safety (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014), both physical and perceived, is vital for students to begin their healing journey (Alvarez, 2020; Ginwright, 2018; Venet, 2021). Students might not feel safe because the brain responds to trauma actively and perpetually (Chafouleas et al., 2016; Perry, 1995; Perry & Szalavitz, 2017). The brain is constantly hypervigilant and on guard for dangers, creating focus and attention issues (Burdick & Corr, 2021; Hobbs et al., 2019; Koslouski & Stark, 2021; Perry & Szalavitz, 2017). Academic risk-taking and confidence in developing relationships are hindered if a student feels unsafe in the classroom (Cole et al., 2013; O'Neill et al., 2010; Wall, 2021).

Through her case studies, Dutro (2011) discusses using relationship building and sharing herself as a human to engage students in sharing (testimony) their stories. Dutro (2011, 2019) claims that opening up just a bit and using literacy as a catalyst creates a testimony/bear witness cycle where both student and educator develop compassion. Wiseman and Wissman (2011) also echo this sentiment of using literacy and opening conversations for students to discuss without feeling shame or guilt (Jones, 2012). Ultimately, the goal is for students to feel safe enough to take academic risks. After all, "a safe environment is critical for children with complex trauma reactions, with the establishment of safety being the first stage of all trauma work" (O'Neill et

al., 2010, pgs. 193-194). Safety includes developing relationships, and feeling comfortable physically and emotionally to develop their sense of self and educational identity in the classroom (Ginwright, 2018; Horowitz, 2015; Skarstein & Schultz, 2018).

Safety is a key factor in the healing process (Ginwright, 2018; Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014; Hopper et al., 2010; Venet, 2021), and the classroom can be a secure environment where students can begin to recover and develop methods to communicate their feelings of safety. Bates (2023) argues that since teachers observe students and are involved in their growth and development, they can create preventative environments, which are spaces that protect against future and/or potential traumas (Martin et al., 2017). Dutro (2011) argued that student safety starts with the teacher creating a safe space for discussing challenging topics. Dutro is working to make safety a topic that can be discussed openly, where both students and teachers can express their feelings, as part of her work on testimony and witnessing. Jones (2012) echoes Dutro's (2011) observations with their pre-service teacher work, discussing the importance of breaking down the myth of "appropriate" topics to share, discuss, read about, and value as part of the educational process. Wissman & Wiseman (2011) extend these thoughts by examining how poetry creates a space where students can interrogate their personal experiences and those of the world around them to see the macro view of their traumas socially and communicatively. Moore & Begoray (2017) share the sentiment, increasing student feeling of safety by engaging, listening, and sharing perspectives and views of other students.

Generally, students need safety to explore who they are and find value in their sense of self (Horowitz, 2010). Trust and safety are interconnected as healing praxis for those trauma-affected (Venet, 2021).

2.1.6 Students' Need for Trust

For students to develop their sense of self and feel safe with teachers and students, trust must be developed (Brunzell et al., 2022; Stipp & Kilpatrick, 2021). Unconditional positive regard is one method to obtain trust (Venet, 2021). In a classroom, unconditional positive regard means empathizing with the students and their traumatic experiences by providing students with a fresh beginning each day, despite previous days' behaviours, and believing students are capable people who need forgiveness and trust (Brunzell et al., 2022; Venet, 2021). This trauma-informed practice can be challenging for a teacher, as initial reactions to students' negative behaviours might be punitive. To establish trust, co-creating consequences with the student, developing strategies to assist with behaviours, and emphasizing students' strengths are ideal (Brunzell et al., 2022; Venet, 2021).

For academic success, students must trust their educators to be able to take risks, fail, and re-attempt, as well as trust their peers to collaborate and share ideas, therefore creating a collaborative learning community (Anderson et al., 2022; Alvarez, 2017, 2020; Jones & Spector, 2017) so students feel safer to take these risks.

Educators generally view trauma as something that occurs outside of school that students bring with them from home; it is seen as an 'other' (Gaffney, 2019). However, schools can cause and worsen trauma. Generally, schools should "...focus…on historical, socio-cultural, institutional, and intersectional understandings of complex trauma; and its utilization (or lack thereof) of relational, participatory, and humanizing methods" (Petrone & Stanton, 2021, p. 537). Adverse events in the school system might cause students to lose trust and enter the classroom with skepticism. A barrier to trust is formed before creating a relationship between teacher and student.

According to Dutro (2011, 2019), trust is required for the reciprocity and critical witness of the student-teacher connection. A student is in the classroom for several hours a day, and one's reactions to a student's sharings and experiences are a delicate balance that must be valued with respect and reciprocity (Petrone & Stanton, 2021), especially because trauma can cause a lot of shame (Hannegan-Martinez, 2019; Jones & Spector, 2017; Skarstein & Schultz, 2018). This fear of shame impedes the formation of healthy connections (Jones & Spector, 2017), putting additional strain on the traumatized individual. When trust is present, it is possible to restore a sense of self-worth (O'Neill et al., 2010).

2.1.7 Students' Need for Empowerment

Finding a sense of self-identity is part of the healing and recovery process that empowers students (Alvarez, 2017; Blitz et al., 2016; Ginwright, 2018; Horowitz, 2010). Put simply, "...trauma-informed classrooms welcome and encourage a child to bring who they are, where they are from, and what they desire to be into the classroom every day." (Thomas et al., 2018, p. 22). Students' identities and experiences should be valued in the classroom (Ginwright, 2018) since empowering a student's interests and background is part of the healing journey. A teacher can provide choices on how, what, and where students work (Crosby, 2015; Kirk et al., 2017; Koslouski & Stark, 2021; Wall, 2021), which empowers them when previous trauma might have created a sense of helplessness. Students begin to trust teachers, their peers, and themselves as they learn methods of demonstrating their work effectively (Anderson et al., 2022).

Curriculum, specifically literacy, can serve as a place to empower students through critical texts (Dutro, 2011; Jones, 2012; Moore & Begoray, 2017; Wissman & Wiseman, 2011). Writing can lead to self-healing, expressing emotions and experiences, and collaboration skills (Dutro, 2011; Wissman & Wiseman, 2011).

Empowering these conversations is a part of the critical literacy classroom, which provides space for simultaneously learning, healing and recovering from trauma (Walters & Anderson, 2021). However, an important issue is the silo effect of various aspects of trauma, such as focusing only on how trauma affects academic success (Baweja et al., 2016; Howard, 2019). Trauma affects all aspects of a person's life, so educators should understand that providing an empowering space that encompasses students' mental, social, physical, and academic well-being is ideal in a trauma-informed environment (Crosby, 2015).

Empowering students to have choices and be decision-makers in all aspects of their education assists with holistic healing and development (Crosby, 2015; Venet, 2021). It creates trust and relationships between educators and students, as well as between students and their peers; as such, all parties can uplift and support one another. Creating trusting relationships assists with self-advocacy later in life as a support network is developed (Ginwright, 2018; Larios, 2020; Ludy-Dobson & Perry, 2010), which is empowering as it gives confidence to ask for assistance.

As Dutro (2011) points out, teachers facilitating difficult conversations can be productive and empowering for trauma survivors. Those affected by trauma have a "tremendous capacity for self-healing" (O'Neill et al., 2010, p. 194), and educators should not fear letting students explore their own traumas. Being open to these challenging conversations using literacy and read-alouds as a catalyst for discussions could assist in empowerment (Dutro, 2011; Jones, 2012; Moore & Begoray, 2017).

Students are in a classroom for 6-7 hours a day throughout a large portion of their life. As such, it is logical for school to be a place where support in the healing and recovery process can occur (Baweja et al., 2016; Brunzell et al., 2022; Crosby, 2015; Howard, 2019). There are

various ways to provide safety in the classroom to encourage students to embark on their healing journey, and writing could allow students to examine their feelings (Larios, 2020). Larios (2020) recommends allowing the writer to choose the writing topic without expecting the writer to expose their traumas. Providing choice in what and how to write empowers a student's voice.

Through writing, students are encouraged through feedback. Students have varied interests, and trauma-informed practices honour their strengths (Cole et al., 2013). In their writing, for example, a student may express frustration with homelessness in their area. A teacher may provide examples of school-led organizations assisting with homelessness and encouraging the student to participate. Taking part in a school-wide social justice initiative provides opportunities for collective and community problem-solving. This may increase student engagement and, therefore, create an increased sense of self-esteem and worth (Bawaje et al., 2016; Blitz et al., 2016; Crosby, 2015; Gherardi et al., 2020; Petrone & Stanton, 2021; Venet, 2021). Empowerment also means removing the individualistic blame of trauma, recognizable by the phrase 'it's my fault.' Allowing for collective healing means understanding how society impacts trauma (Alvarez, 2020; Brunzell et al., 2022; Gherardi et al., 2020; Ginwright, 2018; Pentrone & Stanton, 2021; Venet, 2021). Providing a trauma-affected person access to leadership and community engagement opportunities could lead to empowerment, as the student realizes they have talents and abilities outside the classroom (Wheeler, 2007). This also provides observation of societal impacts on trauma and could lessen self-blame.

Providing students with opportunities for community involvement permits self-discovery and exploration of their experiences of trauma in a macro sense, ultimately providing a better sense of self (Horowitz, 2015). Skarstein and Schultz (2018) noted how various identities impact students, and if educators understand the intersection of these roles (their student vs. home

identities), schools are seen as more empowering. This is empowering because students feel that all aspects of themselves are honoured in the classroom, as opposed to just their student identity. Gherardi et al. (2020) also noted that empowerment can develop in peer-to-peer relationships through collaboration, as peers share their work and feelings and are critical witnesses with one another's learning journeys. This promotes healing and resilience by realizing that a traumatized person is not alone and has support.

2.1.8 Students' Need for Relationships

Perry (2007) points out that trauma can be perceived as isolation, even when a trauma-affected person has support systems. Thus, a trauma-affected person may find it easier to deal with the effects of trauma alone (Sonu et al., 2021). Despite the inclination to deal with the trauma alone, healthy relationships are most important for healing a trauma-affected person (Ludy-Dobson & Perry, 2010; Morgan et al., 2015; Sonu et al., 2021; Venet, 2021). Relationships between educators and students need to be established. Teachers play a vital role in establishing student-to-student relationships (Koslouski & Stark, 2021; Venet, 2021; Wall, 2021). Relationship building can be challenging, due to the general disruptive behaviours of the trauma-affected student.

As some traumas are disruptive, research has shown that traumatic responses are generally dealt with punitively (Cole et al., 2013; Parker et al., 2020; Phifer & Hull, 2016; Thomas et al., 2019). These punitive measures generally translate to student detention, suspensions, and removal from the classroom. These punishments are isolating, further removing a chance for the trauma-affected student to develop relationships. Punitive measures are generally chosen because teachers are unaware that visible behaviours are associated with trauma (Parker et al., 2020; Phifer & Hull, 2016; Thomas et al., 2019). This can create a cycle of

teacher-to-student power struggles, with the student misbehaving and the teacher punishing the behaviour. This cycle disregards the student's complex traumatic experiences and could create tension, putting the student in "fight or flight" mode (Perry, 2003; Perry & Szalavitz, 2017). As such, trauma-informed care cannot be applied as a reactive process; instead, it should be applied as a preventative process that benefits the development of healthy relationships (Bates, 2023; Champine et al., 2021; Gherardi et al., 2020; Sonu et al., 2021; Venet, 2021; Wheeler, 2007; Wolpow, 2009).

Healthy, trusting relationships are crucial for trauma-experienced persons, as healing and recovery are based on relationship building (Bassuk et al., 2017; Ludy-Dobson & Perry, 2010; Koslouski & Stark, 2021; Perry & Szalavitz, 2017; Sonu et al., 2021; Wall, 2021). Ginwright (2018), Petrone & Stanton (2021), and Venet (2021) are some of the researchers who call for an empathetic and holistic approach to trauma-informed care, understanding that trauma affects a whole being and all they encompass. Therefore, relationships must be built to continue to develop safety, guidance, and healing, and educators could provide academic differentiation for success and build honest relationships (Koslusik & Stark, 2021; Venet, 2021; Wall, 2021). By providing empathy, working toward mutuality, and empowering through choice and conversation, relationships can provide foundational support for healing (Brunzell et al., 2022; Koslusik & Stark, 2021; Phifer & Hull, 2016; Pinhasi-Vittorio, 2018). Nurturing and positive teacher-to-student relationships for a trauma-affected student has numerous positive implications for one's current and future academic success (Bates, 2023; Koslouski & Stark, 2021; O'Neill et al., 2010; Perry & Szalavitz, 2017; Venet, 2021; Wall, 2021).

Both teacher-to-student relationships and student-to-student relationships are meaningful and essential. Students require safety with their peers to build friendships and healthy boundaries

(Jones & Spector, 2017; Koslouski & Stark, 2021; Venet, 2021; Wall, 2021). Teachers should look for and support students' social interactions and creative outlets to allow them to express themselves (Cunningham, 2021; Moore & Begoray, 2017; Venet, 2021; Wall, 2021) by advising which extra-curricular activities a student should join, notice and name potential areas of connections for students to broaden their social circles.

2.1.9 Trauma In and Out of the Classroom

The research for this paper focused on micro-moves a teacher could implement in a classroom. Generally, trauma is widely understood in schools as directly related to the individual student, with attitudes such as "trauma comes from outside" the student's school life. However, trauma-informed care means being responsive and holistic toward a person's experience of trauma. Teachers cannot neglect the possibility that they could be the source of a student's trauma, or that the trauma could be the collective identity of schools and institutions and society itself (Petrone & Stanton, 2021).

Trauma cannot be cured with a teacher's implementation of trauma-informed practices alone, nor is that the expectation. Nevertheless, trauma-informed practices can provide safety to make the trauma-impacted person more comfortable and willing to learn. Trauma-informed practices can be powerful when they are the root of all curricula and are the structure of school district policies (Baweja et al., 2016).

A trauma-affected person needs to be seen in their full humanity, and a community-minded approach needs to be applied (Champine et al., 2022; Crosby et al., 2018; Duane et al., 2020; Ginwright, 2018; Petrone & Stanton, 2021). This could mean teachers need to consider their trauma-informed practices and how they reflect the school system. For example, a trauma-affected person may have a positive and healing experience in one classroom or school, and a

retraumatizing and negative experience in another (Howard, 2019). This could be due to many factors, including, but not limited to, the amount and extent of TIP training. Thus, at a fundamental level, even without formal TIP training, teachers should be aware of the classroom environment, the social experiences, and the general life conditions that students are experiencing, in and out of school (i.e., racism, homophobia, poverty, transphobia, Islamophobia, sexism, etc.) (Duane et al., 2020).

Regardless of the type of trauma experienced, that trauma embodies part of how a person interacts with their world (Cole et al., 2013). Crosby (2015) discusses that trauma does not end because the environment, place, or people are different. Trauma is not isolated from a person's identity. In a classroom, for instance, a teacher may focus on the visible negative behaviours displayed by a specific student, and they may continue to apply a punitive approach to these disruptive behaviours (Anderson et al., 2021; Champine et al., 2021; Howard, 2019; Jacobson, 2021; Morton & Berardi, 2017; Parker et al., 2019; Stokes, 2022). In this case, the trauma becomes almost a single entity: the behaviour. A teacher's thought process could be "if I implement strategies to end outward behaviours, then learning will happen, and the student will be successful." A focus on behaviour management could have short-term success; however, for a person who is experiencing trauma, this does not assist with the long-term effects on their social and emotional well-being or self-actualization (Alvarez, 2020; Crosby et al., 2018; Horowitz, 2015; Petrone & Stanton, 2021; Wall, 2021). Figure 3 illustrates my model of how trauma impacts all aspects of students' lives and identities through self-to-world connections.

For a school to be fully trauma-informed, actions must be taken and implemented at the board, school, and classroom levels (Baweja et al., 2016; Chafouleas et al., 2016; Champine et al., 2022; Harper & Neubauer, 2021; Morton & Berardi, 2017; Thomas et al., 2019), and teachers

must understand global and social issues that might impact trauma, even if there does not seem

to be an obvious connection.

Figure 3

"Ripple" of Trauma Influence

World/communal
*(how the world around
impacts trauma)*

Family/Social/
School community

Class environment
*(immediate classroom
peers, teacher
relations, academic
pressures)*
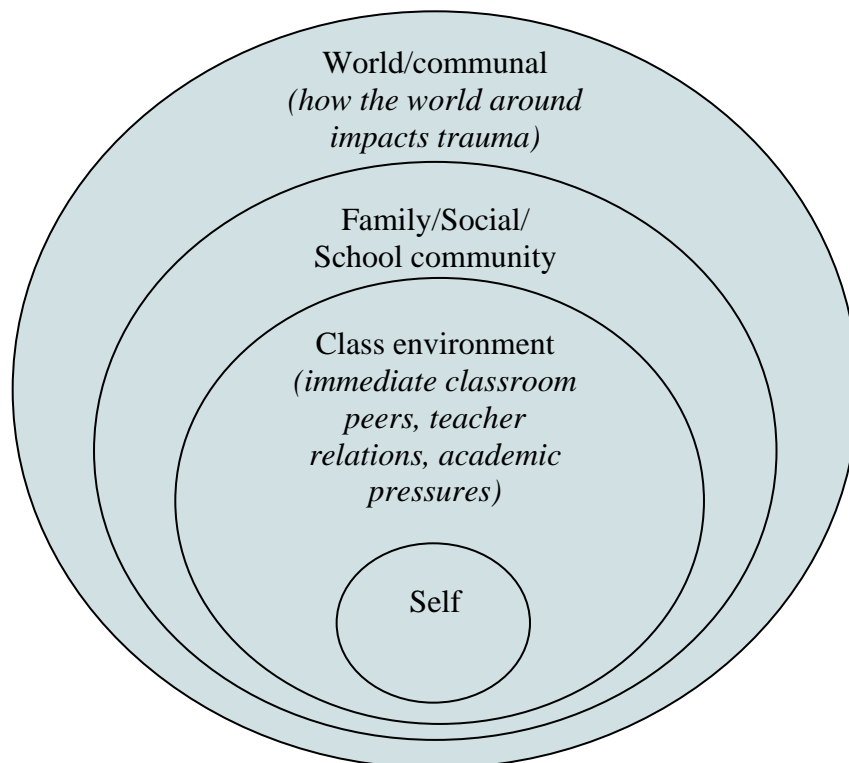
Self

In Figure 3, this relationship is illustrated as ripples in water, with the self, the first

internal circle, being the rock thrown in the water. For example, the rock could represent a

student affected by poverty and neglect. The student imagines this is a private and self-matter.

The class environment, illustrated by the second ripple, presents added pressures from the

classroom environment. For example, the student cannot purchase or bring lunch, and

experiences hunger throughout the day while struggling to focus on academic tasks. A teacher

may call the student out on being distracted, which results in the student feeling shame. The third

ripple represents the broader school community factors, such as access to social work support.

The student may be on a waitlist to access social work care in this hypothetical case. The final and most ripple is the larger community and global factors influencing this student's trauma. In this situation, the student has a single parent who is unemployed due to a lack of work, which perpetuates poverty and creates instability. Though Figure 3 is described from the inner circle moving outward, this can be reversed, meaning trauma can start at the global level and filter inward to the self.

Understanding how trauma affects numerous levels of a student's life is the first step in being trauma-informed in education, according to Morton and Berardi (2017):

> Trauma-informed school programming requires everyone to get on board the bus - from school board members to bus drivers, credentialed and non-credentialed staff alike; all persons, regardless of roles are instrumental to creating a unified, cohesive trauma-informed environment promoting student learning and development. (p. 491)

All school-affiliated personnel must be trauma-informed in order for pupils to receive treatment and safety from all staff.

School itself can be the cause of trauma. For example, implementing a Eurocentric curriculum that omits and erases indigenous experiences (Duane et al., 2020; Gaffney, 2019; Jones, 2020; Jones & Spector, 2017; Petrone & Stanton, 2021). Another way school can cause trauma is through teachers focusing on the trauma behaviours only. To create a place of healing in the classroom, any focus on behaviours should include community, including peers and interests, and cultural support systems (Duane et al., 2020; Ginwright, 2018; Jones & Spector, 2017; Wolpow, 2009). A systemic approach to trauma-informed practices should be implemented (Champine et al., 2022; Howard, 2019).

Trauma-informed education can be implemented successfully with broader support systems, such as social workers or adequate funding (Thomas et al., 2019). As Morton and Berardi (2017) state, schools require systems that support the work of trauma-informed educators. If that support is consistent and present, students will feel successful, and educators may not experience burnout from the burden of creating a trauma-informed space on their own (Parker et al., 2019). Alisic (2012) notes that teachers appreciate trauma-informed professional development but can only implement it successfully with the proper support (Brunzell et al., 2022; Maynard et al., 2019; Parker et al., 2019; Venet, 2019). Support includes consistent assistance from social workers or educational coaches, administrative support in the classroom, and continuation of professional development. If support is not continuous, teachers could return to or continue a punitive state of classroom management (Parrotta et al., 2021; Petrone & Stanton, 2021).

When fully implemented, schools succeed in trauma-informed education practices (Cole et al., 2013; Parker et al., 2019). It follows then that a trauma-informed community and school district will have more success than an isolated classroom. However, most teachers are implementing trauma-informed practices isolation, without the recommended support (Parker et al., 2019). Another area for improvement with school-wide TIP is long-term sustainability, and determining if schools can support trauma-informed practices over time (Christian-Brandt et al., 2020). These practices include collaborating with mental health professionals and ensuring the administration is consistent with trauma-informed practices (Howard, 2019). Furthermore, it is necessary to have protocols for teachers' vicarious trauma or strategies to assist teachers in dealing with difficult conversations and keeping them mentally healthy (Venet, 2021). Protocols

could include free district counselling services, and encouragement to seek colleagues for support.

Although some teachers find trauma-informed practices challenging and exhausting (Koslouski & Stark, 2021; Luthar & Mendes, 2020; Venet, 2019), students are in the direct care of educators for the bulk of their formative years (Alisic, 2012; Baweja et al., 2016; Brunzell et al., 2022; Koslouski & Stark, 2021). As such, rather than understanding trauma-informed care practices as another item to implement, considering trauma-informed care as an overarching framework for teaching has proven to be less daunting (Bassuk et al., 2017; Dutro, 2019; Petrone & Stanton, 2021). Structured as a framework that supports the curriculum, trauma-informed care can be embedded in academic practices (Dutro, 2011, 2019; Jones, 2012; Pinhasi-Vittorio, 2018; Wissman &Wiseman, 2011) and as an approach to creating student-centred spaces and communities in classrooms (Brunzell et al., 2022; Ginwright, 2018; Gherardi et al., 2020; Stipp & Kilpatrick, 2021; Morton & Berardi, 2017; Wall, 2021; Wolpow, 2019). This could include community building through discussion and circles, integrating students' experiences and stories into the curriculum, and integrating students' input into the assessment and grading process.

Framing trauma-informed practices within curriculum is practical as it can assist learning needs and provide students a choice in work presentation methods, how they work, and where they work (Kearley et al., 2021; Koslouski & Stark, 2021; Morton, 2022; Wall, 2021) and benefit everyone, trauma-affected or not. Enabling students' views, perspectives, and strengths to permeate lessons is another trauma-informed strategy, which could include collaboration with students regarding assessment, distribution, and application of feedback and conversations about expectations (Koslouski & Stark, 2021; Venet, 2021).

Research on using literacy as a trauma-informed practice is becoming increasingly abundant. Examples include witness and testimony in classroom discussions where students are encouraged to use texts to validate their emotions and experiences (Boniel-Nissim & Barak, 2013; Dutro, 2011, 2019; Larios, 2020; Moore & Begoray, 2017; Wissman & Wiseman, 2011) as a form of expression and healing (Batzer, 2016; Haq, 2017; Larios, 2020). Providing read-aloud, poems, articles, and multimedia that depict challenging experiences and characters' responses to them assists students in understanding and validating their traumatic experiences (Dutro, 2011; 2019; Wissman & Wiseman, 2011). Teachers can provide these texts and allow for discussions to promote emotional expression. Writing also promotes self-discovery; if a student does not feel uncomfortable verbally expressing connections to texts, they can record (Dutro, 2011, 2019; Larios, 2020).

Crosby (2015) states, "As individuals develop, they are not only influenced by their unique biological and psychological characteristics, but also by the family system, school, community, and larger social system." (pg. 224). We can no longer ignore why trauma-informed care is needed; instead, we must see the value of creating and sustaining trauma-informed classrooms, schools, and societies (Bassuk et al., 2017; Duane et al., 2020; Koslouski & Stark, 2021).

As per Figure 3 found above, one ripple can affect many aspects of a trauma-impacted student's life, and as educators, being aware of the levels of ripples could help us become more understanding of a student's trauma experiences.

2.1.10 A Need for Healing and Recovery in the Classroom

Thomas et al. (2019) call for healing to be the central focus of any trauma-informed program. Providing and nurturing the healing of students affected by trauma in the classroom is

possible, and there is a tremendous capacity for self-healing (O'Neill, 2010). Jones and Spector

(2017) explained that teachers being available for communication is when students might feel

safe to explore their emotions and feelings and start to heal through relationships, academics, and

play (Bates, 2023; Morton, 2022; Ginwright, 2018). For example, Cunningham (2021) found that

by assisting students in "...naming these fears, students came to see they were not alone, and we

could begin to collectively strategize how to develop self-compassion, confidence, and

authenticity as some of the essential work of becoming a teacher." (Cunningham, 2021, p. 290).

This could generate a human experience in the classroom, with the hope that students continue to

strive for healing and recovery in their community outside of school (Hannegan-Martinez, 2019;

Morgan et al., 2015; Sonu et al., 2021). According to Blitz et al. (2016), providing a space where

students could heal may go against the traditional school institution; however, ensuring that

students are collectively respected, allowing them to share their strengths and experiences, and

working toward healing (Phifer & Hull, 2016).

One issue with moving to a trauma-informed education system is the shame and stigma

attached to discussing what is deemed inappropriate in school (Jones, 2012). Historically,

schools have not been places for students to share personal challenges within regular classroom

discourse. This could be because of fear on teachers' behalf regarding how to assist a child in

difficult situations, or personal beliefs may prevent a student or teacher from sharing (Jones,

2012; Wissman & Wiseman, 2011). Some researchers assert that teachers should shift their

thinking on what is appropriate if they honour safety, choice and empowerment in the trauma-

informed classroom (Jones, 2012). Providing space for challenging topics authenticates students'

experiences and "...cultivate[s] hope for the future." (Champine et al., 2022, p. 465). Moreover,

students come to school to be able to immerse themselves in interests, explore places to succeed,

and build relationships (Jacobson, 2021); therefore, developing a safe and collectively cooperative classroom builds healing, recovery, and hope (Cunningham, 2021; Ginwright, 2018; Hannegan-Martinez, 2019; Hobbs et al., 2019; Wolpow, 2009).

Healing can also occur by providing safe spaces for students to reflect, inviting their thoughts, and connecting with other students. Phifer and Hull (2016) noted that educators who changed to preventative trauma-informed practices observed higher student compassion for each other and increased resiliency when affronted with new challenges. When preventative trauma-informed practices were applied collectively ("how can we all help?" rather than "what do you need to figure this out?"), there was increased cooperation and relationship building between peers and decreased feelings of isolation (Bassuk et al., 2017; Duane et al., 2020; Jones & Spector, 2017; Moore & Begoray, 2017; Wall, 2021). Every trauma experience differs for each person, and the behaviours and reactions to trauma change in different situations and times (Maynard et al., 2019; Perry, 2003; Perry & Szalavitz, 2017). Providing collective support led to a more positive healing experience.

 Trauma-affected students should, ideally, investigate and advocate for their own needs, develop their abilities, and feel supported while they heal. School can be an environment for receiving this help, especially if teachers are secure in their trauma-informed skills. As a result, a school could be a productive environment that could support healing (Brunzell et al., 2022; Luthar & Mendes, 2020; Thomas et al., 2019).

2.1.11 Teacher Development of Trauma-Informed Practices

Teacher development and training on trauma-informed practices research has varied responses, from supportive and positive (Brunzell et al., 2022; Hobbs et al., 2019; Parker et al., 2019) to isolating and ineffective (Alisic, 2012; Baweja et al., 2016).

Positively, teachers observed long-term gains in their students' success and behaviours and have found that they are increasingly empathetic educators (Parker et al., 2019). Negatively, teachers felt unsupported after professional development and did not have in-classroom support to implement TIP in a practical, long-term manner (Alisic, 2012). Other research detailed a combination of successes and drawbacks when implementing TIP.

Although trauma-informed practices show promise, long-term sustainability issues exist (Baweja et al., 2016; Brunzell et al., 2022; Chafouleas et al., 2016; Christian-Brandt et al., 2020). Finances (Alisic, 2012), systems (Thomas et al., 2019), and persons with training must remain accessible to teachers and students over time (Maynard et al., 2019); otherwise, teachers do not feel supported to continue providing trauma-informed practices (Alisic, 2012; Brunzell et al., 2022; Howard, 2019; Maynard et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2019). Champine et al. (2022) explained that teachers have an introductory understanding of TIP but need more assistance implementing classroom trauma-informed practices. Another concern cited in the research is assisting boundary setting for educators so teachers do not burn out (Alisic, 2012; Cunningham, 2021; Venet, 2021). Cunningham (2021) found that teachers already felt pressured and challenged with their regular teaching duties and felt trauma-informed practices do not account for the work already done in the classroom. Instead, they were viewed as an "add-on" and, thus, believed it to be a personal attack on their teaching practice. Teachers stated that they "...struggled with their role and wondered at what point their tasks as a teacher ended and at what point those of a social worker or psychologist started." (Alisic, 2012, p. 54). Educators felt they were expected to do more than their job description, and teacher stress is apparent when they hear students' traumatic experiences (Howard, 2019; Parker et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2019; Venet, 2021). Teacher stress is not addressed in the education system with enough support

(Parker et al., 2019; Venet, 2019). Teachers also felt that TIP training was extensive and time-consuming, and there was a lack of teacher support beyond TIP training (Alisic, 2012; Howard, 2019; Martin et al., 2017). Other teachers state that they have limited access to training and would like more time dedicated to TIP training and assistance in the classroom (Parker et al., 2019).

Baweja et al. (2016) found that students felt more supported when their teachers had an overall positive attitude to supporting mental health. Students wanted their teachers to understand their mental health needs and for educators to be aware and supportive in classrooms regarding mental health. Students stated that their mental health cannot be separated from their academic success (Koslouski & Stark, 2021; Parrotta et al., 2021). For this reason, trauma-informed practices should be implemented at all education stakeholder levels, including community, board, school, and classroom (Baweja et al., 2016). The research does not include student responses to trauma-informed practices that have been introduced, the next area of focus will be on understanding how blogging might be used as a channel for student feedback.

2.1.12 Writing/Blogging as Trauma-Informed Practice

Trauma-informed practices can seem daunting and stressful to learn and implement at the classroom level (Alisic, 2012). Schools have a shortage of skilled support, and educators believe that trauma-informed approaches should be supported indefinitely (Horesh & Brown, 2020). Teachers are "left alone" in the classroom to build and execute trauma-informed environments and do not feel adequately educated to do so effectively (Maynard et al., 2019; Venet, 2019). According to research (Dutro, 2011; Moore & Begoray, 2017), writing can be utilized to develop trauma-informed practices without overwhelming instructors.

As evidenced by narrative and writing therapy (Batzer, 2016; Boniel-Nissim & Barak, 2013; Cunningham, 2021; Dutro, 2019; Granic et al., 2020; Haq, 2017; Hibsch & Mason, 2021; Larios, 2020; Pinhasi-Vittorio, 2018), writing is a straightforward method to integrate trauma-informed practices into the language curriculum. Writing is required in every class and is trauma-informed through the healing, recovery, and self-affirmation processes (Batzer, 2016; Hibsch & Mason, 2021; Larios, 2020). Cunningham (2021) addressed how students' moods might be improved through open-ended journal-style writing in which they write about personal situations. Writing can provide a secure area where thoughts are not judged. Teachers can provide this writing space in regular classroom practice and short bursts (Dutro, 2011, 2019).

In Figure 4, the main benefits of blogging are illustrated. The benefits are cyclical, and they rely on and support one another because self-expression (Hibsch & Mason, 2021) can help with emotional processing (Larios, 2020), leading to positive well-being (Granic et al., 2020). The cycle can continue indefinitely.

Figure 4

Main benefits of blogging
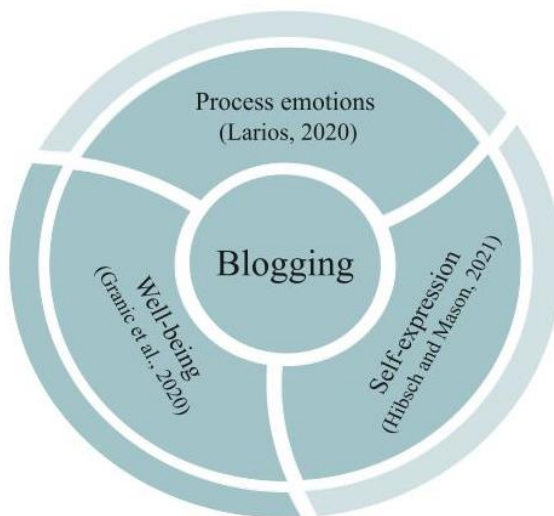
Despite these benefits, it is important to note that teachers may encounter students' reluctance to write because writing is vulnerable (Dutro, 2011; Batzer, 2016; Granic et al., 2020; Wissman & Wiseman, 2011). Since students are writing at school, there is an implicit expectation to write about what is appropriate (Jones, 2021; Moore & Begoray, 2017; Wiseman & Wissman, 2011). For instance, a student may wish to discuss their feelings around their parents' divorce but may feel it is inappropriate. There is an unspoken power imbalance here; the teacher is the one who decides the topics and, even inadvertently, may influence the student's writing topic (Wiseman & Wissman, 2011), which takes away true student choice.

For writing and journaling to be genuinely trauma-informed, complex and challenging writing topics must be accepted (Batzer, 2016; Dutro, 2011; Jones, 2012) without adverse repercussions. The topics, response method, and whether writing is shared, require respect. As Goodson (2019) notes, "I must assume that there are others who are not yet at a place where they feel comfortable sharing—or that I am not the person with whom they choose to share their struggles." (p. 6) and so writing is the vehicle to express thoughts and feelings. Educators should provide a proper writing space where students can choose what and how they write, as well as with whom they share their writing (Moore & Begoray, 2017; Jones, 2012; Wissman & Wiseman, 2011). This allows writing and literacy to become vital components in healing, and individuals can see themselves as more than just their traumatic experiences (Pinhasi-Vittorio, 2018). Blogging, a digital action that students can keep private, is a strong choice for a writing platform.

Research by Hibsch and Mason (2021) supports the benefits of adolescent blogging. Their study notes how it relieves stress since it is "on-demand," alleviating waiting to talk to someone. For adolescents with general challenges, blogging may assist in self-understanding and

reflection (Boniel-Nissim & Barak, 2013; Hibsch & Mason, 2021). If the writer chooses, blogging also allows for community by having readers comment on the author's blog, which could lead to virtual relationships (Hibsch & Mason, 2021).

During COVID-19, students were immersed in online learning and interactions. Granic et al. (2020) discussed how a sense of self and identity could develop through digital spaces. Blogging is a digital action that many students would feel technologically comfortable with, and could be used as a successful reflection tool.

Since adolescents are online and sharing their experiences on various digital platforms, blogging is a natural place to begin the process of writing and sharing (Boniel-Nissim & Barak, 2013).

2.1.13 Teacher-to-Student Feedback

Growing Success (2010) states that timely and consistent feedback improves student learning and suggests a variety of feedback styles depending on the goals of the writing; thus, two main types of feedback were used for the blogs. Rodgers (2018) discusses the hopefulness and personalization of the feedback process, which gives students input on what they change. Hibsch and Mason (2021) also discuss how empowering it is to receive blog-based feedback, as it can allow writers to move forward with their ideas (Tan, 2008).

According to Sieben (2017), teachers should go beyond grammar and spelling critique and provide input that stimulates positive participation in the writing process. Furthermore, Sieben (2017) recommends that teachers balance criticism and compliments, focus on specific areas, and limit the amount of feedback given to students so that they can handle the situation. According to Rodgers (2018), while some educators believe descriptive feedback wastes time, it slows teacher and student writing and requires them to analyze their writing processes.

2.2 Summary

Research defines trauma-informed care practices and education in different ways. There are numerous options for implementing trauma-informed practices in the classroom. However, the concepts of safety, choice, and empowerment are high-yield trauma-informed practices that have proven effective in various medical and educational situations. Recent publications emphasize the value of community and taking a proactive and comprehensive approach to healing trauma (Venet, 2021). When research focuses solely on academic outcomes, it tends to isolate parts of trauma-informed therapy. As trauma affects many aspects of a person's well-being, this could provide a dilemma for teachers seeking trauma-informed best practices. More research on trauma-informed techniques' holistic and cohesive aspects may be more valuable and accessible to instructors. There is also a shortage of research on students' experiences and opinions of trauma-informed care approaches that teachers may use.

Figure 5 outlines the critical missing aspects in research, which led to the focus of my research. As illustrated in Figure 5, significant gaps included student perspectives on applying trauma-informed practices, simple TIP strategies that a teacher could easily and quickly implement in their classroom community, and perspectives from those directly and actively involved in the classroom, educators and support staff. These gaps became the focus in my data collection and analysis, which the Chapter Three details.

Figure 5

Gaps in Literature
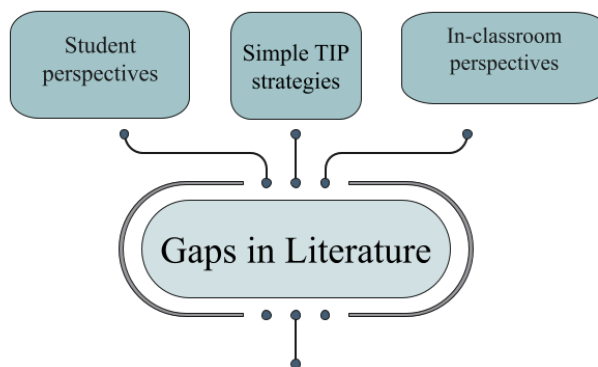
Chapter Three: Methodology

This research aimed to explore blogging as a trauma-informed practice in the classroom. To participate in that process, the research design was evaluated, including research paradigms, research methodologies, the study population, data gathering and analysis methods. This chapter outlines the research design features as well as potential limitations. I begin by quickly reviewing the study's setting and participant demographics.

3.1 Study Context/Population

I am a certified teacher in a public school in Ontario, Canada. As part of my usual teaching practice, I aim to incorporate trauma-informed approaches to promote my students' well-being. I am aware of the effects of trauma on learning and how many students may have experienced or are at risk of experiencing trauma. As a teacher, I used a universal approach, which is when instructional practices developed to help some students are made available to all students in order to help them (Morton, 2022). All students can benefit from trauma-informed strategies emphasizing empowerment and resilience (Wall, 2021). As a result, in the school year 2021-2022, I consciously used blogging as a universal trauma-informed strategy.

Blogging officially started in October 2021 and continued throughout the school year. I led three official blogging sessions that lasted approximately two weeks each. Figure 6 illustrates the blogging timeline by showing the dates of an introduction to Google Sites and the following formal blogging sessions. It is important to note that blogs, including outside formal blogging sessions, were available and used throughout the year. Blogging was introduced in October of 2021, with explicit lessons on developing and creating a website using Google Sites. Students were encouraged to create a website about any topic and spent time designing their websites. I

asked students to create a blog section on their website. Throughout November 2021, students blogged, writing in streams of consciousness.

Figure 6

Timeline of Blogging Sessions Throughout School Year
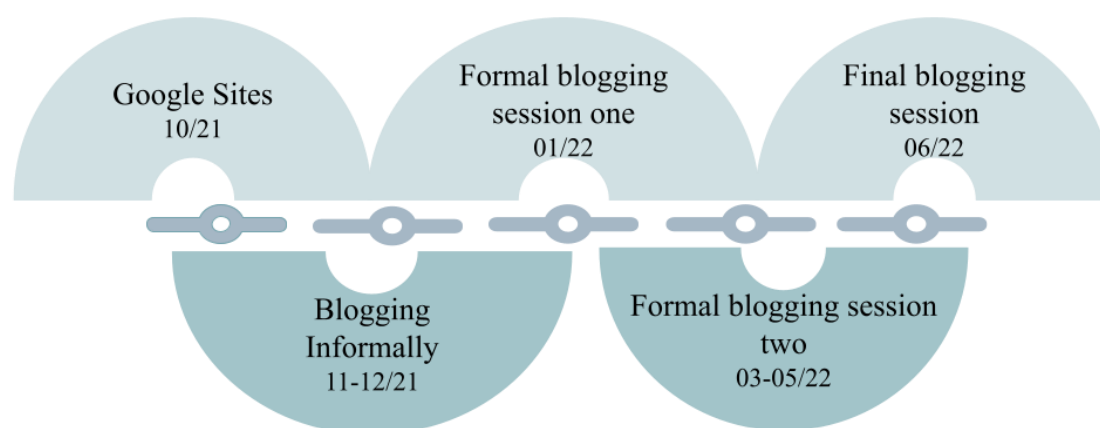
Formal blogging sessions were created to help students develop their writing skills and track their progress. In January 2022, the first formal session was held. Students participated in daily 10-minute writing sessions for approximately two weeks as part of a formal session. I delivered targeted instruction based on general writing needs that arose in blogs or confirmed through conferences. Another formal session occurred between March and May 2022, while the last formal session occurred in June 2022. Students blogged and wrote on their own time throughout the year, in addition to the scheduled sessions.

Since I did not have control over which students were in my class, I used convenience sampling, whereby the students in this class became my population of study. There were 25 (n=25) Grade 6 students. The students were under my care for the 2021-2022 school year. Of the 25 students, 12 identified as male, 11 as female, and two self-identified as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community (specifically, gender fluid). Five students had special education requirements and used Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to support their learning. The student

data used in this study was collected as part of my regular teaching practice. I received REB

approval (REB certificate #16932) to use this archived data for my current Masters of Arts

research.

3.2 Research Paradigms

Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggested a researcher should consider their paradigm, a basic

set of beliefs or worldviews that guides the investigation. The paradigm guiding this study was

interpretivism, which seeks to understand people's knowledge or experiences and is conducive to

qualitative research methodology (Harris, 2016). The paradigm also considers ontological,

epistemological, methodological, and axiological assumptions (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

Ontology is meant to explore and determine the "very nature or essence of the social

phenomenon we are investigating" (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 27). Ontology considers the

environment and contextual factors that influence the concept of reality (Ponterotto, 2005). I was

interested in how students experienced personal states and views of well-being based on their

interactions with blogging and a TIP educator. Rather than seeking an objective truth that is

uninfluenced by the researcher; which, in this study, is nearly impossible —I was interested in

how a student's experience with blogging is revealed and if it was impacted by how my trauma-

informed practices were implemented in the classroom.

Epistemological assumptions consider how knowledge is created and known (Ponterotto,

2005). Knowledge is created through experiences and interactions and can be shared not only

verbally but also through creative pursuits. Blogging was a way for my students to develop

personal well-being through knowledge and experience. Engaging in this TIP was a way for me

to develop my knowledge of trauma-informed pedagogy.

Finally, my axiological assumption, a critical-ideological approach the researcher takes, is that TIPs are necessary in education to support students' well-being and success. After critical reflection on the subject, I believe it is our duty as educators to create a trauma-informed space. Based on these views and assumptions, I chose a qualitative research design.

Qualitative research is a non-numerical method of data collection to help understand individuals' experiences in the world (Bhangu et al., 2023; Creswell, 2014). Adler (2022) stated, "Qualitative research aims to understand meaning, and the data to be analyzed are words and observations." (p. 598). Qualitative data, such as open-ended interviews, surveys, or observation notes used in this study, can garner rich and in-depth information on students' experiences (Creswell, 2014). Various research methodologies are the lens through which data is interpreted (Harris, 2017).

3.3 Research Methodology

To answer my research questions, I chose phenomenology and case study research methodology. I will first describe the phenomenology approach and why it was chosen. Then, I will describe the case study design and how it supports phenomenological research.

3.3.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology research seeks to understand people's perceptions of a phenomenon (Mohajan, 2018; Neubauer et al., 2019). Interviews, storytelling, and other types of communication can be utilized to illustrate that experience (Harris, 2016). The researcher is wholly absorbed in data collecting and, thus, in the experience (Whitehead, 2021). This method was chosen because I wanted to know how students felt about blogging as a classroom intervention to enhance their well-being, specifically trauma-informed care. Understanding both students' and teachers' experiences inside classroom interactions is critical to determining the

outcome of a specific phenomenon (Whitehead, 2021). Phenomenology can reveal student and teacher interactions as well as similarities and differences that can be used to inform educational methods (Spratling et al., 2012).

Hermeneutics is one method for comprehending the experience of a student or teacher (Beverly, 2017; Kalfe, 2011). Hermeneutics, according to Dibley et al. (2022), is to "interpret the experience by a fusion of horizons that are always expanding through constant, ongoing experience." (p. 5). Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology (Neubauer et al., 2019) expands the concept of learning from a person experiencing an event, but understanding the individual cannot be separated from the context of their life and culture (Neubauer et al., 2019). Researchers can only be objective about their data if they account for the factors they encounter in their surroundings (Neubauer et al., 2019). Hermeneutic phenomenology, therefore, provided an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon through lived experiences, in this case, how teachers and students perceived their own experiences with TIP through blogging.

Student blogs, instructor observation, teacher/researcher notes, and transcribed interviews were employed to shed insight into educational experiences. I focused on students' sense of wellness and developing a sense of safety, choice, and empowerment, which are trauma-informed care concepts (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014). This process allowed me to examine students' blogging experiences as a trauma-informed practice and understand how safety, choice, and empowerment were produced or manifested in blogging.

I also examined my experiences implementing trauma-informed practices such as blogging and how this informed my teaching pedagogy. Phenomenology allows the researcher to include personal processes in the data collection process (Bynum & Varpio, 2018), which assists in directing the focus to the lived experience of that phenomenon, even if the experience of the

phenomena is subconscious (Bynum & Varpio, 2018). I wanted to see students' and teachers' "everyday lived experiences" (Mohajan, 2018, p. 29).

3.3.2 Case Study

Case study design is frequently used in phenomenological research because it can enhance phenomenological methodologies (Whitehead, 2019). This study employed a case study to support phenomenological discoveries and to provide clear examples (Aguas, 2022) of specific TIP and blogging experiences. Case studies encourage diverse data collection methods to investigate the research question and support a phenomenon's individual and collective experiences (Ylikoski & Zahle, 2019). Case studies are adaptable and allow for facts not previously addressed in research questions (Mills et al., 2010). This study's entire data collecting and analysis procedure was a case study. Teachers are constantly communicating, determining, and conducting interviews with pupils continuously and regularly. They re-examine the data to report on progress for reporting and assessment reasons (Ministry of Education, 2010). For the objectives of this study, a few case studies were recorded and re-examined through a phenomenological lens based on what was available and complete in the archived data.

Details of the students' experiences with blogging and the teacher's experience of using TIP could be determined by examining the written text. This study had a longitudinal and iterative focus since the experiences of teachers and students were examined over a school year (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). Based on the review of the literature, this paper appears to be the first study in which an eight-month classroom examination of Trauma Informed Oregon's (2014) concepts of safety, choice, and empowerment have been studied.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

In this section, the data sources, collection and analysis methods are described. First, the

data sources are described along with how they help answer the research questions. Next, the

data collection methods are reviewed. Finally, the data analysis method chosen for this

qualitative study is explained.

3.4.1 Data Collection

This study used archival data obtained by me, the teacher, throughout the 2021-2022

school year. This data collection was part of my standard teaching practice as I sought to

enhance TIP and support my student's well-being and academic achievement. I was aware of

trauma-informed principles consisting of safety, choice, and empowerment that I was

experimenting with to support my students.

Furthermore, the introduction of blogging and preserving records of students' experiences

with this activity were gathered for formative assessment purposes relevant to writing and the

Ontario Language Curriculum requirements (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016). Later, in my

Masters of Arts degree, I realized I could utilize this data to investigate how students perceived

blogging and how it may have contributed to trauma resiliency and wellness. According to

phenomenological research (Harris, 2016), I would let the data tell the story of the student's

blogging experiences throughout the year.

Before formalizing this paper's research, I regularly kept reflective notes on my teaching

practices to help identify effective teaching practices and skills. I also regularly engaged my

students in feedback sessions (written and verbal) to understand whether these practices are

helpful or a hindrance. I called one-to-one meetings or conversations with students in the class

conferences. I routinely adjusted my teaching practice based on this ongoing process. In October

2021, I introduced blogging to my students. I had researched how writing can be helpful for students' well-being, especially those experiencing or at risk of trauma. This was a classroom intervention I wanted to explore, and I made sure to record my experiences and my students' experiences with this phenomenon. The data was not initially collected for formal research purposes but for my regular teaching and assessment practices. However, the archived data was stored and available for future review on my school board's Google Drive and the 2021-2022 Google Classroom. The data sources and collection methods are described in Table 1.

Table 1

Data Sources and Contributions

Data Source	Support in answering research questions	Collected and Storage
Observational notes	My observations of students during the blogging process supported research question one. The notes on my behaviours/reflections as a trauma-informed educator supported research question two. Some observations were of student behaviours or their verbal comments during blogging.	Collected throughout the school year. Various collection methods, such as handwritten notes and Google Keep.
Formal/ informal conferences	As students blogged, I spoke with them about their writing and blogs as they wrote and after. Students came to me, or I would sit with them. Conferences could be more formal, with students wanting guidance on a specific writing area, or I would follow up with their blogs. These supported both research questions.	Collected throughout the blogging sessions through verbal feedback with no formal recording, Google Keep notes, or Google Classroom comments linked to student's blogs.
Blogs	Students shared their blogs with me. I used this to look for an understanding of student's feelings and experiences around blogging. These were used to support research question one.	Google Sites blogs that were turned in via Google Classroom at varying intervals during the school year.
Blog questionnaires	These were given twice during the blogging session and assisted in answering question one.	Via Google Forms, which were collected via Google Classroom and stored in the School Board's Google Drive (password protected).

The school Principal signed a letter granting permission to utilize the archive data for this research study. Students' families signed letters of approval to participate as well. Both letters stated that the data was collected during my regular teaching practice. All participants remained anonymous.

After receiving REB approval, I reviewed my databases, which included Google Docs, handwritten notes, and Google Keep notes. I extracted any sources that could give information on my own and students' experiences with blogging as a TIP for wellbeing. Between August 2022 and August 2023, this data was examined and entered into Google Sheets and spreadsheet database software. The students and my own experiences began emerging as I read through the year's worth of data sources, which I began by reviewing chronologically. Data sources are described further to highlight the substantial data accessible in each source.

3.4.1.1 Observation Notes. My observational notes were housed in my Google Keep files through my school board's network. I also had hand-written observations in notebooks and on sticky notes. When the students engaged in blogging during that school year, I wrote down my observations, such as (1) their behaviour before and after the activity, (2) the type of questions they asked, (3) their comments about the activity, (4) their mood and effect during the activity, (5) their writing and thinking processes, and (6) my behaviours and emotions as the teacher.

3.4.1.2 Formal/Informal Conferences. Conferences are occasions where I provided students with 'in the moment' support, either written or verbally, about their writing process or learning activity. According to Sieben (2017), regular feedback cycles while writing help students build a sense of independence and awareness of their writing development. During blogging sessions, there were informal conferences. I went around and sat next to students,

talking about their blogs. I would move on to the next student if a student declined to share. These meetings were typically brief, spontaneous, and conversational. Circulating, I recorded notes on sticky notes or in my Google Keep app. Students requested conferences by approaching me during class and asking for my assistance.

Formal conferences were held when a student requested time with me to discuss their blogs, or when I needed to follow up on a topic or a writing skill that warranted attention. I may spend additional time with the learner and arrange explicit lessons or conversation topics ahead of time.

3.4.1.3 Student Blogs. Blogging as a writing activity was introduced in late fall (October 2021). Students were given a Google Sites tutorial to learn blog formatting and editing procedures. After that, I provided students time to design and create a layout that best suited them.

After a one-hour class, all students had created a simple Google Site blog. Willcox (1982) introduced students to the Feelings Wheel to help with their writing style and to encourage writing as a tool for wellness (See Appendix A). This tool helps students articulate specific language to identify feelings in their blogs and more clearly discuss emotional states and experiences. The Feelings Wheel (Willcox, 1982) also sparked side conversations about emotions and wellness. Students were encouraged to blog about their emotions as part of a trauma-informed approach to wellbeing.

Blogging formally began in late October 2021 with the creation of blogs, and blogging was made available to students anytime. However, I held three formal blogging periods during the year, during which all students blogged for ten minutes daily for two to four weeks. There were particular feedback lessons and writing-focused criteria directed towards blogging

throughout these sessions. I looked at student blogs and provided general feedback. However, for my thesis, I will only focus on the three formal blogging sessions. The three formal sessions when I was most interested in whether blogging provided a safe space for students, I gathered more observational notes, and I used the survey to garner feedback on the blogging process.

Generally, I began each formal session with a prompt, "How are you feeling today?" or "What is on your mind today?" which supported the goal of students' using their blogs to express their emotions. However, students could write about whatever they wanted in their blogs. Approximately ten students chose to write in their blogs during personal time (i.e., weekends, evenings, if they were given any free work time in class, etc.). Students decided which parts of their blogs they shared with me. Some students highlighted sections for me to read or only hit publish to specific sections, so other areas of their blogs remained private. Blogging sessions were completed at different times of the school day to obtain a range of emotions, experiences and stories. I also wanted to see if timing affected their interest in writing or changed their experiences. The details of the formal blogging sessions are explained.

3.4.1.4 Blogging Session One. In October 2021, students were introduced to blogging. Information sessions were embedded with blogging so students could learn the fundamentals of blogging and acquire technological skills on the Google Sites platform. Students learned to complete tasks such as changing theme and layout designs, inserting images, or linking other Google Suite products, such as Google Docs and Google Slides. Before learning Google Sites, students journaled using a notebook or Google Docs. Many students linked their Google Docs journals to their Google Sites and continued blogging through their Google Docs, which, when pressing publish, would update their Google Site. Google Suite products, including Google Sites,

did not publish on the World Wide Web but remained on the school board's network in a

controlled walled garden.

      3.4.1.5 Blogging Session Two. During Session Two, which started in March 2022,

students were introduced to the Feelings Wheel by Wilcox (1982) to assist in self-reflection and

writing styles. Students blogged in ten-minute increments for two weeks during this formal

blogging session. Students could also blog during independent writing or after work completion.

I wrote affirming and detailed letter-like feedback using the comment function in Google

Classroom. At this point, Google Sites did not provide a specific place to leave feedback.

Students uploaded their Google Sites to Google Classroom so I could comment. Students

responded to the feedback as a new blog entry.

      Following Session Two, a Google Form survey was administered. I was curious about

how students felt about the blogging process, whether they thought it was safe, and whether it

enhanced their mood and well-being. The survey had four items (See Appendix B), three of

which were Likert Scale and one open-ended question. Google Forms uses a one-to-five scale for

Likert Scale questions. The first and fifth descriptions are editable, but two through four are kept

blank. While filling out a Google Form, the participant must figure out the two, three, and four

options. The questions were written in a student-friendly style. This group of students was used

to responding to Google Form surveys, which I used frequently. Google Forms automatically

gathers and organizes data, so I shifted data to a Google Sheet for organization and examination.

      I was intrigued about students' attitudes toward blogging and whether they experienced

mood changes as a result of blogging. These questions were not prompted by specific research

but by my interest as an educator. I also wanted questions to be easily accessible so each student

could respond successfully.

3.4.1.6 Blogging Session Three. Between Sessions Two and Three, blogging was an option for students after work completion or on their own time. In June 2022, I implemented a final formal blogging session. I resumed the same pattern as blogging Session Two, with the ten-minute daily time to blog, "How are you feeling? What are you thinking about today?" prompt, and implementation of the feedback cycle. Another Google Form survey was completed by students (see Appendix C). The survey was comparable in length and content to the first session, yet I changed the question to an open-ended question rather than a Likert Scale. This update was made because I wanted students to elaborate on their views and feelings about safety and provide me with more information about how they regarded safety by blogging through their responses. If students did not feel safe, I hoped to change the blogging process to make them feel safer.

3.4.2 Data Analysis

As is typical in phenomenological research, it is essential to explore themes of personal experience (Aguas, 2022; Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2021; Neubauer et al., 2019). The goal is to examine the phenomenological experience and create a narrative of experiences (Aguas, 2022). Therefore, appropriate data analysis methods for this design approach were used: thematic analysis and case study analysis. Teachers often collect interviews, conference notes, and observations. Therefore, these analysis methods are well utilized in education. Student data collection and assessment, as well as teacher reflection analysis, are typical and crucial practices in the classroom. Teachers gather information from a variety of sources in order to better understand their students' thinking and comprehension, as well as their growth. Assessment is ongoing and dynamic in the classroom, and it is triangulated by the types and quantity of data collected without being explicitly named by teachers. Thus, trustworthiness is established

through multiple collection sources, gathering data over time, and cross-referencing data against one another (Adler, 2022).

These analysis methods lent well to the process of triangulation and developing trustworthiness. Method triangulation, which collects different data types in response to the same phenomena (Carter et al., 2014), ensures that data has strong support and plausibility when analyzed. This process can ensure rigour and validity by collecting different data types from different times and through an extended period, in the case of this research, an entire school year. The numerous data sources can be cross-referenced and quantified for repetition and connections, which aids in revealing and confirming themes (Oliver-Hoyo & Allen, 2006).

Using Trauma Informed Oregon's (2014) ideas of safety, choice, and empowerment to triangulate and organize the numerous data sources offered consistent events. Furthermore, triangulation is a standard method in education, even if it is not formally defined. Teachers, for example, cross-reference various pieces of student work to determine a final grade. As per Ontario's Growing Success documents (2010), assessment is a triangulated process the teacher should regularly use to collect data to ensure their teaching practice supports student learning. It is also an organic and continuous process, as data collection can happen spontaneously, especially as teachers witness students.

3.4.3 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a standard method for analyzing qualitative data. It is typically used with texts such as interviews. The researcher studies the data to uncover recurring themes and patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). When researchers want to determine something about people's perspectives, attitudes, or experiences, thematic analysis is an appropriate approach since data may be linked to concepts and ideas, leading to a more in-depth knowledge

of occurrences (Ozuem, 2022). In this investigation, a deductive technique was utilized. Using a deductive strategy, the researcher searches for themes based on current theories or information (Nowell et al., 2017). My data analysis guided my understanding of trauma-informed care principles such as choice, safety, trust, and empowerment. I wanted to see if students experienced these elements from the blogging activity. The steps I took to answer research question one (RQ1) and research question two (RQ2) followed the work of Braun and Clarke (2006) and are outlined below.

Step 1. Familiarize yourself. For this step, I returned to my archived data and familiarized myself with the sources and the information. I used Google Sheets to write the two questions. Then, I listed the resources that could help me answer those questions. The data sources were recorded along with important information such as source, date, and transcript.

Step 2. Code. Since I was using a deductive approach, I started with a list of trauma-informed care principles. I was interested in exploring if these principles were developed from blogging: a sense of trust, choice, empowerment, and safety. Did this contribute to students experiencing blogging as a trauma-informed care practice? I wrote out the fundamental principles on the Google Sheets spreadsheet under the question to answer question one. I then reviewed the data sources listed to help answer this question (see Table 1) and highlighted any words or phrases indicating reflections of the fundamental principles. For example, if a student wrote that they "enjoyed blogging because (they) could barf their brain on the page," I would classify that as choice and safety because they had full access to what they wanted to discuss, and determined who to share their writing with. To answer RQ2, I reviewed the sources and coded for any reflections on my TIP teaching practice's changes, insights and growth from the

blogging process with my students. These codes provided me with a condensed overview of the data's main points and shared meanings.

Step 3. Generalize themes. Because I was working from a deductive approach for RQ1, I had the initial themes: safety, choice, and empowerment. However, I also considered that the codes could suggest other themes not previously identified. I first reviewed each student's resources and then cross-referenced to look for more extensive connections independently, and as a class collective. I wanted to examine themes for individual students, and themes that emerged as a classroom group.

For RQ2, I looked for themes of teacher growth within the concepts of safety, choice, and safety, which provided insights and changes to my practice. Examining, for example, how student feedback informed and calibrated my practice each week. I also wanted to see if themes change for students and myself over time. Themes and ideas can change as students and teachers change. I investigated the trauma-informed practices that changed over time. At this stage, I filtered out any codes that were too vague or irrelevant (for example, because they did not appear frequently in the data).

Step 4. Review themes. The phenomenological approach necessitates re-reading of all data by the researcher (Aguas, 2022). I evaluated the original transcripts and Google Sheets with codes and themes after coding and generalizing my themes. I wanted to collect all the necessary material and review my topics for correctness and consistency. My supervisor also reviewed the themes as an extra step. This procedure was designed to reduce researcher bias, as another person's contribution and interpretation can help to reduce study bias (Adler, 2022).

Step 5. Refine and name themes. Defining themes entailed discovering precisely what I meant by each theme and how it helped me understand the data. For example, what did "safety"

mean, and how was it represented in the data? I considered how these themes benefited or hindered my ability to answer the research questions. There were no theme renames, but data did merge; for example, some data may be coded for both safety and choice, for example.

Step 6. Write-up. After this process, which took several months, I began to write the findings in further detail. The themes were listed with the data examples from each student and data type, then cross-referenced by RQ1. Then, I wrote out the themes for RQ2 with examples from data sources. The data from my reflective notes and observations became detailed stories, which lent to the next step of creating case studies from the data, another phenomenology analysis approach.

3.4.4 Case Study

A phenomenological and case study approach was used to analyze the student experience and my experience as a teacher. This study encompassed an eight-month school year, and the collective process was a case study method. Aguas (2022) noted how the case study is a method to uncover phenomenological understandings and take time to develop a "safe, trustful, and fluid environment." (p. 8). This happens during the school year by creating relationships with students as a teacher. Supporting the relationships is open communication and, therefore, the ability to talk, collect data, and analyze based on multiple interactions with students. Case study data collection in the classroom happens seamlessly and continuously.

A case study was used as a research design approach and analysis method. The case study approach involves organizing data and writing out the participants' stories over time (Mills et al., 2010). The participants' experiences are revealed by reviewing their 'case' (Ylikoski & Zahle, 2019). Writing the experiences in a case study format allowed me to assess the data further, which supported phenomenological analysis. I examined how the stories of both students and me

changed over time (Mills et al., 2010) and began to determine the impacts of blogging on students and my trauma-informed practices. Blogging did not happen on one day, and since phenomenology calls for rich and varied data (Harris, 2016), all of these data pieces create a holistic picture of how blogging evolved in the classroom, how TIP impacted students' wellness, and how my growth of TIP developed as a teacher.

3.4.4.1 Case Study of Student Experiences. Connecting safety, choice, and empowerment through students' blogging perspectives led to a case study approach. Safety, choice and empowerment were chosen from many foundational principles (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014). Before this research, I was curious about students' use of writing for self-discovery and healing. According to Trauma Informed Oregon (2014), restoring power requires providing choice and empowerment. Safety is the structural context required for TIP (Cole et al., 2013). I provided safety through blogging privacy. By giving students the space to write without academic restraints, they could focus on the context of their writing and begin to feel empowered. Since data was based on student blogs, teacher's observations, and notes from interactions and feedback, I could review and place data chronologically. Stories emerged for each student around their experience and possible changes over time. My experience emerged as my own growth story. Each case study consisted of themes of experience.

3.4.4.2 Case Study of the Teacher Experience. I used my notes as the primary data source to analyze, as RQ2 required me, as an educator, to reflect on my trauma-informed practices and if student feedback through blogs changed my practice. As per Ylikoski and Zahle (2019), I organized my reflective notes chronologically. I determined when I changed my trauma-informed practices and reviewed the other data sources (blogs, survey results, and conference notes) to identify the change catalyst. I then cross-referenced the trauma-informed

practices I implemented with how they correlated to safety, choice, and empowerment (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014).

3.5 Summary

This chapter explained the study's process using a qualitative research design. Qualitative research was explained in the research context, with positionality, data, and collection methods mentioned. Trustworthiness and ethical assurances were ascertained through the length of the study and the amount of data collected. Chapter Four will examine the findings of the data, and Chapter Five will develop discussions around the themes and next steps.

Chapter Four: Findings

This research strived to answer two questions: (1) How do students in one Ontario Grade 6 classroom experience blogging as a trauma-informed practice (TIP) that supports their wellness? and (2) How can a teacher develop their trauma-informed pedagogy based on reflective practice? The findings from each research question are presented. For RQ1 and RQ2, I will first provide a (1) summary of overall findings, (2) a summary of themes of student experiences, (3) a review of each data source, (4) the findings from triangulation of data, and (5) case study samples to illustrate the findings (a student's for RQ1 and my own for RQ2).

4.1 RQ1 Findings: How do students in an Ontario Grade 6 classroom experience blogging as a trauma-informed practice (TIP) that supports their wellness?

4.1.1 Summary of Findings

The following data sources were used to answer this question: My conference notes, student blogs, and survey results. This data pool's thematic analysis, phenomenology, and case study approaches revealed that students loved blogging and felt it helped their mental health. Poetry, family, sports, short stories, school, friends, life issues, and serious topics such as family troubles, gender identity, and bullying were among the blog topics covered. Many (n=18) students made clear statements about how it helped them "face the day" and "vent" in order to have a pleasant mood or day.

Blogging, TIP, and well-being are linked because blogging provides three characteristics of trauma-informed care: safety, choice, and empowerment. However, the data demonstrated that each student's experience with trauma principles through blogging differed. This variation was influenced by moderators such as current well-being, writing ability, privacy needs, and level of participation.

4.1.2 Summary of Themes of Experience

I started with a deductive approach to thematic analysis for this question. Using Trauma Informed Oregon's (2014) foci of safety, choice, and empowerment, I analyzed if these were developed in the students individually or collectively. Any reference to the students experiencing these was then coded and categorized. These three themes are briefly described before reviewing how they emerged in each data source.

4.1.2.1 Safety. Many students felt comfortable sharing their blogs with me and others. Students felt comfortable writing about any subject, sharing if requested, and discussing their blogging process. The conclusions of safety for each pupil differed. During the process, some students began to open up. Others' moods shifted considerably from day to day; other's moods changed more slowly over the year. Many students felt comfortable sharing their blogs and responding to feedback. Students attended teacher and peer conferences with increased frequency. Some students (n=3) were apprehensive to participate in the blogging process because they did not feel comfortable talking or expressing their opinions aloud or for others to see. However, the data analysis revealed the trauma-informed care principle of safety was most prevalent.

4.1.2.2 Choice. When it came to blogging, students were offered options. They had a say in how they constructed the blog and the writing topic, whether they shared it or discussed it with the teacher. Some students (n=11) immediately commented on this good option feature throughout the blogging process. It frequently affected their moods and interactions with others, as I witnessed. They became more engaged with me and others when they felt safe and comfortable. This collaboration increased as the school year progressed, with two or three students sharing Chromebooks. Students were heard exchanging and debating views. They also

tried more daring or personal stories in their blogs, as evidenced by attempting to write poetry, creating a continued series of personal events that interconnected, and researching topics that were new and unknown to the student.

4.1.1.3 Empowerment. The theme of empowerment emerged for approximately half of the students (n=12). They directly expressed feeling powerful and in control from being able to write about their feelings or talk about what they wanted. Some students felt empowered to assist each other, which was evident through conferencing. Conferencing enabled me to hear students how they felt about sharing their blogs. Confidence grew as they learned to blog, engaged in self-expression, and supported each other. Approximately half of the students (n=12) requested more time to blog outside of formal writing sessions, which demonstrated an increase in writing confidence, which could represent empowerment.

4.1.3 Review of Findings from Each Data Source

I examined how each source contributed to these findings in further detail. After reviewing each source's findings, I cross-compared the data sources to triangulate the findings. This led to summarizing and connecting data sources to themes and a phenomenological analysis.

4.1.3.1 Observation Notes. Before, during, and after blogging sessions, I recorded student behaviours. This included general notes on (1) their mood, level of engagement, and behaviours prior to blogging, (2) the topics and descriptions of blogs, and (3) their interactions during conferences with me or with other students. At the time, I wanted to examine the impacts on students' well-being and was aware of different frameworks for trauma-informed care, including the essential principles of safety, choice, and empowerment. In the analysis, I

examined how personal experiences of safety, choice and empowerment were observed or witnessed.

Safety. I witnessed student behaviours during writing sessions, especially changes in behaviours, as the blogging sessions continued. Initially, I noticed students were hesitant to start their blogs or seemed unsure sitting at their desks. Sometimes, students would not write for the first three to five minutes of the writing session but would write for the last half. They had many questions or sought guidance as they tried to make sense of the tasks and how comfortable they felt engaging in blogging. They might ask a peer for suggestions on what to write about, for example, "I do not know what to write about…" and a student would respond with suggestions. I also witnessed students allowing peers to read and edit their writing. "Does this make sense?" or "I am not sure what else to write here," I noted that some seemed shy (n=5), hesitant (n=17), and uncomfortable (n=3) during the first session. As the weeks progressed and students felt more comfortable, they engaged in blogging immediately, shared more frequently, asked more questions, and conferenced with me more often. I noted that midway through our weeks of blogging, four pairs of students (n=8) sat together at the end of each writing session and shared what they had written and sought feedback. This was quite different from the behaviours I noticed from them at the beginning of the blogging process. I also noted changes in how much students were willing to share their blogs with me. Students could let me know on Google Sites which sections of their blogs, if any, they wanted me to read. As the weeks progressed, they began to ask me to read more sections of their blogs. These observations were coded as 'an increase in feelings of safety,' 'security,' and 'being comfortable.'

I also noted that some students (n=6) were not writing and or sharing their work. I overheard these students express concerns such as, "I do not know what to write about." (P3) or

"I don't know if I want to write about personal things here in class" (P14). The observation notes suggested that the students may have felt unsafe. I noted that possible moderators for a sense of safety could be mental health, physical presence, student group dynamics, student personality, or openness to writing.

Choice. I purposely integrated choice to practice TIP as Trauma Informed Oregon (2014) outlined. Students had choices in their online blogging designs, writing topics, sharing options, and level of engagement or self-expression with blogging. Students had absolute control over their blogs. They chose what to share. They chose with whom to share. Students would tell me: "You can read my blog today if you like" (P22) or "I don't want to share, maybe later" (P4). Students changed, added, and deleted their blog layouts during writing sessions. Students were free to make changes without judgment from me, as the teacher. After researching how horoscopes are written, one student (P20) added a horoscope section to her blog. She seemed pleased that she could make that decision without my approval. This sense of autonomy was evident for many students in my observations.

During blogging sessions, students were not required to produce a specific amount of writing on a certain topic or to write in a particular style. Students noted, verbally and informally, that they appreciated this freedom. For example, one student (P4) liked that he could write in whatever style he wished and on any topic that interested him on a given day. He said that he liked that "there's no pressure to be perfect." As the weeks continued, many students (n=18) began writing about more personal experiences and seemed more engaged while writing. For example, one student wrote more about her experiences being a member of the 2SLGBTQI+ community. As she wrote on this topic, she seemed engaged and excited. I observed and noted

students talking to each other about their different blog topic choices. One student (P24) stood proudly and stated, "I'll decide tomorrow what I feel like writing."

Various styles of writing were also observed during blogging sessions. Initially, blogs began as standard journal-style prose entries or elementary research about a topic of interest. During the writer's workshop, I modelled different writing methods, inviting lists, poems, sketches, and diagrams. By the second session, I observed students including poetry, images, and mind-mapping to their blogs. These mini-blogging lessons encouraged creativity and choice in style. Almost all students (n=23) attempted different writing styles throughout the year. I noticed some students, who were typically reserved or afraid to make mistakes, took risks using different styles. For example, one student attempted poetry (P14), and another attempted to create a storyboard (P21).

However, for some students, the freedom and non-structure of the blogging activities caused stress (n=6). These students commented that they "weren't sure what to write about" (P24) and looked uneasy having to make this decision each day. In those cases, choice may not have been experienced as trauma-informed. Students' preference for structure versus non-structure based on personality or learning preference was coded as a possible moderating variable in choice as a TIP.

Empowerment. Empowerment, a sense of control, influence, and confidence (Cole et al., 2013) was evident in my observations. Over time, most students (n=19) showed improved empowerment. Three students (P2, P6, P12) who were reserved at the beginning of the blogging process expressed their ideas more readily as they built confidence and a sense of agency. Halfway through the blogging sessions, they began working on the blogs without the teacher's direction. P1 asked, "Can we keep blogging?" P12 asked, "Are we working on our blogs today?"

and "Can I teach my little brother how to do this?". P6 said to me in a classroom interaction, "I am getting good at blogging. I have good things to say".

I also observed that students began to enjoy sharing their work. As they built confidence, they became more willing to share with others. They proudly showed their work. Some read them out loud. P15 said he would take action with the school on his blog about the lack of playground equipment. Students also built empowerment through peer interactions. Developing their confidence and skills made them more comfortable editing their peers' work.

I noted changes in students' demeanour before, after, and throughout blogging. Many students (n=16) changed the way they interacted with their writing. For example, P15 would write for the allotted time and never review his blog. Every new session, he would start an entirely new piece of writing. During the second session, I observed him editing and revising previously written blogs and seeking peer input for content and clarity. In the beginning, I noted that some students looked at their blogs hesitantly or with disapproval. Some students were challenging themselves as they sighed, shoved the work away or commented that they were not good at blogging. Nevertheless, as time progressed, these same students stood taller, talked more about their work, started writing immediately, and shared readily with peers.

Of 25 students, 17 asked if they could write about a social justice issue. These issues included gender equality, the environment, and community programs. I observed students standing in groups, talking about the issues they blogged. They appeared confident, proud, and excited. They felt empowered.

4.1.3.2 Conferences. Conferences and meetings with students occurred throughout the school year, both planned and unplanned. Informal sessions frequently occurred when students asked me to sit and discuss their work before, during, or after the blogging sessions. This was

usually a spontaneous request. Other times, I or the student would request a formal conference to meet privately. I asked for at least three formal conferences with each student over the year: at the writing program's start, middle, and finish. I requested a conference for six students because I was concerned about the content of their work and wanted to ensure their emotional and physical safety. I sought a meeting for 11 pupils to provide writing assistance. 16 students requested a conference to discuss their own progress, potential topics, or struggles they were having. I recorded most conferences, including date, time, student or my demeanour and mood, verbal transcript or point form notes, and outcomes. I will now discuss how themes of safety, choice and empowerment emerged in the conference notes.

Safety. The data revealed that students demonstrated a sense of safety through either direct comments of safety or through their changed behaviours. Direct expressions of safety were noted for nine students. For example, P25 stated, " I like this is a safe space to write about our problems." P15 stated he felt safe to write about anything without being bullied. Sometimes, students demonstrated a sense of safety by opening up during their conference session. For example, P11 retold a story in their blog about a potentially dangerous situation they were in. I requested a follow-up conference to ensure they were safe and to take any necessary next steps. A student who avoided personal conversations in the past opened up to me about many private details. Nine other students also discussed challenging topics with me in conferences. It is important to note that many of these examples were coded as all three: safety, choice and empowerment.

I noted that I was worried whether the blogging sessions were triggering for the students or bringing up past traumas. However, many students said they appreciated being able to express their emotions, or they could share when they were ready. This led to feelings of safety.

Choice. Most of the time, conferences were a student's choice. They were encouraged to request a conference as needed. Conference data indicated that as the year progressed, students requested more conferences. An example of a student-led conference was one student I met with multiple times (P5) who wanted to focus on her writing development more than the blog topic itself. During the first conference, this student wanted assistance in including richer descriptive language in the blogs so the reader could empathize with the student's experience.

Students determined where and how we conferenced. Some students wanted to meet in a quiet corner of a room, others at their regular seating area. One student (P9) asked if he could sit in my chair. When I circulated the classroom, students could request 'conference time.' Some students were not receptive to requesting or attending conferences (n=7). They seemed uninterested or unsure about meeting with me. I reinforced that it was entirely their choice and that they were safe to write without a conference with me. By the third session, all students had conferenced with me. Many students conferenced with peers more than with me.

Empowerment. According to conference data, almost all students (n=20) felt empowered; however, this was not apparent until Session Two. The students were initially nervous and apprehensive about blogging. Many lacked blogging experience and needed to learn how to create blog platforms and write effectively. Students' skills and knowledge were called into doubt throughout the first week of blogging. They didn't feel in control. This was clear among the conference attendees. "I'm confused" (P6), "I can't do it" (P9), "I'm not a blogger" (P15), and "This is too hard" (P18) were among the statements or phrases stated. However, students' attitudes and behaviours changed after learning and practicing blogging. During conferences, they expressed pride, confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy in their blogging abilities. New self-statements emerged, such as "I'm getting good at this" (P2). As students' confidence grew,

they talked about sharing their work with or teaching others. Students made comments such as: "I'm going to teach my brother" (P22), "I can write about anything I want for people to read" (P6), or "Can I work on my blog at home?" (P7). One student (P10) commented in a post-conference session, "If we all wrote about important things, like animal abuse, and shared it with everyone out there, we can change things. Blogging is good for that". Another student (P23) expressed empowerment by saying, "Once this is over, I will make blogs public, and people will be more aware of events. Maybe I could be an influencer."

4.1.3.3 Blogs. Students' blogs were kept in my teacher files as a record of their work. The blogs were not assessed, and there was no correct or incorrect blog, being free of judgment. I reviewed each student's blogs chronologically to get a sense of their experiences in life and the blogging process. Examining the blogs of 25 students revealed that students had varied interests, writing levels, and life experiences. Many students showed growth in writing skills in their blogs (n=9), but most showed some personal growth (n=18). As they felt safer and empowered, they expressed personal stories and discussed crucial social justice issues.

Safety. In Session One, students' blogs were brief and explored safe topics such as the weather, a birthday, an upcoming test, or a sports event. As time passed, the blog topics became more personal or complex. By the second session, students used more emotional and descriptive words and references to personal feelings and thoughts. For example, one student wrote about a beloved pet's illness (P15). She discussed being full of "grief and worry" as she waited to learn from the veterinarian the status of their pet. She then felt relief as the pet made a full recovery. She wrote to me, "You can read how I experienced my pet's illness," it "helps to talk about it with you, and I trust you won't talk to others about it.". P15's blog demonstrates safety, as during the second session, P15 wrote about a personal topic that required trust to express and share.

Another student (P11) shared a detailed racially motivated incident that happened to her and a friend. I conferenced as a follow-up with this student to ensure she was feeling safe. She said, "I feel safe. It's ok to talk about it. Blogging helps. Thank you for talking to me to make sure I am ok too." Through conferencing and showing empathy, P11 felt safer once we discussed her blog afterwards.

Blogging provided a safe space for students to explore areas of interest they might not be able to pursue in other subjects. Horoscopes (P20), gems (P15), cats (P1), sports (P13, P17), and the histories of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities (P5) were among the blog topics. Although they were not journal-style blogs, they provided a safe space for students to pursue their interests. The blogs also provided safety to take risks in the types of writing students explored. Some students attempted poetry. In class, I modelled poetry to teach figurative language, and some students (n=5) wanted to write poems in their blogs. P21 shared a blog they had written, which used many figurative language examples I had taught. I and another peer praised this student for writing a powerful and emotional poem. At first, the student (P21) wanted to keep their poem private, but decided to share it with the whole class after we conferenced. This student wrote a few other poems in their blog during the year. Safety is illustrated in this example as safety, as the student could explore and play with poetic concepts without worrying about grades or assessment.

Choice. There were many possibilities available during the blogging process. For example, each student's design was unique, with different colour schemes, layouts, titles, photographs, and website links. I observed how their individuality was reflected in their design decisions. P1 was particularly interested in altering their blog regularly, stating that they "wanted to experiment and liked all of the choices."

Another example of choice was how students shared their blogs or the part of the blog they shared. Almost every student (n=23) shared at least one aspect of their blog with me once during the school year. Students could highlight which sections of their blogs they wanted me to read. I did not read any section of a student's work that was not highlighted or included a comment stating it was private. Some students kept their blogs more private than others, sharing only with one or two other students and with me on one or two occasions (P7, P18). I do not have data to explain why these students chose not to share.

Empowerment. There were no direct expressions of being or feeling empowered. However, using existing literature and definitions of empowerment components, I highlighted the following words, which signified empowerment, and the frequency they were mentioned: influence (5), control (13), a leader (3), confident (11), proud (7), change-maker (1), influencer (2), my voice (8) and capable (6). These words are expressions of empowerment.

As their blogs grew into complex subjects they wanted to confront or social issues they wanted to share with others, students experienced an indirect sense of empowerment. For example, one student (P19) described the obstacles that 2SLGBTQIA+ students experience. Another student (P4) shared information regarding a bullying incident that they had kept private for two years. As they took more risks, several students expressed liking or appreciating choice and safety in their blogs. Based on my analysis of the data, a sense of safety and choice increased emotions of empowerment.

4.1.3.4 Surveys. Students responded to two Google Form surveys with three Likert Scales and open-ended questions. The Likert scale modifiers in Google Forms are clearly labelled for choices one and five, leaving the survey participant to deduce what two to four could represent. Choice two is generally related to one, whereas choosing four is related to five. Table

2 describes the modifiers for levels one and five and the outcomes for each question. These surveys were for my interests and to assist me in developing my TIP. At the time, analyzing a sense of empowerment was not the primary purpose, but I wanted to know how they felt about blogging and how they felt safe. Students could choose whether or not to complete the surveys. Of the 25 participants (N=25), 23 students responded to Survey One (n=23), and 20 students responded to Survey Two (n=20). The survey results indicated that students enjoyed blogging and felt that blogging aided self-expression, emotions, and wellness. Table 2 summarizes the survey's questions and results.

Table 2

Results of Second and Third Session Google Form Blog Surveys - Likert Scale Questions

Survey One	Students participated n=23	Question	Results	Percentages
	23/25	In general, do you like journaling/blogging? Likert Scale	3 - scale 1(do not like) 3 - scale 2 7 - scale 3 6 - scale 4 4 - scale 5 (love)	13% level 1 13% level 2 30% level 3 26% level 4 17% level 5
		Do you feel safe to write about anything?	1 - scale 1 (not safe) 4 - scale 2 7 - scale 3 9 - scale 4 2 - scale 5 (totally safe)	4% level 1 17% level 2 30% level 3 39% level 4 9% level 5
		Do you feel journaling/blogging helps you with your mood/feelings?	5 - scale 1 (not at all) 4 - scale 2 6 - scale 3 6 - scale 4 2 -scale 5 (very much)	21% level 1 17% level 2 26% level 3 26% level 4 9% level 5
Survey Two	Students participated n=20 20/25	How do you feel about journaling/blogging?	0 - scale 1 (terrible) 2 - scale 2 6 - scale 3 8 - scale 4 4 - scale 5 (love it)	0% level 1 10% level 2 30% level 3 40% level 4 20% level 5
		Do you feel journaling/blogging helps with your mood/feelings?	3 - scale 1 (not at all) 2 - scale 2 7 - scale 3 6 - scale 4 2 - scale 5 (very much)	15% level 1 10% level 2 35% level 3 30% level 4 10% level 5

How these survey results contributed to the findings for safety, choice and empowerment are now discussed.

Safety. Survey One had 23 respondents out of a class of 25 students. The first question asked, "Do you feel safe to write about anything?". Level One had the modifier of "not safe," and Level Five had the modifier of "totally safe." For this question related to safety, ten students responded with Levels Four or Five, indicating 43% of the respondents felt safe to blog about anything. 21% indicated Levels One and Two, which determined they felt unsafe when blogging.

 In the second survey, the safety question was the same but was posed open-ended response. Of the 20 respondents (n=20), seven students provided clear affirmations (35%), including "yes" in their answers. One student added, "Yes very" (P10), and P5 wrote, "Yes, because I don't have to share." Six students expressed partial safety, with statements such as, "I feel safe enough to write a lot [of] things but there's some things I just will not write that are personal." (P19), and P4 wrote, "Some things I don't feel safe about but mostly I feel safe." Combining yes responses (n=6) and mostly safe responses, but not all responses (n=7) results in 65% of (n=20) respondents felt safe or mostly safe when blogging.

Students who did not select a Level Four or Level Five as a response considered their stories personal and did not want to share. P20 wrote, "pretty much, their [sic] are a few things I would keep to myself though," P15 wrote, "I feel safe enough to write a lot of things but there's some things I just will not write that are personal. A few students (n=4) wrote "not really" (P23) and one wrote "nope" (P22).

Choice. There were no survey questions that explored the experience of choice. However, in response to the question exploring if they enjoyed blogging, nine students mentioned they liked having choices.

Empowerment. There were no survey questions exploring empowerment in the survey. However, since empowerment is linked to self-efficacy and image, I was interested in student

responses to the question, "Do you feel journaling/blogging helps with your mood/feelings?". I chose this question as I wondered if students were metacognitive of how the process of writing their emotions could lead to self-reflection and emotional response to the world around them. Did they understand that the two were connected? That, if they wrote, they might feel a sense of relief? Or might they be more aware of their emotional states as the day progressed? Likert Scale One modifier was "not at all," and the modifier for Level Five was "very much." For Survey One, eight of the 23 students responded with Levels Four and Five (35% of respondents felt that blogging positively helped moods and feelings). For Survey Two, eight of 20 students indicated Levels Four and Five on the Likert scale (40% noted that blogging positively affected their mood).

However, 25% of students did not connect their self-awareness of emotions to writing, as they chose Level One or Two. This means students did not feel that blogging supported their emotional well-being, or that blogging had nothing to do with their emotional state. 35% choose Level Three, which could be interpreted as neutral. This seems to indicate that these students were unsure if writing connected to their emotional state or if they did not see how writing and their emotions were connected.

In the second survey, I posed the open-ended question, "What do you appreciate/like about journaling?" Students' statements highlighted empowering moments and activities such as self-expression, emotional release, and authentic thoughts and feelings. Results included the following statements such as:

"I like how I can put my [sic] feelings." (P10),

"I like that I can just put all of my emotions on a page" (P5),

 "I like being able to write about whatever I feel" (P16),

"i [sic] feel like you can relax and type what you are thinking that's why i [sic] like it" (P9),

" i [sic] like that i [sic] can just spill my feelings out and not have to filter" (P3),

"I like that we do it at the beginning of the day so I can get all my thoughts out. I like that I can write about anything that is on my mind." (P23),

"I can vent" (P18).

4.1.4 Triangulation of Data for Research Question One

According to Oliver-Hoyo and Allen (2006), data corroboration is critical for understanding how each data interacts and builds results. I reviewed the data and compared the findings to uncover these patterns and trends. This method revealed that approximately half of the students (n=12) appreciated blogging and that it helped their overall well-being. As evidenced by survey findings, observations, and conferences, many students generally felt secure or safe to write about any topic on their blog. Almost all students (n=20) expressed their liking choice directly. Empowerment was more challenging to investigate because it encompassed many different aspects of student's behaviours, and would have been more difficult to determine what specifically developed student empowerment. For example, was it the act of writing that assisted students in understanding how their emotions were connected? Did conferencing and peer conferencing increase their writing confidence? Despite the challenges of determining direct relationships between blogging and empowerment. Empowerment could be observed, for example, as an increase in students sharing their blogs and in students explicitly stating how blogging helped them process their emotions.

After reviewing the data, I created formal case studies for some students. I wanted to further illustrate their experience with blogging and their specific processes of blogging as a TIP. This would assist in visualizing their phenomenological experiences with blogging. Since the

school year and the interactions between the students were all case studies, I only fully developed a few case studies based on archived data to illustrate specific experiences.

Case studies supported specific students' improvements and growth over time, which supported the effects of blogging. This approach enabled me to determine that 18 of the 25 students had positive blogging experiences and developed at least one aspect of choice, safety, or empowerment. Below is an example of one case study. Other case studies are in my personal research notes.

4.1.5 A Student's Experience - P5

Participant Five was a student who excelled in school. Always searching for ways to improve their work. At the beginning of the year, blogging was daunting for this student. When we learned how to use Google Sites, and I encouraged students to develop and create a template that worked for them, this student had many questions. "What do you think I should add?" and "Does this look good?". The questions were asked whenever I walked by this student's workspace. The student was seeking reassurance and validity in their blog layout.

However, once we focused on the writing aspect of blogging, the student was quick to share their writing and eager to add to it each blogging session. This student wanted to research the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and brought their experiences with friends and their growing understanding of the community. "I am going to keep adding to the research, and then share and record my thoughts."

As blogging progressed, this student was sought after by other students at conferences. They would confidently speak to ideas and help students readily brainstorm. One student (P22) generally sat with P5 to share and discuss ideas. P5 was encouraging and readily provided

positive and affirming feedback to P22. I overheard P5 say, "I think that's the idea you should write about today. It's a good one, and it happened recently".

The progress of P5 differed from that of other students in that other students became more immersed in the content of their writing and writing style as the blogging sessions evolved. Therefore, I focused on P5 in this research to demonstrate how blogging created self-evolution of writing and a sense of self. P5, who was readily concerned about grammar and punctuation, used their blog to express and discover their identity. At the end of the year, it was apparent that the students wrote more freely in their blogs. However, with P5, I saw a more evolved sense of self and an ability to communicate increasingly complex topics.

At first, the choice of what and how to blog caused P5 some stress. They were observed and heard, seeking advice on how and what to write. Later, the choice and the safety of not worrying about conventions gave P5 space to explore their experiences in a way that made sense to them. Empowerment was observed through the complex topics of their blogs, how their peers sought them for writing advice and increasingly spoke out confidently about their lives and experiences.

4.2 RQ2 Findings: How can a teacher develop their trauma-informed pedagogy based on reflective practice?

4.2.1 Summary of Findings

I studied the data, including my observation notes, conference notes, and personal teaching reflection notes, using phenomenological thematic analysis and case study approaches (Harris, 2016) to determine how the delivery of TIP and student feedback influenced my teaching practice. The student blogs and surveys also assisted me in understanding student reactions to blogging and teacher support. The findings reveal that as a trauma-informed practitioner, I was able to build my teaching methods through a cycle of awareness, observations,

feedback, reflection, and adjustments, or what I term micro-moves (in-the-moment reactive adjustments). Engaging in this cycle required me, as the teacher, to be socially and self-aware, open to feedback, self-reflective, empathizing, and trauma-informed. These skills or positions were required to understand the changes and support required for students. Reviewing the data over time uncovered several micro-moves I made during the blogging practice. Some micro-moves were providing more time on projects, changing my physical position in the classroom, and seeking student input in the creation of rubrics.

TIP in the classroom benefited my students since I could have more engaged students who trusted me. This enhanced my position's fulfilling and meaningful nature, resulting in a more real teaching experience. Through thematic analysis, I discovered various micro-moves that I made over the blogging period. I will review these concepts now, followed by my case study, to illustrate their connection.

4.2.2 Themes of Reflective Practice

Research Question Two focused on how teachers can develop their trauma-informed pedagogy based on reflective practice. The findings highlight a cycle of teacher development that includes awareness, observations, feedback, reflection and adjustments, or what I call micro-moves. This continuous process helped me gain insights into practical TIP in the classroom and responsive teacher pedagogy. In this study, blogging was applied to obtain insight into how students reacted to trauma-informed practices.

4.2.2.1 Awareness. First, awareness was required. As I repeatedly reviewed the data sources, it became clear that I had to start by understanding trauma in an educational context to develop my teaching practice. This awareness included knowledge of theories and views of wellness, healthy child and youth development, adult wellness, teacher development, learning

theories, and trauma for both students and teachers. This foundational knowledge helped me develop goals and TIP as a universal support for my students.

4.2.2.2 Observations. After I implemented TIP in the classroom and adjusted my teaching practice based on foundational knowledge, I engaged in observations with my students and myself. I watched and listened for wellness or learning needs, barriers, strengths and accomplishments. I recorded how both students and myself were reacting to the TIP. Being observant helped me identify problems in the moment and apply a critical problem-solving lens. Since I was keen on developing as a trauma-informed practitioner, I was hyper-observant about my methods and student reactions. Recording observational notes helped me track what I saw over time and record changes.

4.2.2.3 Feedback. In addition to these observations, I collected and received *feedback* from the students. This feedback came from student conferences and surveys. The feedback helped determine if my methods were helpful and if blogging, this potential TIP, was being experienced as a TIP. I received daily feedback in the form of conferences, and this was useful. The survey feedback was sparse and did not allow me to understand needs. Therefore, part of the teacher development cycle should include regular feedback.

4.2.2.4 Reflection. After receiving input, I began to reflect. I re-read the feedback and speculated its significance. What did it mean for the students, me, the class as a whole, and the future? Since I collected input from the conferences regularly, I could engage in more immediate reflections. In my reflections, I attempted to be objective. As much as I wanted to help my students, I had to be open to criticism that my methods were ineffective or frustrating.

I also reflected on my own experiences and views of the TIP. This was important for me as someone with their own trauma experiences. Personal triggering can be a reality for teachers,

and I wanted to reflect on my reactions to developing as a trauma-informed practitioner. Per phenomenology case study analysis, I positioned my influences and experiences within the classroom context, how my reactions impacted students, and how students' reactions impacted me (Bynum & Varpio, 2018). Phenomenology considers the researcher's experience (Bynum & Varpio, 2018), and as a trauma survivor, this creates hypervigilance and sensitivity in my interactions with students. I can attest that I am always hyper-aware of my words, tone, and body language when I work with students.

4.2.2.5 Micro-moves. I improved my practice, which I termed micro-moves, after ongoing reflection. These were modifications to my teaching practice or activities to support students from a trauma-informed perspective. I made various adjustments based on student feedback and observations, including giving more choice, giving less choice, modifying my body language, conferencing more frequently, and changing student feedback techniques. For example, I established a private writing space after a few students expressed interest in writing. I adjusted my physical position during blogging sessions to be less overbearing or intrusive. I also altered the methods by which students could share their work.

Reflection is a continual process necessary throughout the blogging activity rather than a one-time event. I needed to reflect not only on the student input but also on my own experiences. Several of my notes mentioned being able to authentically reflect on our experiences as teachers.

4.2.3 Trauma-Informed Insights

In addition to understanding the teacher development process, I made several educator insights. These insights emerged as I triangulated the data sources and analyzed them for themes, which will help me progress in my journey to grow as a trauma-informed educator. I coded these themes under the title 'trauma-informed insights.'

4.2.3.1 Blogging can help students and teachers. Blogging was an activity that helped my students express themselves, process emotions, and share interests. This creative writing process allowed my students to develop empowerment, which is essential for wellness. Through safety, choice and empowerment, they had a voice and were valued. My foundational knowledge of trauma suggests that this is so essential for trauma victims and those at risk of trauma. However, the blogging process also benefited me as a teacher. I was able to know my students at a deeper level. I could better understand their interests, fears, struggles, and passions. Developing writing skills became a secondary goal to supporting students' well-being. This knowledge of my students also helped me determine ways to support their learning. For example, if a student was interested in sports, I could use this to teach math. Alternatively, if my students struggled with sleep at home and were tired throughout the day, I could give more frequent breaks or rest periods. I integrated micro-moves throughout the day as I reviewed their blogs. I believe this made me a more responsive educator.

4.2.3.2 Teachers can support safety through physical actions. Physical interactions with students could either enhance or decrease perceptions of safety. For example, student body language suggested tension when I circulated during writing sessions. As a result, I would find locations where students could meet if they wanted to. Alternatively, I would notify students beforehand that I would be circulating. When I approached a student's desk, I did not stand over them. I would kneel at their level while maintaining personal space. A combination of observations and conferences informed these actions of fundamental trauma knowledge, personal experiences, and student feedback.

4.2.3.3 A sense of safety is impacted by choice. Although I evaluated these two elements individually as TIP, analyzing the data in chronological sequence revealed that having

choices in a classroom contributed to students' perceptions of safety. This relationship has the potential to go either way. Most students felt more protected and secure when they were offered more choices. More choices, however, resulted in a loss of safety for some students. Some students needed structure and routine in order to feel comfortable. This information reminded me to evaluate each student's progress individually and to consider environmental factors that might impact that student's academic performance. TIP is not a 'one-size-fits-all' model, and blogging reminded me that teachers must be cautious with what and how they teach.

4.2.3.4 Empowering students empowers teachers. After triangulating the data and discovering that students developed a sense of empowerment in the classroom, I felt empowered as a teacher. Empowerment is associated with a sense of control and self-efficacy. Supporting students in developing their empowerment afforded me the feeling that I could positively impact them and influence their well-being. I also felt more adept and sensitive as a teacher. Thus, I increased my self-efficacy regarding how I presented new knowledge.

4.2.3.5 Trauma-informed practices are not a 'one size fits all' model. The findings suggested that my students did not experience safety and choice similarly. There were moderating variables, such as existing trauma or mental health problems. Therefore, my reflective practice required me to examine differences in experience and be compassionate about these differences. I had to be flexible in my teaching practice to shift my lesson when I noticed an intervention was not working for all students. This highlighted the importance of micro-moves for myself, making changes in the moment to best meet the needs of the students.

4.2.4 Teacher Experience: My Development as a Trauma-Informed Practitioner

I started my trauma-informed journey approximately five years ago, as I realized I wanted to improve my teacher practice and be more empathetic and nurturing to students. I felt

something was missing in my teaching practice, and I realized it was my understanding of

trauma in an educational setting. I had personal experiences with trauma but did not connect

trauma to my teaching practice. I began reading and following trauma-informed educators on

Twitter. I decided to start building trauma-informed relationships with my students. I became

curious about how different creative activities, such as blogging, could be integrated into a TIP. I

was also interested in my growth through possible micro-moves. I began integrating blogging as

a universal trauma approach for my students, recognizing that many students could benefit from

such an approach.

I kept detailed notes of my journey. My reflective notes proved helpful in developing a

phenomenological understanding of my TIP with students. I was careful and purposeful

whenever we entered blogging time, providing fewer verbal instructions as the year progressed. I

purposefully used fewer words, as I wanted the students' voices to be louder and more pertinent

than mine. I provided a prompt, quickly reminded students of their choices, and I let them write.

Conferencing proved the most beneficial aspect of blogging for me as an educator. It was

beneficial because I garnered new information about my students and who they were as people.

The blogs provided a preview into aspects of students' lives I did not usually observe, and the

conference provided a space for me to ask questions or listen to where they wanted to take their

writing.

Sometimes, when students requested a conference, we did not discuss their blog at all.

P19, for example, addressed writing and potential writing topics, such as their dreams or hopes

for the future. They did not, however, open their Chromebooks to share their blog, and when I

inquired, they declined to share. Despite this, the conferencing discussion appeared to benefit the

student (P19) in progressing with their writing, as following our discussion, they immediately

began to write in their blog. Moreover, their (p19) general demeanour was comfortable as they sat on the floor in a secluded corner, headphones on and busily typing. P19 was a successful blogger without sharing with me. This experience caused me to re-evaluate my definition of student success. This process forced me to understand what choice looks like as trauma-informed practice. In the case of P19, what I was comfortable providing as a teacher was not what this student needed. Based on observations, this student needed empathetic listening and for me to have confidence in their writing ability without intervention.

During Session One, I was more aware of myself and my position of power as a teacher regarding providing safety and empowerment opportunities to students. I implemented what I deemed safe and empowering, not what the students wanted or needed. Later in Session One, as conferences increased, I responded to student feedback and provided more mico-moves in the classroom. The feedback process became more fluid and dynamic, which helped me evolve to be more responsive to student needs and deliver safety and empowerment in ways that met students' needs, not mine. Peer conferencing increased. I requested student input into the structure of assignments. Students made more logistical decisions about due dates, timelines, and how final projects were presented.

More students wanted to share and discuss as the year progressed. My initial goal when planning the blogging unit was to have a cycle of writing mini-lessons. These mini-lessons, 15 minutes in length, would be based on my observations of writing needs from student blogs. I would determine a general need and provide a brief lesson. Students would then edit and revise their writing and submit it for continued assessment and feedback, and then the process would continue. This cyclical process happened but was only visible in the second blogging session.

The first blogging session required more time for students to write and explore Google Sites to develop their blog outlines.

Conferences, at first, were informal and quick. My procedure was to circulate as students wrote and check in with them. I would ask how they were doing, and depending on their response, I would sit beside them and assist as required or move to another student. Safety was observed first, as some students did not want to conference. They would verbally say, "I am good, thanks," or I could see that their shoulders were up, or they would stop typing. I saw this as me intruding on their feelings of privacy and safety, especially in the context of what I asked them to write, which was vulnerable. Providing choice was successful, as students could choose what to share and what they wanted to discuss. I provided affirming feedback, which made the conferencing experience more comfortable. There was an increased sense of privacy since we were at the side of the room. My changes directly responded to student communication and body language when I circulated through conferences during the first blogging session.

Students eagerly sought conferences with me as the year proceeded, and I observed students willing to discuss their blogs. Students were more inclined to attend because I displayed openness and flexibility during the conference. Many students conferred with one another, and I saw natural conferencing partnerships form. For example, at least four groups of students shared almost every blogging session, and I overheard conversations about improving writing and blogging topics. Students trusted each other to share their intimate writing. This could represent how the choice of conferencing methods increased the sense of safety for some students.

The conferencing experience empowered me as an educator. It assisted me in developing relationships with my students, as I could follow up on their interests and blog topics and have conversations. I would find websites or articles on student interests and share resources with

them. I would note when I saw something on the news and bring their attention to it. I could have informal conversations about how they were or what they were feeling, specifically relating to their blog topics. For example, I recommended a student who was exploring one area of interest in their blog to another student who had previously researched that topic ("Oh! You are interested in horoscopes? You should go see _____ and ask if you can read their blog. They have lots of great information!"). When I did this, the student who was the original author of that topic was always willing to share and collaborate. This could be an example of empowerment to the student who was the topic's originator, as they could share their topic of expertise and interest and help guide the other students on their journey.

Despite my efforts to create a safe conferencing experience, I only provided that for some students in my class. Some students did not engage in conferences or avoided teacher and peer editing. These students were the same students I observed who were reluctant to write. I had conversations with these students and explained that I noticed their hesitation. We discussed that blogging was not the best choice for them to express their feelings. Other choices were provided for these students. This only happened in blogging session three, where students could podcast or use art instead of blogs.

I noticed conferencing increased when I allowed students to determine how they wished to conference, offered affirming feedback, and provided a choice for when they wanted to be conferenced. I noticed an increase in peer conferencing throughout the blogging sessions. These could all be examples of safety and choice (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014), as students were observed sharing intimate topics, and seeking out feedback.

Empowerment was more complex to determine through conferencing. Nonetheless, as an educator, I felt more empowered when the blogs provided me with a vehicle for learning about

my students and extending my relationships with them. Student blogs provided insight into their experiences and helped me reflect on my positionality when interacting with students.

Some blogs were vulnerable and honest, which changed how I interacted with those students. There were three distinct times when a student blog changed my relationship with them. In one case, I checked in with the student more frequently, as the experience they shared was one in which trust in adults had been broken. When working, I provided more grace for this student in terms of processing time and observed this student's need for relationships with peers to strengthen their sense of safety. I realized that I could provide this for all students, and my teaching began to evolve. Now, for every assignment, I asked students what a reasonable timeframe was for completion. I staggered due dates for assignments, which assisted those who were done early and those who required more time. I no longer assigned rubrics or marks without student input. I wanted the students to participate actively in their learning and how it was assessed.

Blogging developed my awareness of what created tension and stress for my students, and generally, what caused students stress were the larger assignments and looming due dates. For example, in blogs, in the Google Classroom comments, students would ask me for more time to complete specific projects. Had it not been for the accessibility and safety of asking through the written word of blogs, I do not think these students would have requested extensions or modifications to projects. In almost every case that I noted when one student requested increased time on a project, multiple other students were feeling the same pressure and wanted additional time. Looking at student topics and requests in the blogs resulted in me slowing down the pace and content I was teaching, as well as how I taught the content.

Using blogging as a trauma-informed practice has made me a more attuned and empathetic teacher. I still have more learning to do as a trauma-informed practitioner, but providing blogs is one method of encouraging trauma-informed care in the classroom.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The goal of this study was to determine if blogging can be a trauma-informed practice for students and if teachers could enhance their trauma-informed pedagogy through reflective practice. This chapter will discuss these findings concerning existing literature and theoretical frameworks. I evaluated and correlated the research findings to understand better the results for trauma-informed practices, education, and teacher development. The two research questions were examined separately. I reviewed the findings in the context of the relevant literature for each study topic. For RQ1, the findings will be connected to the literature on student well-being, trauma, trauma-informed frameworks, principles of safety, choice and empowerment, and student success. For RQ2, the findings will be compared to the existing literature on students' need for success, teacher development of trauma-informed practices, and feedback. I will connect these sections to research needs and recommendations for best practices. To conclude this chapter, I will review the recommendations and next steps for research.

5.1 RQ1: How do students in an Ontario Grade 6 classroom experience blogging as a trauma-informed practice (TIP) supporting their wellness?

This question aimed to uncover if blogging was experienced as a trauma-informed practice for students. In particular, I was interested in how safety, choice, and empowerment principles of Trauma Informed Care (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014) were developed through the blogging process. Trauma Informed Oregon proposes that to create trauma-informed spaces, there are foundational practices that need to be implemented (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014).

5.1.1 Student Well-being

I was most interested in the students' blogging experiences as a TIP. Would they experience safety, choice, and empowerment from blogging? The findings suggested that

students experienced these three factors to varying degrees. The levels of experience were

influenced by moderators such as learning needs, existing level of wellness, and need for

privacy. I examined how the findings for the three factors fit within the existing literature.

5.1.1.2 Safety. Safety is essential when creating a trauma-informed space (Morton &

Berardi, 2017). Safety was evident throughout the study, especially noted in the survey results.

Many students felt safe writing about their personal experiences and choice of topics. Students

expressed feelings of safety such as, "I could write whatever I wanted" (P1), "express my

feelings"(P8), and "yes i [sic] do feel safe to write anything." (P12). One student noted, "I can

vent" (P19). This statement indicated that P19 felt safe enough to express emotions and triggers

that a teacher could perceive negatively. In this case, the ability to vent illustrated that the

blogging process was safe for some students. Results demonstrated safety in the classroom, as

students indicated on the Google Form surveys, allowing students to write freely and without

restraints often imposed on scholastic writing.

As noted in the literature, creating a safe and trusting classroom takes time (Chafouleas et

al., 2016) and is a continual process. Many students demonstrated restraint at the beginning of

the blogging sessions. However, with continued observations, reflection and micro-moves, I was

able to integrate practices that promote safety. Students felt safe not only with me but also with

each other. Previous research (Chafouleas et al., 2016; Morton & Berardi, 2017) highlighted the

need for a sense of safety within the community, not just with the educator. My students shared

more with each other as they felt safe in the group. However, some students did not feel safe.

The findings suggested that moderating factors, such as students' existing level of wellness,

affected their feelings of safety. Students who struggled with mental health problems such as

anxiety or had existing trauma needed more time to feel safe or a different approach to feeling

safe altogether. This is important to keep in mind as a trauma-informed practitioner, as trauma-informed approaches should not be a one-size-fits-all model. Most existing literature provides recommendations and evidence-based strategies for trauma-informed practices (Baweja et al., 2016; Burdick & Corr, 2021). More discussion on the differentiation of trauma-informed practices in the classroom is needed. Discussing trauma-informed differentiation in the classroom is a suggested area for further research.

5.1.1.3 Choice. According to the literature, for blogging to be a trauma-informed practice, students must have control over their writing process (Batzer, 2016; Dutro, 2011; Jones, 2012). As a result, blogging was predominantly a student-led activity. Students had complete design control, a choice of writing topics, writing forms, and the amount of privacy they wanted in their blogs. Because the blog was their writing space, they had complete autonomy regarding their interactions with their blogs.

As the blogging sessions progressed, it became apparent that choice was associated with feelings of safety (Maynard et al., 2019). Students' sense of safety may have increased since they selected what to write about, who read their work, and how their writing was presented in their blog. Given that students chose who read or interacted with their blogs, they felt more secure in what they wrote because they had control over what developed into their writing.

5.1.1.4 Empowerment. Previous research indicated that trauma-informed practices can improve students' confidence in their healing journeys (Alvarez, 2017; Blitz et al., 2016; Ginwright, 2018; Horowitz, 2010). When opportunities to influence, control, and enhance self-efficacy are presented, confidence grows. These factors are necessary for empowerment (Brunzell & Norrish, 2022), and the blogging process allows students to experience them all (Larios, 2020).

My research exhibits a cyclical relationship between safety, choice, and empowerment (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014). As students were offered choices, they gained the confidence to make a decision that would benefit them. As students gained a sense of safety, they took more risks, expressed themselves more, and increased engagement and contribution to the school community, resulting in a sense of empowerment and value. For example, writing choice induced student safety, which resulted in self-reflective experiences for some students. This greater sense of safety encouraged more risk-taking with writing topics and greater engagement with the feedback process. According to Koslouski and Stark (2021), choice is a vital trauma-informed approach, and they extend this idea by ensuring we incorporate the student's voice and experiences. More research in this area is required.

5.1.2 Trauma

Given that 64% of Canadians have experienced trauma (Burczycka, 2017), strategies for preventative trauma measures (Venet, 2021), especially since the COVID-19 pandemic has been determined to be traumatic (Horesh & Brown, 2020), could be beneficial to all. This study supports research that utilizing and implementing a trauma-informed classroom is a clear, favourable decision on teachers' and schools' behalf (Alvarez, 2017; Brunzell et al., 2022; Koslouski & Stark, 2021; Venet, 2021). More research is required, especially as trauma gains media attention (Burdick & Corr, 2021; Maynard et al., 2019; Stipp & Kilpatrick, 2021). Understanding trauma at a psychological and social level benefits teachers and schools. I did not have detailed information on my students' traumatic experiences; however, the application of blogging provided students with a potential coping strategy to support current or be a method of preparation for future challenges.

5.1.2.1 Trauma impacts on learning and performance for students. To be a trauma-informed educator, one does not need the details of a student's traumatic experiences (Venet, 2021). This research used a preventative model (Venet, 2021) where a pedagogical TIP was instituted for all students. Therefore, in this study, there is no specific data on which students experienced trauma, their reactions to the implemented TIP, or how the implementation of TIP affected specific learning outcomes. This research was conducted during COVID-19; as such, every student experienced constant change, such as transitioning between at-home online learning and brick-and-mortar learning. My data samples did not reveal anything specific regarding the effects of COVID-19 on learning.

There is limited research on the long-term effects of COVID-19 on students' mental health; nevertheless, the research asserts the value of treating COVID-19 was a traumatic event for all (Harper & Neubauer, 2020; Horesh & Brown, 2020) and recommends the application of trauma-informed practices. Therefore, the blogging process was developed as a potential space for students to express challenges, including COVID-19-related issues.

Students expressed appreciation for the writing process of blogging. Student blog samples, significantly as blogging progressed through the year, demonstrated increased word choices, with students using more complex and descriptive language and improved thoughtfulness, with students writing more organized and detailed. Writing conventions, albeit slowly, began to improve as blogging progressed.

5.1.3 Trauma-Informed Frameworks

5.1.3.1 Trauma-Informed Care and Practices. A call for research on implementing trauma-informed care practices for all is not recent (Baweja et al., 2016; Blitz et al., 2016; Brunzell et al., 2022; Crosby, 2015; Dutro, 2019; Ginwright, 2018; Hopper et al., 2010; Phifer &

Hull, 2016; Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014; Venet, 2021). In education, students have access to

healthy relationships with peers and educators, thus providing a provision of care and a healing

potential (Hopper et al., 2010; Ludy-Dobson & Perry, 2010; Stokes, 2022; Trauma Informed

Oregon, 2014; Venet, 2021; Wall, 2021; Wolpow, 2009). Trauma-informed practices deliver

multiple opportunities to develop trust and relationships (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014). My

research determined that blogging provided a beginning for relationships through the

collaboration process of blogging.

Trauma-informed approaches indicate a trauma survivor's need for healing (Hopper et al.,

2010). Blogging could be a TIP since it provides a digital space for students to record their

emotions and experiences. Processing these emotions through blogging (Larios, 2020) provides a

healing environment, especially if the trauma-affected student feels the writing process cathartic

and is supported throughout the journey by trustworthy teachers and peers.

5.1.3.2 Trauma Informed Oregon Foundations of Trauma Informed Care. Though

there are multiple facets of the Foundations of Trauma Informed Care (Trauma Informed

Oregon, 2014), this study focused on safety, choice, and empowerment. These three components

of the model are essential to mental health and trauma-informed practices. The data collected in

this study support the fact that students experienced each component through classroom

blogging. A collective sense of safety, choice, and empowerment was present through blog topic

choice and sharing. Their importance as a trauma-informed practice was reinforced through this

study.

5.1.3.3 Venet's (2021) Work and Definitions of Trauma-Informed Care. Venet's

(2021) model views trauma-informed practices as beneficial to all students and explains how TIP

can be a preventative measure. With my students, preventative use of trauma-informed practices

was completed by developing a classroom community, creating a space where feedback was welcomed, encouraged, and accepted, and providing a blog space for potential self-discovery. Blogging was a whole class experience, and some students noted that they felt safe to write and express their thoughts. Students who feel unsafe will hopefully reflect on the process and find a safe self-expression method. The blogging experience provided the experience for students to determine what was safe for themselves, which they now understand for future writing options if blogging was not a positive experience.

This confirms Venet's (2021) focus on trauma-informed practices as potentially essential and beneficial for all. After reviewing my observational notes, I determined that more in-depth research on trauma-informed practices in a current classroom, with student interviews, examples of teachers' planning their TIP, and purposeful implementation of TIP, could benefit educators. Research should be written for and accessible to teachers beyond formal academic publications.

5.1.4 Principles of Safety, Choice, and Empowerment

Safety, choice, and empowerment are three essential facets of Trauma Informed Oregon's Foundations of Trauma Informed Care (2014). This study supports these facets as trauma-informed practices. Safety was established through relationship-building throughout the year and the blogging cycles. Choice was evident through student ownership of their blogs. Empowerment was evident through applications and responses to affirming feedback. These three foundations of Trauma Informed Care (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014) were consistently met, built, and reflected upon. Establishing safety by providing students with blogging choices led students to connect the process of writing to their well-being. Students participated in decision-making processes throughout the blogging cycles, which supports empowerment. All three areas worked in tandem as effective trauma-informed practices.

Based on the results of this research, I created a framework that illustrates the primary outcomes of using blogging as a method of self-expression and trauma-informed care. Figure 7 generalizes how blogging is one strategy that when implemented purposefully and with trauma-informed care, provides the student with safety, choice, and empowerment (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014).

Figure 7

A Framework for Blogging as a Trauma-Informed Practice
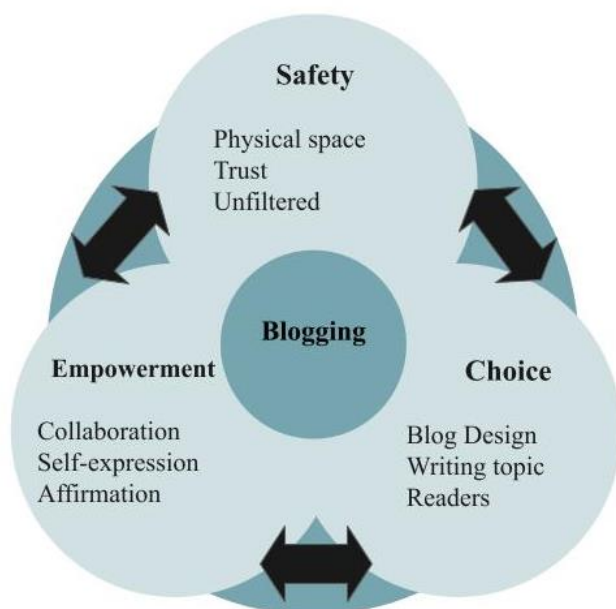
When a teacher provides the physical space a student needs to write without feeling anxious or watched, this provides safety. The blog provides a digital canvas where students fully regulate who sees their writing. Blogging facilitates trust, as students learn they have control on what is shared. They can write without a specific topic and be unfiltered in their writing.

Software such as Google Sites provides students with creative choice in how they layout and design their blogs. Students have a choice and control over how their blog looks. They have

control over what they write about, and how they write it. Students can decide who reads their blog, if anyone reads at all. Once students experience choice, they begin, as this research illustrated, to take risks in their learning and expression, and feel empowerment.

Blogging can also be collaborative, with the availability of co-authoring of topics and peer editing. Students can express themselves by exploring and writing about topics of interest. Affirmation through feedback from teachers and peers happens often. Students' life experiences are validated through peer connection and mutual understanding of each other's feelings. When blogging is an option for self-expression in the classroom, the facets of Trauma Informed Oregon's (2014) safety, choice and empowerment are observable.

Research asserts that, in general, the attitude of educators toward trauma-affected students is that the trauma "happens at home" (Petrone & Stanton, 2021). However, school and its community itself can re-traumatize or be the cause of trauma. Trauma-informed practices should be holistic and community-focused (Duane et al., 2020; Ginwright, 2018; Jones & Spector, 2017; Wolpow, 2009). I aimed to create a trauma-informed space where students were integral to decision-making. However, this study focused on one classroom, not the entire school. Despite a small participant sample, creating a trauma-informed space through blogging focused on using feedback to help students reflect on their experiences and emotions. As students experienced COVID-19, they could use blogging to understand their values and hopes (Harper & Neubauer, 2021) and their understanding of care for their community. Students conferred and shared ideas through writing or conversation, and many continued their blogging outside school. This could be interpreted as students beginning to use their blogs as a place for self-discovery and reflection, to research their interests, and, ultimately, to express their emotions and feelings. Though blogging began as a single classroom practice, students could begin to see

and understand their place in the wider community and continue to advocate for their needs in future classrooms and beyond.

The next step in this research is to share these findings and observations with other teachers in my school and then begin to develop cohesive definitions and understanding of safety, choice, and empowerment. Teachers could implement one trauma-informed practice, such as blogging, and reflect and share the successes and challenges of that specific TIP within the school community. These findings could be shared with the school board and other schools. Findings could also be discussed with the school board's psychological team. Discussion, planning, and implementation of board-wide trauma-informed practices could be the community movement needed to shift educational practice.

5.1.5 Student Success

Champine et al. (2022) noted that trauma-informed practices create hope for the future. This study acknowledged and confirmed the need to embrace and encourage the healing process in the classroom. As per the research, TIP can be included in standard classroom curricular practices (Dutro, 2015; Jones, 2012; Koslouski & Stark, 2021; Venet, 2021).

Generating ideas, organization, and editing as writers are all part of the Ontario Language Curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006); blogging incorporates all of these expectations. This TIP had students use their blogs to consider their own lived experiences, grapple with their emotions through writing, and engage in receiving feedback. Teachers can provide trauma-informed practices such as blogging throughout the curriculum, which creates a seamless transition to being a trauma-informed practitioner.

This study connected the idea of expressing feelings through writing to self-discovery. Results showed increased feelings of safety, appreciation for writing about chosen topics and

embracing the messy writing process. Ideally, a subsequent study would be longitudinal since healing is a non-linear process (Brunzell et al., 2022; Luthar & Mendes, 2020; Thomas et al., 2019). I did not witness the labours of my trauma-informed practices until the spring of 2022. The lack of immediate positive results may dishearten educators new to implementing trauma-informed practices. Despite this, research states that educators should be open and flexible to student needs and support their healing journeys (Cunningham, 2021; Ginwright, 2018; Hannegan-Martinez, 2019; Hobbs et al., 2019; Wolpow, 2009), even if results are not apparent for the duration of the teacher and student's school career.

5.2 RQ2: How can a teacher develop their trauma-informed practice and teaching pedagogy based on student feedback and reflection?

This study suggests teachers can develop trauma-informed practices through ongoing reflective practice and feedback. Though my responses to students' reflections seemed outwardly small, these small micro-moves applied in the classroom led to a more trauma-conscious space. As the blogging sessions evolved, students were increasingly vocal about their wants and needs. Students requested more specific feedback from me. I could tangibly connect my actions to the student's needs. Students provided input into how they wanted to learn and what they wanted to spend their time exploring, and I acted on those requests as soon as possible. I also anonymously discussed queries in the blogs with the entire class, which prompted discussions on assessment methods, project timelines, and focused writing lessons. The classroom became, through the use of blogging, student-driven, with me facilitating students' needs. These are examples of how my actions and responses support Trauma Informed Oregon's (2014) concepts of safety, choice, and empowerment.

As noted by Moore and Begoray (2017), discussions between students and teachers created empathy and a safe and trusting space. Dutro (2015) shared that hard times happen for people, and literacy can catalyze discussions that help students understand that all emotions are valued. All feelings and experiences 'fit' into classroom spaces and curricula. The students' blogs in this study provided a safe and trusting environment. Blogging allowed students to record feelings and thoughts, reflect on their lives, and receive feedback. This demonstrated how the classroom provided a space for trauma-informed care within the confines of curriculum and school. Students had the ultimate voice in how their blogs were shared and what was written in them, which increased their availability to access a safe space. I documented how feedback after the first cycle of blogs may have impacted what students wrote about in the next blogging session; as such, they responded to my questions or expanded on ideas as per my suggestions.

5.2.1 Students' Need for Relationships

Research describes the importance of healthy relationships for trauma-affected people (Ludy-Dobson & Perry, 2010; Morgan et al., 2015; Sonu et al., 2021; Venet, 2021). In the school setting, this translates to positive teacher-to-student relationships and strong inter-peer relationships (Koslouski & Stark, 2021; Venet, 2021; Wall, 2021). In the case of this study, data revealed that feedback was a primary source of student-to-teacher relationships. Feedback became more consistent through the blogging process. Though no formal question was posed about student-to-teacher relationships in the Google Form surveys, my teacher notes indicated how I changed my teaching practice in response to students' needs. Some examples included responding to student suggestions written in their blogs or conference conversations. If students requested more time on a project, I asked the entire class if this was something more students needed. Generally, other students agreed with the request. I learned to seek student input and

continually honoured their requests. This is an example of trust; I would respond if students felt

comfortable and safe enough to make these requests through their blogs and trusted me.

Conferences also allowed me to listen to students' needs. I considered and reflected on students'

blog topics. When I gave feedback to students, I considered the main idea of their blog: What did

the student want me to note or read? What were the aspects of this blog I wanted more

information about? What aspects of the blog could I respond to or ask questions about that would

help students make connections in their writing?

By the final blogging session, students came to conferences prepared. They arrived with

their Chromebooks open with sections highlighted on which they wanted to focus. They had

specific feedback requests, such as how to organize their thoughts more clearly. We would smile

and laugh during conferences, and eventually, students asked me each blogging session for a

conference. Student-to-teacher relationships were built over blogging.

Not all students shared their blogs, and I did not ask students why they did not share. As a

researcher, this is essential data that could have been valuable to this study. Based on what I

observed, some reasons could be that students enjoyed blogging but engaged in complete

privacy. Others might have felt pressured to conference, which created anxiety to share. Perhaps

conferencing, in general, was unsettling. Perhaps writing was not their preferred choice of

exploring their feelings, so they did not feel confident sharing.

5.2.2 Teacher Development of Trauma-Informed Practices

Documenting my responses to students' requests and their impact on trauma-informed

practice was challenging. I carefully considered my words and tone when conversing with

students. I slowed my reaction time when I encountered disruptive behaviours and considered

students' perspectives before making decisions. However, these small changes in my teaching instruction are almost impossible to delineate quantitatively or qualitatively.

Research provided conflicting responses from teachers regarding trauma-informed care in general. However, the literature supports an increased need for research on why there are extreme and varied responses to TIP from teachers. What trauma-informed practices are introduced in professional development settings? What support is available to teachers? What are the long-term goals and "look-fors" for the success of a trauma-informed classroom? These are all potential future research questions.

As I reflected on my journey through this research study, I realized the importance of holistically compiling best trauma-informed practices based on student feedback. As such, I developed Figure 8 as a model for a trauma-informed practitioner's development cycle. Centered in this model is how trauma-informed practices require continuous and reflective practice. As a teacher, you should be vigilant about your word choice, tone, and physical stances in the classroom. Processing your lessons, student responses, and next steps requires concentrated attention and time. Through observation, you are developing your awareness of your position in the classroom and your student's behaviours. Since the writing cycle of the blog facilitates feedback, applying student feedback to your classroom and lessons and trauma-informed practices is the micro-move that positions your evolving trauma-informed practices based on student needs. This cyclical process is one way of improving a teacher's trauma-informed practice. The purpose of this framework is to be the root support of a teacher's curriculum.

Figure 8

Cycle of Teacher Development as a Trauma-Informed Practitioner
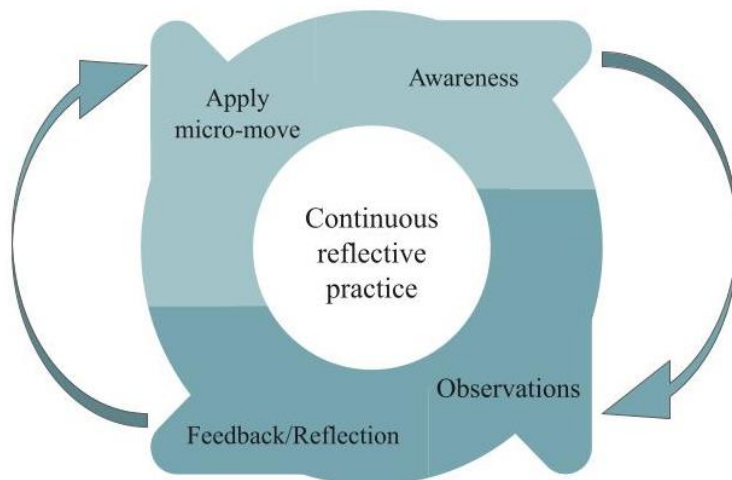
5.2.3 Feedback

What do students think of trauma-informed practices? What are teachers' reactions to student feedback? As Koslouski and Stark (2021) note, this research area needs improvement. I attempted to fill this gap, albeit with a small cohort, using students' blogs to listen to students' needs.

Based on my research and experience, the feedback loop made me a better trauma-informed practitioner. I listened more intently to student experiences and considered how and what students tried to communicate via their blog samples and our conferences. I was more purposeful in my reactions to students' needs, and, in general, I asked the class for more input about our daily classroom experiences. I increased student involvement in developing learning criteria and had students determine assessment choices; thus, students determined how to celebrate learning success. If some students required feedback on their writing needs, such as more clarity, I taught a mini-lesson on strategies to increase clarity, including word choice,

organization of ideas, or sentence structure. Without the continuing blogging cycle, I may not have noticed that particular writing skill was needed. Students asked for more time on projects through their blogs, even if they did not ask in person. Feedback provided a safe alternative to communicate if a conversation was stressful. I became more aware of the pacing and timing of classroom tasks and had students develop timelines and checkpoints for larger projects that worked for them. The feedback allowed students to express their needs and allowed me to respond to their needs.

Many of the feedback responses I provided were subtle. For example, a student would request a conference to discuss a challenging, personal experience, but when the conference began, the student redirected the focus to a specific writing question. I felt compelled to honour the student's lead in this process to avoid creating distrust. Though I entered the conference hoping for the discussion to go in a specific direction, I understood that the blog was for the student, and, thus, my response and feedback needed to focus on what they wanted or needed. If I had redirected the conference to focus on what I had wanted to discuss, I wondered if I would have created distrust with that student. To honour this student's choice, I followed their lead with the feedback process.

However, as the year progressed, I also began to look for and lean into blogs that dealt with complex or potentially traumatic topics. I tended to conference the students who wrote about more challenging and vulnerable events more often and felt an instinct to 'help' them. Considering my background experiences with trauma, this is not surprising. Nevertheless, from a phenomenological standpoint (Neubauer et al., 2019), I wonder how my actions impacted my relationship with these students and students who wrote about 'safe' topics. Did either group of students notice this pattern in my behaviours? What could I do to a) ensure I did not 'favour'

those who wrote about challenging events, b) feel I had to 'save' them, and c) ensure I was

providing all students with the feedback and writing spaces they required, even when it differed

for each student?

Through my experience as teacher and researcher, I support Koslouski and Stark's (2021)

assertion that more research is needed on student response to trauma-informed practices and

allowing students to specify what is and is not working in their learning journey. Ideally,

teachers would be more responsive and purposeful in implementing TIP when provided with

student feedback.

Venet's (2021) work supplements the Foundations of Trauma Informed Care (Trauma

Informed Oregon, 2014) by stating that TIP can be preventative and beneficial to all.

Preventative measures include a willingness to include students providing regular feedback on

learning practices. This study used blogging as a place for housing and responding to feedback.

This feedback allowed me to read and respond to students' concerns or ideas and change

classroom events, which allowed students to provide input and witness changes in the classroom.

This could have been an empowering experience for students.

Students used their blogs as a purposeful tool for self-regulation and self-discovery. Even

if students had not experienced trauma, they could use their blog as a strategy to assist

themselves with challenging times or share their blogging with others who may experience

trauma in the future. Therefore, blogging supports Venet's (2021) concepts of trauma-informed

practices supporting all and being a preventative measure for potential traumas.

5.4 Recommendations and Further Research

The findings from this study indicated that, though imperfect, the educator TIP of

blogging based on the Foundations of Trauma Informed Care (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014)

can bring a collective sense of safety and empowerment through student choice. I began this journey deliberately and with an open mind to the student experience, and I worked toward creating a trauma-sensitive space using blogging. Through a phenomenological approach (Mohajan, 2018), I analyzed data to understand the interconnectedness between researcher and subject, and explored the interconnected nature of a teacher and students' actions (Spratling et al., 2012). However, there is still much to explore on this topic.

A proposed recommendation is a further study of blogging in the classrooms, focusing on students' experiences with the blogging process. Ideally, this would occur with a larger sample size or multiple classrooms so educators could interpret data together. Having students look at collective anonymized data would also provide insight into the effectiveness of blogging as a trauma-informed practice. Google Forms are structured such that data appears in tables and graphs with no identifiers attached, and Likert scale questions appear as bar graphs. Students could review the trends in the graphics to explore, for example, how safe students felt blogging. Students and teachers could follow up with conversations about the range of results and determine potential next steps.

More research is also needed on how trauma-informed practices are being implemented—specifically, increased teacher reflections on implementing trauma-informed practices in classrooms. As Koslouski and Stark (2021) discussed, teachers can only assess the effectiveness of their trauma-informed practice if they seek student feedback. Future research could focus on a case study of one or more teachers describing and defining the trauma-informed practices they plan to use for students before implementation. The data about their thoughts and feelings with the specific trauma-informed practices could be collected from students. Ideally, this would be cyclical and continual, as the teacher should consistently implement trauma-

informed practices, with students providing continual feedback on what works and what needs to change.

Trauma-informed practices only occur with constant reflection, changes, fluidity, and an understanding that immediate results may not be visible (Brunzell et al., 2022; Venet, 2021). Educators should be prepared to make small, purposeful, and deliberate changes to their program, and the students need to support these changes. However, teacher vulnerability is an influencing factor, as a teacher may receive student feedback that they deem as personal. It is also imperative that a trauma-informed journey is a collective experience (Duane et al., 2020) for both teachers and students. Bringing choice and student-shared structure and definitions to the development of the classroom for students and working collaboratively with colleagues for teachers. If students, or those trauma-affected, do not have a say in the classroom procedures, how can it be trauma-informed? Due to the experience of COVID-19, this study supports research that determines trauma-informed practices are necessary for all (Hoersch & Brown, 2020; Venet, 2021). Time, patience, and a more humanizing approach to trauma-informed practices are recommended.

Research on trauma-informed education and practices is easily accessible. Many blogs, books, and articles are available, which may cause educators to feel overwhelmed (Alisic, 2012). Research can be siloed by examining, for example, one impact trauma has on an individual. In education, research generally discusses the academic impacts of trauma and how trauma-informed practices are generally implemented reactively. Trauma-informed care can be holistic and beneficial for all. However, more research is necessary on trauma-informed practices as preventative (Venet, 2021). The complexities of the classroom and education make it difficult to focus on a particular aspect of trauma-informed care that is 'better' than another. However, this

paper has noted that teachers can begin the continual process of trauma-informed care in classrooms through TIP, such as blogging, combined with micro-movesthat provide safety, choice, and potential for empowerment. Connecting how trauma impacts a student's academic, social, and emotional well-being is imperative. Future researchers should write educator-focused papers, analyzing how the systems of education work in tandem with trauma, how schools cause trauma, and how the community and society impact trauma perception and treatment (Venet, 2021). How aware are students of trauma-informed practices? What is their perception of trauma-informed care foundations, and how are they presented in schools and education? Koslouski and Stark (2021) call for more student voices in our trauma-informed care practices. As such, policymakers must realize that trauma-informed care is not 'another' aspect of education for teachers to implement. Instead, it is how education should be structured. Trauma-informed practices connect with Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), Anti-Bias and Anti-Racist (ABAR) education, and Culturally Competent and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP) (Hammond, 2014).

Trauma-informed education demands high expectations (Venet, 2021) and, thus, academic success once trust and safety are established. There is a call for creative expression in classrooms and the ability to facilitate challenging conversations as a student-driven classroom focus (Batzer, 2016; Dutro, 2019; Hannegan-Martinez, 2019; Hibsch & Mason, 2021; Jones, 2012; Larios, 2020; Moore & Begoray, 2017; Pinhasi-Vittorio, 2018; Wissman & Wiseman, 2011). These elements need to be based on student collaboration so students can provide input on how trauma-informed care is implemented. Facilitating a trauma-informed space which supports trauma-affected students needs to be arranged in collaboration with students.

How will we, as educators, know if our work is impactful for our target audience if we do not seek their feedback? It is recommended that trauma-informed practices be assessed from the

lens of educators and students in the classrooms, ideally longitudinally. Trauma-informed care needs to be understood as ever-changing, complex, and nuanced, and it can lead to empowerment and worth. Teachers must understand that trauma-informed practices will morph and change based on societal events (such as COVID-19), a student's sense of self, and the willingness to look at education through a broader lens.

Through this study, I have provided evidence of the effectiveness of trauma-informed practices such as blogging. Blogging can provide students with a safe place to express themselves, feel empowered, and learn from one another. Educators should work toward better understanding the benefits of organizing the structure of their classroom so students can offer feedback. Implementing pedagogical changes in response to students' feedback is the cycle of providing trauma-informed care in the classroom. As a result of this research and implementing TIP, I believe I became a better teacher by demonstrating empathy toward students, changing my teaching practice based on students' feedback, and learning that issues I thought were under control were stressful for students. Without blogging and feedback, students might not have felt safe enough to share their concerns with me, and I, in turn, would not have made the necessary changes to combat their stress.

5.5 Limitations

This study included multiple limitations. As the teacher and the researcher, I carried biases toward my students. Relationships were built over the school year, proving how relationships are an essential aspect of trauma-informed practices (Ludy-Dobson & Perry, 2010; Morgan et al., 2015; Sonu et al., 2021; Venet, 2021). Bias is also created through relationships, as I looked for the best in students and gave them the benefit of the doubt. To inhibit bias, examining data under the lens of trauma-informed practices of the Foundations of Trauma

Informed Care (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014) assisted with keeping the research data-focused.

In order to reduce bias, trustworthiness was developed through cross-referencing data against literature, the Foundations of Trauma Informed Care (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014) and Venet's (2021) work, other research, and various forms of student data. This data was archived and was not originally intended for research purposes. Therefore, there are gaps in follow-up data, and I had to interpret partial information based on memory or context by reviewing lesson plans.

Student attendance due to COVID-19 and the ebbs and flows of illness during a pandemic cannot be ignored as a limitation. Due to these inconsistencies in attendance and participation, no complete whole class data sample was collected at one time. As such, all students did not complete both Google Form surveys. Ideally, this research would be conducted on a larger scale and over an extended period.

Another limitation was the type of feedback I provided my students. My feedback was primarily positive and affirming. For example, if a student wrote about a personally challenging topic, I asked questions to further their writing content. I expressed gratitude to the student for sharing such an intimate topic. The purpose of the feedback, in this case, was to help students continue to feel that blogging was safe. If the feedback were critical, even regarding grammar and content, it may have created an unsafe writing environment. Critical feedback is necessary, nevertheless, to improve writing skills and content. My professional judgement was used to determine the type of feedback that was more helpful to that particular student at that particular moment in time. I had to be sensitive and aware of the purpose of my feedback. Would students share less, or would they continue writing about what they perceived as 'safe' topics, even with

critical feedback? My provision of mostly affirming feedback was a limitation. Future research could examine multiple styles of writing feedback and determine methods of providing critical feedback in a trauma-informed method.

Terminology, especially safety, should have been critically deconstructed with students. This means that while students completed the Google Form surveys, they would have defined the term safety differently, which might have skewed their Likert scale options. Research on students' perception of safety in the school and COVID-19's impact on students' experiences and definitions of safety is suggested.

5.6 Conclusion and Implications

This study aimed to determine if blogging is effective in classroom trauma-informed practice and if teachers could increase their TIP through student feedback from blogging. The focus was on safety, choice, and empowerment (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014). The power of this study was how the data was collected and analyzed. The data was collected from a working and active classroom throughout the school year. From a phenomenological case study perspective (Mohajan, 2018; Ylikoski & Zahle, 2019), blogging can be utilized as a trauma-informed practice, and it can garner insight into students' perspectives of the classroom so that an educator can respond to students' needs.

Examining blogging as a trauma-informed practice in a single classroom elicited profound results. Students engaged in choice through the power of organizing and deciding their writing, creating relationships through peer and teacher conferencing, and beginning to see themselves as complex and self-aware people. Trauma-informed practices should be integrated within the systems and confines of education.

Due to COVID-19 and the number of students who experience trauma, trauma-informed practices require more time, focus, and effort in education (Anderson et al., 2022; Bridgland et al., 2021; Brunzell et al., 2022; Harper & Neubauer, 2021; Horesh & Brown, 2020). Trauma-informed education, and trauma itself, requires a deep understanding of how it evolves in the classroom on all levels of student interactions, such as socially and academically. As educators, humanizing education and creating trauma-informed practices should be foundational in every classroom. This research supports how blogging, a relatively simple tool, can be one strategy to promote trauma-informed care in classrooms.

Trauma-informed care should be implemented with purpose, flexibility, and a shared understanding between educators, the community, and students (Crosby, 2015). It is in the realm of the possibility for educators to create and sustain a trauma-informed care classroom and a trauma-informed school system. For trauma-informed practices to reach their full potential, they must be foundational, structural, and considered before and with academic planning. Just as a teacher would change the trajectory with an academic concept based on student assessment, a teacher needs to modify and change their trauma-informed practice based on student data. We must understand how well-being and daily stressors can impact the daily interactions in the classroom. Though a teacher can implement and be reflective and responsive to their TIPs, understanding environmental factors and the world's reactions may affect students and change how they react to TIPs.

This study also reinforced how trauma does not just impact one aspect of a person, yet research on trauma-informed practices, in general, continues to be siloed. An example would be research on how trauma is observed as a behaviour, focusing on behaviour modification and the individual student (Brunzell et al., 2022). For example, a teacher might put in place a specific

strategy for a specific behaviour (ex., break cards when a student demonstrates a lack of focus), which might seem successful from an observational standpoint, as the student identifies the need for a break and uses the break cards. However, this does not include other aspects of the person's identity that are impacted by trauma. This siloed approach limited how I curated research, as I searched for research that explored trauma impacts on behaviours, academics, and social interactions cohesively, rather than, for example, just trauma's effects on behaviours alone. Increased research on the holistic impacts of trauma is needed, especially in the educational field.

The lack of research from students' perspectives on trauma-informed care (Alvarez, 2017; Koslouski & Stark, 2021) should create urgency for educators. If nothing else, educators should listen to student recommendations and attempt to modify their practice based on that feedback. Trauma-informed care is a response to the needs of the trauma-affected person and has the ultimate goal of restoration of safety, power, and worth (Trauma Informed Oregon, 2014).

Students identified that they felt safe to choose and write about a topic of their choice in their blogs, and some noted that blogging helped them express their emotions. Through this experience as an educator, I learned how purposeful and reflective I was about student needs and the importance of including students in the decision-making processes regarding their learning. Blogging was a forum where I could generate lessons based on students' writing needs. Blogging provided insight into the daily logistics and emotions of the classroom from a student's perspective. Being timely and responsive to students' needs, including students' in-classroom decisions, and providing space to reflect on their emotions enriches the cycle of trauma-informed practices.

Teachers and students should continually and collectively define safety, choice, empowerment, and what they look and feel like in the classroom. Sharing the collective human

and vulnerability experience strengthens trauma-informed practices and care. Trauma-informed

care benefits all students and is a proactive approach that does not solely have to be in response

to trauma (Venet, 2021).

Table 3 illustrates critical elements of safety, choice, and empowerment (Trauma

Informed Oregon, 2014) founded through blogging in this study. Safety through blogging is

provided in the options students can use to design their blogs, how peer-editing and writing

developed a sense of community, and that mistakes are welcomed and encouraged through

attempting different writing styles. Students explored choice through writing topics and

conference methods, for example. Students demonstrated empowerment when they shared their

writing knowledge, expressed emotions and events clearly, and began to connect a sense of relief

after writing about their emotions. Overall, blogging facilitated multiple spaces to experience

safety, explore choice, and feel empowered.

Table 3

Blogging in the Classroom: A Trauma-Informed Practice for Educators

Safety	Choice	Empowerment
- Options for sharing - Sense of community - Options for topics - Room for mistakes - Non-judgemental feedback opportunities	- Design choices - Content and topic choices - Sharing choices - Self-expression choices	- Increase in blogging skills - Increase in confidence - Development of Self-awareness and identity - Self-expression opportunities - Control over process - Influence in community - Autonomy

Though this study is imperfect, that imperfection parallels the experience of providing a

trauma-informed classroom. Creating a safe and empowering environment, making mistakes as a

teacher, and moving forward are constant occurrences at school and within a trauma-informed space. What makes trauma-informed care beneficial is the openness and willingness to increase safety, choice, and empowerment, even if it requires more learning and risk-taking on an educator's behalf. Trauma-informed practices as proactive approaches in the classroom deserve continued research.

On a frosty morning in November 2023, three students from this study approached me in the schoolyard. I was on duty, and these students are currently in Grade 8. We began talking about how we were, our thoughts on the weather, and the state of the world. One student, shuffling their toe into the dirt of the walkway, broke a moment of lull in our conversation. "Remember when we blogged?" they asked, "I miss it. I should start a new one, to get my thoughts out." I was not expecting the topic of blogging to arise, so when it did, I was quietly stunned. "I do remember," I smiled. Our conversation dissolved into the noise of the schoolyard, and we walked away. I reflected on this moment. If nothing else, this student's statement validated the blogging experience beyond that of any peer-reviewed journal publication. The blogging experience had meant something to this student, this growing and developing human, and I hoped they would continue their expressive self-discovery by continuing to blog. For at least this one student, I had provided safety, choice, and empowerment as a trauma-informed practice as an educator.

As an educator, I am willing to share my experiences of trauma-informed practices with others, hoping that together, trauma-informed practices can become increasingly poignant at all levels of education and within the community. I call for a continuation of trauma-informed practices as holistic and cohesive in education. I will continue implementing and researching

high-yield methods that support TIP in my classroom and help students create trauma-informed

spaces.

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Appendix A: The Feelings Wheel
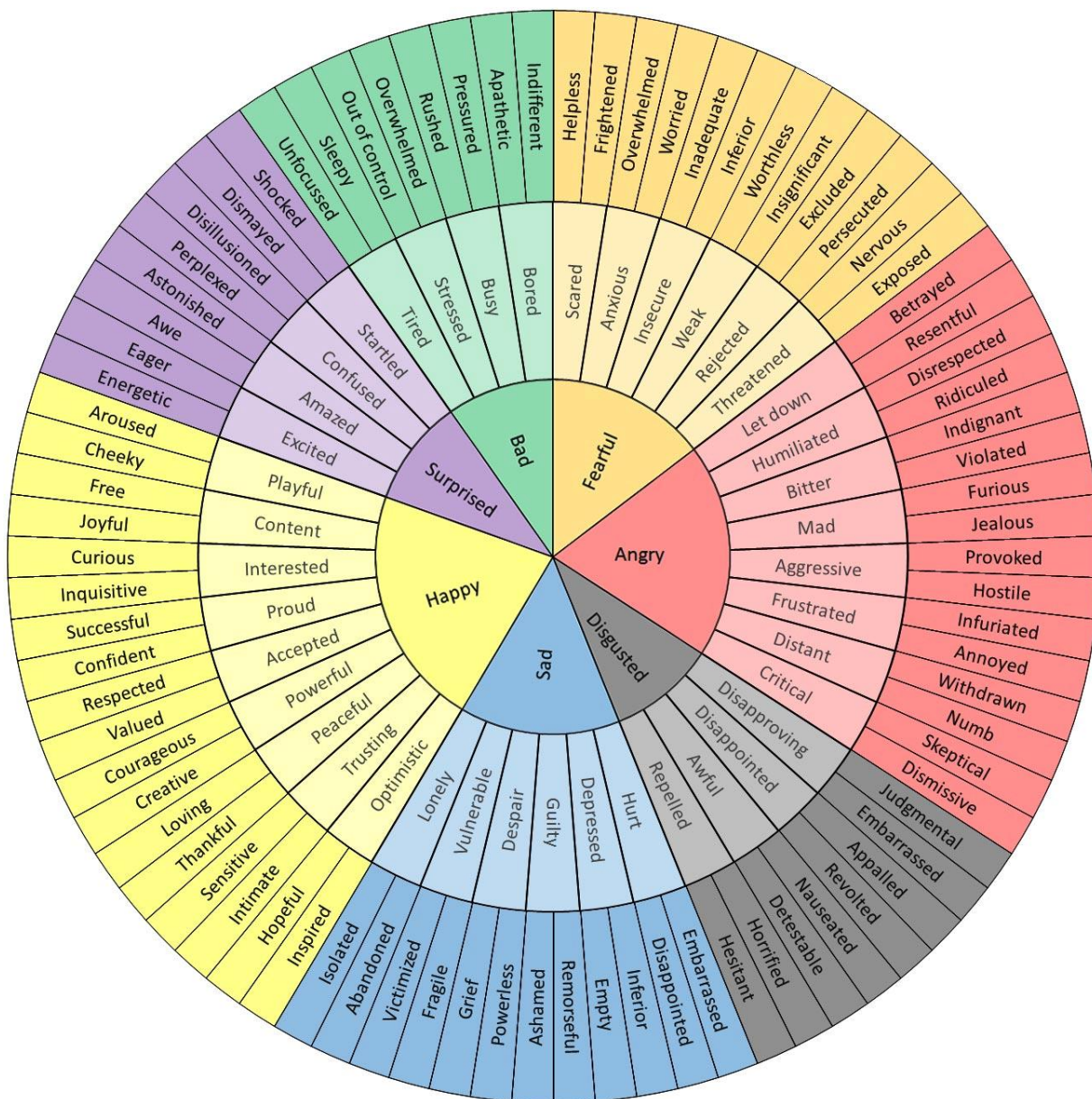
Appendix B: Google Form Second Blogging Session Sample Questions

Question	Format
In general, do you like journaling/blogging?	Likert Scale 1 = Don't like it 5 = Love it!
What do you appreciate about blogging/journaling?	Open-ended
Do you feel safe enough to write about anything?	Likert Scale 1 = Not safe at all 5 = Totally safe
Do you feel journaling/blogging helps with your feelings?	Likert Scale 1 = Not at all 5 = Very, very much!

Appendix C: Google Form Third Blogging Session Sample Questions

Question	Format
How do you feel about journaling/blogging?	Likert Scale 1 = Terrible 5 = Love it
What do you appreciate/like about journaling?	Open-ended
Do you feel safe enough to write about anything?	Open-ended
Do you feel journaling helps with your mood/feelings?	Likert Scale 1 = Not at all 5 = Very much
Would you keep blogging and journaling on your own?	Multiple Choice Yes, no, maybe
OPTIONAL: Anything else you want to tell me about your thoughts/feelings/opinions on journaling? Suggestions?	Open-ended