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Trauma-Informed Teaching With Adult English Language Learners: A Study In A Community-Based Organization

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TRAUMA-INFORMED TEACHING WITH ADULT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A STUDY IN A COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION

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Dissertation Abstract

Often, immigrants in the United States have suffered traumatic experiences in their home country, on their journey to the U.S., and/or in their process of acculturation. In English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, symptoms of trauma can interfere with learning and acculturation. Trauma-Informed teaching can meet the needs of students who have been impacted by trauma but it is not often used in ESOL classes. This is due to a lack of teacher training, and a gap in the literature on the effects of the approach and studies that explore the perspectives of the students. Based in phenomenology and informed by teacher action research, this qualitative study sought to help fill that gap. The study investigated the impact of a six-week trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias in a community-based organization in the San Francisco Bay Area. The study examined three areas regarding the students': (a) level of anxiety about speaking about implicit bias; (b) willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias; and (c) experiences of the trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias. Data collected included six post-interviews, a teacher-researcher journal, and the final class assignment.

The results of this study indicate that students did not have anxiety when speaking about implicit bias. Students spoke easily about the topic in and outside of class. There was, therefore, no issue of risk-taking. The curriculum was also effective in helping students to learn about implicit bias, as students were able to make changes to eliminate their own biases. Furthermore, the students urged friends and family to do the same. Of particular interest to the teacher-researcher was the surprise finding that some students experienced a positive impact beyond the classroom, expressed as an enhanced sense of well-being. The findings confirmed previous research regarding the effectiveness and importance of using a trauma-informed teaching

approach combined with a curriculum that was meaningful and useful to students. Recommendations for future research and teaching include further studies with more students and with different populations of ESOL students.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the people who immigrate to the United States. May you find the courage, strength, and resilience you need to build the life you want here, and may you always know that you belong.

Acknowledgments

"Education is about an effort to improve humanity by improving one's own humanity" (Doolittle, 2003).

I wish to acknowledge and thank the many people who have helped me throughout the doctoral program and the dissertation process. These people include my committee chair and advisor, Dr. Sedique Popal. Thank you, Dr. Popal, for always holding me to a high standard, for believing in my competence, and for your responsiveness, encouragement, and support. Thank you to the two other members of my committee, Dr. David Donahue and Dr. Kevin Oh, for your guidance and input and for helping me make my study and dissertation the best it could be. For what I have learned over the last four years, I wish to extend a special thanks to Drs. Donahue, Jimenez, and Bajaj in the IME Department for the classes I took with you. As a result of the program, I have become a better teacher and human being, and I am grateful to all of you for your help along the way.

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I am also very grateful to IRIS, the community-based organization that allowed me to conduct my study in one of their classes and provided the support needed to accomplish my study. I also want to thank the participants of my study, the students and the teacher-translator who welcomed me to the class and engaged in learning about implicit bias. I am enormously grateful to you for your open hearts and minds and your willingness to share your experiences with me.

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CHAPTER I

RESEARCH PROBLEM

"Trauma confronts schools with a serious dilemma: how to balance their primary mission of education with the reality that many students need help dealing with traumatic stress to attend regularly and engage in the learning process" (Ko et al., 2008, p. 398).

Statement of the Problem

The impact of trauma on students in the classroom has been documented by many researchers. Trauma can have a negative impact on learning and memory, possibly due to the role of stress hormones on the brain's capacity to retain new information (Joels et al., 2006). The brain's affective filters are activated by stress, limiting the flow of information to the higher cognitive networks and interfering with the learning process (Willis, 2007, p. 1). Other symptoms can include difficulty concentrating, difficulty beginning new tasks, eroded self-esteem, blame, guilt, panic attacks, physical manifestations of stress, difficulty trusting others, depression, and in some cases, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), (Bekar, n.d.; Bonifacius, 2018; Lucey, et al., 2010; Gordon, 2015; Isserlis, 2000; Kerka, 2002; Medley, 2012; Stone, 1995). From a Second Language Acquisition perspective, it is important for students to have a low level of anxiety in their English class as well as high motivation and self-confidence (Krashen, 1982).

Trauma-informed teaching can support students' "mental well-being, a state in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community" (World Health Organization, 2014, as cited in Bonifacius, 2018). Possibly, not all students in adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classrooms have been affected by trauma. However, trauma-informed teaching provides safety, rebuilding of trust through the

classroom community, and a way to acknowledge experiences; this is sound teaching for all language learners, not solely those affected by trauma (Medley, 2012). Without training in the approach, however, teachers can misinterpret students' behavior, such as absenteeism, inattention, withdrawal, difficulty trusting, or what may be viewed as extreme reactions to activities or discussions in class (Bonifacius, 2018; Castellanos, 2018; Bekar, n.d.; Kerka, 2002; Perry, 2006; Walkley & Cox, 2013), causing the teacher not to respond appropriately and effectively. As Kerka (2002) stated, such student behaviors may be learned "survival mechanisms" (para. 3) and need to be seen as such.

The need for a trauma-informed approach in the classroom has been well-documented (Adkins et al., 1999; Bekar, n.d.; Bonifacius, 2018; Brunzell, et al., 2016; Castellanos, 2018; Finn, 2010; Gordon, 2011; Gutierrez & Gutierrez, 2019; Higginson-Rollins, 2016; Horsman, 2004; Isserlis, 2000; Kerka, 2002; Klompien, 2018; Krivitsky, 2015, 2017; Leichtle, 2018; Lucey, et al., 2000; Medley, 2012; Mohamed, 2018; Rose, 2018; SAMHSA, 2014; Stone, 1995; Tweedie et al., 2017; Walkley & Cox, 2013; Wilson, 2017). As Horsman (2004) wrote, "If we do not recognize that trauma issues are present in the classroom, and that the instructor's actions can help or hinder learners' processes, we leave learners and educators isolated and unsupported" (p. 136). ESOL teachers are trained to teach language (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), and basic life skills. However, because students may have endured trauma, which can be a barrier to learning, acculturation, and wellness, teachers also need to be able to provide a trauma-informed classroom. Without such training, teachers are left to manage on their own; traditional teacher training can fall short (Leichtle, 2018).

The alternatives to having teachers provide such an approach are not practical or effective. One such option would be to expect teachers to provide a counseling approach for

those students who have been traumatized. However, this would place an unreasonable expectation on teachers and schools. It would also be faulty, as there is no way for teachers to know which of their students fall into this category, nor is there data on the effectiveness of this type of intervention. Another alternative, solely referring such students to counseling, has limited usefulness. The reasons include an individual's lack of understanding about available services, and language and cultural barriers, as well as financial and geographic ones (Gordon, 2011; Krivitsky, 2017; Wall & Musetti, 2018). Instead, what is possible (and recommended) is for teachers to be trauma-informed (Bonifacius, 2018; Gutierrez & Gutierrez, 2019; Horsman 2000; Kerka, 2002; Krivitsky, 2017; Leichtle, 2018). With this approach, adult ESOL students can receive the learning environment needed to support their language acquisition, acculturation, and wellness. Although trauma-informed teaching is greatly needed, it is not widely used in adult ESOL classrooms. In order for the approach to become more widely used, there needs to be an adequate body of research on it and materials for classroom teachers to use. Significant gaps in the research exist, as noted by several authors (Bonifacius, 2018; Kaplan et al., 2016; Klompien, 2018; Sidhu & Taylor, 2012; Rose, 2019; Stone, 1995).

Background and Need

The word "trauma" comes from the Greek word for "wound" (Merriam-Webster, 2021) and is considered to be an experience of physical or mental injury. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2014):

> Individual trauma results from 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. (p. 7)

In the landmark book on trauma by Herman (1992), the author wrote that when a person experiences trauma, they are overwhelmed by a powerful force which leaves them feeling helpless. Herman described traumatic events as overwhelming "the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning" (p. 33). Feeling out of control over one's life is a typical experience for someone dealing with trauma (Fox, 2019). The psychological effects can be severe and, for some people, enduring:

> Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape or natural disaster. Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea. While these feelings are normal, some people have difficulty moving on with their lives. (American Psychological Association (APA), 2021, para. 1)

Adkins, et al. (1999) identified three types of stress and trauma experienced by newcomers to the U.S. "Traumatic stress" (p. 2) is defined as occurring as the result of being intentionally harmed by another or from being harmed by an event such as war, a natural disaster, an accident, or illness. "Migration stress" (p. 2) is the sudden and unplanned leaving of one's home. Migration stress can include violence [traumatic stress] experienced enroute to the U.S.

The incidence of violence that some people suffer before arriving in the U.S., was cited by Krivitsky (2017):

> a recent publication from a recent publication from Médecins Sans Frontières /Doctors Without Borders (2017) reported that most migrants from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, nearly 40% of the migrants interviewed reported fleeing to Mexico primarily due to gang-related violence or threats. Close to 70% of migrants who fled to Mexico

> enroute to the United States were victims of violence during the journey and almost one third of the female migrants reported experiencing sexual abuse during this time. (p. 10)

Adkins et al. (1999) described "Acculturative stress" (p. 2) as stress that occurs from trying to function in a new society or culture. For many newcomers to the U.S., including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students, acculturative stress can include not only needing to use a language that they do not have mastery of in a foreign culture but also living without the support system they had in their home country. Many supportive programs and resources exist through the government and community-based organizations, but the barriers of acculturation and language have made accessing these resources more difficult (Pereire, et al., 2012).

For many immigrants in the U.S., the fear for themselves or for their friends or family of deportation weighs heavily upon them (Tolan, Baron, & Tadayon, 2018). Other problems that immigrants face include social isolation, unemployment, discrimination, changes in family roles, and loss of communities and status. One other issue that is important to note is domestic violence. People who are victims and abusers may not believe that the resources and laws apply to them. Barriers based on financial constraints, cultural issues, immigration status, and language may impede immigrant women from seeking help (Futures Without Violence, n.d.). The impact, psychologically, of war, persecution, and displacement is significant, and research indicates that psychological disorders among refugees occur much more frequently than in the general populations of the host countries (Bogic et al., 2015). In a meta-analysis of the prevalence of mental illness in refugees and asylum seekers across 15 countries, the prevalence of depression was 31.5%, and the prevalence of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was

31.46%. The prevalence of psychosis was 1.51%, and the prevalence of anxiety disorders was 11% (Blackmore et al., 2020).

As the U.S. Government's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Association (SAMHSA) (2014) explained, the consequences of trauma can adversely affect an individual's functioning on a mental, emotional, social, physical, and/or spiritual level. Teachers have the potential to ease or aggravate a person's ability to cope with their trauma. The ESOL classroom, as a social environment, is a natural entry point for students to begin to establish relational ties with others, something often lost for immigrants and refugees (Bonifacius, 2018; Wilson, 2017). The classroom "presents an opportunity to restore pieces of one's humanity" (Bonifacius, 2018, p. 1). Towards these goals of wellness, language acquisition, and acculturation, a trauma-informed learning environment is essential. However, despite the need for this approach, it is not widely used in ESOL classes. Courses to train pre-service teachers on the approach are lacking in most pre-service teacher training programs. In order for the approach to be more widely used, ESOL teacher training programs need to provide training in using a trauma-informed approach. An adequate body of literature on the approach and classroom materials are also needed. An overview of the literature provides an understanding of the areas in which substantial data exist, and where the gaps lie.

One of the most widely discussed topics in the literature is that of the challenges that immigrant and refugee populations face when resettling in the U.S. and becoming ESOL students (Adkins, et al., 1999; Bekar, n.d.; Bonifacius, 2018; Castellanos, 2018; Finn, 2010; Gordon, 2011; Krivitsky, 2015; Leichtle, 2016). Also commonly discussed is what comprises a trauma-informed approach (Adkins et al., 1999, Horsman, 1997, 2000, 2004; Medley, 2014; Tweedie, et al., 2017; Wilson, 2017), although there is no consensus on this question. One of

the sources most often cited is SAMHSA (2014), which states that a trauma-informed system, organization, or program:

> realizes the wide-spread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved in the system; and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization. (p. 9, bold in the original text)

SAMHSA states that the approach encompasses six principles: "safety; trustworthiness and transparency; peer support; collaboration and mutuality; empowerment, voice, and choice; and cultural, historical, and gender issues" (p. 11). Notably absent in the literature is information on the essential components of a trauma-informed pedagogy. Arguably, one such component is being culturally responsive. Without it, teachers overlook who each student is and the life experiences each student brings to the classroom (Freire, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2009). In this regard, teachers not only miss the opportunity to teach students in the most effective way (Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015), but also, unwittingly, risk diminishing students by seeing them from a deficit perspective (Ginwright, 2018; Gonzalez et al., 2005; Rose, 2019; Yosso, 2005).

The literature includes varied opinions on questions about student mental health needs and the role of the teaching in addressing them (Carello & Butler, 2015; Horsman, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2004; Bonifacius, 2018; Gutierrez & Gutierrez, 2019; Gordon, 2011; Isserlis, 2000; Klompien, 2018; Krivitsky, 2015, 2017; Kugler & Price, 2009; Waterhouse, 2016; Wilson, 2017). The issues debated in the literature encompass assessments and referrals, whether or not the curriculum should include activities to elicit students' trauma to be used towards their healing, the need to maintain safety, teacher training, boundaries, and how to handle disclosures

in the classroom. The literature is missing sufficient research on the approach's limitations, the barriers to providing the approach, classroom materials, and guidelines for training teachers. Additionally, teaching strategies are lacking (Leichtle, 2018). How commonly trauma-informed teaching is used in adult ESOL and with which other approaches are two topics that also need to be understood.

It is clear that the literature does include discussions of the many challenges that immigrant and refugee students and their teachers face, and differing perspectives on what comprises a trauma-informed approach. Some anecdotal evidence is provided. Research studies, however, are underrepresented in the literature. Most of the aforementioned articles were discussions; few empirical studies were represented. Noticeably absent were studies of student outcomes from using a trauma-informed approach or from using other interventions. Studies that centered the experiences of ESOL students were also absent. Further research and curriculum development for trauma-informed teaching will allow for the approach to be more finely tuned and more widely used. As a result, more adult ESOL students can learn in a classroom environment that meets their needs for English Language acquisition, and ideally, also supports their wellness and acculturation.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to investigate to what extent the use of a six-week trauma-informed teaching approach in an ESOL classroom in a community-based organization in the San Francisco Bay Area enhanced students' ability to speak English. Specifically, the study examined three areas, the students' level of anxiety when speaking English, their willingness to take risks to speak English, and their confidence in their ability to speak English. The study used a qualitative approach. The students' perceptions of their anxiety about speaking inside and outside the classroom and their perceptions of their willingness to take risks inside and outside

the classroom were explored through individual interviews, as well as the students' experiences of the trauma-informed approach and its impact on their ability to speak English. This study aimed to add to the body of literature about the effects on students of trauma-informed teaching in an adult ESOL community-based classroom environment.

Research Questions

The questions of this study are:

- 1a. To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their anxiety about speaking about implicit bias in the classroom?
- 1b. To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their anxiety about speaking about implicit bias outside of the classroom?
- 2a. To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias in the classroom?
- 2b. To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias outside of the classroom?
- 3. How do students describe their experiences of the trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias?

Theoretical Framework

This study drew from three theoretical frameworks. The first is a trauma-informed approach, as defined by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2014). The second theoretical framework that supported this study is Krashen's

(1982) Natural Approach, which consists of five hypotheses, two of which were applicable and for this study, the Input Hypothesis, and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. Lastly, the 5 R's (Tessaro et al., 2018) of respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility and relationships comprised the third theoretical framework. Woven together, the three frameworks formed the theoretical basis of a pedagogy and a study that focused both on language acquisition and on the psychological and emotional needs of adult learners in a community-based, ESOL class. This section of the Chapter describes how these frameworks were applied to the pedagogy and to the manner in which the study was conducted.

In 2014, SAMHSA developed its framework in response to the growing awareness of the prevalence of trauma and its connection to individuals' mental and physical health and wellbeing. The SAMHSA approach is comprehensive, and it was designed to be applied to behavioral health systems and adapted to others, including education, primary health care, criminal and juvenile justice, and the military. Although there are many authors who have written about trauma and how to be trauma-informed, including in the classroom, SAMHSA's approach (2014) was selected for this study because it is distinguished in numerous relevant ways. One of the most significant is that the approach was based on a large body of research about trauma work, insight provided by survivors from their lived experiences, and knowledge about trauma interventions from those who were practicing them in the field. Furthermore, SAMHSA is one of the most often cited sources in the literature regarding a trauma-informed approach, which speaks to its credibility in the field.

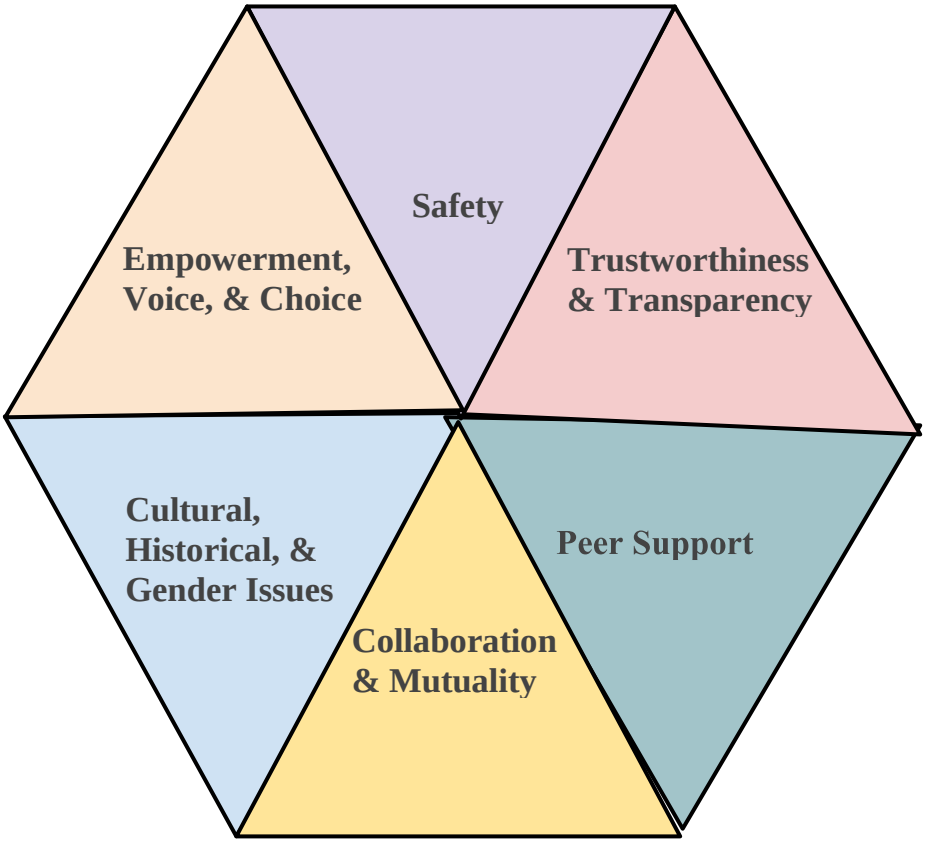
The SAMHSA (2014) framework was also selected for this study because their definition of a trauma-informed approach includes the need to avoid re-traumatizing an individual. Service systems, including schools, have the potential not only to help individuals

resolve their trauma-related issues but also to exacerbate them. This is an important point because it highlights the responsibility that teachers, as well as service providers, have to follow the medical doctrine, "first, do no harm" (Hughes, 2007). This point regarding the need to avoid harming others is further reflected in SAMHSA's definition of a trauma-informed system, organization, or program. Their description of a trauma-informed approach is also distinguished from others by recognizing that, in addition to clients (and students), individuals such as family members and staff in the system may also be affected by trauma. The selection of SAMHSA's framework (2014) further stemmed from the description that individual trauma results from "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" (bold in original source) (p. 7). The inclusion of the physical and spiritual realms is significant in that it recognizes difficulties that an individual may have which are outside of a more common understanding of trauma's impact. This aspect is not found in other frameworks. SAMHSA (2014) provided the main Principles of the approach, depicted in Figure 1 below.

The following is a description of the Principles and how they were demonstrated in the pedagogy during the proposed study. In Appendix H, a listing of the SAMHSA Principles and how they were each operationalized both in the study and in the research process is provided. According to SAMHSA (2014), the first Principle, safety, refers to providing a feeling of being physically and psychologically safe, meaning that the physical environment is safe, and interactions on a personal level provide a sense of safety. Teachers need to have an approach to providing a sense of safety and to be sensitive and responsive to what their particular students

Figure 1

SAMHSA's Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach



(Adapted from SAMHSA, 2014, p. 10)

need in order to feel safe. In the proposed study, a sense of safety was established at the beginning of the six weeks through the development of the Class Agreement (Horsman, 2000). This exercise facilitated an understanding of the ways in which a sense of safety would form the basis of the class culture. It also provided students with an opportunity to discuss the concept, discuss what their needs are, and form the agreement. In addition to abiding by the guidelines in the class agreement, the teacher-researcher interacted with students in a manner that maintains a sense of safety, such as by correcting students' verbal errors in a thoughtful, intentional manner. The class also included class activities that reinforced a feeling of safety, such as an activity to learn students' names and their correct pronunciation and meaning. The teacher-researcher addressed any conflict that arose, and feelings and coping skills/wellness were discussed in the

everyday conversation practice. The teacher-researcher monitored the adherence to the class guidelines and was prepared to intervene to reestablish and maintain safety if needed.

Trustworthiness and transparency, the second Principle, is described by SAMHSA (2014) as carrying out the [school's] operations and making decisions with transparency in order to build and maintain trust with [students] and others in the [school]. In this study, the teacher-researcher worked to model both trustworthiness and transparency, such as by admitting errors and by being committed to rebuild trust if it had been broken inadvertently. The teacher-researcher also monitored class interactions and solicited feedback regarding this Principle. SAMHSA (2014) defined the third Principle, peer support, as peer support and mutual self-help "for establishing safety and hope, building trust, enhancing collaboration, and utilizing their stories and lived experience to promote recovery and healing" (p. 11). In this study, the role of peer support and mutual self-help was included in the Class Agreement. Opportunities to provide peer support were included in the curriculum through having students work in a small group. Peer support was also encouraged during check-ins and in other discussions as opportunities became apparent. Disclosures and discussions about personal experiences were contained by the teacher-researcher in order to maintain a feeling of safety and to maintain the focus on the curriculum.

Collaboration and mutuality, the fourth Principle, places importance on partnering with students and sharing power (SAMHSA, 2014). This Principle, embedded in the teacher-researcher's pedagogy, was seen through the teacher's actions of being flexible with students, offering options, and soliciting input and feedback about the curriculum and the class on an on-going basis. The fifth Principle, empowerment, voice, and choice focuses on recognizing and building on students' experiences and strengths, fostering resilience, promoting empowerment,

and cultivating self-advocacy skills (SAMHSA, 2014). Many of the strategies in the previous paragraph also supported empowerment, voice, and choice. Additionally, they were reflected through the curriculum, such as discussing coping skills/wellness, building resilience, and using one's assets. Additionally, the curriculum included discussions of topics regarding oppression and empowerment. The teacher-researcher also provided students with options regarding assignments.

The sixth and final Principle, cultural, historical, and gender issues, is rarely included in other trauma-informed approaches and is essential for an anti-biased, inclusive, classroom. SAMHSA (2014) described this principle as getting beyond racism and other biases, offering gender-responsive [teaching] services, utilizing the healing of [students'] cultural connections, being responsive to the cultural, racial, and ethnic needs [of students], and recognizing and addressing trauma that has occurred historically. In this study, the curriculum focused on implicit bias and related topics and informal discussions. Critical pedagogies were used to examine issues of injustice and to seek options that can lead to empowerment for those individuals affected. Furthermore, the teacher-researcher role modeled respecting and valuing people and cultures, and increasing one's cultural competence. Taken together, the SAMHSA (2014) Principles form a solid foundation for a trauma-informed teaching approach. For an adult ESOL class, the pedagogy needed to include an equally strong framework for Second Language Acquisition. For this, Krashen's theory of Second Language Acquisition (1982) was chosen. It comprises the basis for most current teaching methods in ESL/ESOL classes (Freeman & Freeman, 2014).

Krashen's theory of Second Language Acquisition (Krashen, 1984) consists of five Hypotheses. A brief overview of each of them is provided here, along with more detailed

information about the two Hypotheses which are the most central to this study. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis states that adults who are learning a second language have two means to internalize it. One is through acquisition, a subconscious process that is intuitive, similar to the way a child "picks up" a language (Brown, 2007). Students are able to acquire language when they use it in a variety of circumstances (Freeman & Freeman, 2014). The other way is through the conscious process of learning, which occurs from studying grammar and vocabulary, memorizing, and practicing aspects of the target language. Krashen claimed that in order to have fluency in communication, a learner needs as much acquisition as possible (Brown, 2007).

Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis, drawing from the research of Dulay and Burt (1974), states that language acquisition happens in a natural order. For example, when babies and children are acquiring English as their first language, some parts of speech are spoken before others. Also, statements come before questions, and positive statements come before negative statements. SLA also follows a natural order, Krashen maintained (Freeman & Freeman, 2014). The Monitor Hypothesis states that inside each learner is a mechanism to watch, or monitor, our output (what we say or write). This monitor edits the output, and too much monitoring can cause a speaker to speak in a way that is halting or to be too self-conscious about speaking; too little leads to communication that is difficult to understand (Freeman & Freeman, 2014). Krashen advocated for an optimal use of the monitor only after fluency had been established, so as not to interfere with acquisition (Brown, 2007). Krashen's Input Hypothesis posits that language learners need comprehensible input which is that slightly beyond the learner's current level of competence. Krashen coined the phrase "i plus 1" (Krashen, 1982, p. 21) to explain that the input should be one level beyond the individual so that the input is challenging but also within reach. This hypothesis is similar to Vygotsky's Zone of

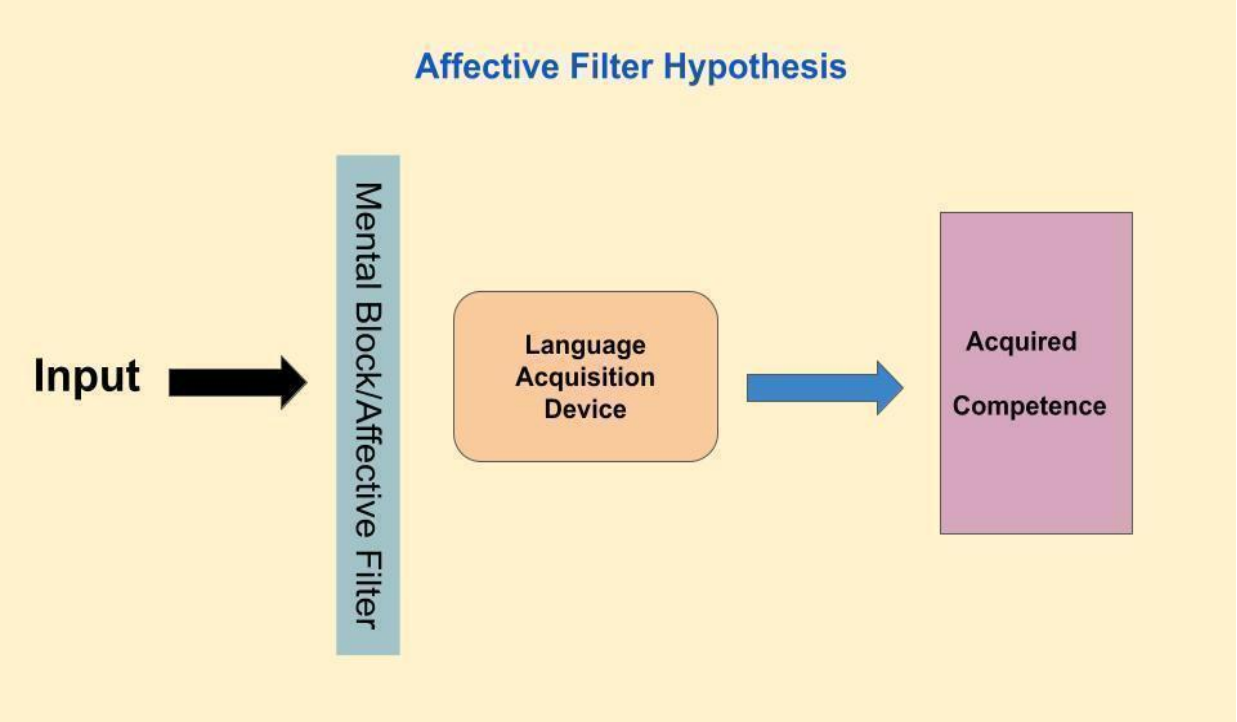
Proximal Development (Brown, 2007), which is the distance between a learner's current developmental level and the next level.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis, first proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977), addresses the role that affective factors such as anxiety and boredom play in second language acquisition (SLA). Krashen wrote that affective factors fall into one of three categories: motivation, self-confidence, or anxiety. Krashen explained that when students have the positive attributes (high motivation, high self-confidence, and low anxiety), they seek out more language input. Also, the emotional barrier in the mind that allows information to penetrate, called the affective filter (Krashen, 1982, p. 30), is lower, and the information penetrates the mind more deeply. It can be surmised that the opposite holds true as well: A high affective filter, due to the factors of low motivation, low self-confidence, and/or anxiety--all possible symptoms of trauma--negatively impacts SLA. An optimal ESOL learning environment, particularly for students who have been affected by trauma, needs to lower students' affective filter. Below, Figure 2 (Popal, 2020) captures the Affective Filter Hypothesis and summarizes the Krashen framework.

In the current study, the teacher-researcher focused particularly on the Affective Filter Hypothesis and the Input Hypothesis. The following is a brief description of how they were utilized. Appendix I provides a listing of the elements of these two Hypotheses and how they were operationalized both in the proposed study's teaching intervention and in the research process. The teacher utilized the Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) by addressing the affective factors of anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence. To reduce anxiety, the teacher-researcher maintained a calm demeanor in a predictable class environment, where students experienced a sense of safety, as discussed previously. To support student motivation, the teacher-researcher provided a highly engaging class with a variety of classroom activities, and

Figure 2

Affective Filter Hypothesis



taught with multiple intelligences. Furthermore, the teacher-researcher's supportive, encouraging stance and feedback aided the students' motivation and also their self-confidence.

As per the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), Krashen stated that verbal and written input should be conveyed at a level slightly beyond the students' current level (i + 1). In the study, the teacher-researcher provided this level of input through the pace of her speech, and through the level of vocabulary, sentence structures, and verb tenses used, and checked for understanding. Working together, the students helped each other to comprehend the input they received. The third and final theoretical framework underlying the proposed study was The Five R's (Tessaro et al., 2018). This framework is based on the Four R's (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001), respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility. Relationships was added as the fifth R

(Tessaro et al., 2018). The 4 R's were developed in response to the issue of colleges and universities in the United States and in Canada not being able to attract and retain "American Indian/First Nations/Native people" (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001, p. 1). The authors proposed The Four R's framework for understanding the differences in perspectives between students with this identity and the colleges and universities they attend. By understanding The Five R's and adapting them to the adult ESOL classroom, the theoretical framework for the proposed study is strengthened. The following section provides a description of The Five R's and how they were demonstrated through the pedagogy in the current study. Appendix J lists the components of The Five R's with how they were each operationalized both in the study's teaching intervention and in the research process.

The first R, respect, according to Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001), is defined not only individually, but also on a more fundamental level, as a people. Respect in the educational setting is reflected in recognizing and respecting the cultural knowledge, core values, and traditions of an individual or of a people. One fundamental way that the ESOL classroom can embody a respectful environment is by creating a collectivistic culture in the classroom (Hammond, 2015). While the dominant U.S. culture is individualist, most students in adult ESOL classes are from collectivistic cultures. In such a culture, the focus is on relationships and group harmony; the group's needs are prioritized. In an individualist culture, on the other hand, the individual's needs take priority. Creating a class environment with a collectivistic culture provides students with a sense of familiarity and ease. Support for teaching in this way also comes from the foundational writings of Gloria Ladson-Billings' (1995) on Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). As part of CRT, Ladson-Billings included the tenet of raising the

cultural competence of students [and the teacher]. Providing what students need, based on their home culture, is fundamental.

In the current study, the teacher-researcher demonstrated respect for cultural knowledge, core values, and traditions in numerous ways. She facilitated positive group interactions and collaboration. She asked the students to teach everyone in the class the correct pronunciation of their name and the story behind their name, if they knew. The teacher-researcher developed a class agreement with the students, centered around respect. She also welcomed students' use of their first language, Dari, or of using a mixture of the two languages in order to more fully express themselves. She reframed their accents, not only as normal for adults learning English, but as assets for other students and as beautiful reflections of their first languages. The students had the opportunity to share about their culture and experiences with the U.S. dominant culture through assignments and in class conversations. The teacher-researcher monitored the class discussions to be sure that everyone had the opportunity to talk if they wanted to, and that the class environment was mutually respectful. The attribute of relevance, the second R, was reflected in the curriculum and materials that were used in a classroom. In this study, the teacher-researcher provided lessons that were relevant to the lives of the students in the class.

The third R, reciprocity, is considered to be an aspect of high quality qualitative research, requiring deep trust, sharing, and mutuality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001), reciprocity in educational relationships entails making teaching and learning a give-and-take for students and faculty. By doing so, everyone involved can gain new levels of understanding. According to the authors, in order for reciprocity to be achieved, the faculty need to try to understand the cultural background of their students and build upon that knowledge. In such reciprocal relationships, students gain a better understanding of the

dominant culture as well as the educational institution where they are studying. In the study, the teacher-researcher worked with the community-based organization to plan for the students and their families at least two activities in the students' communities when the weather is better and transportation can be arranged. Activities such as a weekend potluck lunch at a local park or a trip to a free museum provide students the opportunity to practice their English outside the class, to build relationships, and to access community resources.

Endeavoring to have reciprocal relationships in research can be viewed in terms of giving a gift (Nelson & Shotton, 2022) but in a conscious way, grounded in Indigenous teachings of collectivistic practices and communal teachings. The authors (citing Kimmerer, 2013) wrote that reciprocity is at the root of giving a gift, as it reminds us of our responsibilities to each other and that we are connected to one another. Similarly, Bouchard & Trainor (2012), wrote that reciprocity should be in the context of the relationship where each person gives something the other wants or needs. According to the authors, rather than being a "quid pro quo" exchange, reciprocity should be "a stance" (p. 14) we take throughout our research and even after our study has concluded. In addition to the previously mentioned efforts that the teacher-researcher will make towards reciprocity in the proposed study, she will look for other ways to do so, based on her knowledge of the particular students in the study, and on her interactions with them.

The fourth R, responsibility, centers around the teacher and students recognizing and upholding the practices, ways of knowing, and values of a people (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001). Applying this to the proposed study, the teacher-researcher abided by the class agreement, listened to students' ideas during the study, and tried to incorporate them in the class. Finally, relationships, the fifth R, are the core of teaching and, therefore, are central to discuss

in this study. The other Four R's can only be seen through conscious attention to relationships (Tessaro et al., 2018). In the study, the teacher-researcher, as previously mentioned, facilitated the formation of a class agreement which was foundational to establishing and maintaining positive relationships in the class. To further support positive relationships, lessons were designed for pair work and group work. Class discussions included sharing regarding relationships with self, family, and community. By combining SAMHSA's trauma-informed framework (2014), Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis and Input Hypothesis, and the Five R's (Tessaro et al., 2018), this study employed a theoretical framework well suited to implementing and exploring the effectiveness of a trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias in an ESOL class in a community-based organization. Using this theoretical framework as the basis of the proposed study resulted in trauma-informed research of a trauma-informed pedagogy.

Limitations and Delimitations

As is the case with all studies, the study had limitations. One of the limitations was the diversity of the participants. The study will be conducted at a community-based organization, referred to as Immigrant and Refugee Integration Services (IRIS) in this study, and the participants were from one English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. The class had solely women from Afghanistan. Besides the limited differences, culturally, the class was limited linguistically to Dari and Pashto speakers. IRIS had developed the classes this way in order to provide the linguistic support that is needed at times in the students' first languages through an embedded bilingual tutor. A second limitation was the small number of participants. The number of students who attended the classes varied from 13 to 19, and of those, the number

who actively participated was generally between five and nine. Five students were interviewed, as well as the class teacher-translator.

Several delimitations existed in the design of the study. One such limitation was the short length of time in which the teaching in the study will occur, just six weeks. It was understood that it might not have been enough time for any change to be noticed by the students. This turned out not to be the case, as is discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Also, the study used a convenience sample in one organization. Furthermore, the study did not include students in K-12. Although it would be informative, it was beyond the limited scope of this study. Lastly, the total number of participants in the individual interviews will be limited to six. Because of these limitations and delimitations, the findings may not be generalizable to other ESOL populations and settings. However, rich data obtained from the study. The interviews offer insights and varying perspectives from participants. This data raised important questions leading to further study and theorizing.

Significance of the Study

This study added to the body of literature on trauma-informed teaching in an adult ESOL class. The study contributed information towards understanding the application of the approach in an underrepresented group, ESOL students. What impact can result from using the approach was investigated. With such data, the approach can be further refined and more widely used. Specifically for teachers, the study can be useful in several ways. First and foremost, as has been discussed previously, the literature lacks adequate information on the components of a trauma-informed approach in adult ESOL, how to provide it, the barriers, its impact, and what classroom materials to use. The study offered a multi-faceted theoretical framework, along with specific ways to operationalize it in an adult ESOL classroom. This can add to teachers'

understanding of the approach, why it is important to provide it, and how to conceptualize it, concretely. Along with this, as a support for teachers, specific class lessons are provided for teachers to use. Additionally, the in-depth look that is provided in Chapter 2 regarding the essential component of safety in the classroom can help teachers learn how to work with the issue of safety for their students. Furthermore, the results of the study included which parts of the classes were particularly useful to students and how the classes affected them. With this information, teachers can further refine the approach and investigate what aspects affect their particular students. Lastly, teachers interested in investigating their own approach can learn from how the study was conducted.

As of the writing of this dissertation, there have been no published studies in education that describe their methodology as being trauma-informed. Therefore, the study can add useful information regarding the design, implementation, and analysis for future researchers. Furthermore, because the literature lacks research on using a trauma-informed pedagogy in adult ESOL, researchers may benefit from the proposed study. For example, by knowing how the trauma-informed approach was defined in this study, which research questions were asked, and how the components of the approach were operationalized can lead researchers to new questions, new ideas, and innovative ways to investigate the topic. Ultimately, it is future ESOL students who can benefit the most from this study. Literature in the field lacks the recording of students' perspectives, particularly regarding trauma, its impact on students' learning, and their needs in the ESOL classroom (Wilson, 2017). The study centered the students' voices and their perspectives on their experiences. The results of the study can add to the literature so that a trauma-informed approach can be better understood, including which aspects of it are most beneficial to ESOL learners. From there, the approach can be further refined. As more research

on trauma-informed teaching in adult ESOL is conducted and published, the approach can become more widely known and used. With this, ESOL students can receive a learning environment that meets their emotional and psychological needs, as well as supports their English language acquisition and acculturation.

Definition of Terms

- Acculturation: This refers to the process of maintaining one's own culture and *adding* aspects of the new culture. This differs from assimilation, in which a person loses or gives up part of their own culture in order to fit into their new cultural environment (Popal, 2019).
- Culturally Responsive Teaching: This term refers to a pedagogical approach that focuses on three aspects, increasing students' cultural competence, raising their critical consciousness, and holding high expectations for all students to achieve at a high academic level (Ladson-Billings, 1995).
- Deficit Perspective: This refers to the view of people as being flawed, damaged, sick, ignorant, lazy, or otherwise having a negative attribute that is a permanent part of them (Freire, 2018; Gay, 2018; Ginwright, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Horsman, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995). The opposing perspective is a strength-based perspective, in which individuals are viewed as full of personal assets and strengths, and their difficulties are viewed through a Sociocultural lens.
- English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Students: This refers to students who are learning English in a country in which English is not commonly used (Brown, 2007).
- English as a Second Language (ESL): ESL refers to adult students who are learning English. The term, widely used, does not take into consideration the fact that the

students speak other languages (Brown, 2007). Therefore, it is not the term used in this study.

- English Language Learners (ELL) : ELL refers to students who are learning English in the K-12 system. (McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010)
- English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD): ESOL and CLD refer to adult students who are learning English. These terms are used in this dissertation because they are more current than ESL, and they are used in some college settings (McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010; Torres & Tackett, 2016). Additionally, ESOL and CLD are terms that show recognition of the students' linguistic assets.
- Immigrant: This term refers to a person living in a country other than that of their birth. The term is used interchangeably with "newcomer" (Bolter, 2019) in this dissertation.
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP): LEP refers to students who are learning English in the U.S. in the K-12 system. The term carries a deficit perspective, as it fails to recognize that these individuals speak other languages (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015).
- Migration Stress: This refers to the sudden and unplanned leaving of one's home (Adkins et al., 1999).
- Multiple Intelligences: The term refers to the approach to understanding the different ways human minds function. The intelligences include linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and natural (Gardener, 1983).
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): PTSD refers to a mental health diagnosis first applied to U.S. veterans returning from war. Symptoms can include avoidance, numbing

of responsiveness, such as through substance abuse, hypervigilance, flashbacks, memory impairment, dissociating, and spacing out (Isserlis, 2001, as cited in Kerka, 2002).

- Refugees: This refers to individuals who have fled war, violence, conflict, or persecution in their home country, and who are seeking safety in another country (United Nations Refugee Agency, 2021).
- Second Language Acquisition (SLA): SLA refers to the subconscious process of absorbing another language, vs. the conscious process of learning, which involves studying, memorizing, and practicing using parts of the language (Freeman & Freeman, 2014).
- Sociocultural Perspective (regarding trauma-affected students): (Adkins et al., 1998): This refers to the view of students as not being mentally ill, but rather, normal people who have survived horrible, abnormal circumstances. Their symptoms can be understood as their ways of coping, or their reactions to the traumatic events they have endured. This perspective is strength-based, the opposite of the deficit perspective (Wilson, 2017).
- TESOL: This term refers to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (International Teacher Training Organization, 2021). It is also the name of the professional organization for teachers.
- Trauma: This refers to a reaction that comes from an event, series of events, or circumstances in which the person felt physically or emotionally harmed or that their life was threatened, and resulted in lasting negative effects on the person's functioning and on their emotional, physical, mental, spiritual or social wellbeing (SAMHSA, 2014).

- Trauma-Informed Teaching: This refers to a pedagogical approach in which the teacher realizes the impact of trauma, recognizes signs and symptoms of trauma in others, understands possible paths for recovery, adapts their teaching to be sensitive and responsive to anyone impacted by trauma, and strives to avoid re-traumatization (SAMHSA, 2014).
- Traumatic stress: This refers to stress occurring as the result of being intentionally harmed by another, or from being harmed by an event such as war, a natural disaster, an accident, or illness (Adkins et al., 1999).
- Trigger: This term refers to both the verb, to trigger, and to the noun, trigger. If a person is triggered, it means that they are suddenly having an extreme reaction of anger, fear, or upset, due to remembering a traumatic event in their life (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.)

Summary

The United States is home to more than 40 million people living in the U.S. who were born in another country (Pew Research Center, 2020), creating a continuous need for adult ESOL instruction. Many of these students have experienced trauma from an array of sources, including wars, political unrest, gang violence, extreme poverty, and natural disasters. Stress and trauma are also often experienced from the journey to the United States and from adjusting to living here. Students must contend with their new life, far from the support system of the community, friends, and family who remain in their home country. The impact of trauma(s) for these individuals may be compounded by not being able to access resources in order to cope, or not accessing them due to fear of consequences to their immigration status, even if they are entitled to the public benefits. In the adult ESOL classroom, possible symptoms of trauma can include having difficulty attending class regularly, insomnia and other health problems, difficulty concentrating, problems trusting others, anxiety, and a lack of the self-confidence to

practice their new language skills. From the perspective of a medical model, these students are seen as having mental health problems and deficiencies. However, from a strengths-based, sociocultural perspective, these newcomers are not mentally ill or deficient in any way, but, rather, are regular people who have survived horrible events and are coping with challenges (Adkins et al., 1998, as cited in Wilson, 2017).

Trauma-informed teaching can meet not only the needs of students with trauma, but other learners in the ESL classroom, as well (Medley, 2012). Trauma-informed teaching can promote language acquisition, acculturation, and recovery from trauma. The approach, based on the SAMHSA (2014) framework, includes six Principles, "safety, trustworthiness and transparency, peer support, collaboration and mutuality, empowerment, voice and choice, and cultural, historical, and gender issues" (p. 10). The teaching approach incorporates the foundational tenets of SLA, including Krashen's (1982) seminal theory of Second Language Acquisition, containing five Hypotheses. Of particular relevance are the Affective Filter Hypothesis and the Input Hypothesis. Further woven into the approach is The Five R's (Tessaro et al, 2018). These include respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationships. The three theoretical frameworks, taken together, formed the foundation for the teaching approach in this study, as well as the approach in which this study, itself, was conducted.

Despite the fact that the need for a trauma-informed approach has been well documented, it is not widely used in adult ESOL classes. Few teacher training programs include the approach in their curriculum, at least in the San Francisco Bay Area. This may be due, in part to a lack of research on the approach and to a lack of classroom materials. More research and curriculum development on trauma-informed teaching are essential so that teachers can be trained on the approach and implement it. As a result, more adult ESOL students could then learn in a classroom environment that would support their needs for language acquisition,

acculturation, and wellness. Students are entitled to have their educational needs met. Not only is it the role and obligation of educational systems to meet students' needs, but doing so benefits everyone. As ESOL students learn, acculturate, and experience an increased sense of wellness, the positive impact extends outward to their families and to our communities. Students are more able to manage their daily activities, obtain higher education and better paying jobs, and contribute their skills and talents, not only to the workforce, but also to our communities through their civic involvement. From there, the positive impact extends further to our larger society; the potential benefit to all of us is limitless.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

We survived, that should be enough but it isn't. We must work hard to become whole again, to fill our soul with love and inspiration, to live the life that was intended for us before it was disrupted by war and horrors, and help rebuild a world that is better than the one we just left. -- Loung Ung (Krivitsky, 2017, p. 8)

Immigrants and refugees come to the U.S., bringing an abundance of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005)--their languages, cultural practices, knowledge, skills, ways of knowing, and wisdom--enriching our communities in numerous ways. Additionally, refugees and immigrants start businesses, contribute financially, and further our fields of education, arts, and science, as well as technology innovation. With each person's new arrival, another strand is woven into our country's rich and beautiful tapestry. In order to begin to create their new life here, ESOL students face challenges, not solely with the daunting task of acquiring English but also with acculturation. The ESOL classroom is the first line of defense for immigrants and refugees against culture shock (Lucey et al., 2000). In addition to providing the opportunity to acquire English Language skills, the ESOL class offers students the cultural information needed to ease adjustment and to navigate life's daily activities (Gordon, 2011) as well as to start to regain control over their lives and their futures (Adkins et al., 1998). Furthermore, as a social milieu, the class gives students the opportunity to build new relationships, and to experience a sense of belonging (Finley, 2018). As Bonifacius (2018) aptly wrote, the ESOL class "presents an opportunity to restore pieces of one's humanity (p 1)."

Indeed, most immigrants and refugees have gone through experiences that have diminished that sense of humanity. Many people have endured "traumatic stress" (Adkins et al.,

1998, p. 9) in their home country, such as from war, gang violence, extreme poverty, domestic violence, natural disasters, or persecution. Often, ESOL students have also suffered "migration stress" (Adkins et al., 1998, p. 8) during the period of time from when they left their home country until they arrived here. Still other immigrants and refugees suffer from "acculturative stress" (Adkins et al., 1998, p. 8) in their experience of living in the U.S., often without a support system. Any and all of these types of stress can be experienced as a psychological "wound," which is the root of the word for "trauma" (Merriam-Webster, 2021).

From a psychological or medical point of view, the impact of trauma can be seen in mental health symptoms, including anxiety and depression, cognitive difficulties, and physical ailments that mask emotional difficulties. Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a less common condition, is characterized by symptoms such as flashbacks, numbing, depression, memory impairment, and hypervigilance. Although this information is useful in understanding what some people have experienced or may still be experiencing, it is important to maintain the view of people as these difficulties are part of their experiences and not *who* they are (Ginwright, 2018). From a socio-cultural perspective, people who have suffered from traumatic experiences should not be viewed as having a mental illness, but rather, as normal people who have survived horrible experiences, and whose symptoms are their ways of coping (Adkins, 1998; Wilson 2017). The medical model can lead to a deficit perspective, as opposed to a strengths perspective (Ginwright, 2018; Gonzalez et al., 2005; Yosso, 2005). Blending the medical model with the socio-cultural perspective creates an understanding of the potential impact of trauma along with the view of a person as coping with problems and possessing the resilience and other internal assets needed, along with external support, to overcome them.

Although perspectives on symptoms of trauma and mental health can be debated, what is clear is that English Language acquisition requires concentration, memorizing, retrieving information from memory, making meaning of input, and producing output (spoken and written language), all of which can be more difficult for someone who endured traumatic experiences (Dixon, 2018; Gordon, 2011). In the ESOL classroom, a student might have difficulties concentrating, be reluctant to engage with others, have many absences, seem on edge and vigilant about their safety, or seem to have extreme reactions to a class discussion. Without the understanding that these and other behaviors might be normal reactions stemming from traumatic experiences, ESOL teachers can misinterpret students' behavior, causing the teacher not to respond appropriately and effectively. Certainly, ESOL teachers should not be expected to serve as mental health counselors or therapists, roles that teachers are neither trained in nor hired for. However, the learning needs of ESOL students indicate that teachers need to go beyond simply trying to teach English in a meaningful context. Instead, teachers need to provide an approach that takes into account students' lived experiences, including trauma (Warriner, et al., 2020). Applying the SAMHSA (2014) definition of a trauma-informed approach to teaching means: realizing the impact of trauma and understanding possible paths for recovery; recognizing the signs and symptoms of trauma; responding by integrating this knowledge into teaching; and, striving to avoid re-traumatizing students.

The necessity of a trauma-informed teaching approach has been well-documented (Bonifacius, 2018; Castellanos, 2018; Horsman, 2004; Krivitsky, 2015, 2017; Leichtle, 2016; SAMHSA, 2014, Tweedie et al., 2017; Wilson, 2017). Research indicates that when students have positive educational experiences and with teachers who understand the assets and experiences of their students and who teach in a way that accommodates them, the teachers help

to offset the impact of the students' trauma and help them begin to heal (McBrien, 2005; Sinclair, 2001; UNHCR, 2000, as cited in Warriner, et al., 2020). The approach can meet the needs of students who have been affected by trauma, and of those students who have not (Medley, 2012). Apart from the necessity of trauma-informed teaching, what is also clear in the literature is that the approach is not commonly used in adult ESOL classes. By not using a trauma-informed approach, teachers are missing the opportunity to provide students with an environment that meets students' needs for language acquisition, acculturation, and wellness. In order for teachers to use such an approach, an adequate body of academic literature, including research studies, needs to exist. However, most of the literature contains recommendations and narrative accounts of teachers and researchers, using anecdotal evidence; few research studies exist, particularly regarding adult ESOL students.

Overview

Although the literature reflects a wide range of understandings of trauma-informed teaching in adult ESOL classes, one core component that all contain is a sense of safety. Without feeling safe, it is difficult for a student's affective filter to be lowered and for optimal learning to occur. Relatedly, their acculturation can be negatively impacted, as well as their sense of wellness. Therefore, this literature review focuses on three pertinent themes which relate to safety. The first theme examines how the teacher tries to establish safety in the classroom. The second theme explores whether or not the teacher should use traumatic material, including students' trauma stories, into the curriculum for the purpose of healing and how that potentially impacts the students' feeling of safety in the class. As a point of clarification, it is this teacher-researcher's opinion that, with few exceptions, such materials should not be used. The reasons for this are explained in the section below on the topic of trauma materials. Lastly,

the literature review turns to the question of whether or not teachers should censor materials and/or conversations, in order for students to be protected from possibly being upset or triggered in class. Combined, these three themes lay a foundation for understanding how teachers can provide safety in a trauma-informed classroom. The literature review also guides how the proposed trauma-informed study is to be conducted.

Establishing Safety in the Classroom

Violating one's safety is a core component of trauma (Horsman, 2000). Although a person who has survived trauma may currently be physically safe, they may not have the feeling that they are safe (Wilson, 2020). Some survivors of trauma "feel existentially unsafe and find the world profoundly and imminently dangerous" (Burstow, 2003, p. 11, as cited in Wilson, 2020). However, having a feeling of safety in the classroom is fundamental to learning (Carello & Butler, 2015), and language learning, in particular, requires a feeling of safety in order for students to take risks and make mistakes (Palanac, 2017). SAMHSA (2014) lists safety as its first of six key principles in its trauma-informed approach and explains that everyone needs to feel physically and psychologically safe. Interpersonal interactions, in SAMHSA's approach, should engender a sense of safety, and understanding safety as it is defined by [students] is deemed a high priority.

Vee (2021), as an ESOL teacher, offered suggestions for creating safety in the classroom where some students have experienced trauma, including human trafficking. Vee referenced the recommended practices as what that teachers do "subconsciously" (p. 4). These include: learning students' names, "no corporal punishment" (p. 4), not shaming students, agreeing to listen to each other and respect each other, scaffolding, giving students instruction and tasks at their level, providing students with the opportunity to check their responses with others before

offering group feedback, and giving students positive feedback. Although these are widely accepted as good practices in a classroom, it is questionable if these practices are enough to provide for a safe classroom experience. How the practices should be implemented, whether or not students should be made aware of these practices, and what the students stated they needed in order to feel safe were not included in the article.

In the seminal work, *Too Scared to Learn: Women, violence, and education*, Horsman (2000) wrote of her experience in Canada, spanning decades, of researching, teaching literacy, and facilitating discussions in women's literacy circles. Many of the women shared their experiences from past abuse and from current daily domestic violence. Horsman found that the women felt very empowered by discussing their trauma. Understandably, the boundaries in these discussion groups needed to be established in order for there to be a feeling of safety. Horsman advocated for developing an agreement on rules negotiated with participants in the program. Although the use of a class agreement or set of rules is standard practice in K-12 schools, it is often not seen as needed in the classes with adults. However, because of its importance in trauma-informed ESOL classes, Horsman's (2000) agreement is included here.

> Participants will: respect the individuality and ability of each person in the program; not pass judgment on others and be fair and constructive in my feedback; help create an accepting classroom environment; be allowed to *pass* on activities that I do not want to participate in; honor the people in the program by not using their names or unpublished work in discussion about the program outside of the classroom; give everybody equal opportunity to speak and participate in the program; understand that it is okay for me to express my own needs (i.e., quiet time, time out, etc.) (p. 125).

Regarding classroom expectations, Horsman (2000) wrote that some students who have endured trauma will appear to be not paying attention, bored, or daydreaming, whereas they may be dissociating, a common response to trauma. Therefore, Horsman recommended allowing students to choose their level of classroom participation. Horsman described discussing with students what it means to be fully present in the classroom and giving them permission to be less than fully present or involved in all classroom activities. This somewhat simple intervention can provide a feeling of safety for students.

Horsman (2000) noted that what is safe for one student may be diametrically opposed to what is safe for another student; some students want a safe place where they can share their traumatic experiences, while other students want a safe place where they will not hear traumatic stories. How such an agreement is negotiated with students is not included in the literature. Furthermore, how to handle situations when the rules are not abided by are not included in the guidelines. Horsman, as well as Gordon (2011) noted that situations can arise when students have outside interactions or previous histories of conflict which affect interactions in the classroom. Situations also occur when students express subtle forms of racism, sexism, homophobia, or other types of oppression. In fact, the proposed study at IRIS, the educational director agreed to the study because of the teacher-researcher's expertise in using a trauma-informed approach, but also because she has a curriculum on addressing implicit bias, which IRIS has identified as a need in their classes. The proposed study will include developing with the students in each of the two classes a class agreement, and then examining what benefits it appeared to provide.

The topic of safety in the ESOL classroom was addressed by Gordon (2011), an ESOL teacher who wrote about trauma and its impact on second language acquisition. Gordon drew

from the three-year ethnographic study the author had previously conducted from 1997 to 2000. The participants were Laotian refugee women, all of whom had experienced trauma during the Vietnam War before coming to the U.S. The women resettled in the Philadelphia area, where Gordon was volunteering in an ESOL classroom. In 2009, Gordon also conducted phone interviews with four bilingual professionals in the mental health field as part of their preparation for writing this article. The author stated that, based on Horsman (2000), educators, rather than try to identify which students had traumatic experiences [and provide them with mental health referrals or other interventions], should provide a safe and productive class environment for all students. The recommendations from Gordon (2011), based on Horsman (2000) and the Canadian Center for Victims of Torture, included: attending to the class configuration, such as keeping doors and windows open, having a quiet classroom location, and providing students with a quiet corner where they can work independently; managing students' concentration difficulties, and, communicating the class agenda at the beginning of each day so students can choose whether or not to participate in a lesson. Gordon also recommended providing community resources for wellness, and maintaining the perspective that students will gradually invest in their learning but may have absences and barriers to overcome along the way.

The topic of safety in regards to student disclosures was addressed by Gordon (2011). Gordon stated that cultures vary widely about whether or not disclosing traumatic experiences is important in healing. Gordon, citing the work of von Peter (2009), found that, although the concept of breaking the silence has been a significant contribution of western feminist action and research on sexual and domestic violence, discussing one's trauma is a value that may not be shared by every culture. It would follow, therefore, that establishing safety in an ESOL classroom would include the issue of personal disclosures. This, however, was not discussed by

Gordon (2011). The article, although providing valuable information, insights, and strategies, also did not include other guidance on creating safety, such as having a class agreement or how to provide containment, when needed, of students' disclosures and/or students' emotions.

Palanac (2019), in writing about developing a trauma-informed English Language teaching pedagogy, discussed in depth the issue of establishing safety. The overarching themes included providing a safe physical environment where students are respected and have a sense of agency. Examples included being clear with students about expectations, curriculum plans, role boundaries of the teacher, and class rules. Palanac also recommended learner-centered strategies, such as giving students time each day to discuss their personal struggles and giving students the opportunity to select classroom materials. Caution was raised regarding the use of personalization in the classroom curriculum, such as in 'getting to know you' activities. Asking students to talk about themselves and details of their lives, especially in front of others, can raise anxiety and can re-trigger trauma in some students, according to the author. Ways to minimize that risk were offered, emphasizing that personalization should never be forced. The importance of building interpersonal relationships, being careful regarding curriculum topics, normalizing errors in the process of language learning, and reminding teachers to maintain student confidentiality were among the principles and strategies offered. As the author stated, referencing Horsman (2000), the classroom needs to be a safe environment for everyone. Principles and guidance on how to provide this could be developed through future research, drawing from the strong foundation that Palanac provided.

Using Trauma Material and the Impact on Students' Sense of Safety

This literature review about trauma and ESOL revealed several mentions of the fact that ESOL teachers do not feel prepared to work with refugee and immigrant learners (Barrett &

Berger, 2021; Bonifacius, 2018; Castellanos, 2018; Heald & Horsman 2000; Leichtle, 2018; Nagasa, 2014; Stone, 1995). Krivitsy (2015, citing Walter et al., 2006, Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2012) found that teachers have a limited understanding of mental health and they feel underprepared when it comes to helping children with mental health issues. In the seminal work by Lucey et al. (2000) regarding teaching adult refugee students, the authors wrote that "it can be extremely difficult to learn of a student's painful experiences, and feel powerless to help (p. 21)." As was mentioned in Chapter 1, referring students to outside counseling is complicated and often not useful, due to linguistic, cultural, and logistical barriers. Given limited resources and training, some teachers respond to their perceived need to take action by incorporating lessons into their curriculum that address trauma, including eliciting students' trauma stories. The purpose is to help students with their healing. The impact on students' feeling of safety in the classroom is at the heart of the debate. This teacher-researcher holds the position that as a general rule, such materials should not be part of an ESOL class. The reasons for this stance are because teachers are not trained for this, there is risk of harm to students, and they should not be put in the uncomfortable position of dealing with their trauma in their classroom. Furthermore, there are important cultural considerations. The issues are explored below.

This section begins with providing more background information on the issue and cultural considerations and some words of caution. Following, four studies by authors in favor of using trauma material, including students' stories, are discussed. From there, a study is presented in which the researchers seemed to have found the right balance of using trauma material, including students' stories, in the context of providing a learning environment that felt safe for students. Alternative approaches in ESOL are included in the summary of this part of the chapter.

Background, Cultural Considerations, and Cautions

For some ESOL teachers, their decision to use stories in the classroom may be based on the appeal of storytelling. According to Nguyen et al. (2014), "storytelling is the oldest technique in second language learning" (p. 29). Furthermore, our minds are wired to best learn about the world through stories. Wajnryb (as cited in Abbot et al., 2011) found that stories are useful in language learning, not only for vocabulary and grammar, but also as a genre, as much of our daily conversations are built around stories. Furthermore, the author wrote that storytelling builds a sense of community in the class. A problem may occur, however, when ESOL teachers use stories with any trauma material, including students' personal stories. Any trauma-informed approach centers on safety, and teachers and other practitioners must "first, do no harm" (Hughes, 2007). Furthermore, in a trauma-informed classroom, teachers must strive "to actively resist re-traumatization" (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 9). A student who shares their personal story of trauma can have a range of feelings during and after the telling of the story, spanning from feeling relieved to being very overwhelmed or triggered. Furthermore, the story can activate painful feelings or memories for others who hear it. This part of the Chapter examines the issue of whether or not ESOL teachers should incorporate trauma material, including students' own stories of trauma, into the ESOL class curriculum, and if so, with what guidelines.

The seminal writing of Herman (2015) on trauma and recovery is instructive for this discussion. Herman wrote that people who have survived trauma need "control, connection, and meaning" (p. 33), which is taken from them by the trauma. Applying this to the ESOL classroom, feeling in control is experienced regarding control of oneself and one's emotional reactions, and what will happen in class will be manageable to the student. This engenders a

feeling of safety. A sense of connection is felt in regard to other students and to the teacher, as well as to the curricular materials. A sense of meaning is found in the classroom experiences and in the learning. The challenge for ESOL teachers, therefore, is to create a learning environment that embodies all three, control, connection, and meaning. Along with this challenge, Herman wrote that recovery from trauma includes three stages, each with its own task. The establishment of safety is the first, followed by remembrance and mourning, and then reconnecting to ordinary life. What would be ordinary life for a refugee or immigrant is, in itself, open to debate and beyond the scope of this discussion. However, what is central to the conversation is the idea of supporting a student, if at all, through the stages of remembrance and mourning.

The question of using trauma material, including students' stories, is further informed by the cultural backgrounds of the ESOL students and how those cultural orientations view openly discussing one's traumatic experiences. Culture shapes our concepts regarding the reasons for suffering, the expression of strong emotions, and how to deal with grief (Wilson & Drozdek, 2004, as cited in Gordon, 2011). Although discussing one's trauma may be common in the dominant U.S. culture, it is not considered appropriate for some ESOL students because of the stigma of mental health; admitting a problem can damage one's family reputation. Gordon (2011), in discussing students from Southeast Asia, stated for some ESOL students, trauma is seen as a result of their karma. Similarly, Mohamed (2018), in discussing adult English language students in a Somalian refugee camp, wrote that most students viewed their life events as coming from higher spiritual powers and that the individual needed to accept their fate. Relatedly, Gordon (2011) wrote that, instead of directly expressing one's feelings or traumatic experiences, students held more holistic views of the connection between their mind and body;

they expressed their pain through somatic symptoms. Even among cultures that do not hold any of these beliefs, each student brings with them values instilled by their own family regarding trauma and how it should be expressed. It would be difficult, if not impossible, therefore, for ESOL teachers to determine with certainty that it was appropriate to use trauma curriculum, including eliciting students' stories, with their students.

The issue of cultural appropriateness was not found among most of the authors in this literature review who advocated for a curriculum that includes trauma material. However, several authors did weigh in on the curricular issue with recognition of other complexities. Key among those was balancing their ongoing commitment to safety in the classroom with what might help with healing from trauma. One such author is the seminal writer, Horsman (1997; 2000; 2002; 2004). The author wrote that teachers should not prevent topics related to violence from arising in the class because silence is seen as complicity, as mentioned previously. However, according to Horsman (1997, 2000), not all stories can be shared in the classroom and students need to learn which stories to share and when to share them. Isserlis (2000), echoing Horsman (2000), advised that students be able to choose their own level of participation in any of the class activities, and to create a class environment that supported the option to not fully participate. Kerka (2002) concurred. Carello and Butler (2015), in writing about trauma-informed educational practice in higher education, stated that allowing students to not participate showed respect for the student's limits. It also taught students that they needed to take responsibility for their own self-care. In this scenario, ESOL students would need to be able to navigate the power dynamics with their teacher, along with the cultural expectations, peer pressure, and their own linguistic challenges, in order to declare that they are not going to

do an assignment. If they could do this is debatable, depending on the particular students and the class environment.

Guiterrez and Guiterrez (2019) took a different stance on the issue of curriculum. They argued that, although a trauma-informed lens is needed in order to be able to recognize possible signs of trauma among our students, teachers should never interpret being trauma-informed as giving teachers permission to engage students in conversations about their trauma. The risk of harm for students is too high. Instead, the authors advised being available for private conversations with students if they want to discuss such personal issues and not expecting students to reveal information about their trauma in the presence of others. For these authors, using any kind of trauma in the curriculum would be inadvisable, due to concerns for safety. Along these lines, other authors have stated their concerns about the use of trauma material. Finn (2010) found that teachers may not be equipped to handle highly emotional class discussions, and that it is better to keep students focused on their present circumstances, rather than on any pain from their past. Wilson (2017) described working with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Japan after the triple disasters of an earthquake, tsunami, and natural disaster in 2011. The author pointed out that some curriculum materials contained lessons on natural disasters. Wilson cautioned that for students who have endured such trauma, being confronted with such materials in class would certainly not be of value in learning English.

Arguments Some Teachers Made for the Use of Trauma Material

Several authors, including Schmidt (2019), have weighed in on the other side of the debate, advocating for the use of trauma materials. Schmidt conducted a literature review, using the key terms of trauma, English learners, PTSD, language acquisition, and best practices. The

literature review was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles. In regards to best practices, Schmidt found that teachers should incorporate classroom activities that provide students with opportunities to "safely cope with their past experiences" (p. 5). Included among Schmidt's recommendations are strong, appropriate relationships, reflective practices, and meaningful conversations. Schmidt (citing Iversen et al., 2014) suggested that students be given the opportunity to deal with their trauma by using poetry, visual, performing, and other art modalities to process their trauma and to present their experiences "to the class in a way that is healing" (Schmidt, p. 8). Other modalities could include using the Language Experience Approach (Dixon & Nessel, 1983), which entails having a student dictate their story to the teacher who is in the role of a scribe. Through any modality, the purpose would be to increase language acquisition by having students "begin to tell the story *and build a safe community within the classroom"* (Schmidt, 2019, p. 8, emphasis added). Although using relevant, authentic course materials is considered to be a best practice in teaching ESOL, the author has neglected to address the complexities of trying to achieve both safety and the processing of students' personal trauma within an ESOL classroom environment. Without establishing and maintaining a sense of safety for all the students, providing classroom activities in ESOL to process one's trauma could be very problematic.

Schmidt is not alone, however, in her stance. Medley (2012) described teaching high school English language learners in the U.S. He argued that most language learners need some healing from trauma in order not to be frustrated with learning, and that some types of instruction can be therapeutic and can help build resilience in students. In addition to incorporating teaching with multiple intelligences (Gardener, 1983), Medley recommended teaching that integrates language learning with exploring social relationships and expressing

oneself. The goals of this would include building a sense of community in the classroom where it would be safe to grieve one's traumas and to consider nonviolent options for dealing with conflict. Furthermore, Medley suggested incorporating into the language instruction class materials that describe the process by which someone can heal from trauma and indirectly addresses violence. This would be achieved by using information about a geographically distant conflict that is similar to that which some students may have experienced. Although it is indisputable that building a strong sense of community is a core component of a trauma-informed pedagogical approach, the goals of healing from trauma and addressing violence require skills and a setting that would be difficult, at best, to achieve in a classroom setting for the reasons that have been previously discussed. Medley does, however, explain his actions regarding safety and building community, and regarding the curriculum as it relates to trauma and violence, as described below.

To create a safe environment, Medley recommended having a predictable classroom routine, being careful not to introduce a lot of new types of learning tasks too quickly, and using strategies that are not likely to make students feel uncomfortable. Examples of lower risk activities would be choral reading, small group work, and gentle, thoughtful error correction. In this model, the teacher forms positive, personalized relationships with each student and builds their self-confidence. These guidelines easily fit with a trauma-informed approach with adult ESOL students, as well. Medley (2012) described the component of building a supportive class community as being part of a safe learning environment for students. That sense of community develops, he wrote, with the increasing knowledge and understanding of each other, as well as respect. The activities Medley described included language games geared towards building rapport, increasing trust, and showing caring. Some of the activities utilized multiple

intelligences and were aimed at evoking playfulness and laughter. One example Medley mentioned was a game with Total Physical Response, a method often used with beginning language students in which movement is combined with language. Other activities were described, including one regarding which roles students identify with, and one involving acts of kindness and showing gratitude. These activities and the goals are sound teaching in language learning and are compatible with a trauma-informed approach in adult ESOL.

One place where Medley's view might diverge from others, however, is in regard to mourning and the role of the language classroom in facilitating that. Medley does acknowledge that teachers should not force students to mourn, which seems obvious but perhaps needed to be stated. He also wrote that teachers should sometimes even steer topics in class away from what might remind the student of their trauma. That being said, Medley proposed that within the context of language learning, a teacher could ask students to write about their life experiences, such as describing the refugee camp where they lived, what it was like living with bombing, and what their immigration journey was like. The intention, Medley wrote, was for the teacher to be a learner in these interactions, and to find out which topics to avoid for the time being because they might evoke a trauma response. Medley added that the teacher could suggest more content to be added into the stories, and could validate students' experiences. To justify this type of activity, he wrote that it can help students grieve and further heal. Along these lines, Medley included other ideas for sharing stories, including asking students to write about some of the defining moments of their life, as part of a biography. The project, from Medley's perspective, would create an opportunity for students to share their traumatic experiences, but it would not require that they do so. It is questionable whether the difficulties for students that such activities might create could be manageable for students. The risk is that the students could be

retraumatized by recounting their experiences, particularly in a classroom environment, as opposed to a therapeutic setting. Interestingly, Medley wrote that *how* teachers deliver lessons such as the ones described here is equally important as the content. The article neglects to address the protocol for how teachers should teach these lessons, which problems can arise, how to mitigate the risk of those, how to respond when they do arise, and to what end.

Venturing further into the topic of using trauma material in the English language curriculum, Medley (2012) described lessons for healing which support developing more resilience. One of those topics is non-violent ways to handle conflict and to do problem solving. In this regard, Medley described a subject area that is non-controversial, as most teachers would probably agree that students need to learn conflict management skills, and providing lessons in the context of language learning is sound teaching. The other topic area Medley described, however, making progress towards forgiveness, is not as clear cut. To his credit, Medley pointed out that teachers must be very careful when teaching this subject, as many students have suffered terrible injustices and may be carrying a lot of pain from that. Medley wrote that he worked on raising students' awareness about the need to forgive. His basic premise is faulty, at best; suggesting that someone forgive others may not be timely or ever appropriate for them. Even the topic of forgiveness can stir up many painful feelings and memories. However, Medley's strategy was to teach a unit on apartheid in South Africa and on the work that some South Africans did on forgiveness. Students were assigned to read sections of the book by Desmond Tutu (1999), *No Future Without Forgiveness.* Students wrote out sections from the book into dialogue and acted them out in class. Medley wrote that it was moving to him to hear students who had suffered speaking as South Africans who had suffered, with some students requesting forgiveness and it being granted by other students. The problem with this description

is that the impact on the students has not been documented, let alone how to avoid any negative experiences for students, if a teacher were to use this suggested unit and activity. The biggest concern, however, is that students should not be taught a unit that suggests that students should forgive their oppressors or abusers. Furthermore, the teaching neither takes into account the potential negative consequences nor the fact that the topic and goals may not be of a student's choosing.

In Medley's (2012) conclusion, he appealed to English language teachers to offer students the opportunity to heal through different means of expression in language learning. Medley wrote that lessons geared towards self-expression and those that explore social relationships *create a safe environment* (emphasis added), as well as a supportive classroom community. It is unclear how such lessons could *create* a safe environment for traumatized learners. It may be that the lessons are useful to some students, but the potential for those gains are only possible to attain in a safe environment; it is not clear if the condition of safety has been established and maintained. Medley also argued in his conclusion that with the guidelines and activities he proposed, trauma-affected students can regain trust in others and self-efficacy. He also proposed that with the addition of his lessons on dealing with conflict and on forgiveness, students can become more resilient, along with learning English. The lack of data on the effects of his lessons on students from their perspectives raises questions about whether, or under what circumstances, his lessons that elicit trauma stories or provoke any related feelings are advisable, particularly in a classroom setting.

Klompien (2018) also advocated for the use of trauma materials in a class setting to help students heal. As the author wrote of her personal experience when she had to flee for her life from potential kidnappers in Mali where she was working. Klompien wrote that after safely

returning to the U.S., she felt that because of her traumatic experience in Mali, she could identify with what some of her students had experienced as refugees. She taught elementary school English language learners in Minnesota. It is unclear to the reader if Klompien believed that her elementary school refugee students had fled potential kidnappers, too, or if it was the case. The questions are pertinent because they speak to Klompien's motivation and pedagogical approach. Klompien also decided to study how traumas and adverse experiences among elementary school-aged English Language Learners (ELL's) affect students' English language acquisition and academic functioning in general. The author also decided to create a book of mini-lessons, using best practices, for elementary ELL teachers to use with their students. The book, along with the assumptions and premises it is based upon, is the focus in the following discussion.

Klompien (2018, citing Yoder, 2005) wrote that unhealed trauma is passed down to the next generation, not only in families, but in communities and in countries. There is a great need, the author wrote, for educators to help heal students' trauma, for the sake of future generations. The assumptions here are that individuals adversely affected by trauma need to be healed and that someone needs to help them do so. This is not taking into account different cultures and the different types of healing the individual would be accustomed to and would want, let alone if they needed someone to do that for them. For example, students may come from communities that see healing as being through prayer, healing circles, meditation, massage, coining, cleansing rituals, dance, art, music, writing, etc. (Yoder, 2005). It is presumptuous, also, to believe that teachers should be in the role of facilitating healing. Furthermore, it is questionable if students would be able to choose whether or not to participate in the teacher's healing

intervention. The ethics regarding informed consent deserve consideration if a teacher is going to step out of the boundaries of teaching into trying to facilitate healing.

As a basis for her book of lessons for teachers, Klompien (2018) used the work of Yoder (2005). Yoder wrote that sometimes trauma "creates a need to 'restory' our lives" (p. 25). This involves telling one's story again in a way that gives it a new meaning and gives the one who experienced it a different sense of identity and perspective. Yoder's work was also utilized by Medley (2012) for the same purpose. However, Yoder is not a teacher in a class of students in a school. Rather, Yoder is the director of an organization that trains religious and civic leaders to deal with traumatized communities (Yoder, 2005). Furthermore, Yoder's words were taken out of context. Immediately following the sentence about restorying our lives, Yoder wrote "However, the most urgent need for trauma survivors is often for safety and security--physically, emotionally, and spiritually" (p. 25). In fact, the portion of the book that is dedicated to breaking the cycle of violence encompasses many topics, such as leadership, grieving, naming one's fears, recognizing that the other person has a story too, healing practices, recognizing one's independence, choosing to forgive, etc. There is barely a mention of restorying. What is discussed is the need for a person telling their traumatic story to proceed slowly and carefully so they do not get overwhelmed. Yoder noted that delving deeply into the memory of a story can even be harmful. Interestingly, Klompien (2018) referenced SAMHSA's (2014) principles as underpinning her book's best practices; safety is SAMHSA's first principle. SAMHSA also included in their definition of a trauma-informed approach the importance of not re-traumatizing someone. For all of these reasons, it is questionable if developing a book of mini lessons on healing trauma for elementary school teachers working with refugee students would be advisable.

Klompien (2018) described the book as having 10 mini-lessons targeted for younger elementary school children. The author piloted them with their third-grade students. The lessons were designed to last for 10-15 minutes each, so that teachers would not be sacrificing much time when they could be teaching content. Although the format for the lessons was intended, Klompien wrote, to be in small groups in order to help create a safe space for students. The author added, however, that the lessons could also be used with all the students together in the class, assuming there was a skilled teacher to guide the lesson. What is missing from this article is any discussion about creating and maintaining safety, or empowering students to opt out of the lessons if they wanted to. How Klompien described the purpose of the lessons to the students, and any questions or concerns that students raised were also omitted from the article.

Klompien (2018) provided the following description of the mini-lessons' curriculum. The first lesson is having students work on their own story of their trauma. In the second lesson, students are to talk about an immigration object or picture that is important to them or important in understanding their immigration story or their family's. The third lesson involves asking the student to write a letter to a fictitious refugee character. The fourth lesson is a guided meditation for students to imagine a comforting and safe place. For the fifth lesson, students write about themselves and try to combine that with a positive self-image, shown in a work of art. In the sixth lesson, students create a dream catcher to help them cope with bad dreams. The seventh lesson involves creating a vision board. In the eighth lesson, students focus on remembering lost loved ones. For the ninth lesson, students are to write about an ethical issue, either in their culture or in their family. Finally, in the tenth lesson, students are asked to tell a story from their culture. Klompien did not provide other details about the lessons, or the response from the students who experienced them. The lessons were designed to last 10-15 minutes, and this

seems like a very short amount of time to accomplish any of these lessons, particularly with the need to provide a safe space and to process the content. The bigger concern, however, is that some of the lessons (particularly numbers one, two, three, eight, and nine) could elicit painful memories and feelings without any resources for students to feel contained or to be able to process what they were experiencing. This would risk a student being re-traumatized. The fact that the classroom is not a therapeutic environment and that the teacher is not a trained mental health professional can not be overstated. What Klompien intended to do, while well-intentioned, could retraumatize students, particularly highly traumatized students. There would also be a risk of harm for any students who would be witnessing another student being triggered. Suggesting that other teachers use these lessons with their students would be inadvisable for the sake of the students, but also, for that of the teacher if a problem did arise.

This section has discussed many reasons why using trauma materials in the curriculum, including students' trauma stories, for the purpose of healing can be problematic in the context of a classroom environment. Although the student populations in the last two examples provided are with elementary school students (Klompien, 2018) and high school students (Medley, 2012), the primary concerns remain the same for working with adult ESOL students: culturally, talking about one's trauma in such a setting may not be appropriate for all students; students need to be advised of risks and to provide informed consent; students need to be empowered to not participate if they do not want to and to be given other assignments; the teacher is not a trained mental health professional and the class is not a therapeutic setting; safety needs to established and maintained; resources need to be available if a student is overwhelmed with thoughts and feelings from the material; and, these materials have not been sufficiently researched. Teachers who work with students who have been traumatized may be

responding to what they perceive as a need, but the risk of harm should serve as inhibition to acting on those desires to provide classroom content that accesses students' trauma for the purposes of their healing. If teachers want to help their students heal, they can do so in other ways, such as by providing a safe, supportive learning environment where students feel a strong sense of community and belonging, confidence, empowerment, and hope.

Although this literature review did not uncover any sources regarding adult ESOL teachers using students' stories and other trauma material for the purposes of healing, there was one study that is relevant and somewhat instructive for teachers who want to use students' stories in class. Nicholas et al. (2011) conducted a case study with five ESL teachers and nine students enrolled in adult ESL classes in a Canadian resettlement agency. The purpose of the study was to explore how students' stories are used in the classroom. The study was unique in that it offered the students' perspectives, as well as the instructors. The study also differs from those previously mentioned, in that the students in this study are adults, not youth in a kindergarten to 12th grade school system. Furthermore, the teachers in this study were neither eliciting trauma studies from their students nor championing a goal of facilitating their students' healing through the sharing of trauma material. Instead, the teachers were using storytelling for the purposes of language acquisition, community building, and to increase student engagement and focus. They also saw that storying provided a sense of self-confidence and motivation to continue learning. Through the interviews, the students confirmed that they experienced such benefits from telling stories and listening to those of their classmates.

The study included some of the challenges that the teachers and students experienced, including the sensitive topics that had arisen in class during storytelling. Examples included sensitive topics, such as fear of rape in one student's home country, natural disasters, and

arranged marriages, and ethical, moral, and religious issues, such as organ donation. However, according to at least one teacher, the students were the ones who initiated the discussions of such issues. The researchers emphasized that students should be encouraged to choose the topics discussed in class. One teacher commented that the discussions that included students' personal histories could be very empowering for students. The researchers also stressed the importance of respecting students' limits when they did not want to share. Respecting the learners was a theme noted by all the teachers in the study.

Along these lines, Nicholas et al. (2011) concluded that storytelling in adult ESL classes must be used with sensitivity. Their recommendations for teachers included: respecting learners, including their right to not participate (and using journaling as an alternative); developing a safe and caring class community so students could feel comfortable sharing their stories; valuing each student's experiences and personal stories; being willing to share some of their own personal stories with students; starting with activities that are low-risk; initially focusing on meaning, rather than on form; identifying parts of the stories that relate to the objectives and outcomes in the curriculum and focusing on those for English language instruction; using the strategies of planning and repetition to support English language learning and story development; and, being prepared to handle difficult issues and controversial topics when they arise. All of these recommendations are clear, other than the last one, handling difficulties. A teacher interested in using storytelling in adult ESL/ESOL classes would be wise to gain a deeper understanding of this before proceeding with eliciting students' personal stories.

Summary and Alternatives

As this section has shown, the topic of utilizing trauma material, including students' stories of their traumatic experiences, is an important and complicated issue. The use of stories,

in general, is a vehicle for English language acquisition and can come with many benefits to students, including community building, and an increase in engagement, motivation, and self-efficacy. For some students, sharing their personal experiences of trauma in a class environment can facilitate personal growth and healing. However, as has been discussed, there are many issues and risks that should need to be considered. A teacher's reflections on their own discomfort with the pain that some students have experienced and still may be experiencing is an important starting point. Teachers who may be in need of their own healing and are aware of that can avoid conflating their needs with those of their students. Instead of using trauma materials, this teacher-researcher recommends the use of alternative actions that can be beneficial to students and not risk any harm.

In regard to such alternatives, this literature review provided a window into what other English Language teachers do regarding students' mental health needs or wellness. Although the following is not a complete listing of all those strategies and approaches, it is offered as a brief glimpse into what else might be possible to reach the same goal of helping English Language Learners who have been traumatized. Some of the approaches, not listed in any particular order, include: increasing a student's feeling of belonging (Tweedie, et al., 2017); increasing students' resilience (Gardiner et al., 2019) and wellness skills (Bonifacius, 2018; Wilson, 2017); increasing students' self-regulation skills and attachment to others (Brunzell, et. al, 2016); facilitating positive student relationships (Gutierrez & Gutierrez, 2019); helping with cultural adjustment and coping (Adkins, et al, 1998; 1999); using Culturally Responsive Teaching (Rose, 2019, Warriner, et al., 2020); enhancing students' self-esteem (Bekar, n.d.); using a holistic approach and inclusive teaching (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012); providing community based resources (Bonifacius, 2018); and, teaching with the LEAD model (Miles & Bailey-McKenna,

2017), which encompasses trauma-informed and culturally responsive teaching. Relatedly, paying attention to the role of emotions (Pishghadam et al., 2016) was also found to be important in English language acquisition. The authors (citing Darling-Hammond, 1997) also found that teachers with high emotional intelligence are more capable of interacting with their students and building positive relationships with them. Although ESOL teachers should not be in the role of trying to heal students in their classrooms from their traumas, teachers have other avenues to help students, in addition to their English language learning needs. The starting point, however, is education, critical self-reflection (Ginwright, 2016), and training for teachers in a trauma-informed approach.

Censoring In ESOL

Closely related to the curricular issue of the use of trauma materials in the ESOL classroom is the issue of whether or not to censor materials and conversations in the classroom. The question is important to ask because, if an answer can be found, it may help teachers navigate their way through the challenge of maintaining safety (including not retraumatizing a student) while also being able to deliver the curriculum that is needed in their particular classroom. It is reasonable to assume that all teachers censor materials and class discussions to some degree; how to decide which ones to censor and how to do that is the third and final theme in this chapter. What is uncovered in this part of the literature review can also be instructive for the teacher-researcher in the proposed study. The following section provides a discussion of authors with varying perspectives on the issue of censorship and how that relates to students' feeling safe in the classroom, particularly in an ESOL class. Although there is some overlap among all of the authors' perspectives, each author raised varying concerns and offered different

advice as to how to navigate those concerns in class. Therefore, a chart that summarizes these issues and each author's advice has been included at the end of the section.

Horsman (1997, 2000, 2002, 2004) has written eloquently on the topic of violence and education in the context of women in literacy programs in Canada. Horsman's work has been applied to ESOL classes, as well; her writings were the ones most often cited by other authors in this literature review. Horsman (2004), as was mentioned in the previous section, wrote that, although teachers are often advised not to initiate discussions about violence, "silence is not neutral" (p. 135). That is to say that if teachers remain silent on the subject of violence, they may appear to condone it. Because many ESOL students have suffered from violence, it would seem particularly important that teachers convey that they are opposed to violence in whatever form it takes. How to convey that and yet keep the conversations and curricular materials from potentially triggering a student in class becomes the dilemma. Horsman (2000) observed, as has been previously noted, that some literacy students wanted the classroom to be a safe place away from thinking about trauma, while other students wanted the classroom to be a safe place where they *could share about their trauma* (emphasis added). Horsman (1997) advocated for self-censorship with her statement that students need to decide which of their stories to tell and when to tell them.

Regarding the issue of safety and censorship, Isserlis (2000) wrote that ESOL students need to be able to experience the classroom as a predictable and safe place, in order to build a sense of community and for learners and teachers to feel safe. Some topics in a life activities/skills curriculum, such as regarding family and health, might be uncomfortable for some students, the author wrote, due to their previous or current abuse. However, the author also stated that teachers need to let students bring up topics related to violence, and that course

content should allow students to share as much as they want about themselves. The author offered no guidance on how to accomplish the sense of safety in the context of the discussions that students initiated about violence, however, in this article. Similar to Isserlis (2000), Palanac (2019) wrote of the importance of students feeling safe in the classroom, and the author acknowledged that some topics in the curriculum may trigger students. Examples included family, previous life experiences, the immigration journey, and homes. Palanac suggested that teachers are careful with such topics, but that they don't avoid them all together, as students will need to be talking about these at some point in their daily lives. To navigate the class dynamics regarding such curriculum and discussion, the author advised teachers to build relationships with students, support the development of friendships between students, start with topics that are not as likely to be triggering, go slowly with the topics that are more sensitive, and look for the cues in class regarding which topics students might feel comfortable discussing. With this advice and with these guidelines, Palanac took a middle ground position.

Wilson (2017) contributed a different perspective to the conversation, specifically about censoring curriculum. The author was teaching ESF students who had survived after the 2011 triple disasters of the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster. Writing the article more than five years after the disasters, Wilson found that Japanese citizens were still suffering, psychologically. Wilson wrote about the problem of using some curricular materials with these students, namely, material about weather and natural disasters. The author needed to censor those materials out of a sense of caution for the students who experienced trauma from the three events. As a general rule, Wilson (2017, 2020) stated (citing Stone, 1995) that students should not be exposed unexpectedly and involuntarily to materials that could trigger a student.

Regarding curriculum topics, Wilson advised providing lessons that focused on increasing students' resilience.

Wilson (2017) also argued, however, that a trauma-informed classroom should not be characterized by censorship. Wilson agreed with Isserlis (2000) that students should be permitted to bring up conversations about life experiences and also choose how much they share. Wilson (2020) wrote that, although it is not advisable to use curricular materials that could trigger a student, if students bring up topics that may be traumatic subjects for some students, the teacher needs to be able to navigate the situation. For Wilson, this would be finding the balance between the need for students to feel safe with the needs of the student who initiated the topic. Wilson found that a teacher could achieve this balance with adult learners by openly explaining to the students what the different and perhaps competing needs were in the situation. This approach could be compatible with the trauma-informed model in this study, assuming that the teacher and students had spent time before the problem arose, developing a class agreement, as has been previously discussed, that included how such a dilemma would be handled in class.

Regarding censorship of conversations in an ESOL class, Finn (2010) offered a different position to the conversation, advocating for its use, at least among the population of learners she discussed in the article. As a TESOL doctoral student from New York University, she wrote about the ESL classes specifically for adult refugee trauma survivors (p. 588) at a program in the New York Metropolitan Area. At the time of the writing of the article, the organization was serving students from over 80 countries, although most of them were from West African countries. The maximum length of time that the ESL students had been in the country was five years. Finn wrote that ESL classes were often one of the final steps in recovery from trauma, as

the individual had finally accepted that they could not return to their home country and that acquiring English was necessary for their new life in the U.S. The program of ESL classes was designed to provide English language training and also moral support from the class community. The ESL program was volunteer-run. Officially, the program had an emphasis on conversation skills, but many of the teachers and administrators viewed the program as offering classes that are also social groups that provide all aspects of language acquisition.

Finn (2010) discussed the issue of censorship as it related to the importance of a low-stress learning environment, referencing Krashen (1982) and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. Finn stated that the teachers were "consistently burdened with the task of lowering students' already heightened anxiety" (p. 590). The program was striving to use culturally relevant, meaningful learning materials for students, and the teachers had found that some students wanted to discuss topics in class that were highly emotional. However, Finn wrote, teachers might not be able to handle such discussions. Therefore, the teachers in the program found that the best course of action was to keep students focused on present life circumstances instead of students discussing pain from their past. The hope, Finn wrote, was that the focus on the present life circumstances would increase students' confidence to succeed in their new life here in the U.S. The other benefit to keeping the conversation on students' present circumstances would be so that students did not experience emotions in class that would hinder their language acquisition.

Carello and Butler (2015), unlike the previously mentioned authors, wrote to a different but related audience of readers, social work students and professors. The article explored what a trauma-informed educational approach entails, and how to provide that in a class that includes trauma material, which might be triggering for some social work students. Being indirectly

exposed to traumatic material is correlated with high rates of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder among social workers (Bride, 2007). Carello and Butler (2015) stated that the students are at risk of experiencing vicarious trauma and also of being retraumatized. The authors wrote that, because of this, their teaching needs to reflect what they termed as "trauma-informed care" (p. 264) in education. This encompasses five principles, safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. These are similar to those of SAMHSA (2014), which have been previously discussed and which provide the theoretical underpinnings of the teaching in the proposed study, as well as how the study, itself, will be conducted. Although Carello and Butler were writing about social work students, as opposed to students in an adult ESOL class, the need for teachers to provide a trauma-informed pedagogy is the same across both populations of learners. In both types of classes, there is a heightened risk that students will have been affected by traumatic experiences and will need a learning environment that is sensitive to this fact. The authors provided guidelines, based on their experience, for how to implement the trauma-informed approach they described. These recommendations included censoring classroom materials. Furthermore, for material that might be disturbing to students but needed to be included in the social work curriculum, the authors warned students ahead of time regarding the content, severity, and duration of the materials. The authors found that this was an effective strategy for students. This strategy could be applied to an ESOL classroom in which some topics, such as family, accessing emergency care, or the Police, might be triggering for some students and yet, necessary to include in the curriculum.

Additionally, the authors provided regular check-ins, verbally, during class to see if the lesson plan needed to be adjusted. Optional brief, written check-ins were also offered to students at the beginning and end of class, and the professors followed up with students who

indicated that they had concerns. The authors used the feedback that students provided to inform any revisions needed in class lessons. Regarding class discussions, students were allowed to decline participation. The authors recommended this as a practice, as it empowers students to take care of themselves. Along the same lines, students were permitted to tune out or leave the room for a short period of time to take care of themselves, if needed. In this sense, the authors were providing students with the option to censor their own participation in class discussions, as the students saw fit, without any negative consequences from the professors. The Carello and Butler (2015) guidelines are consistent with the trauma-informed approach in the proposed study.

Waterhouse (2016) contributed the sole source uncovered in this literature review which was written solely on the topic of the impact of students' telling their violent stories in their ESOL class. The context of the article was the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) class in Canada. For the article, the author (citing Waterhouse, 2011) drew from data they gathered in the 2011 study. The study had taken place in a LINC class, provided by an organization based in Ontario. The study was qualitative, and it was conducted during a four-month period with two teachers and four of their adult ESL students. The research methods used were class observations, which were video recorded, individual interviews which corresponded to the recorded observations, and classroom artifacts. Also, the participants had the option of keeping audio journals. The study included six observation sessions in each of the two ESL classes. Waterhouse also collected classroom artifacts, such as worksheets and newspaper articles, that the researcher deemed relevant to the study. The artifacts and observations were used to inform the discussions during the individual interviews. The interviews were open-ended and lasted approximately one hour each. In each interview, Waterhouse and the

interviewee viewed and discussed segments of the most recent observational video. The researcher also used discussion topics which were prepared by Waterhouse. One topic asked about each participant's perception of the LINC requirement to provide newcomers with orientation to Canada's way of life, and how that requirement might relate to peace and violence. Also included were any experiences that the participant may have had that caused some sort of change within them, and classroom experiences regarding peace and violence.

Waterhouse (2016), in discussing the findings of the 2011 study, concluded that learning in the LINC classroom involved much more than learning English. Instead, it included new insights into oneself, "one's social worlds, and one's place in those worlds" (p. 21). Waterhouse (2016), reflecting on the 2011 study, asked the question of what a safe classroom entails and if it necessarily excludes the telling and hearing of violent stories. The author clarified that they were not advocating for the teacher to tell violent stories in the LINC classroom. Rather, the questions raised were pertaining to student-initiated storytelling regarding their own experiences. Waterhouse explained three reasons why trying to provide a classroom environment that feels safe to students, in the sense of being insulated from stories of violence, is complicated and problematic. First, the author pointed out that, despite ESL teachers' best efforts to provide such a learning environment, Canadian newcomers often encounter violence. Citing Bettencourt (2001), Waterhouse stated that such violence includes racism, poverty, harassment by the police, and discrimination. These experiences will inevitably make their way into the classroom (Baynham, 2006). As a second point, Waterhouse questioned if it should be the ESL teacher's decision to censor students' violent storytelling, or if the issue should be decided by the students and teacher, as the class evolves. Lastly, Waterhouse raised the point, as has been discussed previously, that what is considered safe for one student may be the opposite

for another; one student may want a safe place to share their experiences of violence, and another student may want to feel safe from hearing about such trauma.

Waterhouse (2016) also posed the question of what the potential benefits could be gained in the LINC classroom of the recounting of such violent stories. Waterhouse advocated for the critical reflection of what happens when violent stories are inevitably shared by students in the class. Waterhouse found that, although students may feel some discomfort from hearing violent stories in class, students may benefit from it. According to Waterhouse, hearing such stories gives students an opportunity to process their own life experiences and how they view what their classmates described. In this sense, students have the potential for "transformations" (p. 37), which can benefit their lives. This study posed important questions and provided insight into the perspectives of some of the participants. However, segments of the data from solely three students' interviews were reported. What the study did not include was data gathered from the entire class regarding any negative impact that the students experienced as a result of trauma stories being shared. The teachers' views on this question were also not included in the findings. More data needed to be gathered and reported in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the potential impact of students' sharing and hearing personal trauma stories in class.

This section of the chapter covered several different issues raised by ESOL/ESL teachers regarding censoring classroom materials and conversations. Advice from the authors has been included in this discussion. Table 1, below, provides a summary of the material in this portion of the literature review.

Table 1

Summary of Sources, Issues, and Advice Regarding Censorship in Class

Source Cited	Issues Raised	Advice
Horsman, 2014	Silence is not neutral; teachers should not appear to condone it. Students have conflicting needs (to share their stories vs. to not)	Students need to learn to learn which stories to share and when to share them
Isserlis, 2000	Students need a predictable, safe place in which to learn	If students initiate topics regarding violence, let them share.
Palanac, 2019	Some curriculum topics (i.e., life, immigration story, family) may trigger some students	Don't avoid such topics, as students need to learn to deal with discussing them. Build relationships, go slowly, & be sensitive to students
Wilson, 2017	Some topics (i.e., extreme weather in a class of natural disaster survivors) are likely to be triggering	Censor topics that are obviously likely to trigger students. Don't expose students suddenly & involuntarily to such topics. Teacher needs to navigate these. Use a class agreement. Openly discuss competing needs.
Finn, 2010	A low-stress learning environment is needed for students and for teachers to manage class.	Focus class on current life circumstances, not on past experiences
Carello & Butler, 2015	Some material will be triggering	Remove unnecessary triggering materials. Needed materials should have a trigger warning. Allow students to decline participation, to leave room, and to check out. Check in with students during class. Provide optional check-ins before and after class. Follow up as needed. Modify materials based on feedback.
Waterhouse, 2016	Students experience violence as newcomers and they will bring their experiences to class. Students have conflicting needs re: safety. The teacher, alone, should not decide whether or not students can share their stories of violence.	Teachers should not tell violent stories or ask students to tell their violent stories. Teachers need to navigate the complicated issues with their students and to see the potential benefits to students of the recounting of such stories.

Summary

The issue of safety, central to any trauma-informed teaching approach, has been explored in this chapter regarding three pertinent topics. First, what teachers do to provide a safe ESOL classroom setting was discussed, followed by the question of curriculum and whether or not teachers should elicit students' stories for the purpose of healing. Lastly, the issue of censorship, regarding whether or not teachers should censor class materials and students' sharing of their traumatic experiences, was explored. These three topics were chosen because, taken together, they address the most essential considerations regarding safety in a trauma-informed teaching approach. As this literature review has demonstrated, teachers vary widely in their perspectives regarding what is needed in order for students to have a classroom environment where they feel safe, and how to provide it. The use of traumatic material, whether in the curriculum or in students' storytelling, has also been shown to be a difficult issue for the ESOL/ESL field. Perhaps not surprisingly, teachers have answered these questions for themselves with a wide range of views and actions.

Despite the complexity of these issues and the varying responses teachers have, when it comes to the core principle of safety, an abundance of caution is warranted. Teachers must, before anything else, do no harm. A trauma-informed approach includes not traumatizing, or re-traumatizing, students (SAMHSA, 2014). Beginning from this starting point, while perhaps simplistic, may provide teachers with a basic rule of thumb, or standard, with which to measure class materials and discussions. This standard is what will be used in the proposed study. Teachers who believe that they have students who are not at risk of being traumatized and who want to engage with trauma material in class may be well advised to develop and implement a

screening assessment tool before offering such a class. Potential students for such a class should have the option of a class that does not include trauma material. For those who do partake in it, warnings about potential reactions should be provided as part of informed consent. Check-ins and student feedback would need to be incorporated into the class. The teacher would also be well advised to have a list of accessible, culturally responsive, community-based resources to offer students in the course, in case they did have need for support.

The literature review has also brought to light the need for teachers to self-reflect regarding their view of a safe classroom and if they intend the class to include trauma material, whether it is as a pedagogical language tool, or if it is for the purpose of healing or transformation. Again, extreme caution is warranted. Teachers can access consultation and become more educated on the risks, skills, and responsibilities involved. Students' cultural issues need to be understood in this context, such as how violence and trauma are viewed, and whether or not expressing personal issues and strong emotions is deemed appropriate. Teachers need to be aware of their own limits, and to be clear about their purpose and goals in teaching ESOL. As an alternative goal to facilitating healing, a pedagogy of promoting and supporting students' wellness and building community can be offered without the risk that students may be traumatized or retraumatized by the class. Lastly, more research is needed. As this literature review has shown, there is a lack of research studies on the use of a trauma-informed approach in ESOL, particularly from the viewpoint of the students. More studies are needed, especially with qualitative data for a deeper understanding of students' viewpoints. This is exactly what the proposed study endeavors to accomplish. With such research studies, trauma-informed teaching can be further refined, appropriate curricular materials can be developed, teachers can be better informed and equipped, and students who have been impacted by trauma can participate in

ESOL classes that meet their needs.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

"If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together" (Watson).

In this chapter, information regarding how the study was conducted is provided. The restatement of the purpose of the study and the research questions are outlined first, followed by the research design. After these sections, the research setting, the participants, and the sources of data collection are described. The procedures for conducting the study are then provided. Lastly, additional information, including the background of the researcher and the protection of human subjects conclude the chapter.

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate to what extent the use of a six-week trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias in an ESOL classroom in a community-based organization in the San Francisco Bay Area enhanced the students' ability to speak about implicit bias. In the study, the students had the option of speaking English, their Dari, or a mixture of the two languages. Specifically, the study examined three areas, the students' level of anxiety when speaking about implicit bias, the students' willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias, and the students' experiences of the trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias. The limited amount of the literature on trauma-informed teaching with adult ESOL students points to a lack of research studies, and to a lack of curriculum, particularly regarding curriculum on difficult topics such as implicit bias. Also notably, ESOL students' experiences and perspectives are absent from the literature. The current study, therefore, sought to add to the body of knowledge on these important pedagogical issues.

The theoretical framework for the proposed study, as described in Chapter 1, wove together SAMHSA's (2014) trauma-informed approach with Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis and the Input Hypothesis, and Tessaro's et al. (2018) Five "R's." Chapter 1 included information on how each of these three strands were operationalized in the pedagogy of the proposed study. Appendices H through J present how the strands were operationalized throughout the study, both in the teaching and in the research process. By providing this, the study can be useful to researchers who wish to implement a trauma-informed teaching approach in adult ESOL and/or a trauma-informed research study.

Research Questions

The questions of this study are:

- 1a. To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their anxiety about speaking about implicit bias in the classroom?
- 1b. To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their anxiety about speaking about implicit bias outside of the classroom?
- 2a. To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias in the classroom?
- 2b. To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias outside of the classroom?

- 3. How do students describe their experiences of the trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias?

Research Design

This study was designed as qualitative. Characteristics of a research problem that lend itself to a qualitative study include having a concept that has not been well studied or that lacks a theory and previous research, and needing to explore the phenomena, to describe it, and to develop theory (Morse, 1991). As Denzin and Lincoln (2011) wrote, qualitative research attempts "to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the *meanings people bring to them*" (p. 7) (emphasis added). Trauma-informed pedagogy in adult ESOL has not been well studied, and it lacks a theory and adequate previous research. The experience of the pedagogy needs exploration, particularly from the students' perspectives. For these reasons, the current study is well suited for qualitative research. Informing the study was teacher action research. In this methodology, the teacher is the researcher of their own praxis, uses a flexible methodology, not solely in regards to the methods, but more fundamentally, in terms of adapting to the different aspects of the teacher's daily practice (Capobianco & Feldman, 2006). It is an orientation towards research in which the teacher is the researcher and the goals of the research are to improve their teaching and students' learning in their current class context (Feldman & Minstrell, 2000). This flexible methodology fit well with the current study in which the researcher was the teacher, and the goals of the research encompassed both the improvement of teaching and learning and also an enhanced understanding of the teacher-researcher's particular ESOL class and the implicit bias curriculum.

Phenomenology

Compatible with this approach and well suited for this study is the qualitative methodology of phenomenology. As Creswell and Poth (2018) wrote, "a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their *lived experiences* of a concept or a phenomenon (emphasis added, p. 75). The purpose is to reduce the experiences of participants to a composite description of the essence or experience (van Manen, 1990). In 2014, the author described research as requiring that the researcher maintain a state of wonder about the phenomenon. This fits well with the guiding principles described above of having respect, cultural humility, and an openness to learning with the participants.

The origins of phenomenological research include a strong philosophical aspect. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the philosophical assumptions encompass the study of participants' lived experiences. These experiences are conscious (van Manen, 2014). Creswell and Poth (2018) also wrote that philosophical assumptions encompass the development of descriptions, as opposed to analyses or explanations. Creswell and Poth (2018) further explained that phenomenological research emphasizes the phenomenon to be explored, and that it is phrased in terms of a single idea or concept; within a group of participants (from 3 to 15), the phenomenon is then explored. The authors noted that, of importance, individuals have both subjective experiences of the phenomenon, as well as objective experiences (having something in common with others who also experience the phenomenon). Therefore, according to the authors, phenomenological research occupies a space on the continuum somewhere between quantitative and qualitative research, although today it is considered a qualitative methodology.

Although this methodology affords a deeper understanding of a phenomenon as it has been experienced by a group of individuals, there are challenges to its use. One is that it

requires understanding the broader philosophical assumptions and articulating them in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This will be provided by the teacher-researcher of this study, who is practiced in doing this when teaching, as well as previously as a social worker and as a therapist, and in other USF coursework. A second concern with phenomenology pertains to finding participants who have experienced the phenomenon in question so that the researcher can develop a common understanding (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This was not a concern in this study, however, as there was an ample number of students in the ESOL class where the study was conducted. Furthermore, the issue of the researcher bracketing personal experiences needed to be considered (van Manen, 1990). Which experiences, when, how, and for what purpose needed to be thought through before the study begins and during the study.

Interestingly, the methodology has a potentially transformative impact on the researcher. "...phenomenological research is often itself a form of deep learning, leading to a transformation of consciousness, heightened perceptiveness, increased thoughtfulness and tact and so on" (van Manen, 1990, p. 163). Although the study was short in length, such a transformative impact on the teacher-researcher occurred to some degree. This will be discussed in Chapter 5. However, it was the intention of the teacher-researcher that the participants, primarily, would experience a positive effect from the study. This effect is also explained and discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Individual Interviews

The qualitative data for this study was collected primarily through interviews. They included an artifact that each participant created in the final class. The artifact was either written work or artwork representing the participant's experience of the trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias. During the class and for the final assignment, the participants were invited to use Dari, English, or a mixture of both languages. One-on-one

interviews are advantageous with participants who are articulate, do not hesitate to speak, and can comfortably share their thoughts (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Phenomenological research studies typically include the use of interviews with individual participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The comfort of the participants in the study was particularly important for any students with information to share about the class that they might perceive as negative feedback for the teacher-researcher. To address this potential issue, participants were invited to share what might be considered negative feedback, as it had the potential of being highly useful in further refining the pedagogical approach, which was one of the aims of the study.

The question of whether the researcher-teacher should share personal experiences in this study required careful consideration. Creswell and Poth (2018) argue that it is essential to minimize the sharing in a phenomenological study in order to construct the participants' meaning of the phenomenon. However, considering that the researcher-teacher had been a participant in creating the classroom experience, it would have been unrealistic and inauthentic for her to try to fully place her experiences outside of the interview. Instead, she strove to be thoughtful and measured in how much, what, and when she shared. Her guiding principles were to reflect back to the participants what they expressed, and to only add what could be useful for the participants. Examples included occurrences when a student seemed to gain a new understanding of another person's perspective or exhibited a trait such as courage, perseverance, or compassion. Sharing such experiences with participants during the interview had the potential to enhance a student's self-esteem and also serve as a form of reciprocity.

Weis and Fine (2000) posed questions that applied to the interviews in this study. Examples included whether or not participants could articulate what oppressed them, if they experienced erasure of their history and cultural identity, and if participants were able to risk

their vulnerability by going on record to disclose information about difficult aspects of their lives. Although in the planning stages for this study, it would not have been possible to fully anticipate the answers to these questions in this study, the fact that the ESOL class included conversations that involve topics of racism and other forms of oppression, individual and cultural identity, acculturation, vulnerability, risk-taking, and wellness, etc., it was likely that participants would share sensitive information that arose in the conversation; they did. The potential for participants to experience relationship building, personal growth, and community building through the class discussions further supported the usefulness of this study.

The interviews explored how students described their experiences of the trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias. In particular, the interviews focused on three areas, the students' level of anxiety when speaking about implicit bias, their willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias, and their confidence in their ability to speak about implicit bias. The questions were posed as a series of open-ended questions, asked in a flexible order, depending on the participants' responses. Some of the questions asked specifically about the participant's perception of their anxiety when speaking about implicit bias in and outside the class, and of their willingness to take risks to do so in and outside the class, either in English, Dari, or a mixture of the two. Other questions explored the participant's level of confidence about speaking about implicit bias and the particular activities and aspects of the class. The questions were translated into Dari and shared with participants before their individual interview, in order for participants to feel more at ease. Students had the option of using Dari, English, or a mixture of the languages in the interview. To protect confidentiality, participants were given a pseudonym on Zoom before the video recording started. The recordings were

made with the participants' consent. The Individual Interview Questions are found in Appendix E.

Artifacts

Creswell and Poth (2018) defined artifacts as "data generated from audio and visual methods" (p. 52). The authors listed artifacts as one of the four basic sources of qualitative information, along with interviews, observations, and documents. The use of artifacts can facilitate deeper exploration of participants' lived experiences (Taylor et al., 2020). The artifacts in this study were generated by the students in the final class. The form was either a written paragraph or artwork, depending on each student's preference, on the topic of what the student wanted to express regarding their experience with the unit that was taught on implicit bias. The artifacts were shared in class and in the interviews for analysis and inclusion in the data for this study.

Research Setting

The study took place in the context of a community-based organization in the San Francisco Bay Area, called Immigrant and Refugee Integration Services (IRIS), for the purposes of this study. IRIS' mission is to work with newcomers so that they can thrive in their new lives here. IRIS serves immigrants, refugees, asylees, asylum-seekers, Special Immigrant Visa recipients, and other newcomers. They represent approximately 50 countries, including Afghanistan, China, Mexico, Eritrea, Guatemala, and Yemen, to name a few. The organization recognizes that although many newcomers have been through very traumatic experiences, they are courageous, resilient, and highly motivated to build their new lives here. Furthermore, newcomers bring vast amounts of diverse skills, strengths, experience, and knowledge, including multilingualism and multiculturalism.

IRIS also recognizes that newcomers in the U.S. often face challenges that include racism, discrimination, and poverty. Further challenges include learning English and literacy skills, adjusting to the new culture, and managing social isolation. The organization uses a supportive, strength-based approach, trauma-informed approach that promotes safety, fosters a sense of acceptance and belonging, and honors the newcomers' cultures. The programs include adult education, school-based education, in-home tutoring, summer camps, and early childhood education. Within adult education, classes are offered for English language, citizenship preparation and job development skills. IRIS was chosen for the study because it embodies the values of a trauma-informed approach in ESOL. In particular, these aspects include viewing newcomers as full of assets and skills, including their languages, cultures, and experiences, and having empathy, courage, resilience, and determination. Furthermore, a trauma-informed ESOL approach honors students' cultures, builds community, and supports individuals towards overcoming social isolation and adjusting to the new culture, while also addressing issues of poverty, racism and other forms of oppression. Having the values and goals of the ESOL class in alliance with those of the organization created an optimal situation for the students, the teacher-researcher, and the organization.

In Table 2, information is provided about the class, the teachers, and the students in which the proposed study was conducted. The data was provided by IRIS and it was partly based on last year's students. The students in the current study were a mixture of continuing and new students. As indicated above in Table 2, the current study was conducted in one of IRIS' high- beginner and low-intermediate level ESOL classes, which was offered solely on Zoom. This teaching modality provided affordances for this study that an in-person class could not provide. For example, in Zoom classes, when students have their cameras on, everyone sees

Table 2

Classes, Teacher, and Students in the Study

Class Level	High-Beginning and Low- Intermediate
Modality	Zoom
Days class meets	Tuesday/Thursday afternoons
Number of students registered	19
Teacher's educational background and credentials	Associate degree in Business Administration, Kardan University, Afghanistan
Teacher's ethnicity & age	Afghan American, mid-30's
Language, other than English, spoken in class by the teacher	Dari
Gender(s) of students	Women
Number of students who typically attend	13-19
Countries represented by students	Afghanistan
Languages spoken by students in class, other than English	Farsi, Pashto
Students' years of previous education	50% finished high school; 25-30% also attended college; and 15-20% had 0-8 years of school

each other's face easily, instead of a class where the arrangement of seats and the physical distance between people can be a hindrance. As is explained in Chapters 4 and 5, this potential advantage to Zoom was not seen in this study. However, other advantages to using Zoom were realized. For example, typically in Zoom classes, many students are less stressed due to not needing to commute, park, or even get dressed in street clothes. Furthermore, students on Zoom can easily take breaks when they need to or turn off their camera in order to feel less vulnerable. The teacher-researcher had previous experience teaching ESOL students on Zoom, and she had

developed and used a curriculum on implicit bias as well as on other topics within a trauma-informed pedagogy for these classes. She had demonstrated that on Zoom she could successfully form trusting relationships with students, build a sense of community in class, and draw out students' community cultural wealth. Furthermore, on Zoom, she had been successful in creating a norm in the class regarding discussing what mattered to students in their lives, and topics that were hard to talk about. In the model she used, students learned, grew, and gave each other support, as well as celebrated their successes and happy occasions.

The level of the ESOL class for the proposed study had also been carefully considered by the teacher-researcher. ESOL students at the high-beginning or low-intermediate level, compared with advanced-level students, are also more likely to notice that the pedagogical approach is different from a more traditional one. Students at the lower level are also more likely to experience its impact on their anxiety about speaking about topics such as implicit bias and taking risks to do so, based on the teacher-researcher's experience. Therefore, students at the high-beginner/low-intermediate level could provide the most useful data for this type of study. IRIS agreed to have the teacher-researcher conduct the study at their organization for two main reasons. The first was because of her expertise in trauma-informed ESOL teaching; the organization promotes a trauma-informed approach throughout their programs. Secondly, IRIS had identified a need for students to learn about and address implicit bias, and the organization was looking for someone to teach this.

Because the concepts related to implicit bias are abstract and difficult for students new to English, the organization chose one class for the study. The funding source for the class was also a factor, in terms of curriculum and IRIS' need to measure English language acquisition gains with a standardized assessment tool. The funding for the class in the current study did not

carry such requirements. As stated previously, the students in the class were all women from Afghanistan, who were Dari and Pashto speakers. The class teacher was an embedded language tutor in the class, who provided linguistic support in Dari. As noted previously, the students had the option of speaking Dari, English, or a mixture in class and during the individual interview. The site was typical of the phenomenon that was being captured in the teaching and in the interviews in the study. In addition to participants discussing their answers to the interview questions, they shared their work from the final class in order to further communicate their experiences. Taken together, the alignment of the values and goals of IRIS and the trauma-informed approach and the curriculum in the proposed study, the English level of students, and the embedded language support allowed for the data to be gathered in the most advantageous conditions for this type of study.

Participants of the Study

All the students in the study were adult newcomers who have settled into the San Francisco Bay Area. The teacher-translator immigrated to the U.S. from Afghanistan a few years ago. The students' commonalities also included attending this particular high-beginner/low-intermediate-level ESOL classes at this community-based organization. As shown above in Table 2, the students were solely women from Afghanistan, and they spoke Dari and Pashto, in addition to English. The level of previous education varied widely. Having these aspects of diversity among the participants, yet commonalities in terms of languages and culture, added variation to the types of experiences the participants brought to the study, and also a sense of belonging and community in the classroom. The participants who were interviewed in the study shared an interest in reflecting on their experiences in the classroom, and on their opinions about the trauma-informed approach and curriculum used. Presumably,

because most students strove to please the teacher-researcher and the teacher-translator, the students who were interviewed were likely to be the students who had a positive experience in the class and wanted to discuss it with the teacher-researcher. Having research participants who had a positive experience with the pedagogical approach and curriculum provide a rich source of data on which aspects of the approach worked well and what the impact was on students' learning and attitudes.

However, the study and its findings would have been enhanced also with students who had not responded favorably to the pedagogical approach and curriculum were also included and were willing to reflect on their experience to offer insight into which aspects of the approach did not work well for them. For the interviews, the teacher-researcher strove to select a diverse group of participants among those who expressed interest in being interviewed, and whose schedules are compatible with the teacher-researcher's schedule. However, due to some barriers in getting the consent forms signed and returned, the students who were interviewed were solely the ones who had returned their forms, indicated that they wanted to participate in an interview, and followed through with scheduling with the teacher-researcher.

Sources of Data Collection

In this study, qualitative data was collected. The data was obtained through individual interviews with six participants. The interviews were all on Zoom, and they were conducted after the final class was taught. The other data that were collected were the teacher-researcher journal and the artifacts, the written paragraphs and artwork which were done in the final class.

Procedures

The data collection period occurred in three Steps. Explaining the study, providing the consent forms, and creating a class agreement happened as Step 1, during the study's first week.

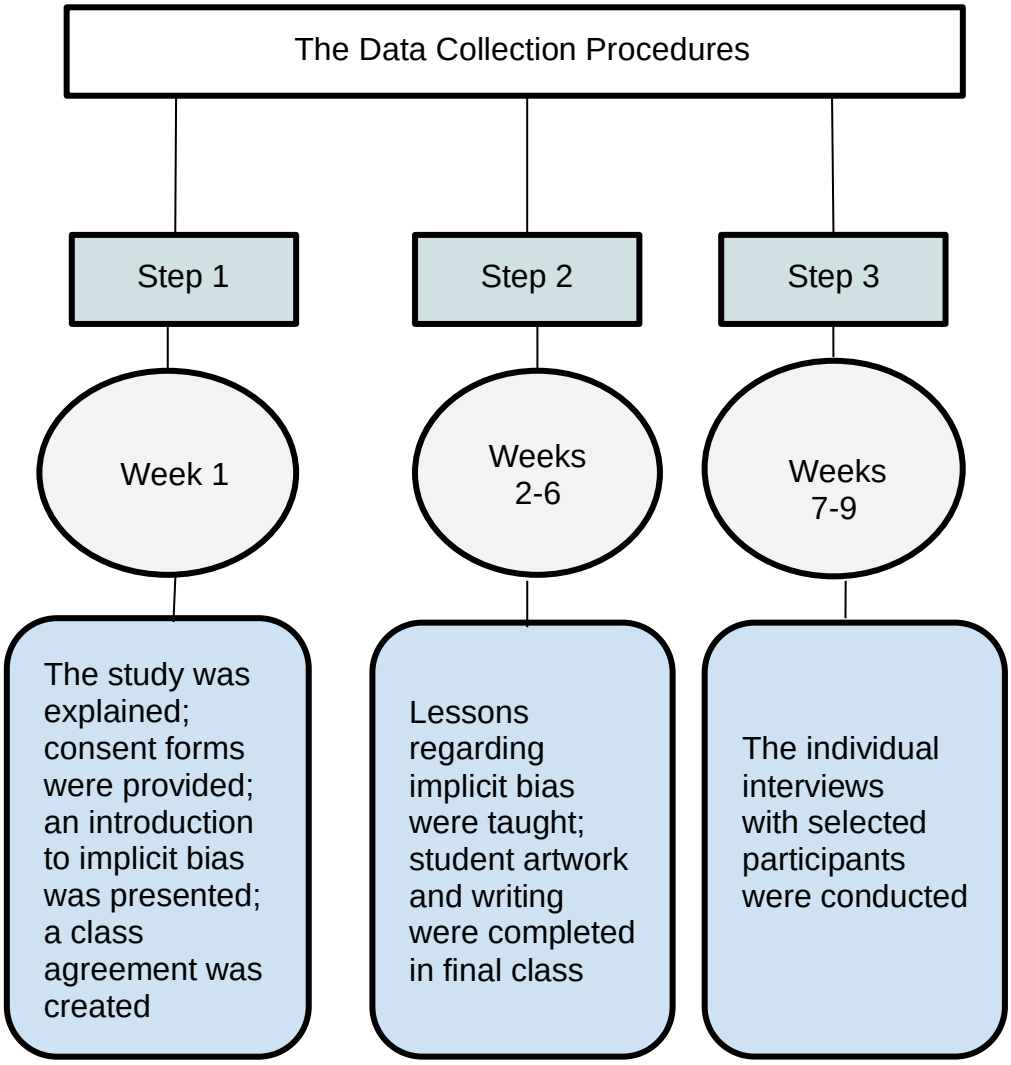
Implementing the remaining five weeks of teaching about implicit bias in a trauma-informed pedagogy was Step 2, during weeks two through six. The prompt for the written work and the artwork was given in English and in Dari, and the work was done during the final class. Participants were invited to share this classwork during the class and to send it to the teacher-researcher so she could analyze these artifacts. Step 3, during week eight, consisted of individual interviews with the participants via Zoom. Below, Figure 3 illustrates the timeline and each of the Steps of the data collection, followed by more detailed information about each Step.

Step 1: Explaining Study, Consent Form, Class Agreement

In preparation for the meeting with the students to explain the study, the teacher-researcher met with the IRIS educational coordinator to gather more information about the particular students in that class, in order to make any needed changes to the lessons and to ensure that the lessons were at the right level and with the scaffolding that the students may have required. Throughout the study, the IRIS teacher-translator translated for the teacher-researcher into Dari, as needed. During Step 1, the teacher-researcher explained the study and its significance, and she engaged the students in a conversation to answer any questions or concerns they had. The Informed Consent Form, found in Appendix B, will be explained, along with confidentiality. The Informed Consent Form was translated in the students' first languages (Dari and Pashto) ahead of time and mailed by IRIS to the students. It was made clear to the students that none of them were obligated in any way to participate in the study, and that, regardless of participation, students would receive the same teaching instruction. In an effort towards reciprocity to IRIS, the teachers, and the students, the teacher-researcher provided the students who participated in an interview a $25 gift card to a store of their choice.

Figure 3

The Data Collection Procedures



Step 2: Teaching of Lessons on Implicit Bias

The lessons began in the first class and continued through the sixth class. One lesson per week was taught for 50-55 minutes each time. As discussed above, the unit on was regarding implicit bias, as requested by IRIS. The subject has been chosen by the organization because they identified a need for this among some of their ESOL students. The materials that were used had been developed and successfully used by the teacher-researcher in a similar ESOL setting and were adapted for this study. Three sample lessons can be found in Appendix F. As a point of clarification, the focus of the materials was understanding that everyone has implicit bias and how we can change ourselves if we are motivated to. The lessons are *not* to elicit any trauma stories from students. Eliciting trauma stories from students would not be in keeping with the trauma-informed approach that the teacher-researcher has developed and has been using in teaching, and that is consistent with the trauma-informed design in this study. The lessons have been refined to fit within the lesson's time frame and in collaboration with the IRIS educational coordinator and the teachers. Table 4 illustrates each week's lesson topics and classroom activities.

The four language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening were used with an emphasis on speaking and listening. Materials and instruction methods included vocabulary building, class lecture, class discussion, and journaling/self-reflection. Although pair and group work had been planned for Breakout Rooms, the students said that they preferred to work as the whole class instead, so the teacher-researcher agreed. The use of critical media pedagogy was also planned, but it was not used. The reason was because the teacher-researcher decided to focus on the main concepts: understanding that we all have implicit biases and where our biases come from; seeing the potential impact of biases as related to discrimination; exploring how we

Table 3

Teaching Intervention by Week, Topic, and Classroom Activities

Week No.	Topics	Classroom Activities
1	Explanation of Approach, Overview of Unit, Class Agreement	Lecture, Class Agreement
2	Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Motivation, and Discrimination	Teach Me Your Name Activity, lecture, class discussion, and assign homework
3	Where biases come from; Discrimination in the U.S. and in Afghanistan; Change	Review, lecture, class discussion, and assign homework
4	Review of concepts, vocabulary, and pronunciation; Discrimination; How we change	Review, lecture, class discussion, and assign homework
5	Applying the curriculum to ourselves; how we change	Review, class discussion, and assign homework
6	Wrap Up, Next Steps, and Take-Away's	Written paragraph or artwork; class discussion

can change if we want to; and, uncovering the potential benefits of making that change. Three sample lesson plans are provided in Appendix G.

Having the embedded language tutors in each class to translate when needed facilitated the students' comprehension of these abstract concepts and allowed students to be able to more easily express themselves. The prompt for the assignment in the final class was also translated to ensure that the students understood. The students were given the option of doing artwork or of writing. They were invited to use English, Dari, or a mixture of the languages for this assignment and throughout the class. The lessons on implicit bias, as described, encompassed the content, the "what," of the teaching. The other aspect of any trauma-informed teaching approach is contained in the process, the "how," of the teaching. An explanation of how the

trauma-informed approach was operationalized in this study is detailed in Appendices H through J.

Step 3: Individual Interviews

The six participants for the individual interviews were selected through a purposeful sampling process. The criteria has been described above. The interviews occurred on Zoom, and they were scheduled during the three weeks after the last classes had been taught. The individual interviews will each be limited to 60 minutes each. They followed a semi-structured format, which allowed the researcher-teacher to follow up on participants' comments and to ask for more information. As a part of closure, the teacher-researcher will discuss the findings with IRIS and how the findings can be used. The teacher-researcher will also debrief with them regarding how the study went to see if there are any insights that can be gained from the process.

Summary

As has been demonstrated, this study was based in phenomenological methodology, and it utilized a qualitative approach. With individual interviews, the teacher-researcher journal, and artifact analysis, the study provided new insights into how the use of a trauma-informed approach with adult ESOL students enhanced their ability to speak about a difficult topic, implicit bias. The study was significant in that it centered the experiences of ESOL students and it included the use of a curriculum that addressed implicit bias. Such studies are rarely found in the literature. The study was helpful in understanding if there is a connection between the trauma-informed approach being used and the students' level of anxiety and risk-taking regarding speaking about implicit bias and in and outside the classroom, as well as the students' level of confidence to speak about such a difficult topic. The students' experiences of a trauma-

informed approach to teaching about implicit bias was also explored. This study can also be informative for teachers and/or researchers who want to implement a trauma-informed research study. With further research and with more development of classroom curriculum, the approach can be more widely used in adult ESOL classes.

It was hypothesized that if students are willing to speak about implicit bias, they may be willing to stand up for themselves or someone else and to influence their friends, family, or community to do so. Although the sample size was small and the results are not generalizable, the study can be informative for teachers interested in using a trauma-informed teaching approach, including curriculum about a difficult topic that is important for individuals and for our larger society. Students in ESOL classes are not there solely for language acquisition and to learn about basic life activities, although necessary and valuable. Students also need support to navigate the difficult situations they encounter in their new home country, and to help their family, friends, and communities to do the same. On a larger societal scale, our work in ESOL is to prepare people, not just for their lives in the workplace and as parents, but as future citizens in this country. We all need to have more confidence and willingness to talk about difficult topics, including implicit bias, if we are to help build this nation as a better place.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis of the individual interviews was conducted through a process outlined in Creswell and Poth (2018). The data from the interviews was prepared via Zoom transcripts and organized for analysis by printing out the transcripts, listening to the Zoom recordings of the interviews to clarify what had been said, and then reading for themes. The journal and the transcripts were compared to clarify further what had been said. This was an important step considering that Zoom did not accurately capture the participants' words, partly

because of their accents. The teacher-researcher journal was also read for themes, and the artifacts were analyzed. The themes were deductively drawn from the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 2 and inductively, based on carefully reading the transcripts and the teacher-researcher journal. The themes are presented in Chapters 4 and 5 in paragraph form. A concluding descriptive passage, according to Creswell and Poth (2013), discusses the "what" and "how" of the phenomenon that participants have experienced. In some phenomenological studies, including this one, the researcher incorporates their own interpretation of the meaning of the participants' lived experiences. The authors wrote that the essence of the phenomenon is typically the crowning piece of the study. This is included in Chapter 5.

Sampling Plan and Logistical Considerations

This study utilized a convenience sample of 19 students in an ESOL class at the research site. Of the 19 students, the goal was to have at least 14 complete the Informed Consent Form and to do the final assignment, and to have 5-6 students participate in the individual interviews. The teacher-researcher limited the number to 6 participants because of the time constraints of the study in terms of conducting and transcribing the interviews, and completing the data analysis and reporting process. The goal regarding the artifacts for analysis was to have a sampling of 10 artifacts.

Background of the Researcher

My career as an ESOL teacher began after working for over twenty years as a counselor, as a social worker, and then as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in private practice. After leaving my career in mental health and beginning to teach ESOL classes in 2017, I obtained a Certificate in TESOL, and then a Master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Throughout my years of teaching, my perspective on students and

teaching has remained the same: Many students have suffered from trauma and need an approach that is sensitive and responsive to their needs, for their language acquisition, as well as for their acculturation and wellness. For my Masters in TESOL field project, I researched just that, trauma-informed teaching with adult ESOL students. I have had the privilege of presenting at numerous professional conferences and teaching workshops on the topic, as well as teaching ESOL classes for Catholic Charities and as an Adjunct Faculty member at West Valley College, and at the University of California--Silicon Valley Extension. I also bring my experience in doing refugee resettlement work in the Bay Area.

I come to the educational field as someone who grew up with both economic and racial privilege as white and middle-upper class. I am also someone whose life experiences have allowed me to identify with some of my students' struggles, to have empathy, and to form a sense of community with them. My experiences have also provided me with the ability to understand how a trauma-informed approach can positively impact students. It is an approach I have been using in the ESOL classroom since 2017. I have acquired the ability to continue to refine the approach as I learn more, both academically and through teaching. My understanding of how my positionality affects my research and teaching requires ongoing self-reflection and scrutiny. Certainly, I am biased towards the approach, as I have seen it work with a range of students in a variety of settings over the years that I have been using it and researching it. In the proposed study, as a researcher who is also the teacher, the overlapping roles present potential ethical dilemmas. For example, when I am interviewing students about their experience of the approach, the students may want to please me with their responses. I will need to provide a space for students to share all of their experiences without concern, if possible, about my reaction.

Although most of my teaching experience has been in a non-credit ESOL community college program where there are no grades issued or concern for students about passing the class, a power differential still exists in the classroom. The pedagogical approach I use includes ways to share power, such as having a Student Advisory Council that helps with decisions. I also regularly seek student feedback and incorporate their ideas and suggestions into our class, and students vote on some parts of our curriculum and activities. This mitigates the power difference to some degree. Whether or not the interviews should happen in the students' first language was another consideration, particularly given that the students were English Language Learners, and that this created a power imbalance. To address this concern, I offered the students the option of using Dari, English, or a mixture of the languages, and the option of having a translator if they wanted that language support. Apart from potential language barriers, I want to be aware of my life experiences and how they can cause me to not fully understand my students' lives. To address this, I plan to access cultural consultants, as I have done in the past, for the research and writing periods. With cultural humility and ongoing critical self-reflection, the issue of my being an outsider can be significantly lessened, although not entirely eliminated.

The question of reciprocity and how information will be disseminated certainly require thoughtful consideration. My intention for the study is that it provides students with an opportunity to reflect on how the approach has been useful to them in their English Language acquisition, as well as in other areas of their life. It is my intention that the interview process and the sharing of my findings with the students will be accomplished in a respectful, sensitive, collaborative, supportive way and that it will benefit the students. My other goals for the research include gaining insight into the aspects of the pedagogical approach that work well, as

well as any that do not, in order to be able to further refine the approach. Potentially, the findings can offer useful information for teachers and teacher educators who want to use the approach, and that the study can bring to light questions that need to be researched in the future.

Expert Panel Review

An expert panel was used to assess the content validity and reliability of the individual interview questions. The two experts who served on the panel have extensive experience teaching, including in the ESOL field. Dr. Didem Ekici is a professor in the ESOL department at the College of Alameda and serves as the Chair. Lynne Von Glahn is a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco in International and Multicultural Education. She also holds a Master's degree in the Art of Teaching, a certificate as a Teacher of Students with Disabilities, and a certificate in TESOL. The teacher-researcher sent an email to the panelists, describing the study's purpose and procedures and requested the opinions regarding the sensitivity, linguistic clarity, and validity of the questions. Ms. Von Glahn and Dr. Ekici reviewed all the items and provided their expert input. Based on their advice, Interview question number 3 was changed from asking about "language" to asking specifically about English. Question number 4 was changed to be clearer in what information is being requested. Question number 5 was reworded to ask first if the student had taken any other English classes before the current one. The other change was that some of the questions (numbers 5, 6, 7, and 9) were broken down into parts a and b in order to be easier to understand. The questions were found to be ethnically and linguistically sensitive. Emails from the panelists, approving the questions, can be found in Appendix F. As a point of clarification, the emails referenced a survey. Originally, a survey had been part of the plans for the study. However, during the initial dissertation defense, the

committee and the teacher-researcher decided to change the data collection plan and to eliminate the survey.

Protection of Human Subjects

After the dissertation committee approved the proposal, the teacher-researcher applied for approval from the University of San Francisco (USF)'s Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) to conduct the study. The IRBPHS granted permission for the study, and the letter of approval can be found in Appendix A. The teacher-researcher completed the orientation and training from IRIS, the community-based organization at which the study was conducted, and she adhered to the guidelines of the organization. The organization provided a permission letter, which is in Appendix C. At this point, the teacher-researcher went to the class to explain the study to the potential participants. She also explained the Informed Consent form, found in Appendix B. IRIS mailed the consent forms in English, Dari, and Pashto to the students at their homes. Because the study was conducted in a class of students who speak English as a second or third language, the explanation of the study and the Informed Consent Form was also translated in class into Dari. The students were given a chance to ask questions. The students indicated that they understood what had been explained to them.

The Informed Consent form describes the purpose of the study, and it provides a description of what is required of participants and how the teacher-researcher would use the data. The form explained to participants that their participation in the study was optional, and that if they chose to participate, they could withdraw from the study at any time. The incentives for participating were explained to the students. The incentives consist of a $25 gift card for completing the Informed Consent Form and participating in an individual interview. The teacher-researcher also explained that the interview questions would be provided ahead of time

with translation into the students' first languages, and that during the interview, the students were welcome to use English, their first language, or a mixture of languages.

The teacher-researcher also explained to the students how the data, once collected, would be handled. All private information would be kept confidential. The data from the individual interviews was destroyed by the teacher-researcher after it was transcribed and analyzed. Pseudonyms were used in reporting the findings from the interviews; no identifying information was reported. In each class, time was allotted for the students to ask questions or raise any concerns they had. Because of the aforementioned reasons, there was no risk to participants for participating in this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study aimed to investigate the extent to which the use of a six-week trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias in an ESOL classroom in a community-based organization in the San Francisco Bay Area enhanced the students' ability to speak about implicit bias. In the study, the students had the option of speaking in English, their first language, or a mixture of the two. Specifically, the study examined three areas, the students' level of anxiety about speaking about implicit bias, the students' willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias, and the students' experiences of the trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias. The theoretical framework for the study, as described in Chapters 1 and 3, wove together SAMHSA's (2014) trauma-informed approach with Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis and the Input Hypothesis, and the Five R's (Tessaro et al., 2018). Chapter 1 included information on how each of these three strands would be operationalized in the pedagogy of the proposed study. Appendices H through J present how the strands were operationalized throughout the study, both in the teaching and in the research process.

To explore the research questions, the teacher-researcher chose a qualitative approach, drawing from phenomenology and teacher action research. This approach afforded the teacher-researcher the opportunity to uncover meaningful insights and descriptions from the perspectives of the participants in a class taught by the researcher. As described in Chapter 3, the study entailed six lessons on implicit bias that the teacher-researcher taught as a "guest lecturer" once a week for six weeks for approximately 50 minutes during the course of a regularly scheduled ESOL class. The sources of the data collected included the researcher's teacher journal, the final class assignment, and post-interviews with participants. In this chapter,

the findings related to the study's three research questions are reported. In order to provide context for the study, this chapter first provides a brief description of the research site and the ESOL class in which the study was conducted. How the data were analyzed is described, followed by the findings of the emergent themes for the research questions. A brief summary of the findings concludes the chapter.

ESOL Class and Participant Description

As described in Chapter 3, the study was conducted at the community-based organization, IRIS. The ESOL class consisted of all newly arrived Afghan women. The teacher, also a woman who had immigrated from Afghanistan, provided the translation in Dari, which all the students understood and spoke. She also served as the translator for some of the post-interviews. The class, which was held on line via Zoom, was high beginning/low intermediate level. This is the most advanced class that the organization offers. The number of students who attended each class varied from 13 to 19. However, the number of students who actively participated in class discussions was usually between six and nine. All the students and the teacher kept their screens off almost the entire time of the classes and the interviews. The teacher-translator explained that this was due to problems with wifi. The participants' ages ranged from approximately 23 to 60 years. The number of years that students had been studying English varied considerably. At one end of the spectrum was a student who had studied English through college. At the other end of the spectrum was a student who had not formally studied English before she started taking the class at IRIS. The student said that she had been learning English on her own, using books that her mother had given her.

The teacher-translator also participated in the class discussions and in the interviews. To reflect her inclusion, in this chapter and in Chapter 5 the term "student" has been changed to

"participant." The exception is when it is solely the students who are being referred to. Due to the small participant size, in order to protect their confidentiality and privacy, a detailed description of the women has been omitted. Collectively, the students described their motivation to learn English as wanting to get a job, to help their children in school, to be able to talk with them in English, to be able to talk to their children's teachers in English, to make friends, to go to college here, and to accomplish the tasks of daily life such as going to the doctor and shopping. All the participants were all given a pseudonym to protect their privacy.

The participant post-interviews were all conducted via Zoom and recorded using Zoom's recording device. Some of the participants chose to do the post-interviews in English without the support of the teacher-translator. The teacher-researcher also took notes during the post-interviews. Zoom provided the transcripts and the audio recordings, and the teacher-researcher reviewed the transcripts for accuracy while listening to the audio recordings. This was an essential step, due to the limitations of Zoom's accuracy in transcribing the students' English. The teacher-researcher compared the Zoom transcripts to the notes that she had taken during each interview and resolved discrepancies between the two data sources. The teacher-researcher made preliminary notes on the transcripts and then reviewed the transcripts again to generate initial codes.

Regarding the data she collected from her teacher journal and from the final class assignment, the teacher-researcher engaged in a similar process of reviewing her notes, comparing them to the class lessons, and checking for accuracy. She then began underlining and circling key words and phrases in order to identify the discursive themes, which were reviewed and revised. The themes were then connected to each of the research questions. The selection of the themes was also guided by the literature discussed in Chapter 2 and by the theoretical

framework used in this study. The chart below depicts the demographic characteristics of the people interviewed in this study. The findings are then presented. A summary of the findings concludes the chapter.

Table 4

Demographic Characteristics of Interviewees

Pseudonym	Age Range	No. of Years of Education	No. of Years of Studying English	First Language(s)
1. Amina	60-69	12	3	Dari
2. Lala	30-39	10	1 & self-study	Dari
3. Samira	30-39	10	3	Dari
4. Jamila	30-39	Bachelors	1 month	Dari
5. Hadiya	30-39	Some college	1 & self-study	Dari
6. Medina	30-39	Post-Bachelors	9	Dari & Pashto

Findings

Research Question 1a.

The first question this study addressed was: *To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their anxiety about speaking about implicit bias in the classroom?* The theme that emerged from the research is related to not having anxiety when talking about implicit bias in the classroom. The issue of having anxiety about speaking about a topic is highly relevant in terms of language acquisition. Dr. Krashen (1982), the author of the Affective Filter theory, an integral part of the theoretical framework guiding this study, stated that in order for students to have optimal learning, students

need to have a lower level of anxiety. In trauma-informed teaching, the issue of anxiety also relates to the necessity of students feeling safe in the classroom (SAMHSA, 2014).

There were two separate aspects to the issue of student anxiety when talking in the ESOL class about implicit bias. These aspects were speaking English (if students chose to) and talking about the topic. Because almost all of the students spoke Dari more than English in class, the Question of anxiety when speaking was understood by the teacher-researcher to mean anxiety when discussing the topic rather than anxiety when speaking English. Although the topic of implicit bias was new for most of the students, they did not show anxiety when talking about the topic in class. In fact, the participants readily engaged in conversation about it in class. For example, in the fourth class, when the teacher-researcher asked where our biases come from, the students had a lively discussion in Dari. The teacher-translator then explained in English to the teacher-researcher that the students had provided a substantial answer to the question, reporting that we get biases from childhood, parents, school, media, their country, the environment, and "the evil" (Teacher Journal, 11/2/23).

In the fifth class, the students talked at length in Dari about implicit bias. The teacher-translator then explained in English that the students were talking about the fact that "women in Afghanistan and in other Muslim countries are treated badly, and that this is not the way of Islam." (Teacher Journal, 11/9/23). The discussion had been very emotional, she said. Also, in the fifth class, two of the participants openly disclosed who they were biased against, even though the teacher-researcher had asked them not to and had written that on a slide for them to see as well. One of these participants was Hadiya, who told a story about an experience she had had. She had held a bias against a group of people, saying that she was afraid of them. One day, Hadiya was walking on the street with her young son and a man from this group was behind

her. She started walking faster, picked up her son, and carried him. Hadiya said that she was frightened, thinking that maybe the man was going to rob her or try to take her son from her. She started running. The man caught up to her and called to her, "Miss," and as she turned slightly towards him, he explained, "Your son dropped his shoe," (Teacher Journal, 11/9/23) and handed her son's little shoe to her. Hadiya did not comment in class about what she learned from this experience, but another participant stated in response that we should not judge a book by its cover, as the adage goes. Amina also said in class that she had a bias against a group of people because of their lifestyle, which goes against her values. The teacher-researcher gently reminded the participant that those practices may be against the participant's values but not against that person's, and that we need to be open-minded about who that person is as an individual. Amina seemed to agree.

In the sixth class, the participants talked about biases in their home country, including against people who speak Pashto and Uzbeki. One person said that some people think that people who speak Pashto are not well educated and that "they are not good people" (Teacher Journal, 11/16/23). One of the participants related their experience with this, saying that in her own family, her mother-in-law is a Pashto speaker, but that the participant's husband has this bias against them and that he has refused to believe that his mother is a Pashto speaker. Also in the sixth class, Hadiya explained that in Afghanistan, in addition to biases without our own families and society (regarding languages), there are international biases as well. For example, there are biases against Americans because Americans "kick their kids out at 18, so they are not good parents. . . Americans kick out their mom and dad when they retire" (Teacher Journal, 11/16/23).

The students' lack of anxiety when talking about implicit bias extended to the interviews

as well. For example, Samira talked about having a bias against people from a certain country. Amina talked about her family having a bias against people from a different country. Hadiya, in her interview, explained that there are biases against females in Afghanistan. When asked in the interview about being anxious about talking about implicit bias, the participants said that they did not have anxiety about this. Medina explained that she is nervous when she realizes that she *has* implicit bias, but that she is not nervous when she talks about the topic. As Lala said, "This is very easy, very very not hard because, as I told you before, when the teacher is good, the students enjoy the class. . . and can easily talk" (Lala, Post-Interview, 11/29/23).

Research Question 1b

The second part of the first question this study addressed was: *To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their anxiety about speaking about implicit bias outside of the classroom?* From the research it became clear that it is important to recognize that all the students have somewhat limited interactions with people apart from their friends and family. This is understood as cultural because many Muslim women are restricted by their husbands in their activities and interactions outside of the home. This point was made by Hadiya in her post-interview and also by the teacher-translator in reference to participants' not having familiarity, perhaps, with the different stores in their area when the participants were asked by the teacher-researcher which store they chose for their gift card for participating in the study. Other considerations regarding talking about implicit bias outside of the classroom are that the students have been limited due to their level of English, the stage of their acculturation, and their family responsibilities. The questions in the study about students talking about implicit bias outside of the class, therefore, were focused on participants' friends and family.

Theme: Anxiety about Talking about Implicit Bias with Friends and Family

In the interviews, when asked about having anxiety about talking about implicit bias with their friends and family, all the participants said that they did not have anxiety. Amina said,

> "I'm not nervous because I talk about it. 'It's not fair.' I say. . . I can talk about it with my family, and I talk with my sister about anything. . . Any time I sit at breakfast and lunch, I talk about my class, 'Today, I learned about judgment and how you can stop it,' My family is interested. . . They listen to me anytime. It's like a meeting. I talk with my husband, my daughter, my son, and my granddaughter. I learn about it. I share it with my family" (Amina, Post-Interview, 11/22/23).

Lala relayed in her post-interview that the information about implicit bias was new to her, and she confirmed that she is not anxious about talking about implicit bias with her friends and family. At the time of the interview, she said that she had already talked with her aunt and one of her friends about implicit bias.

Jamila, in her post-interview, said "I feel very comfortable to talk about implicit bias with others because I have a lot of experience from you and I know how to make a conversation with them about what bias is, why we shouldn't have bias, and how to change ourselves" (Jamila, Post-Interview, 12/8/23). The teacher-translator said, "Right now, she can make conversation because she learned" (Jamila, Post-Interview, 12/8/23). When pressed further about the participant's level of comfort talking about implicit bias with friends and family, the teacher translated and then explained to me, "She's comfortable to talk with friends and family, especially, she talks with her husband" (Jamila, Post-Interview, 12/8/23). Hadiya stated that she was "very, very comfortable" (Hayida, Post-Interview, 12/8/23) talking about implicit bias and

confident in her ability to do so. She said that she had not talked about implicit bias before because the information was new to her. She also had not had the opportunity to talk with people outside of the classroom because her husband had made it almost impossible for her to make friends here.

Medina was the exception in the study regarding having knowledge about implicit bias before she had attended the class in which the study took place, and previously having talked about the topic. She stated that she had no problem talking about it, saying "I like to speak about the issue. . . I want to talk about it so that people change themselves." (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23). Medina explained that in Afghanistan, when she was at the university, when there were classmates or professors who were expressing bias regarding "a language, culture in a different city," she would explain to them, 'No, you don't have the right to have this problem about their language or their culture.' Medina provided the context that it is normal to speak up if there is a problem and to say, 'No, please, don't. . . ' to your neighbor or your classmate" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23). She clarified that it is the younger people, not the elderly people, who are open to hearing this. Medina also stated that she talks with her husband about implicit bias.

Research Question 2a

The second question this study addressed was: *To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias in the classroom?* Several themes related to this question emerged.

Theme 1: The Irrelevance of the Question

As discussed in Research Question 1a, the issue of anxiety when speaking about implicit bias in the ESOL class could be understood in terms of using English or in terms of talking

about implicit bias. Because almost all of the participants spoke Dari more than English in class, the Questions were understood by the teacher-researcher to mean anxiety and risk-taking regarding speaking about the topic rather than anxiety and risk-taking when using English. As Palanac (2017) found, language learning requires a feeling of safety in order for students to take risks and make mistakes. Yet, the students reported that risk-taking to talk about implicit bias was not an issue for them and they demonstrated this in the classroom by speaking easily to each other and to the teachers. This may have been because students found the material to be relevant to their lives. Therefore, the theme relates to relevance, part of the study's theoretical framework (Tessaro et al., 2018). It follows, therefore, that because the students found the material to be relevant to their lives, the students were highly motivated to discuss it. High motivation is a factor that supports language acquisition (Krashen, 1982).

The only indication of something close to taking a risk to talk about implicit bias was related to having had a lack of knowledge on the subject of implicit bias. Jamila, as indicated above, shared that she felt confident talking about implicit bias with others "because I have a lot of experience from you [the teacher-researcher] and I know how to make a conversation with them" (Jamila, Post-Interview, 12/8/23). Her response was understood to mean that she had only needed to obtain the information about implicit bias and then she was able to talk about it with others; there was no risk-taking, but rather, she had been lacking the necessary information. Medina, who, as stated above, felt comfortable talking about implicit bias in Afghanistan, expressed in her interview that she had become confident to talk about implicit bias *in this country*, after having the lessons on implicit bias in our class. Although there was somewhat of a language barrier in the interview, Medina explained "In each group of people, there are good and bad people" and that "the lessons helped us change our ideas about society. . . When I see

the people, I see different reactions [to my being Muslim]. . . The lessons helped me not to have a reaction to them" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23). To be more specific, she said, "When we come here, we see some people have a problem with a hijab" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23) and that she needs to understand their perspectives. She continued, "The lessons helped me see we need to change sometimes. Every person who has implicit bias needs to change." (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23). Specifically, to the point of speaking about implicit bias, Medina said that the class helped her with that. She explained, "I don't have complete knowledge. . . It helped me to be strong and to help others change here. Here, if I hear about implicit bias, I can say something" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23).

Theme 2: The Participants' Encouragement to Other Students to Change

It is well established in the ESL/ESOL literature that the classroom provides not only instruction on the English language but also invaluable cultural information and support (Finn, 2010; Gordon, 2011; Wilson, 2020). In fact, an ESL/ESOL class provides "the first line of defense against culture shock" (Lucey et al., 2000, p.1) for newly-arrived immigrants. In the class for this study, the students did not know each other well and they could not see each other because their cameras were off. Yet, some of the participants offered encouragement and advice to classmates to change. Their actions have been viewed in this analysis as reflecting the speakers' desire to help their fellow students to better themselves and to acculturate. Seemingly welcome, the speakers' comments also indicated positive social interactions, which relate to the theoretical framework regarding collaboration (SAMHSA, 2014) and reciprocity (Tessaro et al., 2018), as well as engendering a feeling of belonging (Finley, 2018; Wilson, 2020) in the class. Lastly, by offering advice and encouragement to change, the students demonstrated an

indication of the students' collectivistic culture, which focuses on the needs of the group, as opposed to the needs of any one individual (Gay, 2018).

The first evidence of this theme of students encouraging and advising other classmates to change occurred in the fifth class when the teacher-researcher asked the question that had been assigned for homework, "In your opinion, should we try to change and not be biased? Why?" Lala said, "We need to change ourselves first. Then, we can talk nicely with our friends and others about this [to help them change]" (Teacher Journal, 11/9/23). The teacher-researcher also asked "How do we start to change ourselves? What do we need to do? What qualities/characteristics do we need?" One participant responded that we need to be strong. Another student said that it all hinges on our hearts and minds, and that if we decide in our hearts and minds to change, we will do so. She advised everyone to bring more good thoughts into their minds, and that that would help. A different student added that we need to see the goodness in people. This dynamic of giving advice and encouragement had previously occurred in the second class when students were talking about feelings and being upset about what was happening in Afghanistan. One of the students spoke at length about the importance of parenting well, even if the parent is feeling depressed, and she reminded other students to pray.

Research Question 2b

The second part of the second question this study addressed was: *To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias outside of the classroom?* Several themes emerged related to this question, as well.

Theme 1: The Irrelevance of the Question

Instead of reporting that they felt they had to take a risk to speak outside of the class about implicit bias, the participants seemed eager to share the information they had learned about implicit bias with their friends and family. In fact, one participant, Medina, spoke of the issue of implicit bias as being a normal part of her daily life when she lived in Afghanistan. Examples of what students shared with friends, family, and neighbors are provided above.

Theme 2: Participants' Encouragement to Their Friends and Family to Change

The students' actions of encouraging their friends and family to change was tied to the relevance (Tessaro et al., 2018) of the curriculum, as previously discussed. The theme is also understood as a reflection of the students' interest in helping their friends and family to better themselves and to acculturate, as is also described above. Lastly, by talking about the lessons with other people outside of the class, students were reinforcing their learning of the material, thereby enhancing their English language acquisition. Amina said that she spoke with her daughter, granddaughter, and daughter-in-law about implicit bias:

> "Every time, I say, 'No, that's not good.' . . .I do this anytime. We go to lunch and if they said [negative things] about [a certain group of people]. Oh, no, I say, 'That's not good. They are people. Why do you say that?' They say, 'Oh, mom, why do you say that?' [and she says] 'I learned about this, okay? Don't speak negative about people.' . . . They say, 'Okay, mom, fine, okay'" (Amina, Post-Interview, 11/22/23).

Hadiya talked about being committed to working with her sons so that they are not biased against females. She said:

> "Sometimes, my kids don't like to play with girls, as in our culture. Believe me, in

> our culture, they don't like girls. But all the time, I am just [trying to] convince them it doesn't matter if he is a boy or if she is a girl. 'Make friends. There is no difference between you and the girls. But they say, 'No, Mommy. I don't like girls. I don't want to play with girls.' . . . So this is something important for them to learn. [She asks them] 'Is there something wrong with being friends?' All the time, I tell them 'Your mom is a girl. Yeah, I'm a woman. I'm a girl. I am a female. You don't respect me?' [They say] 'No, we love you, but we don't like the other girls.' Sometimes, I ask them, 'Do you want a sister?' [and they say] 'No, we don't want a sister. We want a brother' because their daddy all the time says 'I want boys. I don't want girls.' . . . It is all bias from their dad" (Hadiya, Post-Interview, 12/8/23).

As stated above, Medina said that it was common in Afghanistan in the university setting to say to a classmate or professor, "Oh, please, don't say that," (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23) if they were expressing a bias. Medina also said that it was normal to encourage others, such as a neighbor, to see that they were expressing a bias and ask them not to.

Research Question 3

The final question of this study was: *How do students describe their experiences of the trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias?* The participants' descriptions reflected a mixture of the trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias and the content of the lessons. The participants did not make a distinction between the two.

Theme 1: The Effectiveness of the Classes regarding Implicit Bias

Neither in the planning stages for this study nor in the weeks of conducting the study was the effectiveness of the lessons explicitly discussed between IRIS and the teacher-researcher. Rather, the communication had been solely in regard to the fact that the teacher-

researcher had previously taught a unit on implicit bias in a different ESOL setting and that the students had understood the lessons. The theme, however, of the effectiveness of the lessons was very apparent in the data. The data on this included the class discussions and the post-interviews. The theme relates both to the relevance (Tessaro et al., 2018) of the material and to the ESL/ESOL literature on providing cultural information to support acculturation, as previously discussed. The participants readily expressed their understanding of the topic, even though it was new to most of them. During the first class on implicit bias, one student expressed her understanding of the negative impact of implicit bias. The teacher-researcher had asked what happens if someone is biased against another person, and the student responded that the result is not good and that implicit bias hurts people. In the fourth class, when students were asked where our biases come from, they were able to come up with a list, including childhood, parents, school, media, country, environment, and "the evil" (Teacher Journal, 11/2/23), as previously mentioned.

The participants also related how the material was impacting their awareness of their own biases and what participants were deciding to do about that. In the fourth class, Amina offered, "I decided that I don't want to think negative things about people" (Teacher Journal, 11/2/23). The teacher-researcher asked in the fifth class the question that had been posed for homework, if we should try to change ourselves and why. Amina answered, "I decided not to talk about people. It's not good to judge people, to have biases. We don't know about other people's lives" (Teacher Journal, 11/2/23). When the teacher-researcher asked in the fifth class how we can start to change ourselves, one participant answered that we need to be strong. Another person said that we need to commit our hearts and minds to making the change, and by doing that, we will be successful. According to the teacher-researcher's journal, another student

said, "We have to see the goodness in people" (Teacher Journal, 11/9/23). As previously stated, Hadiya told a story of a bias that she has held. In the story, her assumptions were challenged by the kindness towards her from the person she had been biased against. In response, a different student aptly offered the English adage, "Don't judge a book by the cover" (Teacher Journal, 11/9/23).

In the sixth and final class, the assignment was to write a few sentences or draw something to answer the question, "What have you learned from our lessons on implicit bias? how have the lessons affected you?" After some of the students and the teacher-translator spoke in Dari, the teacher-translator said, regarding a student, "The class has affected her too much [a lot']. She's trying to think positively about everyone. Now, she has decided to stay relaxed and remember the lesson" (Teacher Journal, 11/16/23). Then, the student added, "I can talk to someone about it and I can think positively about everyone and not be biased" (Teacher Journal, 11/16/23). Another student, according to the teacher-translator, said that when the student started the class, she did not know much about bias, and now she is relaxed. The teacher-translator further stated that the student said that we need to accept each other, no matter which country, culture, or religion someone is from. The student also said through the teacher-translator that we should treat everyone just like a friend. Additionally, the teacher-translator said that [as a result] the student is relaxed and happy and that she feels much better.

For the final class assignment, the students were offered the option of doing a writing assignment or of doing art to express how the class had impacted them. The purpose of offering the art option was so that students could express themselves through a different modality. The students were all asked in the first few weeks of class if they would like art supplies mailed to them at home so they could do the assignment. Surprisingly, only two students chose the art

option. They were mailed the art supplies and they confirmed that they received them. Only one participant, Samira, chose to share her art. She drew the flower captured below in a screenshot.

Samira said, "I like the flower. I like the color." When the teacher-researcher asked how it related to the lessons, the teacher-translator said, "It's a rose. The meaning is about peace, human beings. When we plant it, it grows more and more. It smells good. We are relaxed." (Teacher Journal, 11/16/23). When the teacher-researcher pressed the question on how it relates, the teacher-translator answered, "Yes, peace and freedom. If we want to have a good connection with someone, we give them a rose. . . We show we care. That's how it relates" (Teacher Journal, 11/16/23). Medina, in the final class, commented "The lessons had a very positive effect. . . . It helped us to refine our thoughts and know that it is possible we have bias" (Teacher Journal, 11/16/23). The teacher-translator conveyed what another student had said that she had learned that if we have a bias, whether personal or international, it has a negative impact. Hadiya added her opinion that "every country and every culture has good people and bad people [as opposed to thinking that some entire groups of people are bad or good]" (Teacher Journal, 11/16/23).

In the post-interviews, participants expanded on what they had shared in class. Amina, for example, stated that in our class:

> The material is so interesting and so I like it. This is the first time I talk. I talk

> about everything. I know it is good, good material. It is good for my mind and for me it is good. . . I take everything you learn [taught us]. I learn here. I decided in my life, anytime I think about a person and bias, I automatically think, 'Oh, my gosh, I learned the lesson on bias. That's not good--you don't think about personally negative [things]. It's not good' (Amina, Post-Interview, 11/22/23).

When Amina was asked by the teacher-researcher what she wrote for the assignment in the last class, Amina said:

> Never stop learning because life never stops teaching. . . And don't judge other people and their life because you don't know about other people's lifestyle. . . Everyone has a different lifestyle. You don't know about other people or say 'Oh, she's not good. She is not cooking well. She's not cleaning her house.' It's not your business, I think (Amina, Post-Interview, 11/22/23).

Samira, in her post-interview, expressed that the classes were "so very good for me. The classes were important and good for me" (Samira, Post-Interview, 12/6/23). Through the teacher-translator, Samira said that she was excited about the class because the subject of implicit bias was new to her, and she was excited to learn about it. She said that she realized that she has a bias against a group of people. She said, "I don't want to have a bias," (Samira, Post-Interview, 12/6/23) and that now, she has changed and that she is trying not to have a bias against anyone. In Jamila's post-interview, she said that the class was helpful and that the topic was new to her. Through the teacher-translator, Jamila said, "We understand [now] not to judge others who we do not know" (Jamila, Post-Interview, 12/8/23). She described the class as exciting, and that learning about implicit bias was new to her. She said that she learned "what bias is, why we shouldn't be biased, and how we can change ourselves"

(Jamila, Post-Interview, 12/8/23). Hadiya said in her post-interview that the class was important for her and for the others who were in attendance, saying that we have a lot of biases, and she had learned that not everyone in any group of people is bad. She added that, most importantly, she had learned how to change herself.

Of all the participants who did post-interviews, it was Medina who talked in the most depth about what she had learned in the class about implicit bias and how the class had impacted her. Medina was also unique in that she was the only participant who spoke of having had previous knowledge of implicit bias. As described above, Medina learned about the topic when she was at the university in Afghanistan. Furthermore, she shared that she was comfortable talking about implicit bias to others. However, she said that although the lessons were somewhat of a review for her, she had gained knowledge about the United States, and that was important to her. She said that learning about implicit bias "is necessary, especially when we come to a new country. . . It is necessary to know how to speak about the people. . . Because people in the world, in the U.S., people are from different countries. They are different colors, [they speak] different languages. They have different ideas. To respect the people, and not to have ideas about them is very important" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23). The teacher-researcher clarified that what Medina was saying was that it was important to understand their perspectives. "I need to understand the people," (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23) she said.

Medina also said that she realizes that she needs to change. She explained that because she grew up in Afghanistan, she has certain ideas. She asks herself, "Why are they [people] different from my country?" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23) and she added, "I need to understand myself. . .to understand everything" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23). She also voiced that people have the power to change. Medina said that the class helped her learn more.

She added, "I understand that if we have this problem [of having implicit bias], it's bad" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23). Medina offered that to become more open to people, she makes an effort to notice that she receives help from lots of different people. She said, "I need a doctor, I need help from a receptionist, to go shopping, I buy things from different people. . . Yes, we receive help from people who are different from us, from different countries" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23).

> Medina added that she has learned to see herself from the perspective of others:
>
> But, I'm Muslim. Some people have no Muslim background, but they are very, very kind to us; they're good people. . . I have seen good people and I have seen bad people from all countries, all colors. It isn't correct to have an idea about *all* the people [from a certain group. . . Afghan people are good and bad--We have [both] . . . This lesson [on implicit bias] helped us to change our ideas about it. Every society has problems. Different people are part of societies. We have good and bad people in societies (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23).

Continuing on the theme of changing her perspective, Medina said, "These lessons helped me. I changed ideas" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23).

Medina also commented on her experience coming here and how people treated her, perhaps their own biases. She said, "When I saw the people, I received every reaction. Some people like refugees; some people don't. Some people like Muslims; some people don't. It's a problem in all societies. . . But bias . . . It's bad" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23).

Rather succinctly, Medina stated, "These lessons helped me understand people and also breaks my idea when I have this problem" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23). The teacher-researcher clarified with Medina what she was referring to when she talked about

breaking her idea. Medina explained that she was saying that she learned in class how to stop herself and change her thinking when she realized that she had thoughts indicative of a bias; this was a key concept of the curriculum. Medina added that it is natural for someone to have such thoughts because maybe they had not been aware, previously, that they had had a bias. Medina later remarked, "I want to say that this lesson helped me. We need change sometimes. Sometimes, we think that [our way of thinking] is correct [from an experience of how people acted], but we need to change. I think I need [to] change. . . Everyone needs to change if they have implicit bias" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23). She added near the conclusion of the post-interview, "People, if they have knowledge, I think, change" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23).

Theme 2: The Use of Positive Affective Terms

The theme of students' use of positive affective terms in describing their experience relates to the theoretical framework and to the literature review. As previously discussed, students need to have a low level of anxiety in the classroom for optimal language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). Krashen stated that the anxiety can be personal or classroom anxiety. Other factors contributing to a lower affective filter, according to Krashen, include high motivation, self-confidence, and a good self-image. Therefore, data regarding students' positive affective experiences in and outside of the classroom can enhance researchers' and teachers' understanding of their students and of their learning. The significance of understanding students' emotions is also a finding of Pishghadam et al. (2016), who wrote that emotions impact not only learning in general, but learning another language, in particular.

In trauma-informed teaching, a student's positive affective experience in the classroom is part of interpersonal interactions that promote a sense of psychological safety, fundamental to

learning (Carello & Butler, 2015, SAMHSA, 2014). The need for positive experiences, affectively, is also closely tied to the SAMHSA principle of peer support needed "for establishing safety and hope, building trust, enhancing collaboration. . . " (p. 11). Lastly, the relevance of students' affective experiences is seen in the theoretical framework's third strand of the 5 R's (Tessaro et al., 2018), particularly respect and relationships in the classroom. In order to understand the post-interview data that participants provided regarding their affective descriptions of their experiences of the class, some context about the classes is needed, and it is provided below. It is noteworthy that the participants' facial expressions and other body language could not be observed, due to participants' having their cameras off. Therefore, the affective terms were analyzed exclusively from the students' words in the classroom and in their post-interviews.

The first source of data from this theme arose at the end of the third class. The context was that the attack on Israel and the war in war in Gaza had just begun, and the teacher-researcher was concerned about how the students were being impacted by it, particularly because they had lived in a country at war for most of their lives. The other concern was related to the fact that the teacher-researcher had included in the first lesson about implicit bias the point that someone could hold a bias against a person simply because they are in a particular group. The teacher-researcher shared the example of herself as being in a number of groups, including being older, from the United States, a woman, a teacher, a student, and *Jewish*. Her concern after the war had started was that many innocent Palestinians (and well as Jewish people) were being killed, and the U.S., as well as other countries, had seen an increase in incidents of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. Because the students are Muslim, the teacher-researcher wondered if, perhaps, the students would feel uncomfortable with her as a Jewish

person. The day before the class, IRIS had sent an email to all the students, teachers, staff, etc., reminding us that we all want peace, we all want the war to end, and that we need to see each other's humanity. The teacher-researcher decided to start the class by asking students how they were doing and by talking about the points in the IRIS email. She also chose to include the acknowledgement that they know she is Jewish, but that we all want peace and for the war to end. She also asked the students if it was hard to come to class or to concentrate on studying; it was difficult, a student confirmed.

The teacher-researcher then offered that it is important that we pay attention to how we feel, and that when we are under a lot of stress, we need to increase our self-care. From that point, the students and teacher engaged in a conversation about how the students were feeling. Collectively, the students expressed feeling sad, stressed, nervous, and angry. Medina shared that, although she was sad, she was also feeling happy, remembering that "life goes on" (Teacher Journal, 10/26/23). One student talked at length in English and then in Dari about the importance of prayer, of being patient with one's children, and of staying out of depression. Notably, at the end of this class, a student said to the teacher-researcher, "Thank you for your heart" (Teacher Journal, 10/26/23). The teacher-researcher incorporated a check-in about emotions at the beginning of the remaining three classes, as well. In the fourth class, collectively, the students conveyed a mixture of feeling happy about positive things in their life, such as learning English, being in good health, and the birth of a niece, and feeling worried about the health of a parent in Afghanistan. In the fifth class, as previously mentioned, the students discussed the question about whether or not we should try to change our biases and if so, how we can do that. The students discussed the fact that "women in Afghanistan and in other Muslim countries are not treated badly, not the way of Islam" (Teacher Journal, 11/2/23),

according to the teacher-translator. She added that the conversation had been very emotional. During the class, comments from the participants included encouragement to be strong and to not judge others, as well as advice on how to change ourselves.

As previously stated, the sixth and final class included the final lesson on what students had learned and how they had been affected. According to the teacher-translator, one student said that she had decided to stay relaxed and to remember the lesson, although it was not clear which aspect of the lessons the student was specifically referring to. The teacher-translator also explained that another student shared that now, she is relaxed and happy and that feels much better. In this assignment, as referenced above, Samira drew a rose and the teacher-translator explained the cultural significance of the rose. She said that after it is planted and grows, it smells good, and that this causes an individual to be relaxed. The teacher-translators also related the rose to offering peace and to showing that a person cares about another.

In the post-interviews, the participants used several positive affective terms regarding the class. When Amina was asked what she thought of our class, she said, "I love this class. . . You smile, you have [give] positive energy to everyone" (Amina, Post-Interview, 11/22/23). Lala said that she was happy, and she described the class as enjoyable and comfortable. She elaborated that the teacher-researcher had a "smiley face, kind, like a friend" (Lala, Post-Interview, 11/29/23). Samira used the word "excited" in talking about her experience of the class, and she explained that the excitement was because she was learning about implicit bias. Through the teacher-translator, Jamila shared that when the teacher-researcher asked about students' feelings, "that was very special for me . . . the class got so friendly to share everybody's feelings together" (Jamila, Post-Interview, 12/8/23). Hadiya and Medina were the only participants who described the class in non-affective terms. For Hadiya, the class was

important and helpful, and for Medina, it was somewhat of "a review" for her and "necessary" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23).

Theme 3: Seeing a Broader Impact on Their Lives

In the study, some students reported that the classes made a broader impact on their lives, beyond the issue of implicit bias. This theme is tied to the principle of relevance (Tessaro et al., 2018) and of acculturation, as previously discussed. However, the reported impact on some students was beyond the issue of implicit bias and extended to a sense of wellbeing, as described below. The correlation between the theme and the literature is regarding fostering wellness in a trauma-informed pedagogy (Bonifacius, 2018; Wilson, 2020; Horsman, 2000; Gordon, 2011; Bekar, n.d.). In the post-interview, Amina spoke at length about the impact on her: "[The material] is good for my mind and for me, it's good because I take everything you learn [teach]" (Amina, Post-Interview, 11/22/23). She described waiting with anticipation every Thursday for our class. When Amina was asked by the teacher-researcher about anxiety about speaking about implicit bias, Amina responded by sharing some of her health issues. "It is a lot of problems. It takes [gives] me anxiety" (Amina, Post-Interview, 11/22/23), she said. However, later in the post-interview, Amina described generalizing the learning from class regarding not think negatively about people we do not know to not think negatively at all:

> I see the first time this class is . . . for me it's good. . . I have a lot of problems. For example, I think about something, "Oh, that's bad. . . It's bad. I talk to myself, 'That's not good. Why do you say that?' . . . I think about bad things. I'm so tired [from thinking about] and I don't feel good. After this class, I say, 'I learned this. It's not good, it's not good to talk about another people, another group. You do not know about them. Don't think negative,' I decided. Oh, no. After this class, I don't

> think about negative things. . . I good to think about good things, I think it [was] for one day. [Now] it's all day, all week. *Now, I feel so good*' (emphasis added). . . If I [start] to think [something] is bad, I think, 'No, don't think negative things. You learned a lot of things in Elizabeth's class. You think *good* things.' . . I wake up, I say, 'Oh, [It's] good, [It's] a good day. You are good, you feel good, your health is good. Now, you're good. . .You wake in the day. The night is gone. We start new things. You're good! You feel good. Your health is good. Now, you are good.' . . . Life is good (Amina, Post-Interview, 11/22/23).

Lala, in her post-interview, explained that the classes helped her to feel relaxed and to have a better mindset when she is with her children. She said this is needed "for our heart, for our soul. . . if your mind is good, you are relaxed" If your mind is good, she said, "you can spend [your life happy]" (Lala, Post-Interview, 11/29/23). Lala elaborated that if we think bad thoughts, our life is bad. Lala said that when your mind is relaxed, "you [have a] happy life! You're more satisfied. You like your life. . . When you have positive thinking, you have good thinking. . . My mind, my heart, both of them is good, happy. . . happy, happy time with kids and others, with husband, with family" (Lala, Post-Interview, 11/29/23).

In the sixth class, the word, relaxed, was used by the teacher-translator in reference to what two other students had said in Dari. First, the teacher-translator said that a student expressed that the class had affected her a lot, and that she had decided to stay relaxed and remember the lesson. The word "relaxed" was also used in that class in reference to another student. Regarding this student's comments about the class, the teacher-translator said that after learning about implicit bias, the student is relaxed. Although it was not clearly stated, it seemed that these two students, in deciding to stay relaxed, had developed a positive coping strategy.

All four of the students described here had experienced an unexpected sense of wellness to some degree as a result of the classes on implicit bias.

Theme 4: Noticing Their English Language Acquisition

As previously established, affective factors, such as anxiety and its related behavior of risk-taking, impact learning and second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982; Palanac, 2017). In addition to the data from participants in this study regarding anxiety and risk-taking to speak about implicit bias, participants also talked about their English language acquisition. The theme of English language acquisition is also related to the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), a component of the study's theoretical framework. The Hypothesis postulates that students need comprehensible input that is slightly above their current level, input that is both challenging and within the student's reach. The term being used here is not Second Language Acquisition, as many students already speak two or more languages. As a second side note and one which was previously mentioned, when participants were asked to describe their experiences of the approach to teaching about implicit bias, the participants did not distinguish between the approach and the curriculum.

Some of the participants' answers reflected their awareness of their acquisition of English during the course of the study. For example, Amina commented that the curriculum was very interesting to her. She also described her speaking in class, saying, "First time I talk. I talk everything" (Amina, Post-Interview, 11/22/23). Amina stated that she took what she learned in class and talked to her family about it, which potentially reinforced her learning. Lala offered that the teacher-researcher listened well to the students and that this helped the students speak. Lala also indicated that what helped was that the teacher-researcher was friendly. Lala said:

First of all, you listen . . . Just listening us, listening us. That is good for students.

> When teaching listening and give you time. . . it gave us time [to speak] . . . give us time and [have] a smiley face, and kind, like a friend, you [are] like that. Then, we students grow up and grow and grow and learn. Learn. Learn! . . . You give it the opportunity and give it to us. Time. Yeah, very important together, slowly, slowly, because you know our English is not good, but you give it us to time. You ask questions slowly, slowly, slowly, and you just waiting and listening. . .and we need more time before we can respond. . . But this way, I like it. This, yeah, look at the teacher listening to us (Lala, Post-Interview, 11/29/23).

Three other participants made comments related to their English language acquisition. Samira related the advice she had for a new English language teacher. Samira said that she wants to speak more and that a teacher should help students do that. Jamila stated that the fact that the teacher-researcher spoke only in English helped their English language acquisition. Lastly, Medina said that the classes on implicit bias helped students improve the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Theme 5: Reflecting on What Participants Liked the Most or Found to be the Most Helpful

Soliciting student feedback and input, arguably a best practice in teaching, is a theme that relates directly to the theoretical framework in this study. In trauma-informed teaching, getting feedback and input from students is seen in two of SAMHSA's (2014) principles, collaboration and mutuality, and empowerment, voice and choice. The theme also connects to the theoretical framework of the 5 R's (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001) in three aspects, respect, relevance, and responsibility. Certainly, a degree of overlap exists between this theme and the other themes. Asking participants what they thought about the class, what they liked or did not like, and what was helpful or not helpful elicited some answers that have been previously

discussed here, such as descriptions of the effectiveness of the class in helping students to understand and change their biases, or about how the class helped students with their English language acquisition. Amina, in her post-interview, spoke about the importance to her of talking about everything, saying that "we talk about people's problems. . . the war, everything [regarding] people in this country. . . we talk about the world" (Amina, Post-Interview, 11/22/23). Amina also stated that she liked the fact that the teacher-researcher smiled at the students and "gave positive energy to everyone," (Amina, Post-Interview, 11/22/23), which relates to the theme of affective terms. Similarly, Lala, as previously mentioned, liked that the teacher-researcher gave the students time to speak and that she had "a smiley face, kind, like a friend" (Lala, Post-Interview, 11/29/23). Lala also said that the curriculum on implicit bias was very important.

Jamila, in her post-interview, had a variety of responses. She said that it was good that the students met a new person, the teacher-researcher. As stated in the theme on English language acquisition, Jamila also reported that it was also helpful to her that the teacher-researcher spoke solely English. Furthermore, Jamila said that what stood out to her was when the students were asked in class how they were feeling. She said, "I felt really good when you asked us," and that after that, "the class environment got so friendly" (Jamila, Post-Interview, 12/8/23). Lastly, she discussed the importance of the curriculum on implicit bias. What was particularly helpful to her, she said, was that she learned that we should not judge someone who we do not know. Related to the issue of changing oneself, Hadiya said that learning "how we can change" (Hadiya, Post-Interview, 12/8/23) was the best part of the class for her. Medina, in her post-interview, shared that the class was different from other English classes, which are solely about English; instead, in the class in the study, issues, ideas, and perspectives were

discussed. Although Medina had previous knowledge about implicit bias and experience talking with others about it, she stated a few times, "I need to change" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23). The sole participant who did not specify any particular aspect in her feedback about the class was Samira. The teacher-translator explained that Samira said that she was excited about the curriculum because it was new, and that "Everything you taught them she liked. Everything was helpful for her" (Samira, Post-Interview, 12/6/23).

Summary of Findings

This qualitative study aimed to explore the extent to which the use of a six-week trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias in a community-based organization in the San Francisco Bay Area affected the students' ability to speak about implicit bias. In the classes and in the post-interviews, the students had the option of speaking in English or their first language, or of translanguaging. The study focused on three areas, the students' level of anxiety about speaking about implicit bias in and outside of the classroom, the students' willingness to take risks to do so, and the students' experiences of the trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias. The emergent themes related to the theoretical framework of SAMHSA (2014), Krashen (1982), and Tessaro et al. (2018), as well as to the ESOL/ESL literature on acculturation (Lucey, et al., 2000) and on creating a class environment with a sense of belonging (Finley, 2018 & Wilson, 2020). Even though the topic of implicit bias was new to most of the participants, the findings of this study revealed that the participants did not have anxiety about speaking about implicit bias in class. This was consistently demonstrated how readily and openly the participants talked, particularly in their first language, Dari. Even though they were asked by the teacher-researcher *not* to disclose any information regarding who they might be biased against, some participants disclosed this information anyway, further showing

their comfort discussing these issues. The lack of anxiety extended to the post-interviews, as well.

Regarding having anxiety when speaking about implicit bias outside of the class, the data was clear that the students did not have this anxiety, either. It is worth noting that the opportunities for students to speak about implicit bias outside of the classroom were limited to friends and family. This was due to cultural norms for these participants, their family responsibilities, their level of English language acquisition, and to the fact that they are newly-arrived immigrants, still learning about the dominant U.S. culture. The participants reported that within their social circles of friends and family, not only did the participants not have anxiety about speaking about implicit bias, some of the participants shared their experiences of talking with friends and family about what the participants had learned about implicit bias in class. Because there was no indication by the participants that they felt anxious about speaking about implicit bias in the classroom or outside of it, the question of risk taking to speak about implicit bias was, therefore, irrelevant. In class, some participants advised and encouraged each other to change. In the post-interviews, the data included accounts by some of the participants of going beyond solely talking about implicit bias to their loved ones, but also exhorting them to change, as well.

Regarding the question of the participants' experiences with the approach, this, too, was complicated. The participants did not distinguish between the approach to teaching and the lessons themselves. Their answers, therefore, were regarding the classes about implicit bias. One theme which emerged was that the classes were effective for students in helping them to understand implicit bias and also to address their own biases. Numerous times, participants talked about what they realized and what they wanted to change within themselves. Because the

participants found the material to be relevant to their lives, they presented as highly motivated to learn and change. This relates specifically to the students' English language acquisition and to their acculturation. The data also revealed a theme of the participants' use of positive affective terms in describing their experiences of the classes. Examples included the words relaxed, happy, excited, and friendly. Having positive affective experiences in the classroom is tied to having lower anxiety, high motivation, and a good self-image and self-confidence, all of which result in a lower affective filter (Krashen, 1982), optimal for English language acquisition. In the findings, some of the reasons for the students' positive affective states were that they could talk about their feelings and discuss a variety of problems and issues in class, as well as the teacher-researcher's friendly affect and patience, and that she gave students ample time and opportunities to talk.

The theme of students' awareness of their English language acquisition emerged from their descriptions of their experiences in class. It was found that what was particularly helpful to students was the class atmosphere, the interest they had in the implicit bias topic, the fact that the classes were all in English, and, as described above, the opportunities that students had to talk. These were highlights of the class, along with the relevance of the material that was meaningful for the students in deciding to change and having an understanding of how to do that. Three findings, all of which were unexpected, emerged from the data. The first is that the students took the material to heart and they made changes, even in the short period of time of the study. Secondly, they spoke with their classmates and loved ones, as mentioned above, openly and with encouragement to change and not be biased. Lastly, and perhaps more notably, for some of the participants, the classes impacted them beyond the issue of implicit bias. Instead, they experienced an enhanced sense of wellbeing.

This study has shown that as a result of the combination of the trauma-informed teaching approach and the curriculum on implicit bias, the students were able not only to talk about implicit bias, but to make changes in their lives and to influence change in the lives of their loved ones. Unexpectedly, some students also experienced a further-reaching positive impact. In the following chapter, a deeper examination of the emerging themes and their relation to the literature and the theoretical framework will be discussed in detail. Chapter Five will also include recommendations for future research on this important topic of implicit bias, particularly related to this population of learners.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to investigate the extent to which the use of a six-week trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias in an ESOL classroom in a community-based organization in the San Francisco Bay Area enhanced the students' ability to speak about implicit bias. In this chapter, a summary is presented first. This includes the need for the study, as well as the purpose, theoretical framework, and methodology that guided it. Following, a discussion of the findings is provided. The conclusions and implications for future research and practice are then offered. The teacher-researcher's closing remarks conclude the chapter.

Summary of the Study

The need for a trauma-informed teaching approach in ESOL classes has been well-documented (Bonifacius, 2018; Castellanos, 2018; Horsman, 2004; Krivitsky, 2015, 2017; Leichtle, 2016, SAMHSA, 2014; Tweedie et al, 2017; Wilson, 2017). For students who have experienced trauma, the impact of the trauma can adversely affect their functioning on a mental, emotional, social, physical, and/or spiritual level (SAMHSA, 2014). English language acquisition requires concentrating, memorizing, retrieving information from memory, making meaning of input, and producing output (spoken and written language), all of which can be more difficult for someone who has endured traumatic experiences (Dixon, 2018; Gordon, 2011).

Research indicates that when students have positive educational experiences with teachers who recognize their students' assets and experiences and who teach in a way that accommodates their students, the teachers help to offset the impact of the students' trauma and help them heal (McBrien, 2005; Warriner et al., 2020). A trauma-informed teaching approach

can meet the needs of students who have been affected by trauma, and of those students who have not (Medley, 2012). However, despite the need for a trauma-informed teaching approach, it is not widely used in ESOL classes. Courses to train pre-service teachers on the approach are lacking in most pre-service teacher training programs. In order for these courses to be offered, a significant amount of information about the approach needs to exist in the literature. To date, the literature is lacking research, particularly studies on the impact on students of using a trauma-informed pedagogy. Also absent are studies that focus on the students' perspectives of their experiences in the classroom.

This qualitative study sought to fill a gap in the literature by investigating the impact of a six-week trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias in an ESOL classroom in a community-based organization in the San Francisco Bay area enhanced the students' ability to talk about implicit bias. Originally, the study was designed to explore how trauma-informed pedagogy enhanced students' ability to speak English. However, IRIS, the community-based organization at which the study would be conducted, requested that the curriculum be on the topic of implicit bias. Because the content would be abstract and the students' level of English would be high-beginning and low-intermediate, IRIS asked that the unit be taught in a class with a teacher-translator as an embedded language tutor so that the curriculum would be more accessible to the students. The research questions were then modified to reflect the new focus of the study, helping students to be able to talk about implicit bias in and outside of the classroom.

In this study, it was presumed that teaching about implicit bias could greatly benefit not only the students in their process of acculturation but also their families and their communities. At a time when our country is seeing a historically high number of incidents of racism, Islamophobia, and other forms of oppression, having students equipped not only to handle the

issue but also to be able to speak openly about it could have a significant impact in and beyond the classroom. To support the students, the class provided them the option of speaking in English, Dari, or a mixture of the two languages. The students had the same options during the post-interviews, due to the help of the class teacher-translator.

The study focused on three specific areas, the students' level of anxiety about speaking about implicit bias, the students' willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias, and the students' experiences of the trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias. The study was shaped by three research questions:

- 1a. To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their anxiety about speaking about implicit bias in the classroom?
- 1b. To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their anxiety about speaking about implicit bias outside of the classroom?
- 2a. To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias in the classroom?
- 2b. To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias outside of the classroom?
- 3. How do students describe their experiences of the trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias?

As described in Chapters 1 and 3, the theoretical framework in this study was a blend SAMHSA's (2014) trauma-informed approach, Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis

and the Input Hypothesis, and the Five R's (Tessaro et al., 2018). Chapter 1 provided information on how each of these three components would be operationalized in the study. Appendices H through J present how the strands were operationalized throughout the study, both in the teaching and in the research process.

The teacher-researcher chose a qualitative approach to explore the research questions, based on phenomenology and informed by teacher action research. This approach provided the teacher-researcher the opportunity to uncover insights and meaningful descriptions from the participants' perspectives in a class she taught. The study entailed six lessons on implicit bias, as requested by IRIS. As described in Chapter 3, the participants were five students who recently immigrated from Afghanistan and the teacher-translator, who also immigrated from Afghanistan. All the participants were women. Because of the teacher-translator's participation in the study, the term "student" has been changed to "participant" except when it is solely the students who are being referred to. The lessons were taught on Zoom for approximately 50 minutes each week for six consecutive weeks during a regularly scheduled ESOL class.

The sources of data collected included the teacher-researcher's journal, the final class assignment, and the post-interviews with participants. Three of the students chose to do their interview in English and without the support of the teacher-translator. The post-interviews were recorded on Zoom. Additionally, the teacher-researcher made notes during the interviews to aid in later reading the transcripts and checking them for accuracy. As described in Chapters 3 and 4, the data analysis was conducted through the process outlined by Creswell and Poth (2018). The interview transcripts were prepared by Zoom and were printed out. The teacher-researcher also listened to the audio recordings of the interviews to further clarify the participants' responses. The transcripts, the teacher-researcher's journal, and the final assignment were then

reviewed again, and the codes were generated. The themes were deductively drawn from the theoretical framework and the literature discussed in Chapter 2. The themes were also inductively drawn, based on carefully reviewing the collected data. From the analysis, the themes which emerged answered the research questions.

Although it was assumed that the students in the study would have anxiety about speaking about implicit bias and would, therefore, need to take risks to do so, neither was true. Other surprise findings included that students made changes to themselves to eliminate their biases and that the students encouraged their friends and family to do the same. Furthermore, some students experienced an enhanced sense of well-being from the classes. These findings confirm the literature that a trauma-informed teaching approach enhances student learning (Bekar, n.d., Bonifacius, 2018; Brunzell et al., 2016; 2019; Gordon, 2011; Lucey et al., 2001; Wilson, 2020) and that the approach can support student well-being and resilience (Taylor et al., 2020), and post-traumatic growth (Gardner & Stephens-Pisecco, 2019). The current study's findings and how they relate to the literature and to the theoretical framework are discussed in detail in the following section.

Discussion

This study served to fill a gap in the literature by exploring how a trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias in an adult ESOL class in a community-based organization in the San Francisco Bay Area enhanced the students' ability to speak about implicit bias. In the literature, there exists a lack of studies on trauma-informed teaching, particularly in adult ESOL and from students' perspectives. This study provided a voice for students from this underrepresented group to be heard. The study also brought to light important insights about the trauma-informed approach that was used. Furthermore, the findings

illuminated the topic of teaching ESOL students about the difficult and highly relevant topic of implicit bias. Two sample lessons from the unit can be found in Appendix F. The themes that were ascertained from the data to answer each of the research questions are discussed below.

Research Question 1a

The first question this study addressed was: *To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their anxiety about speaking about implicit bias in the classroom?* This research question stems from the issue of language acquisition of students having anxiety about speaking their target language. Krashen (1982), the author of the Affective Filter Theory, described the classroom factors needed in order for students' affective filter to be lowered so that optimal language acquisition could occur; low anxiety was one of those factors. In Trauma-informed teaching, a class environment in which students have a low level of anxiety is an essential component, as it relates to students feeling safe (SAMHSA, 2014). As discussed in Chapter 4, there were two separate parts to the issue of experiencing anxiety when speaking in the ESOL class about implicit bias. One component was anxiety when speaking in English if the students chose to. The other part was anxiety when speaking about the topic of implicit bias. Because almost all the students spoke more in Dari than in English in class, this Research Question was understood as pertaining to students' anxiety about speaking about implicit bias, rather than their anxiety about using English.

It was assumed by the teacher-researcher that the topic of implicit bias would be new for the students and that they would have anxiety when speaking about it in class. All except for one participant stated that the material was new to them. However, all the participants expressed that they did not feel anxious when talking about implicit bias in the class. The participants demonstrated this by having lively discussions about the topic, primarily in Dari. The teacher-

translator then explained to the teacher-researcher what the students had said. The participants' lack of anxiety when speaking about implicit bias was further demonstrated by the participants' openly sharing about their own biases, despite the teacher-researcher's request that they not share that information in class. The participants' lack of anxiety about speaking about implicit bias was also observed in the post-interviews.

The high level of comfort that the participants demonstrated when speaking about implicit bias was understood by the teacher-researcher as stemming primarily from the homogeneity of the participants in the class. All of the participants were women who had recently immigrated from Afghanistan, with the exception of the teacher-researcher who had come several years before. With the exception of the teacher-translator, all the participants were, therefore, at a similar stage of acculturation. Also, all of the participants shared the same language, Dari, and they were at approximately the same level of English. Furthermore, the participants shared the same religion, and some of these values were expressed during the class. For example, when the students were asked by the teacher-researcher in class where our biases came from, the participants included in their list, "the evil" (Teacher Journal, 11/2/23). Another example occurred in a class discussion about how to change oneself and not to continue to have a bias. The participants talked about our hearts and minds and seeing the goodness in people, and remembering to pray (Teacher Journal, 11/9/23). Furthermore, the idea in the curriculum of our trying not to have a negative judgment of people who we do not know seemed to resonate with the participants, evidenced by their repeating it in classes. The participants also shared the commonalities of being of similar age (except for one participant who was older), of being parents, and of having experienced gender-based discrimination in Afghanistan. Although the study was not designed intentionally for students who had so much in common, the

commonalities were instrumental in creating conditions by which the students experienced lower anxiety when speaking about implicit bias in class.

Research Question 1b

The second part of the first question this study addressed was: *To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their anxiety about speaking about implicit bias outside of the classroom?* Before discussing the findings related to this Question, some context about the participants' lives is needed. The participants all came from a religious and cultural background in which their activities and interactions outside the home were restricted by their husbands. Furthermore, because the participants had families that required their care and the participants were almost all newly arrived immigrants who were learning English, the likelihood that the participants would be going out to jobs or having other places where they could talk about implicit bias was reduced. Therefore, the question of whether or not participants were anxious about talking about implicit bias outside of the classroom needs to be understood as primarily in the participants' relationships with their friends and family.

Theme: Not Having Anxiety about Talking about Implicit Bias with Friends and Family

The finding was that the participants did not experience anxiety when they talked with their friends and family about implicit bias. This was understood by the teacher-researcher as indicative of their close relationships and their shared values, culture, and experiences. None of the participants reported feeling uncomfortable talking with their friends and family about this issue. In fact, some of the participants reported initiating conversations about the topic and urging their loved ones to stop having their biases. For example, one participant, Medina, explained, "I like to speak about the issue. . . I want to talk about it so that people change

themselves" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23). In fact, when she was living in Afghanistan, she had urged classmates and professors to stop having their biases. For her, speaking up about this issue was normal. Five of the six participants reported either having spoken about the topic with their loved ones during the course of the six-week class or planning to do so when they had the opportunity. This was also unexpected. The finding was interpreted to mean that the material was impactful to them personally and that they were excited to share this new information with others.

The finding that many of the participants expressed urging their loved ones to change was a further surprise. From the perspective of the teacher-researcher, there are two likely meanings of this behavior. One meaning is that the behavior reflected the participants' care and concern that their loved ones be the best they can be, and this includes not having biases against others. This is likely, based on the cultural and religious factors mentioned above. The other likely explanation is that the participants wanted to help their loved ones acculturate, and understanding the issues of implicit bias, specifically in the United States, is a component of acculturation. It is reasonable to assume that the participants' behavior was motivated by one of these explanations or by a combination of the two. However, ascertaining a more definitive understanding of the behavior was outside the limits of this study.

Research Question 2a

The second question this study addressed was: *To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias in the classroom?* As discussed in Question 1a, the issue of having anxiety about speaking about implicit bias in an ESOL class has two components, students' anxiety about using their spoken English and students' anxiety about talking about the topic of

implicit bias. Because almost all of the students spoke more in Dari than in English in class, Questions 1a and 2a have been understood as pertaining to the latter factor, participants' anxiety about speaking about the topic of implicit bias, rather than anxiety about speaking English in class. It may be that students did not experience anxiety about speaking in English, either, but the teacher-researcher was not able to distinguish between these aspects in this study.

Theme 1: The Irrelevance of the Question

As discussed in Question 1a, the participants did not experience anxiety when speaking about implicit bias in class. Instead of showing anxiety and needing to take risks to speak in class, the participants readily engaged in class discussions with each other and with the teachers. Therefore, the question of risk-taking to speak about the topic in class was irrelevant. The reason for the participants' speaking easily about implicit bias in class may have been because they felt comfortable, as described in Question 1a, and because the participants found the material to be relevant to their lives. Relevance is part of the 5 R's (Tessaro et al., 2018), which is a component of the theoretical framework. It follows, therefore, that because the participants found the curriculum to be relevant to their lives, the participants were highly motivated to discuss it. High motivation is a factor that supports language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). The only possible issue regarding risk-taking was that for most participants, the information on implicit bias was new information. It would follow, therefore, that the participants would be taking a risk to talk about a new topic, particularly regarding how it would apply specifically to living in the United States.

*Theme 2: The Participants' Encouragement to Other Students to Chang*e

It has been well established in the ESOL/ESL literature that the classroom provides not only instruction in English but also invaluable cultural information and support (Finn, 2010;

Gordon, 2011; Wilson, 2020). In fact, as Lucey et al. (2001) wrote, an ESOL/ESL class provides "the first line of defense against culture shock" (p. 1) for newly-arrived immigrants. In this study, despite the fact that the participants did not know each other well and that they were on Zoom with their cameras off, the participants still offered encouragement and advice to their classmates to change. To the teacher-researcher, these actions were seen as indications that the speakers wanted to help their fellow classmates to better themselves and to acculturate. The speakers' comments appeared to be welcome and, therefore, the speakers' behavior pointed to positive social interactions. This relates to the theoretical framework regarding collaboration (SAMHSA, 2014) and reciprocity (Tessaro, et al., 2018), as well as promoting a sense of belonging in class (Finley, 2018; Wilson, 2020). Furthermore, the students offering advice and encouragement reflected the students' collectivistic culture, which focuses on the groups' needs, as opposed to an individual's (Gay, 2018).

Research Question 2b

The second part of the second question this study addressed was: *To what extent does the use of a trauma-informed teaching approach affect the students' perception of their willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias outside of the classroom?* Several themes emerged from the research on this question.

Theme 1: The Irrelevance of the Question

This question was seen as irrelevant to the participants. This was due to the fact the participants did not experience anxiety about talking about implicit bias outside of the classroom. In fact, participants reported being eager to share information on this topic with their friends and family. Chapter 4 provided examples of what participants reported sharing with their loved ones. One participant in particular, Medina, explained that in Afghanistan, she spoke

about the issue as part of her normal life, and she spoke about it here, as well (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23). Without anxiety about speaking, there was no issue of risk-taking.

Theme 2: Participants' Encouragement to Their Friends and Family to Change

The finding that students encouraged their friends and family to change was unexpected, particularly considering the short length of time of the study. The student's actions relate to the relevance of the curriculum (Tessaro, et al., 2018), as previously discussed. The finding also indicates that the participants were interested in helping their loved ones with their acculturation, as well as to better themselves, as is also described above. Finally, by talking with others outside of the class about the lessons, the participants were reinforcing their learning.

Research Question 3

The final question of this study was: *How do students describe their experiences of the trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias?* The participants' responses to this Question reflected a mixture of the trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias and the content of the lessons. The participants did not make a distinction between the two. This may have been because the students did not experience a difference between the approach that the teacher-researcher used and the approach of the teacher-translator. Another possible explanation is that the participants were, understandably, focused on what was more impactful for them. Arguably, this was the lessons, what the participants had learned, and the changes that they were making in themselves and with their loved ones.

Theme 1: The Effectiveness of the Classes regarding Implicit Bias

The question of the effectiveness of the class was not explicitly discussed between IRIS and the teacher-researcher in the planning stages for the study or in the weeks of conducting it. Instead, the communication had been in regard to the fact that the teacher-researcher had

previously taught the unit in a different ESOL setting and that the students had understood the material. However, the effectiveness of the lessons was a very clear finding in this study when the participants were asked what they thought about the class. The data related to this was seen in the class discussions and in the post-interviews. This relates to the relevance of the material (Tessaro, et al., 2018) and to the previously discussed ESL/ESOL literature on providing cultural information to support acculturation.

The participants expressed their understanding of the topic and how they were relating the material to their biases. Participants also shared what they were deciding to do about their biases. For example, Amina offered, "I decided that I don't want to think negative things about people. . . I decided not to talk about people. It's not good to judge people, to have biases. We don't know about other people's lives" (Teacher Journal, 11/2/23). The participants also learned how someone could start to change themselves if they wanted to. According to the teacher-researcher's journal, a student said that we need to see the goodness in people (Teacher Journal, 11/9/23). The finding that the class was effective confirms the findings in the literature that a trauma-informed teaching approach supports student learning (Bekar, n.d.; Bonifacius, 2018; Brunzell et al., 2016; 2019; Gordon, 2011; Lucey, et al., 2001; Wilson, 2020).

The fact that the participants found the lessons to be effective stems from the combination of several factors. The first is that the students reported that the curriculum was interesting, relevant, and important to them, and this caused the students to be very motivated to learn. As previously discussed, relevance is one of the 5 R's (Tessaro et al., 2014) and high motivation is a component of Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Theory. Secondly, the homogeneity of the class, which has been discussed above, aided students in their learning. Because the students had so much in common, they were comfortable openly discussing the

material and encouraging each other to change. There was an unspoken level of trust in the room, which provided participants the feeling of being able to share anything they wanted to--even when the teacher-researcher had asked them not to be open about who they had biases against. This finding confirms the literature regarding the importance for students of having social support in class (Horsman, 2000), particularly in ESOL (Finley, 2018; Gordon, 2011; Wilson, 2020),

The next reason that relates to this is that the material was compatible with students' religious and cultural values of not judging others and thinking positive thoughts. This finding regarding the importance of faith, having a strong moral code, and the regulation of affect relates to the literature pertaining to characteristics of resilience among people who have endured trauma (Gardner & Stephens-Pisecco, 2019; Taylor et al., 2020). The fourth reason is that the trauma-informed teaching approach allowed students to learn more easily, even though the students did not specifically say that the approach itself was effective. However, the participants did describe the importance to them of having positive interactions with their peers and their teachers, experiencing some interest, care and concern from others towards them, and having positive affective experiences and reduced stress, which facilitated learning. This finding confirms the previously cited literature that a trauma-informed approach supports student learning. The fifth reason is that the students were given ample opportunity to discuss the topics, which enabled them to process the concepts. Lastly, because the students had language support from the teacher-translator and the material and discussions were translated into Dari, the students were allowed to speak Dari instead of English or a mixture if they preferred. This increased the accessibility of the material for the participants.

Regarding the effectiveness of the classes regarding learning about implicit bias, one additional factor may have been the focus of the curriculum. Within the broad topic of implicit bias, there were many options for lessons, including the fact that the students may face discrimination and other forms of oppression in the United States because of other people's biases against them. Instead, the lessons taught that everyone has implicit biases, where biases come from, and what someone could do to change themselves if they wanted to. Additional information included the potential positive effect that this type of change could have on individuals, their communities, and beyond. By keeping this focus, the curriculum conveyed an empowering message of students' choices and the sense of agency that the students had. The principle of empowerment is a component of the SAMHSA (2014) framework. Empowerment also relates to the positive education literature (Brunzell et al., 2016; 2019; Seligman et al., 2009). Furthermore, empowerment aligns with the findings of Gardner and Stephen-Pisecco's (2019) work regarding the characteristics of resilience and how to foster resilience in students.

Theme 2: The Use of Positive Affective Terms

The use of positive affective terms relates to all three strands of the study's theoretical framework. As previously discussed, students need to have a lower level of anxiety for a lower affective filter, leading to optimal language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). The author stated that the anxiety could be personal or classroom anxiety. Other factors contributing to a lower affective filter, according to Krashen, include high motivation, self-confidence, and a good self-image. The significance of understanding students' emotional experiences is also a finding of Pishghadam et al. (2016), who studied the impact of emotions specifically on language learning. A student's positive affective experiences in the classroom is also part of trauma-informed

teaching. This is because positive personal interactions promote a sense of psychological safety, which is fundamental to learning (Carello & Butler, 2015; SAMHSA, 2014). The need for students to have positive affective experiences is also closely tied to the SAMHSA principle of peer support needed "for establishing safety and hope, building trust, enhancing collaboration. . ." (p. 11). Finally, students' positive affective experiences in the classroom are tied to the 5 R's (Tessaro et al., 2018). The connection between this part of the theoretical framework and such affective experiences is found in the aspect of respect and relationships in the classroom.

Regarding the participants' use of positive affective terms in the data, it is worth noting that the participants had their cameras off almost the entire time in each class and in most of the post-interviews. Therefore, their facial expressions and their body language could not be observed. Thus, the data on the students' affective experiences was obtained solely from their words in the classroom and in the post-interviews. Despite the importance of students having positive affective experiences in class, the curriculum was not designed to include activities to engage the students directly in discussions about their feelings. Instead, the teacher-researcher assumed that the students would have positive affective experiences through the activity of sharing the stories behind their names, by talking about coping skills, and through the class discussions about implicit bias. However, when the attack on Israel and the war in Gaza started, the teacher-researcher initiated a conversation about the situation, as well as asking how the students were feeling. She asked if the students were finding it hard to come to class and/or to concentrate on studying, due to the crisis in the Middle East, and of the students who answered the question, the reply was "Yes." In that class, the teacher-researcher also urged students to increase their self-care during this difficult time. At the end of that class, a student said to the teacher-researcher, "Thank you for your heart" (Teacher Journal, 10/26/23). The teacher-

researcher then decided that the students might benefit from regular check-ins about how they were doing and feeling. For the remaining three classes, the curriculum was adjusted to reflect that change.

According to the data, the participants did have positive affective experiences in class, as indicated by their use of words such as "relaxed," "calm," "happy," "friendly," "excited," and "confident" in their descriptions of the class. It is noteworthy that two of the participants also commented on the importance to them that the teacher-researcher smiled at them. One of these women also commented that the teacher-researcher gave "positive energy to everyone" (Amina, Post-Interview, 11/22/23). This surprise finding relates to the literature in several ways. First, the findings confirm those of Pishghadam et al. (2016) that positive emotions play an important role in student learning. In the positive education field, positive emotions in class are seen as enhancing students' well-being and learning (Brunzell et al, 2016, 2019; Seligman et al., 2006; Oxford, 2014). Positive affective experiences are also a component of cultivating resilience (Garden & Stephens-Pisecco, 2019). Additionally, the study's finding regarding the importance of emotions confirms Oehlberg's (2008) work that trauma-informed teaching reduces stress for students and improves classroom learning. Lastly, the findings relate to Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Theory regarding the role of anxiety and the importance of reducing it for optimal language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). The study's findings also indicate that the teacher-researcher played an important role in supporting the students on an emotional level. This confirms the findings of Pishghadam et al. (2016) that teachers can be instrumental in doing so. The current study's findings are confirmed further by Brunzell et al. (2016, 2019), who found that teachers can positively impact students by using a pedagogy that is trauma-informed and that emphasizes student well-being.

Theme 3: Seeing a Broader Impact on Their Lives

An unexpected finding in the study was that some students reported that the classes made a broader impact on their lives beyond learning about implicit bias. This finding is tied to the principle of relevance (Tessaro, et al., 2018) and acculturation, as previously discussed. The reported impact by some of the participants indicated that they experienced an enhanced sense of well-being. Some examples of this are provided below. The correlation between the finding and the literature pertains to the idea of fostering wellness in a trauma-informed pedagogy (Bonifacius, 2018; Wilson, 2020; Horsman, 2000; Gordon, 2011; Bekar, n.d.). One participant, Amina, spoke at length about the impact of the classes on her, saying the material "is good for my mind and for me" (Amina, Post-Interview, 11/22/23). She elaborated that she needed to deal with many challenges, including physical conditions, but that, due to the class, she started thinking more positively. She said that she has started to see the benefits of this in her life and that now, she feels good.

Another student, Lala, shared that the classes helped her feel more relaxed and to have a better mindset with her children. She said that she started thinking more positively, and that led to having happier interactions with her children, her husband, and with others (Lala, Post-Interview, 11/29/23). In the final class, the teacher-translator said that a student reported that due to the classes, she decided to stay relaxed. The teacher-translator reported that another student said that after learning about implicit bias, the student is relaxed (Teacher Journal, 11/16/23). It appeared that for these two students, the lessons had caused them to develop a positive coping strategy. All four of the students described here indicated that they had experienced what can be understood as an enhanced sense of well-being as a result of the classes. This finding is consistent with the findings regarding resilience and the possibility of

post-traumatic growth (Gardner & Stephens-Pisecco, 2019) and the role of positive education in enhancing student well-being (Brunzell et al., 2016, 2019; Seligman, 2009).

Theme 4: Noticing Their English Language Acquisition

Thus far, the discussion has focused on three aspects of the participants' descriptions of the classes, the effectiveness of the material, the participants' affective experiences, and for some participants, noticing that the classes made a broader impact on their lives. All of these data relate to English language acquisition. An additional finding is that the participants also described the classes in terms of what they noticed about their own English language acquisition. This finding is tied to the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), which postulates that students need comprehensible input that is slightly above their current level, input that is both within their reach and that is also challenging. As a side note, the term, Second Language Acquisition, is not being used here because many students already spoke two or more languages. The data primarily reflected the importance to participants of being able to talk in class. For example, Lala stated that the teacher-researcher listened well and gave students time to respond, which Lala said helped the students speak (Lala, Post-Interview, 11/29/23). Another participant, Samira, relayed her advice for a new teacher, to help students be able to speak more in class (Samira, Post-Interview, 12/6/23).

Theme 5: What the Participants Liked the Most or Found to be the Most Helpful

As mentioned in Chapter 4, soliciting student feedback and input is, arguably, a best practice in teaching. In trauma-informed teaching, getting such feedback and input is seen in two of SAMHSA's (2014) principles, collaboration and mutuality, and empowerment, voice, and choice. The concept also connects to the theoretical framework of the 5 R's (Tessaro et al., 2018) in three aspects, respect, relevance, and responsibility. It is worth noting that the teacher-

researcher was asking for feedback and input from participants who came from a culture that does not typically do this. Yet, the participants were, for the most part, forthcoming with their comments. This was due, perhaps, to the fact that the teacher-researcher had concluded her lessons and that there were no grades or other possible adverse consequences for providing feedback. Although the teacher-researcher included a question to elicit any possible negative feedback about the class, as one might predict, the comments were exclusively positive.

Certainly, the findings regarding what the participants said they liked or found to be most helpful overlap with previously discussed findings, such as the participants' descriptions of the effectiveness of the class in helping participants to understand and change their biases, or about how the class helped participants with their English language acquisition. Some such examples have been provided above. The data revealed that what was most meaningful or what they liked the most varied widely among participants. For example, one participant, Jamila, mentioned the importance of having the teacher-researcher speak only English. Jamila also commented that what stood out to her was when the teacher-researcher asked the students how they were feeling, after which, she said, "the class environment got so friendly" (Jamila, Post-Interview, 12/8/23). This finding confirms the literature regarding the importance of having a supportive class community (Horsman, 2000), particularly in ESOL (Finley, 2018; Gordon, 2011; Wilson, 2020).

There were only two sets of similar responses from participants. One set involved the perspective that the class was not solely about English; instead, ideas, issues, and perspectives were discussed (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23). Along these lines, Amina stated that she liked that "we talk about people's problems. . . the war, everything [regarding] people in this country. . .we talk about the world" (Amina, Post-Interview, 11/22/23). The other set of

responses was regarding change. Hadiya stated that learning "how we can change" (Hadiya, Post-Interview, 12/8/23) was the best part of the class for her. Similarly, Medina commented a few times, "I need to change" (Medina, Post-Interview, 12/17/23). This finding is related to the SAMHSA principle of empowerment. In the current study, the significance of being able to change for students confirms the findings of Gardner and Stephens-Pisecco (2019) regarding the importance of teachers facilitating resilience among students who have been traumatized. The current study's findings also confirm those of Taylor et al (2020) pertaining to resilience and post-traumatic growth among adults who are refugees. The fact that the data showed such variation in participants' responses to this Question was expected. The participants, as in any group of individuals, came to class with different needs, wants, and preferences. The fact that the participants did contribute their ideas was seen as positive for the participants, as well as helpful for this research study.

Conclusions

In the San Francisco Metropolitan Area, approximately 1.5 million residents, or 31% of the total population, are people who were born in another country (Vera Institute of Justice, 2023), creating a great need for these English language learners to take classes. Often, the students have been traumatized from experiences in their home countries, while they were immigrating to the United States, and/or from living here due to factors such as loss, separation from family, poverty, racism, and other forms of oppression. A teaching approach that is trauma-informed can meet the needs of these students as well as the needs of students who have not been traumatized (Medley, 2012). However, trauma-informed pedagogy is not commonly used in ESOL classes, largely due to a lack of education on the approach in pre-service teacher training programs. For such education to be implemented in these programs, a substantial body

of knowledge needs to exist in the literature. At this point, the literature on trauma-informed teaching is lacking, particularly with ESOL students and in regard to studies on the effectiveness of the approach. Furthermore, the literature is deficient in studies that offer the students' perspectives and also on topics that are both difficult and highly relevant to students, such as implicit bias.

This study sought to contribute to the literature by exploring the extent to which the use of a six-week trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias in an ESOL classroom in the San Francisco Bay Area enhanced the student's ability to talk about implicit bias. The study examined the students' perceptions of their experiences both in and outside the classroom. The study looked specifically at the students' perceptions regarding their anxiety about speaking about implicit bias and their willingness to take risks to do so. Also examined were the students' descriptions of their experiences of the trauma-informed approach used to teach about implicit bias. Although the teacher-researcher explained the trauma-informed approach, the participants did not make a distinction between the trauma-informed approach and the curriculum.

In order to increase the accessibility of the material, IRIS, the community-based organization at which the study occurred, selected for the study a high-beginning-low intermediate level class with an embedded language tutor. This tutor was the students' regular teacher, who served as the teacher-translator for the classes and in some of the post-interviews. This language support was especially important, given that the teacher-researcher did not speak Dari, the curriculum was abstract, and because it was assumed that the vocabulary would be unfamiliar to the students. To further support the students' comprehension, the students were encouraged to speak Dari, English, or a mixture of the two languages if the students preferred. It is important to note that a limitation of the study was found regarding the impact of the

teacher-translator. She was both a colleague and a participant who was processing the material along with the students. Because the teacher-researcher did not speak Dari and she needed to rely on the teacher-translator in the classes and in two of the interviews, it was impossible for the teacher-researcher to know and assess the effects that the teacher-translator had on the students throughout the study.

Underlying the Research Questions were the language acquisition assumptions that students would have anxiety about speaking and that they would need to take risks to do so. However, the data showed that neither was true for these participants. In fact, they spoke easily about the topic in class, they offered advice and encouragement to each other to change, and they were eager to share what they had learned with their friends and family. The findings that the students had these responses were understood as stemming from a combination of several factors, including the homogeneity of the class, the fact that the material was compatible with the participants' cultural and religious values, the language support from the teacher-translator, and the option for students to speak in Dari. Other factors included some aspects of the trauma-informed approach, such as engendering positive affective experiences.

Another potential factor was related to the curriculum. Rather than focusing on students potentially being subjected to others' biases against them, the curriculum was geared towards supporting students to make positive changes. The concept in the curriculum of individuals having personal agency seemed to resonate with the participants. Giving students ample opportunities to discuss the concepts in class further supported the students' abilities to process the information and apply it. The data also indicated that the participants understood the relevance of the curriculum to their lives and to the lives of their loved ones. The students' desire to acculturate and to help others to do the same contributed to the positive outcomes, as

well. Lastly, for some participants, the classes caused them to experience a change in their outlook, which, by their report, provided them with an enhanced sense of wellbeing. The findings confirm the literature that a trauma-informed approach is effective for student learning (Bekar, n.d.; Bonifacius, 2018; Brunzell et al., 2016; 2019; Gordon, 2011; Lucey, et al., 2001; Wilson, 2020). The fact that these findings emerged after only a six-week study with classes for 50-minutes once per week was significant. Also remarkable was that the students were able to experience a sense of community on Zoom even with their cameras off. This speaks to the effectiveness of the trauma-informed teaching approach, the openness and receptivity of the students, and the power of the implicit bias curriculum, particularly for this population of learners.

Implications

This study's findings support the existing literature that the use of a trauma-informed approach to teaching in ESOL classes can support students with their learning and with their acculturation (Bekar, n.d.; Bonifacius, 2018; Gordon, 2011; Lucey, et al., 2001; Wilson, 2020). The participants were able not only to understand the material but to apply it to themselves, addressing their own biases and making changes in themselves. The participants also took what they had learned in class and encouraged their loved ones to change, too. Furthermore, the study's findings indicate that some students experienced a broader impact on their lives and an enhanced sense of well-being. Not only was this impact unexpected and significant for participants, but it also held the potential to continue to benefit them in the future. Furthermore, the positive effects extended beyond the participants to their families as well.

These findings confirmed the findings in positive education that teachers can play an instrumental role in fostering an enhanced sense of well-being for students, which is connected

to students' improved classroom learning (Brunzell et al., 2016, 2019; Oxford, 2019; Seligman, 2009). Furthermore, the current study's findings confirmed the findings that teachers who prioritize student well-being can foster students' resilience (Gardner & Stephens-Pisecco, 2019). Understandably, most ESOL classes are geared towards helping students acquire basic English language skills in order for students to be able to manage their daily life activities. However, teaching about implicit bias and related topics can be included as part of acculturation. Based on the participants' responses to the classes, it was clear that the students could benefit from more classes on other topics that might be outside the usual ESOL curriculum, combined with a trauma-informed teaching approach. For this to happen, educators need to be trained on the approach and an adequate curriculum needs to be developed. Concurrently, more studies need to be conducted to better understand the different populations of ESOL students and their needs, as well as how to meet those needs most effectively.

Recommendations

A gap in the literature on the use of trauma-informed teaching, particularly in ESOL classes and from the perspective of students, has resulted in the approach not being widely used. The findings in this study have been offered here in order to help fill that gap. Based on these findings, the teacher-researcher's recommendations for future research and for future practice are offered below.

Recommendations for Future Research

During the course of conducting this research study, a few issues arose that were unexpected and needed to be addressed. They are discussed here with the intention of wanting to aid future researchers faced with similar challenges. One issue was the difficulty of getting consent forms signed and returned. Because the study was conducted on Zoom and because

most students did not have access to a printer, the consent forms needed to be mailed to the students' homes. For this study, the consent forms were provided in Dari, Pashto, and English with a return, stamped envelope, addressed to IRIS, the community-based organization where the study took place. Due to the barriers to getting the forms signed and returned, the teacher-researcher needed to spend class time each week on the challenge of getting the forms signed and returned, while being careful not to pressure the students if they actually did not want to participate in the study but were not saying that. A second set of forms was sent to students who indicated that they needed the forms and had not received the first set. One participant, whose English and technical skills were at a more advanced level, suggested a simple fix of using a service such as DocuSign. The agency provided that and it solved the problem of getting this student's forms back. Another participant was able to print out her form, sign it, and send it back as an attachment. A variety of approaches were needed and implemented.

One possible solution regarding the consent forms would be to ask IRB to make an exception to requiring them to be signed. This would be based on cultural considerations, as for some students, signing a document provided by someone you do not know and trust would not be considered culturally appropriate. A similar challenge existed when trying to schedule and conduct the post-interviews. In this study, the teacher-translator proved to be invaluable in this regard. She helped with scheduling, reminding the participants about their post-interview appointments, and ensuring that the participants received the Zoom link and were able to log on. Of course, in-person classes would not have these challenges. In-person classes also would not have the barrier of not being able to see the students who are on Zoom and who are not able to turn on their cameras. However, there are advantages to being on Zoom, especially the practical considerations for a teacher-researcher and/or for students who live out of the area or who have

family responsibilities or transportation issues that would hinder their participation in in-person classes. Thus, the recommendations here are to carefully consider the obstacles and affordances of both types of classes and to be prepared to address any challenge that arises. The other rather obvious recommendation is to ensure that a class has the needed linguistic and cultural support in any research study. This study would not have been possible if it had not been for the assistance provided by the teacher-translator and of the community-based organization.

Related to that point, the participants were offered the opportunity to do their post-interview in English, Dari, or a mixture of both languages. Some of the participants opted to do their interview in English without the help of a translator. Although this was commendable, the teacher-researcher struggled with the language barrier at times in those interviews. In retrospect, the communication would have been clearer if a translator had attended the interviews to help when the communication was strained. To compensate for these occurrences, the Zoom transcript of the interview aided in clarifying what had been said. However, during the interviews, the participants did not have the opportunity to avail themselves of the help of a translator to clarify what the teacher-researcher was asking.

The current study included six participants for the post-interviews. Studies with more participants are recommended in order to capture a wider breadth of students' experiences. Future research with different populations of ESOL students is also important. It would be important to discern the potential classroom dynamics for any future study that included challenging topics such as implicit bias. A group of students more diverse than the homogenous group in this study could still experience tremendous gains from the study, provided that students felt a strong feeling of safety in the class. It is also recommended that future studies include other topics that are highly relevant to students.

Recommendations for Future Practice

The findings in this study point to the essential work that is being done at community-based organizations such as the one where this study was conducted. The ESOL students clearly felt appreciative of the classes and of the regular teacher they had. The support for the teacher-researcher was consistent throughout the study, and the administration quickly addressed the challenges that arose. Such support does not always exist for teachers, although it is essential for them and for their students. ESOL classes, as discussed previously, need to include training for teachers so they can provide a trauma-informed approach. As part of building trusting relationships between the teacher and the students, it is important that the teacher is someone who the students see as an ally, someone who knows the community and interacts with the community. Class curriculum needs to be expanded to include important topics such as implicit bias, a component of acculturation. For this to occur, educators need access to the necessary curricular resources.

Closing Remarks

Freire (2005) called upon teachers to be joyful and intellectually rigorous in their approach. He wrote, "In short, it is impossible to teach without a forged, invented, and well-thought out capacity to love" (Freire, 2005, p. 5). According to Ginwright (2014), teaching requires humility, courage, and tolerance, and a shift in thinking from what we *think we need to know* to *who we need to be to best support*" (p. 89, italics in the original) our students. If we are to rise to the challenge of teaching, we need to cultivate the mindset of a life-long learner, seeking out the best research and teaching practices from our particular field of education and incorporating them into our daily practice. In addition to this, I believe we must go beyond these principles and develop a pedagogy that incorporates four key, overlapping criteria.

The first of these is the development of positive and authentic relationships both between teachers and students, and among students themselves. These types of relationships foster a sense of belonging (Finley, 2018), which Maslow (1970), identified as a basic need. If we are to love our students, we need to approach teaching with an open heart and mind, and a commitment to learn and grow with our students. This can only happen when we actively build and maintain positive relationships. Related to this, teachers must desist from the practice of seeing students as empty vessels to be filled with our knowledge (Freire, 2018). Instead, we must see our students as individuals with extensive community and cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Culturally responsive teaching (Ginwright, 2016; Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2009) is the second core element of my theory of what is needed. Although this approach has been beyond the limits of this dissertation, they undergird the building of authentic relationships in the classroom and can help to ensure an optimal learning environment.

Third, and closely related to culturally responsive teaching, a trauma-informed approach is needed. As described throughout this dissertation and demonstrated in this study, the approach provides a class environment that is effective for learning, a safe and welcoming space for students to feel seen for who they are, accepted and valued, a place where they feel a sense of belonging, purpose, and meaning. Finally, the last criteria is related to the use of positive education (Brunzell et al., 2016, 2019; Seligman, et al., 2009), which is education for traditional skills as well as for students' well-being. As discussed in previous sections, two surprise findings in this study stemmed from the impact of the trauma-informed approach and the curriculum on implicit bias. One finding was that participants not only learned about implicit bias, but they also took it upon themselves to change themselves and to encourage their

classmates and loved ones to do so too. Furthermore, some participants indicated that they experienced positive changes beyond the curriculum, including enhanced interpersonal relationships, an ability to be more positive, lower stress, and feeling better, overall. What the participants experienced from just six weeks of class, one hour per week, was transformative and unexpected. These findings point to the importance that our teaching and curriculum can play in the lives of our students. As teachers, we need to venture into other educational fields, such as positive education. This field offers research-based strategies such as how to promote emotional intelligence and a growth mindset, and how to engender resilient self-talk (Brunzell et al., 2019). Using positive education has been found also to increase student learning (Brunzell, 2016, 2019; Seligman et al., 2009). The field can also inform our approach to teaching topics such as implicit bias.

Certainly, we must not be afraid to love our students. We as teachers must exhibit a love that is informed by best practices and research in our field. We must commit to a love that is characterized in our teaching as culturally responsive and trauma-informed. Our goal must be to build authentic, positive relationships, informed by the field of positive education. As this study has demonstrated, such an approach can be transformative for our students and, by extension, for their families and communities. If we are open to our own growth, we will notice our own transformation, as well. To me, this is the joy and intellectual rigor of teaching. This is love.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

To: Elizabeth Eastman

From: Richard Greggory Johnson III, IRB Chair

Subject: Protocol #1994

Date: 10/01/2023

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco (USF) has reviewed your request for human subjects approval regarding your study.
Your project (IRB Protocol #1994) with the title Using a Trauma-Informed Approach to Teaching Adult English Language Learners about Implicit Bias: A Study in a Community-Based Organization has been approved by the University of San Francisco IRBPHS as Exempt according to 45CFR46.101(b). Your application for exemption has been verified because your project involves minimal risk to subjects as reviewed by the IRB on 10/01/2023.
Please note that changes to your protocol may affect its exempt status. Please submit a modification application within ten working days, indicating any changes to your research. Please include the Protocol number assigned to your application in your correspondence.
On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Greggory Johnson III
Professor & Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
University of San Francisco
irbphs@usfca.edu
IRBPHS Website

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

(Please note: The Informed Consent Form will be translated into the students' first languages).

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY: Using a Trauma-Informed Approach to Teaching Adult English Language Learners About Implicit Bias: A study in a community-based organization

Below is a description of the research procedures and an explanation of your rights as a research participant. Please, read this information carefully and ask any questions you have. If you agree to participate, you will sign in the space provided to indicate that you have read and understand the information on this consent form. You are entitled to and will receive a copy of this form.

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Elizabeth Eastman, a doctoral student in the Department of International and Multicultural Education at the University of San Francisco. The faculty supervisor for this study is Dr. Sedique Popal, a Professor in the Department of International and Multicultural Education at the University of San Francisco.

WHAT THE STUDY IS ABOUT:

The purpose of this study is to investigate to what extent the use of a six-week trauma-informed approach to teaching about implicit bias in an English classroom in a community-based organization in the San Francisco Bay Area enhances students' ability to speak about implicit bias. Specifically, the study examines three areas. They are the students' level of anxiety about speaking about implicit bias, their willingness to take risks to speak about implicit bias, and their experience of the trauma-informed approach to teaching the lessons. Speaking about implicit bias includes either using English, using a student's first language, or using a combination, which is called translanguaging. The focus of the study is *not* on a student's experience with implicit bias, but rather, on what implicit bias is, where it comes from, what we can do to reduce or eliminate any implicit bias that we want to, and what the possible benefits of that can be.

WHAT WE WILL ASK YOU TO DO:

During this study, the following will happen:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do two things: 1) Engage in your current English class, which will be taught by Elizabeth Eastman, for 30-40 minutes each per week for six weeks; and 2) Decide if you would be interested in participating in a 30-45-minute

individual interview with Ms. Eastman on Zoom about the class and about speaking about implicit bias. Because of time constraints, the number of students who can participate in the individual interviews will be limited to five students.
The individual interviews can be with a translator, if you like. Everyone who is going to be interviewed will receive the questions ahead of time, for their comfort. The interviews will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for students during the week after the six classes have been taught. The individual interviews will happen on Zoom and will be recorded on Zoom for the purpose of transcription. After the interviews have been completed, Ms. Eastman will come back to the classroom to talk with all the students about the study and the findings.

DURATION AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY:
Your participation in this study is expected to last for seven weeks. Attendance in all classes is encouraged, but if you have to miss a class or come late, that will not cause you to be dropped from the study. Once each week for six weeks, Ms. Eastman will teach about implicit bias for 30-40-minutes during your class, using a trauma-informed teaching approach. The seventh week will be for interviews outside of class time.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:
I do not anticipate any risks or discomforts to you from participating in this research. If you wish, you may choose to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time during the study without penalty. Whether or not you participate in the study, you will receive the same teaching instruction in your class. No grades will be given.

BENEFITS:
You will receive no direct benefit from your participation in this study, but the possible benefits to yourself and others include useful knowledge of Trauma-Informed Teaching and how it can help students with speaking English. The use of this type of teaching creates a learning environment that is sensitive and respectful to all learners, inclusive, and strength-based, with content to support English language learning. You may also benefit from learning about implicit bias. Furthermore, you may experience a benefit by possibly learning some strategies to manage stressful situations in the future, and by having the opportunity to reflect on your experience of the class if you participate in an individual interview.

PRIVACY/CONFIDENTIALITY:
Any data you provide in this study will be kept confidential unless disclosure is required by law. In any report we publish, we will not include information that will make it possible to identify you or any individual participant. Specifically, we will keep your interview information secure. Zoom recordings and transcriptions of the interviews, as well as responses to the survey, will be saved in a password-secure digital file. I will do everything in my power to preserve your confidentiality by doing the following:

1. I will assign a pseudonym to each participant that will be used on all research documents.
2. My dissertation committee and I will be the only people with access to the data.
3. Once the dissertation is published, the data will be destroyed. Participant's consent forms will be kept for 3 years and will then be destroyed.

COMPENSATION/PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION:
Participants participate in the individual interviews and do so will each receive a $15 gift card.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY:
Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits. Furthermore, you may skip any questions or tasks that make you uncomfortable and may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. In addition, the researcher has the right to withdraw you from participation in the study at any time.

VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDINGS:
Semi-structured interviews conducted on Zoom will be recorded, uploaded, and saved to a password-secure file. The recordings will be transcribed to ensure accuracy of participants' responses. Once the dissertation is published, Zoom recordings and transcriptions will be deleted.

OFFER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS:
Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you should contact me: Elizabeth Eastman (650-283-6814), or eleastman@dons.usfca.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board at IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

I HAVE READ THE ABOVE INFORMATION. ANY QUESTIONS I HAVE ASKED HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT AND I WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM.

_____

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE *DATE*

PARTICIPANT'S PRINTED NAME:

Appendix C

Research Site Permission Letter

December 7, 2023

Refugee & Immigrant Transitions
1811 11th Avenue Oakland CA 94606

To Whom It May Concern:

As the Associate Education Programs Director with Refugee & Immigrant Transitions, I am writing you on behalf of Mrs. Elizabeth Eastman. Refugee & Immigrant Transitions gives Mrs. Eastman permission to complete her dissertation study with our clients and students.
Refugee & Immigrant Transitions' mission is to assist newcomer families in becoming self sufficient in the United States by providing services to help them attain the English language, life, job, and academic skills they need to succeed in their new communities. Refugee Transitions, based in the San Francisco Bay Area, is a community-based nonprofit agency serving high-need, low-income refugee, asylee, and immigrant newcomers from over 50 countries.
Please do not hesitate to contact me with any further information regarding Mrs. Elizabeth Eastman.
Sincerely,

Sonia Wong

Education Manager, Refugee & Immigrant Transitions
Phone: 510.210.3624
Email: sonia@reftrans.org

Appendix D

Individual Interview Questions

(Please, note: The Interview Questions will be given to the participants ahead of time, and the questions will be translated into the participants' first languages. For the interviews, students will be invited to either speak English, translanguage, or speak in their first language and use an interpreter.)

[Introduction of self and of the research project]. Would it be okay with you if I ask you some questions about your experience as a student in our class?

I know you from class, but what should I call you in this study and when I write about it?

1. How long have you been studying English? How long have you been taking English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes here at this site?[MOU1]

2. What is your goal in studying English? In other words, what do you want to be able to use the language for?

3. What do you think of our class, in general? [If needed: helpful/not helpful, enjoyable/not enjoyable, stressful/relaxed, interesting/boring?]

4. a. In what ways is our class similar to other English classes that you have taken?

b. In what ways is our class different from other English classes that you have taken?

5. What do you think about the unit we did on implicit bias? [If needed: useful/not useful, important/not important, interesting/boring, hard/easy, relevant/not relevant?]

6. What parts of our class worked well for you, and which parts of our class do not work well for you?

7. Did you bring either the written paragraph or artwork from the last class that you want to reflect on?

8. I have some specific questions about how the class might have affected you in different ways. How has the class affected your:

a. level of anxiety about speaking in the class about implicit bias?

b. level of anxiety about speaking outside of the class about implicit bias?

c. willingness to take risks to speak in the class about implicit bias?

d. willingness to take risks to speak outside of the class about implicit bias?

e. level of confidence in your ability to speak about implicit bias?

9. What do you think about some of the activities and discussions that we have done in our class? Which have impacted you the most? Examples are the Teach Me Your Name activity, discussions about implicit bias, racism, and oppression, community building, wellness, and emotions.

10. Is there anything you didn't get a chance to tell me because I did not ask you about it? [Alternative]: What advice would you give a new ESL teacher about how to teach well? What does a teacher need to know to do?

Appendix E

Expert Panel Approval of Survey and Interview Questions

Email from Didem Ekici:

Didem Ekici <dekici@usfca.edu>

To: Elizabeth Eastman Sun, Jul 23 at 3:13 PM

Hello Elizabeth,
Thanks for following up. I looked at your questions and they all seem to serve the purpose of your study. I am sure you will have interesting data for your dissertation.
My only suggestion is about question 3 and 4. For question 3, I recommend replacing "language" with "English" so that they will not confuse it with their home language.
For number 4, is there a way you can specify the question? The answer for "What do you think about our class?" may be too broad, so it might be helpful to add a follow up question, but I'll leave it up to you.
I don't have any other suggestions other than these two. No doubt this will be a wonderful study, and I'm excited to read your results/discussion. Let me know if I can help with anything else.
Best,
Didem

Email from Lynne Von Glahn:

Lynne Von Glahn <lsvonglahn@dons.usfca.edu>
To: Elizabeth Eastman Mon, Jul 10 at 12:00 PM

Hello Elizabeth,
It is my pleasure! Thank you for sharing your survey and interview questions with me. There is strong alignment between these items and your research questions. I am happy to confirm the validity of these questions.
A minor suggestion to take into consideration is to separate items that have more than one question into separate questions:

- 1. How long have you been studying English? // How long have you been taking English as a Second Language (ESL) classes here at this site?
- 3. What do you think about the language? // How hard or easy is it to learn?
- 6. What parts of our class work well for you? // What parts of our class do not work well for you?
- 9. What do you think about some of the activities and discussions that we have done in our class? // Which have impacted you the most?
- Alternative: What advice would you give a new ESL teacher about how to teach well? // What does a teacher need to know to do?

Also, question 5, "In what ways is it different from or similar to other English classes that you have taken?" may be a follow up question to something along the lines of, "Have you taken any other English classes outside of this course?" This way, if the participant has only taken courses at your site, you can omit this question accordingly.
I am so excited for you to be entering into this next stage of the dissertation journey! Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can help with anything else. You are doing great!
All the best,
Lynne Von Glahn

Appendix F

Samples of Detailed Lesson Plans

Lesson 1: What is implicit bias and why does it matter?

Explain to students what implicit bias is:
We make judgements (decisions) about people, based on their country of origin, language, religion, gender, etc. We do this before we even know them. We prejudge them. (We are prejudiced.) These judgments happen quickly, usually without thinking about it. These judgments are usually negative.

Give one or two examples, such as:
Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche from Nigeria: Her roommate in college was surprised that her family had a stove and that not everyone from her country was poor.

American parents: My friend from China said that she had heard that American parents make their children move out of the house when they are 18 years old. My friend decided that American parents are mean/bad.

Pause to think about this with the students. Ask them to think of an example in their own life but *not* to share it out loud:
Can you think of a group of people who you have thought are not as honest (or smart/ hardworking, clean, kind, polite, etc.) as you and your family/friends?

Explain that it is normal to have implicit biases.
We don't need to feel bad or ashamed. It is normal. These ideas about other people were put in our minds. But, we do want to understand it (be aware of it) and ask ourselves, "What do we want to do about it?"

Explain the connection between having a bias and discrimination:

What can happen if someone is biased against another person? What do you think?
It can lead to discrimination: treating people unfairly because of their race, religion, age, gender, etc.

Increase student motivation to work on this issue:
Ask students why it is important to learn about implicit bias.
1. We want to understand people as they truly are.
2. We want to treat other people fairly.
3. We need to understand that other people might have biases about us.
4. We can help other people in our lives with this information.
5. We can help to create more fairness and peace in the world.

Review vocabulary words: Implicit Bias, Prejudge, Prejudiced, Discrimination

Practice pronunciation

Check for understanding of material

Assign homework
Write a sentence with each word. Write what you are learning about implicit bias.

Lesson 2: Discrimination

Review vocabulary words.

Ask students to go into breakout rooms to discuss these two questions:
1. What is something that you are learning about implicit bias?
2. Where do you think biases come from? Please, make a list with your group.

Class discussion

Then, talk about discrimination and make the connection to biases.
What are some examples of discrimination in the United States? What are some examples of discrimination in your home country?

Assign Homework: *In your opinion, should people try to change and not be biased? Why or why not?*

Lesson 3: How we can change

Review vocabulary, where biases come from, discrimination. Ask about students' motivation to change

Discussion:
In your opinion, is it hard to change our negative biases?
If someone wants to change and not be biased against a person or a group, how can they do that?

Appendix G

The Use of SAMHSA Trauma-Informed Principles in this Study

SAMHSA Principle	In the Classroom	In the Research Process
1. Safety	A Class Agreement was developed, inc. what is not asked, such as immigration status, and political and religious affiliations. The teacher used gentle error correction. Each student was invited to teach how their name is pronounced and its meaning. Conflicts were addressed. Feelings and coping skills were discussed in everyday conversation practice. The teacher-researcher monitored the adherence to class guidelines and was prepared to intervene to reestablish safety if needed. Students' personal disclosures and discussions about personal issues were contained.	Participants will be provided with information about the study and their rights, such as not answering questions or ending the interview early if they wish. In the interviews, the guidelines from the Class Agreement will be adhered to. The researcher will intervene to reestablish safety if needed. Students' personal disclosures and discussions will be contained by the researcher.
2. Trustworthiness & Transparency	The teacher modeled trustworthiness & transparency, such as by readily admitting errors, apologizing when needed, and by seeking to rebuild trust if it is broken. The teacher monitored class interactions and solicited feedback regarding this Principle.	The researcher modeled trustworthiness & transparency, such as by readily admitting errors, apologizing when needed, and by seeking to rebuild trust if it is broken. The researcher monitored interactions and solicited feedback regarding this Principle.
3. Peer Support	Encouragement of peer support and mutual self-help was included in the Class	In the class, the researcher encouraged participants to

	Agreement. Opportunities to provide peer support were included through students working in class. Peer support will be encouraged during check-ins and in other discussions as opportunities become apparent.	provide peer support and mutual self-help.
4. Collaboration & Mutuality	The teacher was flexible with students, offered options, and solicited input and feedback about the curriculum and the class on an on-going basis.	The researcher was flexible with participants, offered options during the interviews, such as regarding the closing activity, and sought feedback from the participants regarding their experience in the study.
5. Empowerment, Voice, & Choice	The curriculum included discussing coping skills/wellness, building resilience, and using one's assets. The curriculum included topics regarding oppression and empowerment. The teacher provided students with options regarding assignments. Students were encouraged touse Dari or a mixture if they wanted to.	The interview questions are aimed at understanding students' sense of empowerment regarding learning and community building. Participants were also encouraged to provide feedback and input regarding the study process. Participants were encouraged to do the individual interviews in their Dari if they wanted to.

6. Cultural, Historical, & Gender Issues	The curriculum included topics and discussions such as gender issues, cultural knowledge, the cultural/racial/ethnic needs of students/communities, and, recognizing and addressing trauma that has occurred historically. Critical pedagogies were used to examine issues of injustice and to seek options that can lead to empowerment. The teacher role modeled respecting and valuing all people and cultures, and increasing one's cultural competence.	The interview questions were aimed at understanding participants' experiences of the classroom, including gender issues, cultural knowledge, the cultural/racial/ethnic needs of students/communities, and, recognizing and addressing trauma that has occurred historically. The discussions included the use of critical pedagogies to examine issues of injustice and to seek options that can lead to empowerment. The researcher role modeled respecting and valuing all people and cultures, and increasing one's cultural competence.

Appendix H

The Use of Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis in this Study

Krashen's Principle	In the Classroom	In the Research Process
1. (Affective Filter): Lower anxiety	The teacher-researcher developed a Class Agreement with the students so the expectations are clear and so students can ask for what they need; the teacher-researcher was responsible for enforcing the Agreement. The teacher-researcher did an activity so that everyone's name is correctly pronounced in the class, did gentle error correction, and provided options regarding how assignments were done. The teacher-researcher did not require students to talk, write, or otherwise participate if they didn't want to. Students had opportunities to ask questions in class. The teacher-researcher also provided community-building and relationship building class activities, and she encouraged students to express their feelings, thoughts, and needs if they want to. The use of Dari or a mixture of languages was permitted.	Participants in the individual interviews had the opportunity to ask questions about the Informed Consent form. In the individual interviews, the teacher-researcher reviewed the guidelines and confidentiality. The teacher-researcher offered participants the option of using English, Dari, or a mixture of both.
2. (Affective Filter): Increase motivation	The teacher-researcher taught with different learning styles. She also explored issues of motivation with students.	The teacher-researcher engaged participants in discussing the interview questions and reflecting on their own experiences and attitudes toward their learning. This process was geared toward supporting students in gaining insight into what helped them learn and stay motivated to continue improving their growth and their English

		Language skills.
3. (Affective Filter): Increase self-confidence	The teacher-researcher included in the Class Agreement that we don't laugh at others for their mistakes, and that we try to be helpful and supportive to our classmates. The teacher-researcher discussed the positive side to accents. She used gentle correction and encouraged students to focus on their message when in conversation, rather than being concerned about small errors, which can be corrected in grammar lessons.	The teacher-researcher engaged the participants in the individual interviews in reflecting on their gains in the class. The process was geared toward fostering insight among students regarding what they have accomplished and what they did to help enable those successes.
4. (Input Hypothesis): Provide comprehensible input at level slightly above learner's ("i plus 1")	The teacher-researcher obtained information about the levels of the students before the start of the class and checked this through interactions with students as well as in reviewing their written work in order to provide teaching that is a slightly higher level than the students' and within reach. The teacher-researcher paced her speech and used an appropriate level of vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar and checked students' understanding. The teacher-researcher solicited feedback from the students regarding the level of input they were receiving and if it was at the level they were needing; she made adjustments to her teaching, as needed.	The teacher-researcher worked with participants to ascertain if the input in the class is at the right level or needs to be adjusted, as a way to gauge the input for the interview discussions.

Appendix I

The Use of the Five R's in this Study

5 R Principle	In the Classroom	In the Research Process
1. Respect	The teacher-researcher facilitated positive group interactions and collaboration. She asked everyone in the class the correct pronunciation of their name and the story behind their name. The teacher-researcher developed a Class Agreement with the students, centered around respect. The teacher-researcher welcomed students' use of their first languages or mixing languages in order to more fully express themselves. She reframed their accents, not only as normal for adults learning English, but as assets for other students and as beautiful reflections of their first languages. Students had the opportunity to share about their culture and experiences with the U.S. dominant culture through assignments and in class conversations. The teacher-researcher monitored the class discussions to be sure that everyone has the opportunity to talk if they want to, and that the class environment was mutually respectful.	The teacher provided the interview questions ahead of time in Dari, English, and Pashto. At the conclusion of the dissertation process, the teacher-researcher will return to the class to facilitate a conversation about the process, share the findings, and answer any questions that the students may have. She will also share the study's findings with IRIS and debrief about the process.
2. Relevance	The attribute of relevance was reflected in the curriculum and materials that are used in a classroom. In this study, the teacher-researcher provided lessons that were relevant to the lives of the students in the class.	The teacher-researcher discussed with the students the relevance of the study for them, as well as for ESOL teachers, administrators and future ESOL students.
3. Reciprocity	The teacher-researcher strove to demonstrate cultural humility and learn from students.	Throughout the research process, the teacher-researcher demonstrated cultural humility and her interest in learning from participants. The teacher-researcher provided gift cards to

		participants to show appreciation for and valuing of their time and effort.
4. Responsibility	The teacher-researcher abided by the class agreement, listened to the students' feedback and ideas during the study and how they could be incorporated into the class.	The teacher-researcher protected the privacy and confidentiality of participants in the study.
5. Relationships	The teacher-researcher facilitated the development of a Class Agreement, which was foundational to establishing and maintaining positive relationships in the class. Class discussions included sharing about relationships with self, family, and community.	The teacher-researcher attended to the relationships with and among participants.