

Surprises and Inspirations of the Bibliotherapeutic Approach in Classrooms of Young Children



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COVID-19 can be viewed as an extended event of mass trauma to young children. In this study, college students majoring in education, and related fields, provided insights on their beliefs about the strategy/approach of bibliotherapy to support young children by ameliorating their fears. The need to include strategies for supporting PK-12 students in trauma within the traditional teacher preparation program may be warranted. With school-aged children spending more waking hours at school with their teachers than they do with their parents (Minkel, 2018), and teachers being the first to possibly notice a child as traumatized, preparing new teachers to address the needs of these very students is imperative. One particular strategy, developmental bibliotherapy (DB), has been shown effective in supporting children in trauma (De Vries et al., 2017). While this method has long been employed by or suggested to in-service teachers (Pardeck, 1995), it is either not often taught in the coursework of teacher preparation programs or not studied for research. This session will discuss the preliminary findings of an investigation with preservice teachers and their beliefs held about DB. Findings from such a study may prove helpful in deciding whether it should be included within a teacher preparation curriculum. The research question driving this study is: What are the beliefs held by undergraduates in education and related fields concerning the effectiveness of bibliotherapy as an approach to supporting young children in trauma? Findings of thematic analysis reveal the participants' surprises and inspirations of the approach.

Keywords: Bibliotherapy, Education, Trauma

Themes: Teacher Education

Biography:

Jeanne Gunther is a Professor of Education at Francis Marion University. She received her Ph.D. in Early Childhood Education, Intervention, and Literacy at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Her research interests include investigations of effective methods in reading instruction, teacher content knowledge, early childhood writing development, and bibliotherapy.