EFFECTS OF EXTREME BEHAVIORS AND OUTBURSTS IN KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

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This study explored extreme behaviors and violent outburst in kindergarten classrooms and the affect they had on other students as observed by their teachers. A mixed methods study design was used, and included a survey and interviews. Quantitative data was collected to understand what teachers are experiencing as a group, and qualitative data expanded on those experiences. The data revealed the variety of extreme behaviors exhibited by some students, and the ways other students and staff both in the classroom and at the school site are affected by them. One of the primary findings is that a lot of time is spent on classroom evacuations and various class activities after an extreme behavior event, which takes away from instructional time.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

To think about kindergarten invokes positive feelings in many, as it is a time of exploration through play, making friends, and learning how to be a student. While this remains true, kindergarten teachers have increasingly been reporting extreme behaviors that impede teaching and learning in their classrooms. It may seem to some that kindergarten violence is not a meaningful threat since the perceived likelihood of five-year-olds causing serious bodily injury to classmates or teachers seems low, however, it is not only physical injuries that need to be taken into consideration. Whenever violence is witnessed, the emotional reaction must be processed.

The purpose of this study is to examine the phenomenon of extreme and violent behavior exhibited by kindergartners and the effects, if any, these behaviors have on the other children in the classroom. If students are affected, in what ways are they impacted?

This thesis will continue with Chapter 2, a review of the literature, which addresses the effects on overall classroom behavior, teacher stress and fatigue, effects of trauma on brain development, all framed by Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory. Chapter 3, Methodology, details the methods employed to find participants, instruments and the process used to gather data. The results of the analysis of the data gathered will be discussed in Chapter 4, Results. Finally, Chapter 5, Conclusion, will discuss the data, limitations, and implications for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A recent investigative news report, “Classrooms in Crisis,” (Tierny, 2019) by Oregon television station KGW, highlighted increasing incidents of extreme behaviors in the classroom, calling it a crisis. Teachers report these behaviors include screaming in classrooms and in the halls, throwing chairs at students and adults, using expletives while yelling in the halls or classroom, threatening suicide, and hurting other students and adults (Tierny, 2019). A study conducted by Flannery, Wester, and Singer (2004) states an average of 61% of students witnessed violence or the threat of violence at school.

In addition to the above-mentioned acts, classroom violence and aggression includes yelling, kicking, throwing large and small objects, making threats, bullying, and destroying school or personal property in the classroom. These behaviors go beyond basic disruptions such as wandering in class, blurting out, and talking (O’Brien, Taras, Barton, Sellick, & Stein, 2015; Wehby, Symons, & Shores, 1995).

While acknowledging the student acting out is in distress, it cannot be ignored that the students who are exposed to the actions are impacted. Students may come to school without any trauma experience only to gain that experience in the classroom, while others may have had previous traumatic experiences, which then continue and deepen in the classroom. The question this study seeks to explain is how outbursts and extreme behaviors impact the other students in the classroom from the perspective of the classroom teacher. Effects on other students can take the forms of a decrease in instruction time, teacher fatigue that affects teaching quality, exposure to violent

behaviors that can either be new to students or triggers for past experience, and changes in their own behaviors.

The purpose of this literature review is to explore violent outbursts and extreme behavior in kindergarten classrooms as a form of trauma to students who witness them, and the effects on those students. This review will: 1) examine violent acts in the classroom, specifically classroom behavior of others as influenced by violent outbursts, followed by the role classroom violence plays in the academic achievement of student witnesses; 2) consider teacher stress and classroom culture; 3) explore the impact violence has on brain development; 4) analyze theories related to the subsequent behavior effects students witnessing violence in the classroom. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Bioecological Theory, and Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory (Shaked & Schechter, 2013) will be considered to help frame the topic.

Effects on Classroom Behavior

Scholars have studied the effects peers have on behavior in the classroom. A number of those studies found that when non-aggressive students are placed in a classroom with one or more students displaying aggressive and disruptive behaviors, the non-aggressive students can develop aggressive behaviors (Barth, Dunlap, Dane, Lochman, Wells, 2004; Thomas, Bierman, Thompson, & Powers, 2008, 2011). This suggests that students view aggression and disruptive behavior as an acceptable way to function in the classroom, if another student is displaying such behavior. Students as young as first grade are included in some of these studies (Barth et al., 2004; Flannery et

al., 2004). Carroll and Hoekstra (2009) found by adding a disruptive student to a classroom, misbehavior by other students can increase by as much as 16%.

Socially, students may see aggressive behavior as acceptable when it is on display regularly in class. In some cases, students believe peers' perception of aggression and disruptive behavior is less serious than their own perception (Dursley & Betts, 2015). This could be another reason for increasing aggression throughout the year in students who initially showed low or no aggression at the beginning of the year. Students perceive aggression to be thought of as more acceptable than it is in actuality.

Becoming more aggressive is not the only behavior change some students can undergo. A case study by O'Brien et al. (2015) describes a 10-year old boy in a classroom with a new, highly disruptive student. The disruptive student had violent outbursts and was physically and verbally abusive in the classroom. This triggered anxiety in the study subject, and over the course of 3-4 months, he started pulling his hair out, bedwetting, and having nightmares. This is another example of extreme behaviors affecting students in the classroom setting.

Students can present as having defiant or obstinate behavior due to internalized trauma. This is particularly so for children who have reactive attachment disorder as a result of a neglectful or abusive home environment **(**O'Neill, Guenette, & Kitchenham, 2010), especially between the ages of "six months and three to four years of age" (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). According to MedlinePlus, U.S. National Library of Science (2020) reactive attachment disorder describes when "a child is not able to easily form a normal or loving relationship with others. It is considered to be a

result of not forming an attachment to any specific caregiver when very young." This is a developmental period when the most intensive attachment is taking place (Ainsworth, et al., 1978). Their fight, flight, or freeze instincts are unregulated, often looking like misbehavior to others due to the influence of reactive attachment disorder, or other trauma experience at an early age can have on the developing brain **(**O'Neill et al., 2010).

Managing a classroom with students who are prone to outbursts or aggressive behavior is more difficult, since teachers need to ensure the safety of all students, and help the student having the outburst, at the same time. When classrooms are poorly managed, and instructional time is spent on correcting behavior, the outcomes for students are negatively affected (Barth et al., 2014). Instructional time can be lost when teachers need to attend to the outburst, or when the whole class needs to leave the classroom for safety reasons.

Simply witnessing violence in the classroom can lead to the development of emotional and behavioral issues. Academic achievement is also at risk, especially when exposed to violence in the classroom over time (Flannery et al., 2004).

Academic Effects

Students need to know that they are safe at school in order to learn. Abraham Maslow (1943) developed the theory Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation. Maslow's theory proposes a hierarchy of needs wherein the lower needs in the hierarchy must be sufficiently met before the individual can ascend to higher levels necessary to fully realize one's potential. The five levels of needs, starting from the foundation, are the need

for physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. *Physiological needs* are very basic; air, water, food, shelter, etc. Safety needs, which in the context of this study refer to personal safety, resources, health, property and, less fitting to kindergartners, employment. When the needs at the lower end of the spectrum are sufficiently met, it allows the individual to ascend to *self-actualization*, the highest level of psychological development. It is at this level, individuals can realize their full potential as a human being (Maslow, 1943).

When considering academic effects on students, it is important to remember that many students come to school with pre-existing trauma. Researchers studied the effects that early exposure to child maltreatment had on academic outcomes using data from Child Protective Services (CPS) involvement with families, since an open CPS file would indicate trauma experience (Ryan et al., 2018). Their sample came from all Michigan public schools, and was comprised of students born between 2000 and 2006. The study found that of the third-grade students, "approximately18% were or had been associated with a formal CPS investigation" (Ryan et al., 2018, abstract). Further, in some school districts in the state "more than 50% of third graders" were currently or had been associated with CPS investigations (Ryan et al., 2018, abstract). This data indicates a large number of trauma-affected children already in the school system who are at risk of being further traumatized by violent peers, and of experiencing negative academic outcomes themselves.

Since witnessing violence in the classroom can affect a child in numerous behavioral and psychological ways, it stands to reason that academic learning outcomes

are also affected. Academic achievement is significantly negatively affected by trauma (Duplechain, Reigner & Packard, 2008; Goodman, Miller & West-Olatunji, 2011; Ryan, Jacob, Gross, Perron, Moore & Ferguson, 2018).

Carrell and Hoekstra (2009) suggest a disruptive peer can "have a statistically significant negative effect on their peers' reading and math test scores" (p. 61). The addition of one disruptive student to a class of 20 decreases test scores for both reading and math by more than two-thirds of a percentage point (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2009). Carrell and Hoekstra (2018) estimated that having a disruptive student in the classroom can negatively affect the lifetime earnings of students in the class, as lower academic achievement compounds over the years.

Duplechain et al. (2008) explored whether or not the intensity levels of experienced trauma had any impact on reading achievement. Their study compared students who experienced a moderate amount of trauma to those who experienced high amounts of trauma. As outlined in the article, students completed a scale questionnaire and those who reported one or two events of trauma in the past year were considered to have experienced a moderate amount, while those experiencing three, four, or five events were considered to have experienced a high amount. Though "all significant findings demonstrate low reading achievement" (p. 130) among students who experienced trauma, the moderate exposure group experienced a consistent decline in reading based on standardized test scores, whereas the high exposure group did better than expected. Duplechain et al. (2008) theorize that this difference could be due to the fact that teachers know the signs and behaviors a student who is traumatized exhibits, and can intervene.

Students who fall into the moderately exposed category may not exhibit behaviors that teachers clearly identify, and therefore, are overlooked for services and interventions.

Violence Directed at Teachers

Students also witness violence directed at the teacher, their primary care-giver, at school. Whether or not an individual has witnessed physical aggression or violence against their mother or step-mother is one of the qualifying questions on the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) questionnaire used by the CDC-Kaiser Permanente ACE Study in 1998. A 2014 national survey conducted by McMahon, Peist, Davis, Bare, Reddy, Espelage, and Anderman (2019) supported the claim that teachers are victims and targets of student violence/aggression. The survey found that 80% of teacher participants had been victims of violence at school within the current or past year. Of those teachers, students perpetrated 94% of the victimizations. Elementary school teachers reported more incidents of physical abuse/assault against teachers than those teaching middle and high school (Anderman, Eseplage, Reddy, McMahon, Martinez, Lane, Reynolds, & Paul, 2018; Gerberich, Nachreiner, Ryan, Church, McGovern, Geisser, Mongin, Watt, Feda, Sage, & Pinder, 2013; McMahon et al., 2019). Physical aggression against elementary level teachers was primarily the result of de-escalation attempts once a student had become violent as opposed to discipline and breaking up fights (McMahon et al., 2019).

Witnessing aggression/violence is not the only way students are affected when their teachers are victims. The chronic stress associated with teaching in a classroom with students who have violent/aggressive outbursts can lead to teacher burnout, which is a

make up of emotional exhaustion, a reduced sense of accomplishment, and depersonalization (Steinhardt, Jaggars, Faulk & Gloria, 2011). Experiencing depersonalization is "feeling cynical, irritable and negative toward others," and one is "more likely to develop an indifferent or cynical attitude and detached response on the job" (Steinhard et al., 2011, p. 420). The study exploring student violence against school employees, conducted by Bass, Chen, Henry, Tomozic, and Li (2016) illustrated that "victimization was positively associated with burnout and negatively associated with work engagement" (p. 318).

Teachers experiencing stress-related burnout and lower work engagement are not performing their best work due to the fact that they are exhausted and burned out, which negatively impacts student learning. A study assessing burnout conducted by Steinhardt, et al., using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey showed teachers felt emotional exhaustion (α=90%), and feelings of depersonalization (α=75%) (Steinhardt, Jaggars, Faulk & Gloria, 2011). Furthermore, students' academic outcomes and relationships with teachers are more likely to weaken if the classroom teacher has depressive symptoms (McLean & Connor, 2015). "Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest" (Mayo Clinic, n.d., para 1). Together, burnout and depressive symptoms can compromise the classroom learning environment, and result in decreased growth in math (McLean & Connor, 2015). Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) showed weaker long-term academic growth directly related to the teacher experiencing a sense of reduced personal accomplishment (Wong, Ruble, Yu, & McGrew, 2017). Stress and poor emotional

regulation are symptoms of depression, which can also interfere with a positive classroom climate and learning outcomes (McLean & Connor, 2015).

Stress and burnout affect teacher turnover, and teacher turnover can lead to instability in the teaching profession, and the hiring of lower quality or lower performing teachers. A study on teacher retention by Boyd et al. (2011) reported findings that the most important factor influencing the decision to leave a teaching position is support or lack thereof from administrators.

Trauma and Brain Development

Students who experience trauma express this stress in different ways at school. Hypervigilance, defined by the American Psychological Association (2020) as a state of abnormally heightened alertness, particularly to threatening or potentially dangerous stimuli that can result when students do not know what to expect from a situation from minute to minute (O'Brien et al., 2015: Terrasi & Crain de Galarce, 2017). When there is a violent outburst, the stress and trauma experienced by others in the classroom can keep them in a heightened state of tense alertness, waiting for the next outburst, or waiting to see what will happen to classmates or their teacher, if a threat of harm to either exists.

Psychological and physical trauma can activate the immune system, resulting in a sustained activation of the innate immune system at an early age (Danese & Baldwin, 2017). The innate immune system can be detrimentally impaired through sustained activation over time due to psychological or physiological trauma. The innate immune system is the one we are born with, as opposed to the adaptive immune system, which

develops throughout a lifetime due to exposure to different pathogens. Skin and membranes are parts of the innate immune system. Through the innate immune system, the body immediately reacts to foreign bacteria and viruses, but without the specific responses to specific bacteria and viruses that the body develops through exposure, as it has not yet had the exposure (Merck Manual Consumer Edition, n.d.). Psychological trauma can "affect the development of the innate immune system and thus induce a chronically activated and hyperreactive inflammatory response starting in childhood and persisting into adult life" (Danse & Baldwin, 2017, p. 519). Speer, Upton, Semple, and McKune (2018) found that being in a systemic inflammatory state is thought to lead to "increased risk for developing physical co-morbidities with cardiovascular, metabolic, musculoskeletal, dermatological, and pulmonary diseases" (p. 118) in later life.

Inflammation can also lead to psychiatric disorders, which increases chances for children who experience trauma to develop them. According to Matthews et al., (2010) people who have depression also have higher levels of inflammation. This same inflammation response also occurs in people with bi-polar disorder (Leboyer et al., 2012) and post-traumatic stress disorder (Passos et al., 2015).

In addition to inflammation, high levels of stress during childhood can affect the proper development of the hippocampus, which is the part of the brain believed to be involved in memory and cognition (Danse & McEwen, 2012). Higher than average cortisol levels can be found in children with a history of maltreatment, which can be toxic to brain development and can affect the hippocampus, causing shrinkage (Carrion & Wong, 2012). When the hippocampus is not properly functioning, the memories of an

individual may present as “overrepresentation, such as intrusive thoughts and nightmares, or suppression, inability to recall memories, or selective amnesia” (Carrion & Wong, 2012, p. 524). These are significant implications for all students’ classroom experience and academic outcomes.

Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Systems Theory

The ways students witness violence, and the subsequent effects can be framed using Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Systems Theory. His theory explains human development as influenced by the different environments in which the individual spends time, and the people within those environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In the nurture versus nature question, the Bioecological Systems Theory represents nurture, while genetics represents nature.

At the center of the system is the child. The child’s immediate environment is the *microsystem*, which for most children is home, school, and daycare. The microsystem is where the child primarily spends their time during typical days, and individuals the child interacts with on a personal level.

The *mesosystem* encompasses the microsystem due to the fact that microsystem environments are connected and influence each other (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Children have many microsystems that make up the mesosystem. As children grow and develop, they begin to understand ways in which their different microsystems relate to one another, and sometimes cross over.

The *exosystem* is next and encompasses environments and people in which the child does not have direct interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Though there is no direct interaction, the environments and people included in the exosystem indirectly influence and affect the development of the child. An example of this is a parent's work situation. If a parent's workplace is stressful, or if a parent loses their job, the child will know the effects, though they do not have contact with the workplace or co-workers. A loss of income creates financial changes, and workplace stress can create interpersonal tension at home.

Finally, the *macrosystem* encompasses all systems and represents the child's culture, including belief systems, which are made up of the microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem. These systems fit into the macrosystem to create a consistent and reliable culture that influences a child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Macrosystems can be neighborhoods, socioeconomic status, cultural group, etc.

The manner in which the student may be affected by violent outbursts or incidents in the classroom cannot be studied in isolation when examining the issue through Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory.

General System Theory

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory is similar to Bertalanffy's General System Theory, however the general system theory was developed with the biological sciences in mind, specifically, the meaning of life related to differences between living matter and non-living matter (Shaked & Schechter, 2013). Bertalanffy's theory is holistic, and built

upon the idea that “the whole takes a form that cannot be recognized from its parts” (Shaked & Schechter, 2013, p. 777), and parts of the system cannot be explored independently of one another, as they relate to the whole (Hofkirchner, 2019). Shaked and Schechter (2013) stated that though initially the theory was used in the biological sciences, Bertalanffy believed it could apply to any system.

System thinking was born from Bertalanffy’s General System Theory (Mania-Singer, 2017; Shaked & Schechter, 2013). Mania-Singer (2017) conducted a study on a large school district, examining it through the lens of system theory, with the district office as the center of the system. The study sought to answer questions about effective leadership during times of school reform and restructuring. Data collected were surveys, sociograms, interviews, observations, and document review to measure the perceived effectiveness of leadership (Mania-Singer, 2017, p.74). The analysis of the data revealed that more connections are needed between district office and schools, and people in managerial roles need to be more connected and less isolated from each other and the district office for the purpose of better communication. Information was shared in passing, or informally, which left many administrators at the site level out of the loop of communication. Formalized feedback loops were suggested to increase ongoing communication (Mania-Singer, 2017). According to Daly and Finnigan (2009), the more connected the education network is, the more knowledge can be generated, created, and shared. Both findings recommend more communication between systems.

Conclusion

The purpose of this literature review is to examine what is currently known about the effects on student witnesses to violent outbursts in kindergarten classrooms. There are behavioral, psychological, physiological, and academic implications for students in the early grades of kindergarten through second grade who witness violence and aggression. The literature on the topics of the effects of classroom violence on behavior in other students, stress and burnout in teachers, developmental effects on the brain, and academic effects in isolation is ample, but the synthesis of these topics and effects on peers in the classroom at the time of the violent outburst is limited. While some of the literature reviewed is current, much of it is less recent. All studies and articles were necessary to build a more complete picture of student violence in the classroom. A thorough investigation addressing the frequency of outbursts or violence, duration of the outbursts, room evacuations, injuries, property damage, student reactions, and follow-up actions taken is missing from the literature.

There is a need for the aforementioned topics to be studied as a system in order to generate relevant and accurate data for future study and analysis. Violent students acting out in the classroom do not affect students, teachers, and classrooms in isolation, as they are a part of a complex system. The complexity of the systems is precisely the reason for studying them holistically as opposed to in isolation.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The goal of this study is to investigate the phenomenon of violent incidents and outbursts in kindergarten classrooms and the effects on students from the point of view of classroom teachers. Specifically, the study seeks to understand the impact of these incidents on other students in the classroom. The review of the literature revealed a gap in the information about violent outbursts in kindergarten classrooms only, however, the literature covered higher grade levels and ranges of grade levels including kindergarten (Cooley & Fite, 2015; Dursley & Betts, 2015; Fite, et al., 2017; Reinke et al., 2014; O'Brien, et al., 2015; Thomas, et al., 2011). Studying this topic from a kindergarten perspective is important because it is often a child's first experience with formal schooling. It is also in kindergarten where children develop skills that set the foundation for their academic success.

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are operationally defined as (Merriam-Webster.com, 2020).

Table 1: Definition of terms

Term	Definition
Extreme	to exist to a very high degree
Violent	the use of harmful or destructive force
Outburst	a violent expression of feeling
Evacuate	to remove people from a place of danger to a safer place
Elopement [a]	leaving the designated area without permission

Note [a] (Marin County SELPA, n.d.)

Participants

Interview and survey participants were found through convenience sampling. A total of 832 kindergarten teachers from Northern California, Oregon, and Chicago Public Schools received a cold introduction and invitation to participate by email (see appendix A). Potential participant names were gathered by conducting online searches for kindergarten teachers. The initial search focused on kindergarten teachers by looking at public school websites for names. Then the names were searched for and contacted through the social media platforms LinkedIn and Facebook. Those who had at least one of the social media accounts were sent a brief message explaining the study, Humboldt State University affiliation, contact information, opportunity to give an interview, and a link to the survey. If a prospective participant had a LinkedIn and Facebook account, the

introduction message was sent to both accounts. Prospective participants with neither type of social media account were not sent a message.

Measures/Materials

The instruments were developed by the researcher, based on the extant literature and were specifically designed for this study. In order to demonstrate the dependability and validity of the resulting data, a face validity check with a faculty expert in the field was done.

The semi-structured interview was the instrumentation of qualitative data collection. Each interview was conducted using the same ten questions, with varying follow-up and clarifying questions (see appendix D). Interviews took between 25 – 40 minutes. The interview schedule covered the teachers' classroom experiences with extreme and violent behaviors exhibited by students in relation to reactions of other students, and the teacher's ability to teach.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through anonymous surveying. The survey consisted of 28 questions, of which 14 used a five-point Likert scale, and the remaining questions were open-ended (see appendix E). Questions using the Likert scale were supplemented with open-ended questions so teachers could elaborate on their answer if needed. Open-ended questions were coded and data was compiled and matched with the corresponding Likert scale question.

Procedures

The survey link was sent to various email addresses, LinkedIn direct messages, and Facebook Messenger. Thirty-three kindergarten teachers responded to the survey, with two surveys being incomplete, which were eliminated from the total subject pool (n=31).

Participants accessed the survey using the website, SurveyMonkey. Since the survey was anonymous, follow-ups, reminders, and thank-you notes were not sent.

To prepare for interviews, the researcher obtained permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to work with human subjects (see appendix B). Once interview participants were identified, an interview date and time were set. All interviews (n=5) were conducted by phone, on speaker, while a separate cell phone recorded the audio using a recording application called "Voice Recorder." The recording was used later to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. Participants were emailed the informed consent document (see appendix C), and responded via email that they read and consented to the conditions of the interview. The consent form was also read prior to the interview wherein participants gave verbal consent prior to beginning. Interview participants were given pseudonyms and district and school site names were not used to ensure confidentiality. When the interview concluded, participants were thanked for their time and professional insight.

Analysis

Data from the survey results and interviews were analyzed separately. Qualitative data from the surveys and interviews were initially coded using open coding, then coded again using selective coding to test for connections between recurring themes. Quotes from the survey were selected to illustrate the responses in more detail. Permission was not obtained, as these were anonymous, however quotes from interviews were used with the interviewees' permission.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This chapter provides a synopsis of the survey and interview outcomes. Both qualitative and quantitative survey responses are grouped by topic and include response rates for all questions. The interviews revealed several themes and those are presented in this chapter, as well.

Survey

Not all participants answered the qualitative survey questions, which will be reflected in the response rates. Adding to the quantitative data enhances this study. The information gathered from the open-ended questions allows for a better understanding what is going on in kindergarten classrooms. The survey was completed at a rate of 84%.

Survey demographics

The survey was anonymous, therefore, exact demographics are not available. Kindergarten teachers in both rural and urban school districts were contacted. Out of the 832 cold contacts made, 21, or 2.5% were male and the rest were female. Of the 832 cold contacts, 33 teachers responded, and of those, 31 completed the survey. All 33 teachers identified as female. Of the 25 participants who responded to the years of teaching service question, 20% had five to ten years of experience, 20% reported 11-15 years of experience, 8% had 16-20 years of experience, and 52% had over 20 years of experience.

Table 1 gives an overview of the age ranges of the 26 respondents who reported this information.

Table 2: Age ranges of survey participants

Age Range	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
25-34	5	19%
35-44	7	29%
45-54	10	38%
55-64	3	11%
65 or older	1	3%

Survey results

The survey was designed to address four main ideas: 1) extreme behaviors students are exhibiting; 2) student reactions to witnessing these behaviors; 3) impacts on teachers; 4) impacts on instructional time in terms of how violence in kindergarten classrooms affects other students. Each section discusses the results of the survey that are grouped in the aforementioned categories. To begin, common extreme behaviors were identified in order to establish the types of events students were seeing and hearing, and teachers were managing. The next topic is the impact these outbursts and events have on instructional time in the classroom, followed by feedback and comments by students, teachers, and other school staff who either witnessed or were otherwise affected by the outburst. Finally, potential behavior and academic changes in students in the classroom are addressed.

Extreme behaviors and outbursts

Survey questions (see Appendix E) 2-5 presented a series of extreme behaviors and (statements on a Likert scale (1-never, 2-rarely, 3-a few times, 4-often, 5-very often) to identify the kinds of behaviors teachers were seeing in the classroom, and measure the frequency in which teachers had witnessed the behaviors (n=30). Table 2 shows the percentage of teachers who reported witnessing the identified extreme behaviors. Question 6 was open-ended and allowed participants to explain any behaviors they considered extreme, but were not listed in questions 2-5, (n=18). Two teachers listed verbal threats to harm other students or their family members, two teachers listed biting, and one teacher each listed spitting, stabbing students with scissors or pencils, and banging head on desk repeatedly.

The data reveal several notable key pieces of information. Behavior that teachers report experiencing often or very often at a 40% response rate or higher are yelling at adults, yelling at students, kicking objects, throwing objects, and screaming in general.

Table 3: Behaviors witnessed in the classroom

	Never	Rarely	A few times	Often	Very often	Mean	Std Dev
yelling at adults n=	2 6.67%	5 16.67%	9 30%	12 40%	2 6.67%	2.6	1.25
yelling at students n=	1 3.33%	3 10%	11 36.67%	12 40%	3 10%	2.5	1.3
cursing at adults n=	8 26.67%	11 36.67%	9 30%	1 3.33%	1 3.33%	2.56	1.3
	6	12	6	5	1		

	Never	Rarely	A few times	Often	Very often	Mean	Std Dev
cursing at students n=	20%	40%	20%	16.67%	3.33%	2.86	1.23
cursing at no one in n= particular	10 33.33%	8 26.67%	10 33.33%	2 6.67%	0 0%	2.26	1.2
kicking objects (chairs, n= books, backpacks, etc.)	1 3.33%	5 16.67%	11 36.67%	9 30%	4 13.33%	2.6	1.47
threatening to kill self	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
throwing objects (pencils, n= crayons, furniture)	0 0%	5 16.67%	13 43.33%	10 33.33%	2 6.67%	2.43	1.37
threatening students with n= objects	4 13.33%	10 33.33%	11 36.67%	5 16.67%	0 0%	2.46	1.3
verbally threatening n= students	4 13.33%	6 20%	12 40%	8 26.67%	0 0%	2.26	1.2
threatening adults with n= objects	8 26.67%	11 36.67%	6 20%	5 16.67%	0 0%	2.7	1.78
verbally threatening n= adults	10 33.33%	6 20%	10 33.33%	4 13.33%	0 0%	2.2	1.12
threatening to harm self n=	9 30%	10 33.33%	9 30%	2 6.67%	0 0%	2.43	1.25
screaming at close range with intent to hurt others	6 20%	11 36.67%	6 20%	7 23.33%	0 0%	2.7	1.16
screaming in general n=	2 6.67%	2 6.67%	13 43.33%	9 30%	4 13.33%	2.4	1.43
tearing things off walls n=	10 33.33%	6 20%	9 30%	5 16.67%	0 0%	2.26	1.11
making a mess of the room n= (trashing the room)	5 16.67%	9 30%	9 30%	5 16.67%	2 6.67%	2.26	1.37

Question 7 addressed teachers who did not have any of the experiences in questions 2-5, but had classes that were affected by outbursts from other classrooms, wherein 73% responded yes, 26% responded no.

Impacts on instructional time

Question 9 is about the amount of time lost due to extreme behaviors and outbursts. Five time intervals were listed, and teachers matched the intervals with the amount of instructional time usually lost during extreme behaviors and outbursts in their own classrooms (n=27). It is noteworthy to extract from the data that 47% of respondents report losing between 16 to over 30 minutes of instructional time. One respondent chose two time intervals, accounting for the difference in the number of respondents and responses. Figure 1 illustrates this data.

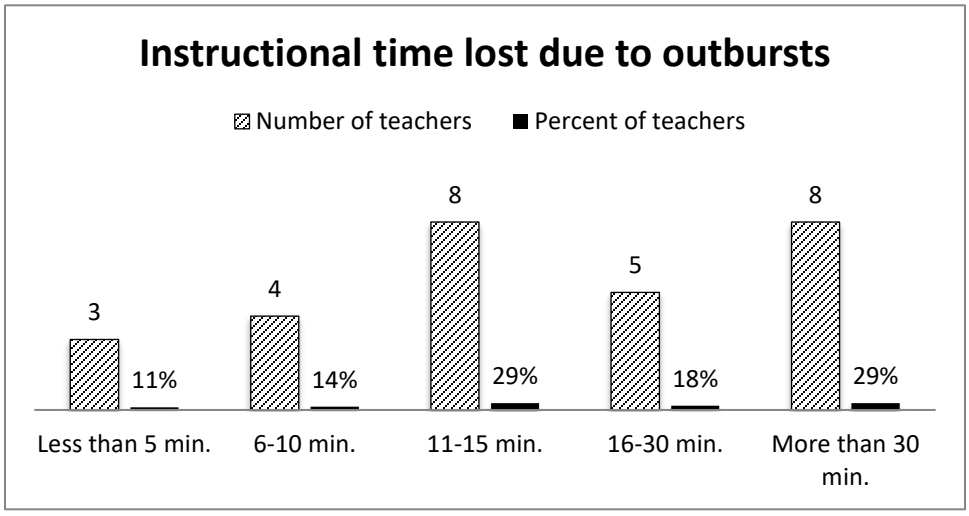

Figure 1: Instructional time lost due to outbursts

Evacuating the classroom for the safety of all students during an outburst is another means by which instructional time is lost. The majority of participants (n=27), 77% reported having to evacuate the class due to another student's behavior while 22% did not. Quite a few reasons listed varied, including hiding, running around the room tipping over chairs and tables, climbing furniture, swallowing small objects, spitting, verbally threatening physical harm to others, refusing to leave the room with adult assigned to help, punching walls, harming teacher, not getting what they want, not applicable (n=21). Behaviors reported more than one time are represented in Figure 2.

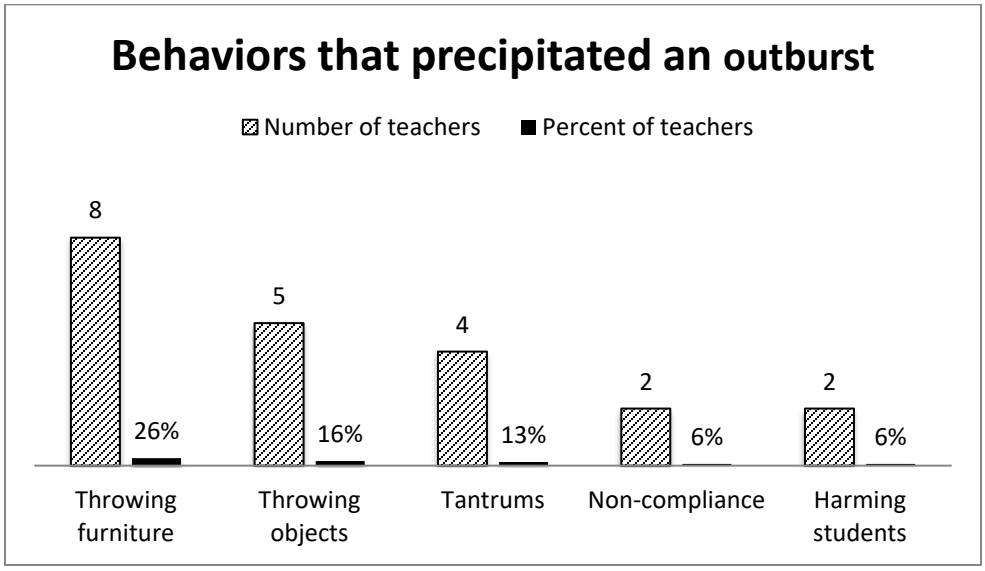

Figure 2: Behaviors that precipitated an outburst

To understand the amount of instructional time that is lost to class evacuations, teachers (n=19) were asked to approximate the amount of time spent out of the classroom due to the evacuation. The majority of teachers, 74%, spent 16 minutes to a half hour or more out of the classroom. This was an open-ended question and once data was gathered,

it was put into time intervals, which is shown in Figure 3.

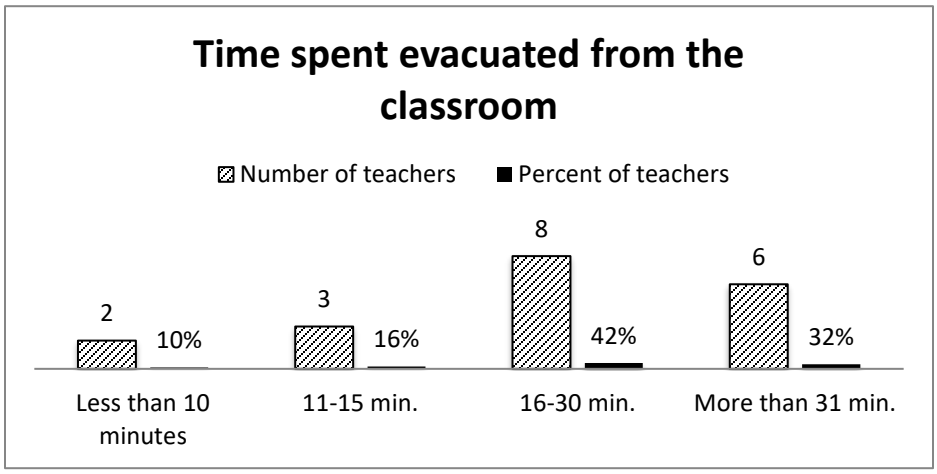

Figure 3: Time spent evacuated from the classroom

During a classroom evacuation, students went to various places on campus. Teachers responded (n=25) to an open-ended question asking them to list some of the locations to which they would evacuate. Sometimes the classroom teacher was with the rest of the class, while other times another adult staff member took the class. The result was 56% of teachers took their students outside for extra recess, or to an outside space.

Figure 4 shows the results of this question.

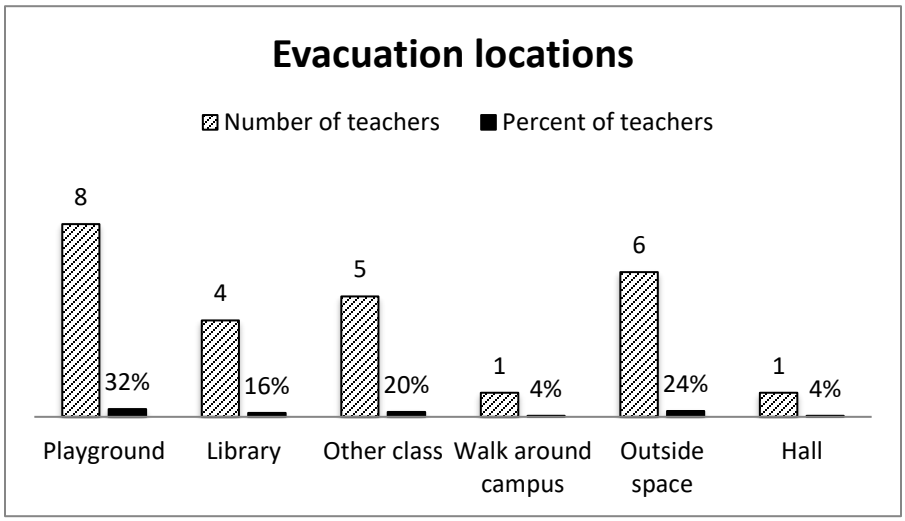

Figure 4: Evacuation locations

While students waited to get back into their classrooms, teachers had to find safe activities in which they could engage to ease anxiety caused by the event. Watching videos, having a class meeting, playing an “I Spy” game outside, and de-escalation techniques were reported once. Figure 5 shows the activities that were reported by more than one teacher (n=21).

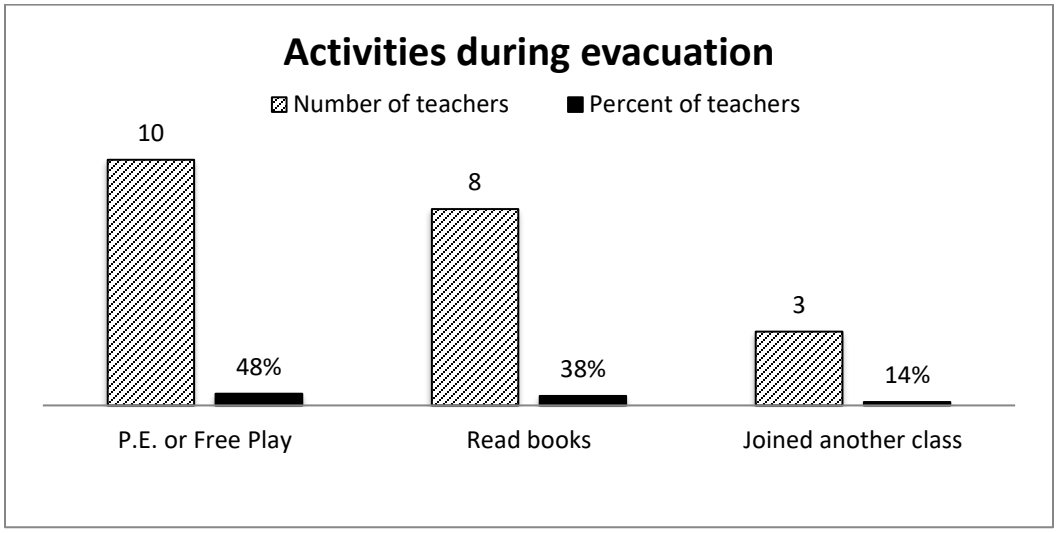

Figure 5: Activities during evacuation

Involvement of other school staff members

Naturally, evacuating a classroom for the safety of all students results in two sets of students to consider: the student having the outburst, and the rest of the class, thus requiring at least two adults in order for all students to be supervised. The next few follow up questions addressed other staff members who assisted in the evacuation. All respondents (n=20) who answered this question reported that other staff members helped. Figure 6 depicts the titles of the staff members who gave assistance. Respondents mentioned the following titles only one time: office staff, maintenance staff, P.E. teacher. This data shows that when including the P.E. teacher, certificated teaching staff assisted the classroom teacher at a rate of 31%, which is just 6 percentage points fewer than school administration. Some participants chose more than one staff member, which accounts for more responses than respondents.

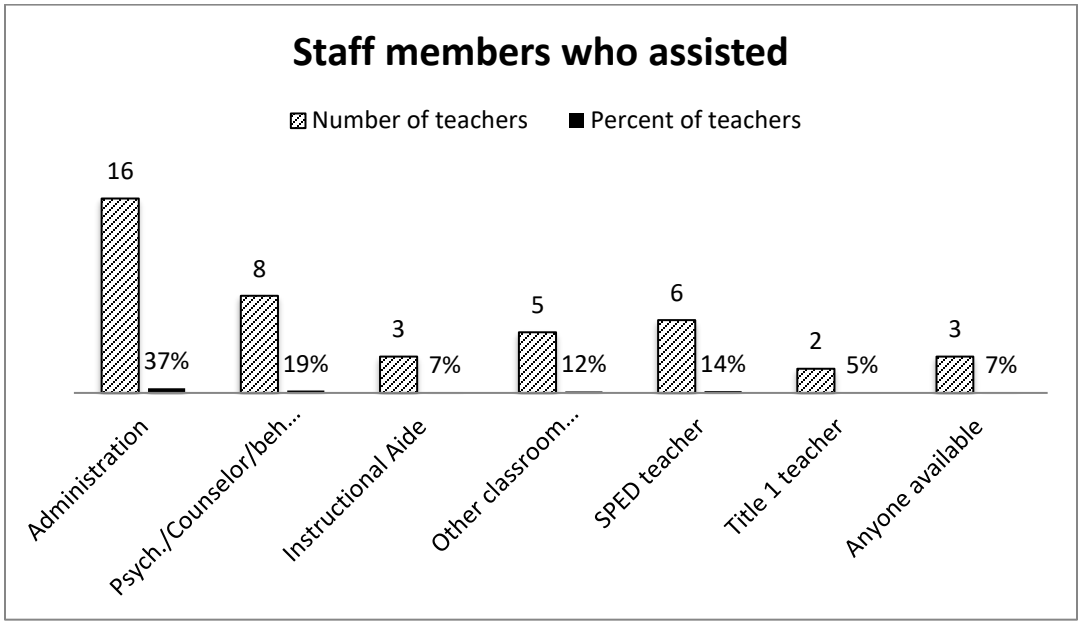

Figure 6: Staff members who assisted

Staff members assisted in a variety of ways, as captured by the open-ended follow-up question. Respondents (n=24) reported three responses only one time. They were: went to get help, had the student come back and clean up the room, crisis prevention intervention hold, or CPI (Crisis Prevention Institute, 2020). Figure 7 shows the responses that were mentioned more than one time.

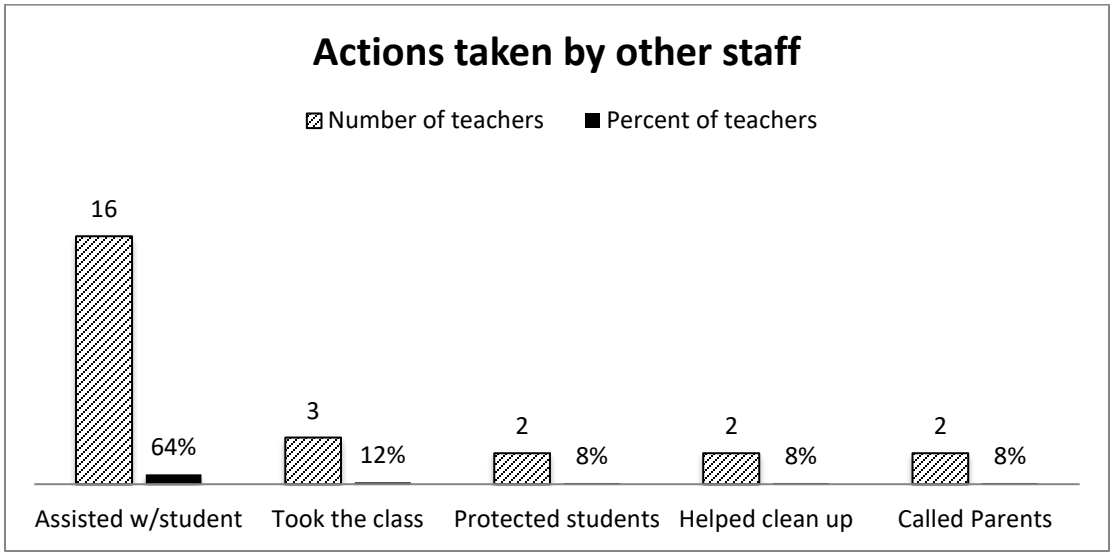

Figure 7: Actions taken by other staff

Responses to the outburst

In order to better understand the students' reactions to extreme behavior or outbursts, teachers were asked to recall what their students said and/or did after or during the event. Twenty-one respondents reported that they had students who expressed feelings about the event, while five respondents did not (n=26). Of the 21 teachers who had students comment on the outburst, the following responses were reported once; their body language speaks for them, students said they couldn't get their work done, apologies and explanations for student's outburst, recounting unprovoked abuse, kids were unable to respond because they are introspective and non-expressive, that's not nice, he's in trouble, that's not a good choice. Figure 8 details specific feelings expressed by students about the outburst that were listed more than once.

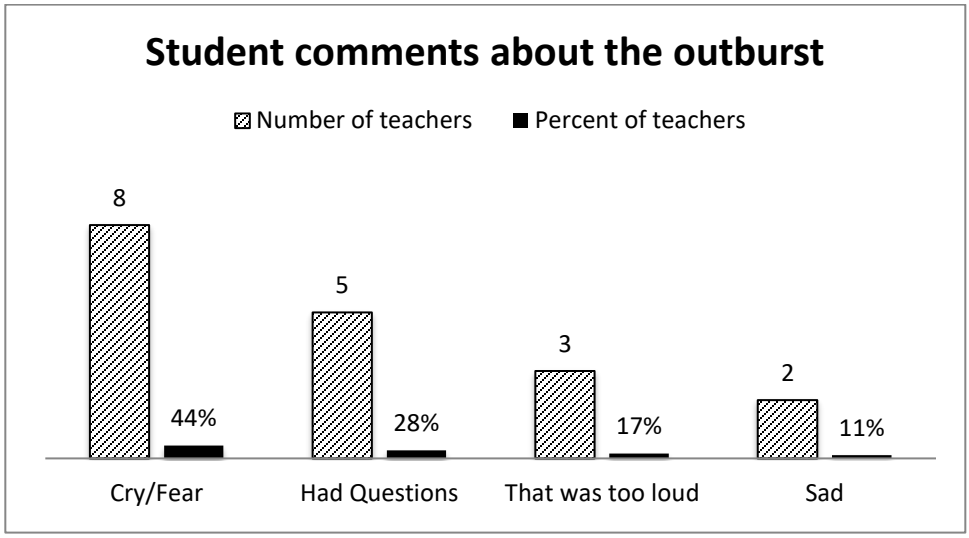

Figure 8: Student comments about the outburst

The next Likert scale question and corresponding open-ended question is similar to the previous set, however instead of addressing the outburst itself, the question is written to find out if student witnesses verbally expressed feelings about the individual having the outburst (n=26). Twenty-one people, or 81% responded yes, while five, or 19% responded no.

The following responses (n=21) were mentioned only once, while Figure 9 represents those mentioned more than once: angry at the student, others wanted to help, I've been told they don't want to come to school because of that child, I don't want to play with him/her, their feelings get hurt, wanting to go home, she needs a nap, explaining behavior to other children not in the class, he/she is really mad, he/she gets mad really fast.

Since these questions are so similar, with one asking for student responses about the outburst, and the other asking about responses to the student having the outburst, it is

reasonable that the answers were, too. Respondents reported that students were afraid and/or cried and had questions about the outburst at a rate of 72%, while 71% had the same response for comments about the person having the outburst.

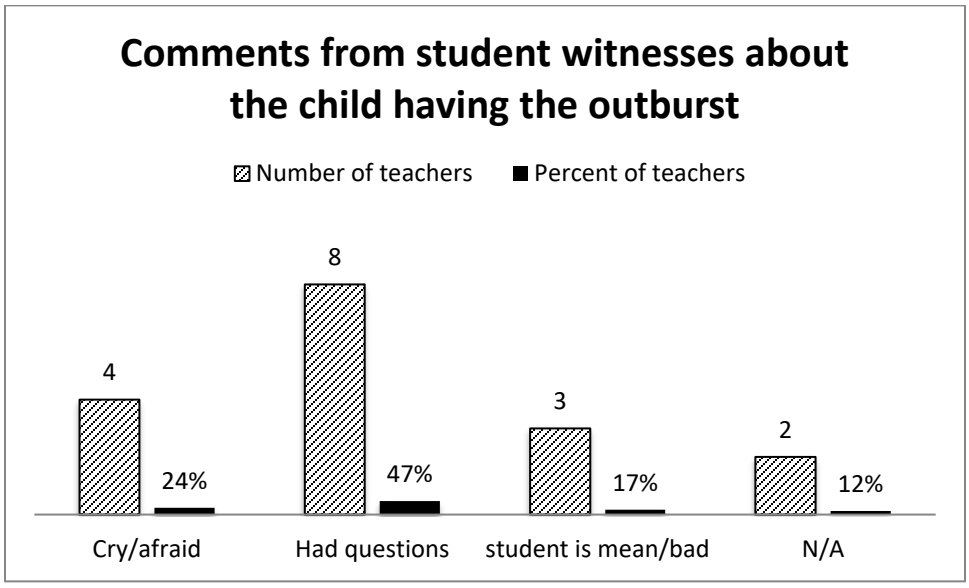

Figure 9: Comments from student witnesses about the child having the outburst

Teachers often find support in their colleagues. Some outburst or extreme behavior events spill out into hallways and other parts of the school. Twenty-one, or 78% of participants (n=27) reported their fellow teachers expressed feelings about the outbursts, while 6, or 22% reported they did not.

The comments are varied with only a few mentioned more than once. Six of the 23 respondents, or 26% heard comments regarding the students' need for help, while seven, or 30% reported negative feelings such as anger, frustration and unacceptability. Teachers would want to know the students' diagnosis, or ask if it was their student screaming again. One teacher said, "My aide broke down in tears because of the level of

violence from a child and their intent to harm others." Another recounted it being "like a warzone."

Question 18 asks if other teachers in the building heard their students expressing feelings about the outbursts from other classrooms, and was answered by 27 respondents. Twenty-one teachers, or 78% answered yes, their students commented on the event, while six, or 22% did not. The corresponding open-ended question was answered by 13 people, and allowed teachers to report the nature of the comments, or the exact comments of their students.

Some students began tattling on the student when in common areas, such as the playground. Others asked for strategies for interacting with the student when in common areas. One teacher shared that her students would stare or want to know if they should help. Figure 10 illustrates the comments that were mentioned more than one time, and like the previous questions about student responses, half of the teachers reported their students had questions.

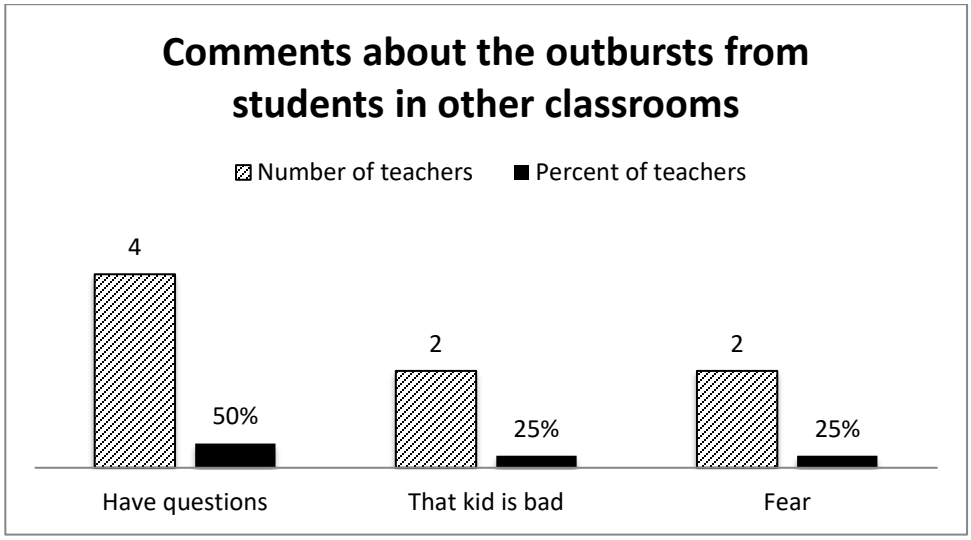

Figure 10: Comments about the outburst from students in other classrooms

Behavior and academic consequences

When considering effects of extreme behavior and outbursts in the classroom, changes in behavior and academic progress must be considered. Respondents who addressed the question about changes in behavior (n=22) mentioned crying, becoming timid, stealing, nervousness, and becoming easily frustrated. Parents sometimes told their children not to play with students exhibiting violent behaviors, which can cause children to label students as "bad" or to ignore and distance themselves from them. Some students become hyper-vigilant to the student's behaviors. One teacher wrote, "The behavior of one student creates anxiety in all students." Related to this, another teacher noted that some students don't want to come to school, or will flinch when the child is nearby. Figure 11 shows other behavior changes in student witnesses that were noted more than

one time. It is worth noting that the two negative behaviors (fearfulness and mimic behavior) together, make up 78% of the responses.

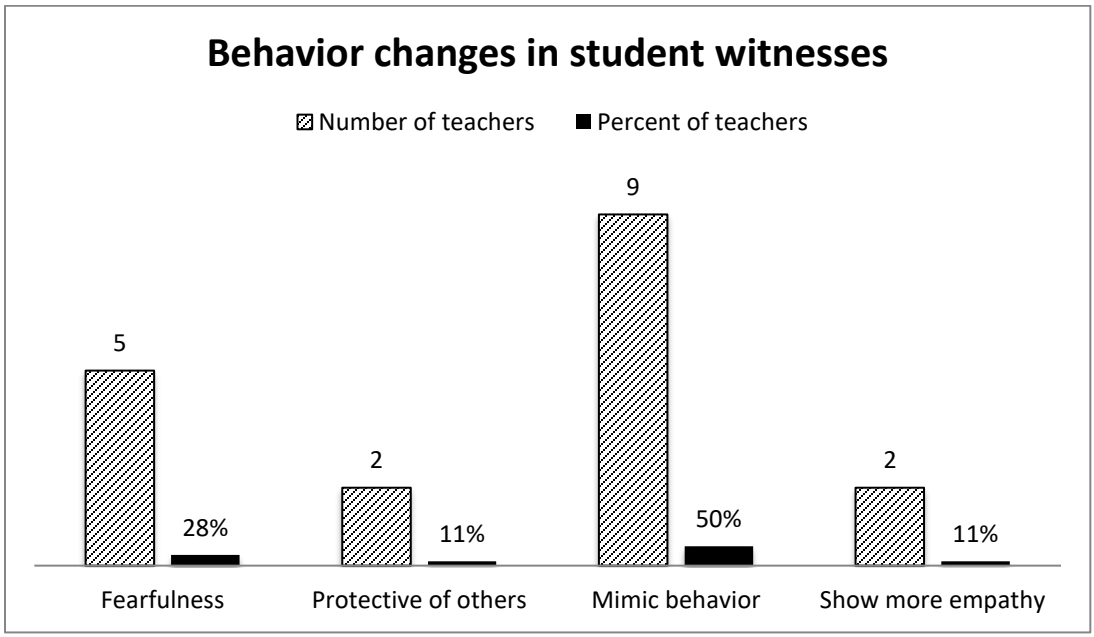

Figure 11: Behavior changes in student witnesses

In an open-ended question, teachers were asked if they anecdotally, noticed academic performance change subsequent to outbursts (n=20). Many of the responses were about lesson interruption. One teacher wrote, “Trying to bring students’ focus back to a lesson is impossible when they are emotionally upset by the behavior they see.” Another noted that her focus would not be fully devoted to teaching because of the high state of alert she was in, waiting for that child to explode. Conversely, another teacher noted that her students would tend to pay more attention to her during and after an outburst, while another noted that students became so accustomed to outbursts they ignored it and class evacuations became a routine. Figure 12 shows the comments given by more than one teacher.

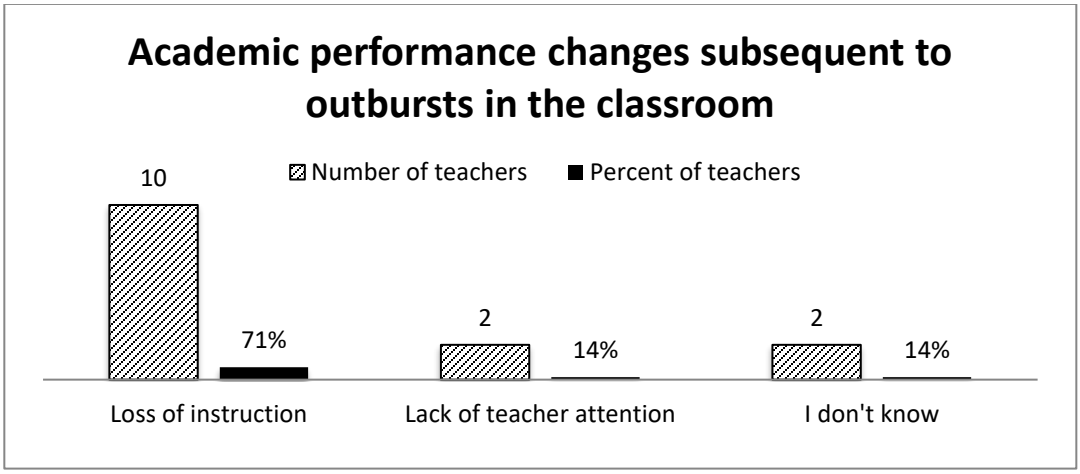

Figure 12: Academic performance changes subsequent to outbursts in the classroom

The final question of the survey was open-ended and gave respondents an opportunity to give comments (n=14). Overall respondents reported the increase in extreme behaviors over the years, sadness for the child having the outbursts, a sense of helplessness, or they recounted a specific violent event in their classroom. Others expressed thanks to the researcher for conducting this study. One commenter wrote,

> "It is heartbreaking to watch a child act out in such violent ways toward teachers and students. It is defeating to go through this each day, and know that you can't give them what they need and there isn't money or manpower anywhere else to give that to them either. And it is also defeating to know that the other students in the class have to experience that violence in what should be a safe place. Kindergarten isn't supposed to expose kids to violence, but

four of my five years of my teaching experience they have done just that."

Questions without a theme

Two survey questions did not fit into a theme. A question on parent communication sought to find out if students were relating instances of violent outbursts to parents, and in turn, if parents were calling the teacher or administration to voice concern. Twenty-seven respondents answered this question with 70% responding yes, and 30% responding no.

The second question was about Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs. In seeking to understand the trauma experience of students, teachers were asked if they were aware of students in class with ACEs. Twenty-five respondents answered this question, as Figure 14 illustrates.

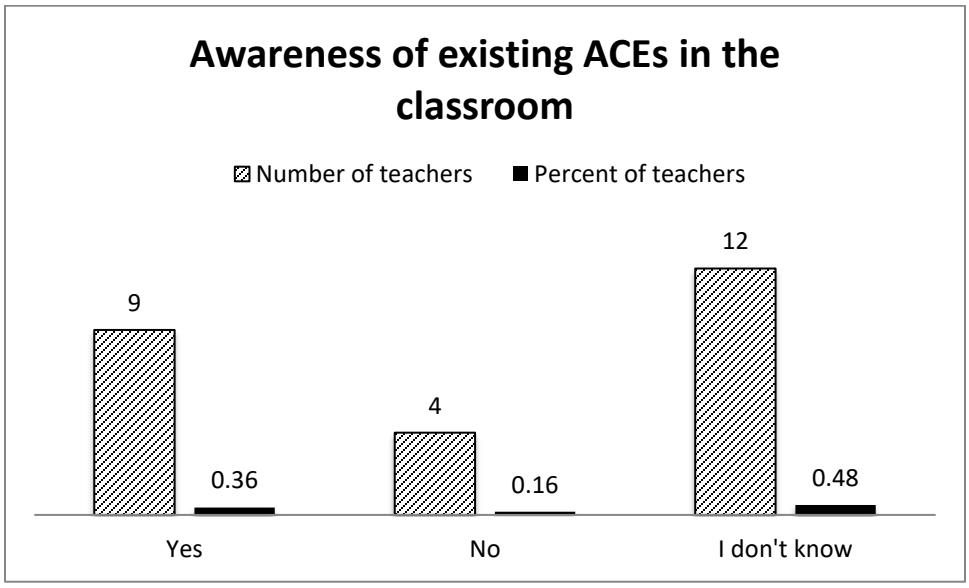

Figure 13: Awareness of existing ACEs in the classroom

Interview Results

There were five interview participants with commonalities among all five respondents. Upon coding answers, three distinct themes emerged: behavior, effects on teachers and students, and instructional time.

Interview demographics

The teachers interviewed live and teach in various settings. One teacher teaches in a low-income neighborhood in Oregon, where most of her students are Caucasian. Two other interviewees teach in different rural districts in Northern California that are classified as low-income with student populations that are majority Caucasian. The last two teachers interviewed teach in different school districts in suburban areas, with a diverse racial make-up of students, however the socioeconomic status of neighborhoods differed. One teacher taught in an affluent neighborhood while the other taught in a low-income neighborhood. Despite these differences, their stories and experiences were similar.

Four of the five teachers interviewed made clear that they weren't there to speak negatively about their students, rather to help shed light on the behaviors teachers are working with and other young children are witness to.

Behaviors

Physical contact was made in some behaviors and not in others. Physical contact in this context is when the child having the outburst makes contact with another person with his/her body or with an object.

All teachers reported extreme behaviors wherein purposeful physical contact was made with them. Throwing furniture such as chairs, and shoving tables and desks into the teacher was common to all five interviewees. One teacher was hit by a shoe, however, objects typically thrown were regular classroom items like crayons, pencils, and in two cases a stapler. Teachers were also kicked, hit with open hand and/or a closed fist, and spit upon. Three interviewees stated that students were "in the line of fire," and were sometimes hit with projectiles. One child was hit by a magnet that was thrown during an outburst, resulting in a bruise on his forehead. Additionally, all five reported that while the child having the outburst would, at times, intentionally harm the teacher, any harm to student witnesses was unintentional.

Screaming, yelling, and cursing are non-contact behaviors that take over the room, which makes it difficult to teach. Four of the five teachers interviewed had this happen in their classrooms. Screaming in this context is defined as a long, piercing cry whereas yelling is defined as very loud vocalizing using words. One teacher is quoted as saying, "When she was screaming at the top of her lungs, and kicking me, kind of like scratching me, or whatever, she called me a 'fucking bitch'." Another teacher recalled a student who regularly would stand up during class and yell out that he was going to kill himself, which is a behavior not reported by survey-takers.

Four out of the five teachers reported having their own classrooms wrecked, and the one who did not, had seen it happen to colleagues. Interviewees described wrecking the classroom as tipping over tubs, ripping things off the wall, walking around the room breaking pencils, sweeping things off shelves, dumping baskets of toys and learning

manipulatives, throwing items, pushing furniture around, all with the intent to make a mess of the classroom.

Elopement, or leaving the classroom without permission was experienced by three of the five teachers. Students generally stayed on campus, however one student went off campus into a nearby open wetlands area. Additional staff members are required in these instances since students cannot be without supervision.

Teachers noticed that as the year went on, students who were working to learn self-control and good decision-making started to regress as the student with extreme behaviors continued with outbursts. One teacher attributed it to the lack of attention she was able to give them, stating that sometimes 90% of her attention in a given block of time would go to the student with issues with extreme behaviors. Another teacher pointed out some students had the perception that one student would be allowed to behave a certain way and others could not, resulting in unfairness. This is consistent with existing literature that found a disruptive student can influence similar behavior in students who were not previously disruptive (Barth, Dunlap, Dane, Lochman, Wells, 2004; Thomas, Bierman, Thompson, & Powers, 2008, 2011).

Emotional effects on teachers and students

The impact extreme behavior and outbursts have on the emotional well being of students and teachers were discussed in all interviews. Teachers reported feeling angry and frustrated with the situation and cited a lack of support around this issue for students in the school system as a whole. Every teacher spoke of the exhaustion they felt when

they had a class with one or more students exhibiting extreme behavior. Among the stressors contributing to exhaustion were hyper-vigilance of and waiting for an outburst, keeping students safe, and second-guessing one's handling of a situation and effectiveness as an educator. A teacher summed up this sentiment by saying, ". . . there are days you do just want to cry because you're exhausted and you're a human being, and you just got hit or spat at, or whatever it was." Exhaustion affects the morale and feelings they had for their job. Another teacher reported dreading going to work some years, and hoping for the end to the school year so she could get a new class of students.

Teachers also felt the need to keep up the appearance that everything was fine during and after an outburst so the student witnesses did not become fearful. This required pushing their own feelings aside and not fully processing them in the moment. All respondents had the support of a principal or other staff member if they needed a moment alone before going back to teaching, however, there were also times when that support was not available.

It is not only the adults in the room who need time to process emotions related to witnessing an outburst. Three of the interviewees described students as looking "shocked," and "stunned," when seeing an outburst in their classroom. Teachers reported that initially, students would show empathy toward the student having the outburst, and toward the teacher. They would recognize that both the teacher and the student were having a difficult time with the situation. Some would check in with the teacher and ask if she was all right.

Though student witnesses were shocked by the outburst and behavior, they would play with them at recess and continue to interact in the classroom. Two teachers in particular stressed that students were capable of showing compassion and empathy toward the student having the outburst. One of these teachers stated, “I think besides being afraid, they have empathy that you wouldn’t believe,” and went on to say students wanted to help and encourage the student and be a friend to them. Although witnessing this behavior brought out empathy in students, in some instances, as time went on and the behaviors continued, kids would pull away and become frightened of the student. One teacher stated, “There would be more fear. I would notice kids running away and hiding or maybe coming up to me and clinging to me.” These children would perceive that student as being “bad” or always in trouble.

Instructional time

The loss of instructional time came up in all interviews. The most common activity that resulted in a loss of teaching and learning time was a class meeting or something similar. When a behavioral event happens and students see and hear scary words and actions, feelings must be discussed in a group setting. This is especially important when students see their teacher being hit or otherwise harmed by the student having the outburst. One teacher reported that some class meetings and time to regroup would take up to an hour, especially if the classroom needed to be cleaned up and put back together. An interviewee summed up the necessity of this step by saying, “. . . it had to be talked about because it sucks the energy out of the class. You have to address it.

You can't just go on from it, so it has to be validated. I think over my career I realized that you have to spend more time on that. You have to do that because if you don't, nothing else will get done."

Classroom evacuations also cut into academic time. The majority of the time, students would evacuate to the playground or another outside area. Two teachers reported having buddy classrooms they could go into in the event of an evacuation. When going into a buddy classroom, the regular routine in that classroom is interrupted as well. "It's really, really hard to make up that time you miss. So if your room's destroyed, if you have to evacuate, there's a whole lesson there that's not being taught. And it's really hard to go back and make up that time."

Finally, three teachers discussed feeling the need to spend time after an outburst or an evacuation doing something relaxing with their class, such as watching a movie and having popcorn, having extra choice time, extra recess, and read-aloud time. One teacher stated, ". . . it would take a good 20 minutes for me to get back in my swing of things, and the kids, I could feel it so we would just read a story . . ."

Chapter 5: Discussion

The question driving this study was, “Do extreme behaviors and violent outbursts in kindergarten classrooms have an effect on student witnesses?” The purpose was to gather data and insight from teachers who have experience with these phenomena in order to get a better picture of what these behaviors look like in the classroom. The preliminary answer to the question is yes: extreme behaviors and violent outbursts in kindergarten classrooms to affect student witnesses. In looking at the data as a whole, the themes are not isolated from one another; rather, they are interconnected, and indicate that students are in fact affected by violent outbursts in the classroom.

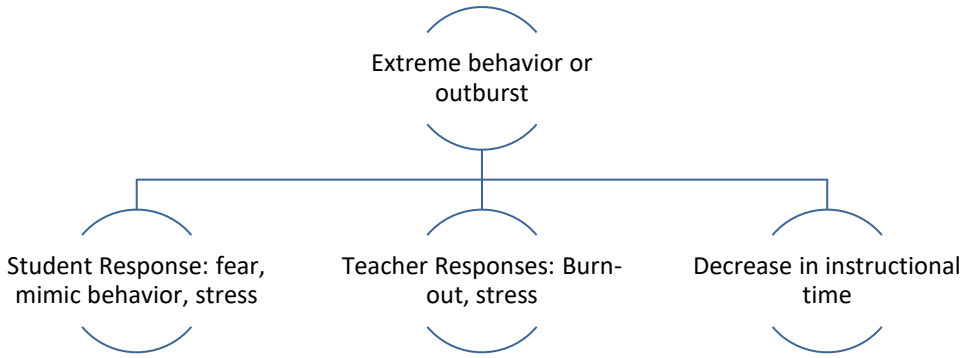

Figure 14: Relationship between extreme behavior or outbursts and student responses, teacher responses, and decrease in instructional time

Among other things, the American Psychological Association (2020) defines a traumatic event as one that causes injury, the physical integrity of self or others, and

helplessness at the time it occurs. An event that may be traumatic for one individual may not be for another. As the data show, students witness a variety of extreme and violent behaviors that are atypical in an ideal kindergarten classroom. The classroom is the part of the school building that belongs to the students who learn there. The space belongs to them, and there is a sense of ownership and responsibility. Students are witnessing their classroom treated with disrespect during an outburst when another student is wrecking the classroom. They feel unsafe when a student is throwing items and furniture because not only do they get hurt on occasion, they sometimes witness their primary caregiver in the school setting being attacked and hurt. Students can find it difficult to feel safe and secure, and therefore learn. Based on interviews, some children heard and learned profanity for the first time in their kindergarten classroom. Additionally, some were introduced to the concept of self-harm when classmates threaten to kill themselves. Being a witness any of these events can be a form of trauma.

We consider these behaviors trauma-inducing if witnessed in other settings, such as the home. The body of literature around childhood trauma and its psychological and physiological effects is established, and so the following questions arise: Are these behaviors trauma-inducing if witnessed in the classroom? Are some kindergarteners traumatized by extreme events in their own classrooms? Is it possible that students experiencing trauma at home are re-traumatized at school? If the answer is yes to any of these questions, then we must find out if any of this trauma is having psychological or physiological effects on these students.

Extreme behaviors have an effect on teachers' ability to teach the class. Making sure students are safe and intervening when an outburst occurs takes its toll on teachers physically, mentally, and emotionally. It affects their morale and can cause burnout. When burned out teachers give less of themselves to the job and their students, it is the students who feel the consequences. Their teacher may be impatient, tired, emotionally exhausted, not invested in their job, and feel less effective.

Finally, loss of instructional time has an effect on all students, and outbursts and extreme behavior always result in loss of time. I was surprised that so many teachers reported losing up to an hour of instructional time. Most of the time was lost to classroom evacuations and class meetings.

Based on the findings in this study, extreme behavior and violent outbursts occur to the detriment of students in two ways. Students lose instructional time, and become fearful in their own classroom. Kindergarten is a year when children learn to become students, and learn the fundamental skills of reading, writing, and math that they will build upon and apply to learning for the rest of their school careers. When outbursts diminish learning time and the feeling of safety in a classroom, we are limiting access to education for some. Lessons are not being taught, or students are not always able to immediately give their full focus to learning.

When seeking ways to alleviate this issue it is helpful to look at it through the lens of Bronfenbrener's Bioecological Systems Theory, as explored in the literature review. Social services and education funding as well as society and its collective values represent the mesosystem. Society must be made aware of and be invested in, the issue of

extreme behaviors and outbursts in kindergarten classrooms and the implications for our education system. Public funding needs to reflect the value society places on solving this problem.

Solutions at the exosystem levels would be made at the district level, while mesosystem progress would be at the school sites, all of which will have a positive impact on students, families, and teachers.

Every part of an extreme behavioral event, or outburst affects other students, either directly, or indirectly; however, limitations of this study must be considered while drawing conclusions. Missing from the data is the perspective of male teachers due to the fact that all participants identified as female. Another limitation is the convenience sampling. The topic and nature of my study may have resonated more with those who have direct experience with this phenomenon, causing them to have a stronger motive for response, resulting in a skewed sample.

Recommendations and next steps

This study provides a preliminary examination into the phenomenon of extreme behaviors in kindergarten classrooms and the resulting effects on students in the classroom. The results demonstrate the need for further investigation to inform practices, procedures, and even staffing decisions. The need is for additional staffing around mental health and behavioral specialists for both the student having the outburst as well as student witnesses is evident. Assisting all students during extreme behavioral events will

result in a reduced loss of instructional time, as demonstrated by the data gathered for this study.

The research for this study did not delve into the effects on the students who are having outbursts and displaying extreme behavior. This is another facet of the issue that merits further inquiry.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Cold email contact

Hello Ms./Mr. ____. I'm a grad student at Humboldt State and I teach third grade. I have 14 years of teaching experience and I'm now working on my thesis study on student violence in kindergarten classrooms. If you are willing to complete an anonymous survey or participate in an interview for my study, please let me know. Please also feel free to pass this information along to anyone else you think may be able to help. Thank-you for your consideration. cmn6@humboldt.edu

Appendix B: IRB Approval

Published on *IRB Proposal Submission* (https://hsu-forms.humboldt.edu/irbsub)

Home > Effects of Classroom Violence in Lower Elementary Grades

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Effects of Classroom Violence in Lower Elementary Grades

Submitted by cmn6 on Sun, 2020-03-15 18:47

IRB Number: IRB 19-119

Modification or Renewal: Modification

Principal Investigator Name: Christine Ng

Faculty Advisor (if Student): David Ellerd

I would like to change the Informed Consent form wording. If this revision is approved, the fourth bullet will read: • You will be interviewed in the setting of your choice, on a video chat platform or phone call. It currently reads: • You will be interviewed in the setting of your choice, on a video chat platform that works for you.

CITI Training Complete:

CITI Training Complete:

Date Completed: Sunday, March 15, 2020

CITI Training Complete:

Date Completed: Sunday, March 15, 2020

None have participated yet

N/A

N/A

N/A

N/A

N/A

Attachment	Size
Informed Consent Revised - Interview.docx [1]	104.03 KB

Reviewer Comments:

I approve.

Source URL: https://hsu-forms.humboldt.edu/irbsub/?q=node/2534

Links
[1] https://hsu-forms.humboldt.edu/irbsub/sites/default/files/Informed%20Consent%20Revised%20-%20Interview_0.docx

Appendix C: Informed consent for interview

Informed Consent for Interview

My name is Christine Ng, and I am a graduate student at Humboldt State University in the Education Department. I am conducting this research study to gain further insight into ways students are affected by violence done by other students in the classroom.

If you volunteer to participate, you will be interviewed about your experiences with violent students in your class.

- This will be a one-session interview that will take about 20-40 minutes to answer questions.
- The interview will be recorded.
- Your direct quotes may be used with your permission.
- You will be interviewed in the setting of your choice, on a video chat platform that works for you.
- Your participation in this study is voluntary.
- You have the right not to participate at all or to leave the study at any time.
- There is a possible risk for participants. This risk is feeling stress due to retelling and remembering stressful events.
- There are some benefits to this research. You may help others understand how student violence affects other students in the classroom.
- The study results will likely be shared with the public through presentations and/or publications. Any information that is gained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will stay confidential and will be shared only with your permission.

- Ways to insure your confidentiality are 1. You will be asked to provide a pseudonym or one will be made up for you. 2. Data will be stored on a thumb drive located in a locked drawer in my home office. 3. Any information that could be used to identify you will be stored separate from the interview data.

- Data will be kept three years after study completion. The de-identified data will be kept in a safe, locked file and may be used for future research studies or given to another investigator for future research studies without more informed consent from you. This consent form will be kept on a thumb drive and will be destroyed after a period of three years after the study is completed.

If you have any questions about this research at any time, please call or email me at cmn6@humboldt.edu, or 707-630-3437. My advisor, David Ellerd is also available if you have questions. He can be reached at david.ellerd@humboldt.edu, or 707-826-5851.

If you have any concerns with this study or questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at irb@humboldt.edu or (707) 826-5165.

Your signature below indicates that you are at least 18 years old), have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, and that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature _____

Date _____

Please keep a copy of this form for your records

Appendix D: Interview schedule

Interview Schedule

Introduction

Thank-you for agreeing to sit down with me. My study is on student-perpetrated violence in the classroom and I'm hoping to get a more in-depth picture of how that looks in a typical classroom.

I want you to know you are free at any time to stop the interview without penalty, and any information gathered up until that point will be destroyed. If you need a break, please let me know.

Please also feel free to stop me at any time to ask questions. Do you have any questions now?

After the interview this information will be kept in a locked file cabinet until this study is complete. At that time, it will be stored on the Humboldt State University campus in the secure office of David Ellerd in the Education Department for 3 years. After 3 years all information, documents, and data will be destroyed.

Do you have any questions? We are ready to begin.

1) Tell me about your students.
    - language learners
    - refugee status
    - trauma experience
    - socioeconomic status
    -
2) We are here to discuss student-perpetrated violence in the classroom. Do you

have experience with students in your class, either current or past, who are/were violent?

- What is/was a violent outburst, or incident like? Look like? Sound like?
- Was there anything specific that would precede it?
- Did the other students react?

3) What would typically happen with the child who had the outburst, once the event ended?

4) I have heard of students running out of the classroom or school. Do you have experience or knowledge of this that you can speak to?

5) Have you been physically attacked? Can you talk about that?

6) Have students been physically attacked, or hurt during an outburst/incident? Can you talk about that?

7) What role does administration or other staff play during these incidents? What kind of support do you receive, who are the support staff that help you?

8) Do these incidents affect you as a teacher? (stamina, emotional availability, fatigue, positivity)

9) Do these incidents affect your ability to teach? (time for room clears, restorative circles, class meetings)

10) What types of supports or policies would help the phenomenon of student perpetrated violence in classrooms?

Conclusion:

Do you have any questions? Is there anything you'd like to add? I value your time, so thank-you for sharing your experiences with me.

Appendix E: Survey

Survey: Student Violence In Kindergarten Classrooms

Informed Consent

1. INFORMED CONSENT for: Effects of Classroom Violence in Lower Elementary Grades

My name is Christine Ng, and I am a graduate student at Humboldt State University in the Education Department. I am conducting this research study to gain further insight into ways students are affected by violence done by other students in the classroom.

If you volunteer to participate, you will take an anonymous online survey on your experiences with violent students in your class.

- This survey will take about 20-40 minutes to answer questions.
- Your participation in this study is voluntary.
- You have the right to terminate the survey at any time. Partially complete surveys will not be used.
- There is a possible risk for participants. This risk is feeling stress due to remembering and writing about stressful events.
- There are some benefits to this research. You may help others understand how student violence affects other students in the classroom.
- The study results will likely be shared with the public through presentations and/or publications. Any information that is gained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will stay confidential and will be shared only with your permission.
- The survey will not collect personal information, thus, ensuring your anonymity.
- Data will be kept three years after study completion. The de-identified data will be kept in a safe, locked file and may be used for future research studies or given

to another investigator for future research studies without more informed consent from you. This consent form will be kept on a thumb drive and will be destroyed after a period of three years after the study is completed.

- If you have any questions about this research at any time, please call or email me at cmn6@humboldt.edu, or 707-630-3437. My advisor, David Ellerd is also available if you have questions. He can be reached at david.ellerd@humboldt.edu, or 707-826-5851.

- If you have any concerns with this study or questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at irb@humboldt.edu or (707) 826-5165.

Check-marking the box below indicates that you are at least 18 years old, have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, and that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

- ❑ I have read and agree to the consent form above.

Survey: Student Violence in Kindergarten Classrooms

Classroom Behaviors

1-5 The following questions were designed to understand the kinds of extreme or violent behaviors you see in the classroom.

	Never	Rarely	A few times	Often	Very often
yelling at adults					
yelling at other students					
cursing at adults					
cursing at other students					
cursing at no one in particular					
kicking objects – chairs, books, backpacks, etc.					
threatening to kill self					
throwing objects – pencils, crayons, furniture, etc.					

threatening students with objects					
verbally threatening students					
threatening adults with objects					
verbally threatening adults					
threatening to harm self					
screaming at close range with intent to hurt others					
screaming in general					
tearing things off walls					
making a mess of the room (trashing the room)					

#6 Are there other behaviors you consider extreme or violent that you have witnessed? If yes, please explain the behavior and frequency. (open-ended)

#7 If none of the above has happened in your classroom, has your class been affected by a violent outburst from another class?

#8 Have numbers 1-3 applied to your classroom experience in the past three years? If not, this ends the survey. Thank-you for your time. If yes, please continue.

The following questions address the affects violent incidents have on instructional time.

#9 To the best of your recollection, on average, how much instructional time is/was usually lost during aggressive/disruptive/violent incidents?

__ less than 5 minutes
__ 6-10 minutes
__ 10-15 minutes
__ 16-30 minutes
__ more than 30 minutes

#10 Has a student's behavior necessitated evacuating the room for the safety of the other students?

__ yes __ no

#11 If you answered yes to the previous question, please answer the following and list as many things that apply: (open-ended)

- What were/are some behaviors or actions that precipitated evacuations?
- Approximately how long did an average evacuation last?
- Where did you take your class?
- What activities did you and your class do?
- Did other staff members help with the situation?
- If other staff members helped, what were their job titles?
- If other staff members helped, how did they assist?

The following questions were designed to capture any communication students, parents, and teachers may have had with you regarding violent incidents.

#12 Have ***student witnesses*** verbally expressed any feelings (during or after) about the outburst/incident? __ yes __ no

#13 If you answered yes to Question 9, what are some of the verbal responses you remember? (open-ended)

#14 Have ***student witnesses*** verbally expressed any feelings (during or after) about the individual having the outburst? __ yes __ no

#15 If you answered yes to Question 11, what are some verbal responses you remember? (open-ended)

#16 Have other ***teachers*** in the building expressed feelings about the incidents of student violence/outbursts? __ yes __ no

#17 If you answered yes to Question 13, what are some verbal responses you remember? (open-ended)

#18 Have *other teachers* in the building reported that **their students** expressed feelings about the outbursts in your classroom? __ yes __ no

#19 If you answered yes to Question 15, please explain. (open-ended)

#20 Have parents communicated with you regarding incidents/outbursts?
__ yes __ no

A few more questions about the students in your class

#21 Have you noticed student-witnesses to the violence exhibit any behavioral changes over the course of the school year? If yes, what are some of the behaviors you noticed? (open-ended)

#22 Anecdotally, do students' academic performance change subsequent to violent outbursts/incidents in class? If yes, please describe. (open-ended)

#23 When you think about the academic years you've had violent students in your class, did any of the other students have Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) that you were aware of? __ yes __ no __ I don't know

Wrap Up: There are just a few more questions in order to wrap up the survey. I want to sincerely thank you for the time you've given to this study. Please contact me at cmn6@humboldt.edu if you would like to participate in an interview.

#24 Is there anything you'd like to add? (open-ended)

#25 Years of teaching experience (open-ended)

#26 Gender (open-ended)

#27 Age range

__ under 18
__ 18-24
__ 25-34
__ 35-44
__ 45-54
__ 55-64
__ 65+

#28 City and/or district of employment (open-ended)