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Laura Garriguez
lgarriguez@yahoo.com

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University of San Francisco

**Mitigating Trauma in The Newcomer Classroom:
A Commitment Beyond Borders**

A Field Project Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Teaching English To Speakers of Other Languages

By
Laura Soledad Garriguez
December 2020

Mitigating Trauma in The Newcomer Classroom: A Commitment Beyond Borders

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in

TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

by

Laura Soledad Garriguez

December 2020

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this field project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

Luz Navarrette Garcia

Luz Navarrette García, EdD
Instructor/Chairperson

December 3, 2020

Date

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have been a mirror in which I have looked at myself, and often what I saw in that mirror was more than what I expected of myself, but had to catch up with it...“Como tú [...] mi sangre bulle y río por los ojos que han conocido el brote de las lágrimas.”

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ABSTRACT

In this field project, you will observe a melding of macro-and micro-perspectives on the mitigation of trauma in the newcomer classroom. The central premise of the project is that without understanding the socio-political factors, socio-economic realities, and historical process of migration to the United States, it is nearly impossible to attempt to ameliorate the trauma of students new to the country. In other words, attempts to do so without this perspective can and often does leave students marginalized and/or feeling marginalized. Working from an anti-racist and anti-imperialist lens, the project's framework is grounded in the scholarship and activism of abolitionist teaching, trauma stewardship, and the dialectic of educational (re)production. In addition, you will read a literature review that looks to dismantle systems of oppression and address student trauma by decentering normative whiteness from our pedagogical frames of reference.

This project is a two-part teach-in, in the tradition of critical pedagogy. It aims to instill and inspire in educators and all those working with refugee and immigrant students a sociopolitical understanding of migration and its repercussions on immigrants and refugee students. Only by understanding those macro-structural forces that have conditioned the lives of our students can educators operate effectively and consciously to combat trauma in the newcomer classroom.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society. (Krishnamurti, as cited in Vonnegut, 1975, p. 208)

Statement Of The Problem

Before I embark on sharing this work, I will share the motives that have propelled me to immerse myself in trauma-informed practices in the classroom. I am made out of many stories and many of those stories come from traumatic experiences, not only my own but also those of my parents, grandparents, and friends. Beyond these stories, I have bonded with many of my students (with whom I share a profound passion for learning) over their stories of struggle, suffering, and resistance. My students, immigrant students, black and brown students, have flooded my life with beautiful stories of love, family, friendships, hope, strength, and happiness. Many of these same students have experienced the most unjust, cruel, and devastating experiences that have placed a heavy weight on their learning journey, a heavy weight resulting from white supremacy, capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. Therefore, for anyone who understands this weight and has the power to make a difference and make this world a better place, I implore you to stand up and fight with all you've got because this harm needs to end now. Moreover, I have wrestled with myself about the idea of sharing some of these stories, but nonetheless, these stories have been entrusted to me to hear, care for, and act upon by looking for help in whatever form it may come. I will honor that trust. Lastly, I advance in my journey carrying these stories in my heart every step along the way, remaining conscious and woke.

Trauma is a detrimental problem in any given classroom. Trauma enters and exits classrooms daily, whether teachers see it or not (Dutro, 2011). This project focuses specifically on students referred to as “newcomers”—immigrant and refugee students who are new to the country *and* the high school classroom in the United States. Throughout the project, the “newcomers’ classroom” refers to any classroom composed either entirely of such a student population, or a classroom that has any number of newcomer students. In the newcomers’ classroom, trauma frequently intensifies due to the lack of cultural and sociopolitical awareness on the part of educators, school staff, and administration. Trauma is acute, trauma is loud, trauma is offensive, and trauma is hurtful. Trauma impairs the flow of lessons, and most significant of all, it impairs learners, it impairs teachers, and it damages relationships. It silences students, enrages them, weighs on them, and paralyzes them. Trauma’s consequences are high, not only for learners, but also for teachers, schools, communities, and society at large (NCTSN, n.d.).

Purpose of the Project

...Teachers need to be truth and knowledge seekers. (Muhammad, 2020, p. 15)

The disruption of learning in America's newcomer classrooms due to trauma is a desperate cry in the ears of those teachers who wish wholeheartedly to see their students’ academic growth. This desperate cry calls us teachers to take the matter into our hands. The purpose of this project is to offer teachers an entry point to address, study, implement strategies, and advocate for the well being of students inside and outside classrooms and schools. In the following work, I propose and outline a pair of two one-and-a-half-hour teach-in sessions,

focusing particularly on trauma in the newcomer classroom. These two sessions would be offered as a starting point not only for teachers, but also for school personnel to internalize the complexity of trauma in adolescents, particularly immigrant youth. My goal is that any given teacher or school personnel who is interested in and understands the importance and urgency of trauma-informed practices can propose, with confidence, to his or her school administrators the implementation of this teach-in project.

This project will allow the school community to define trauma, to explore it, and to discuss its impacts in the classroom, school community, and society at large. Most important of all, it will offer tools one can immediately apply in the mitigation of trauma. Furthermore, it will give the school community a window into the socio-political context in which we teach by highlighting systems of oppression that the school community needs to recognize and dismantle in order to fully care for and effectively teach our immigrant students.

This teach-in is based on the research and implementation of the most successful and specific up-to-date tools and strategies (Hood, 2008; Duto, 2011; Minahan, 2019; Simmons, Brackett & Adler, 2018; Torres, 2019) designed by educators to face the impact of trauma on young immigrant scholars. It is only with love, strength, mindfulness, commitment, and the power of solidarity among teachers, administrators, counselors, mental health practitioners, and social workers that a strategic plan can be implemented to mitigate trauma in the newcomer classroom. Implementing such a plan will allow our youth to embrace learning and flourish as critical thinkers and active agents of society.

Significance of the Project

If you want to go quickly, go alone.

If you want to go far, go together. (African proverb, n.d.)

This project is essential to informing school personnel, particularly teachers, on how to support immigrant youth while transitioning and settling into our country. The entire team will be able to grasp the necessary knowledge on trauma and the sociopolitical and geopolitical context. Thus, school personnel will acquire the tools to intervene and alleviate the effects of trauma in the classroom with expertise, empathy, and confidence. This project looks forward to pushing for collaboration and dialogue among school personnel and teachers. All adults involved in educating young and newly arrived scholars to the country should be involved in these efforts. We (educators and school personnel) are all in need of tools for listening, empathizing, and supporting immigrant students to succeed.

A critical awareness of how our educational system has developed since the beginning of its existence, and of the politics of a system that has always favored profit-making over the lives of people and entire communities sheds light on our understanding of trauma: its origins, its nature, and the ways teachers and school personnel work in its midst every day. Van Dernoot Lipsky (2009) writes, “Trauma Stewardship refers to the entire conversation about how we come to do this work, how we are affected by it, and how we make sense of and learn from our own experience” (p. 6). Thus, applying trauma-informed practices in the classroom without a personal investment into what has brought us here would be empty of purpose and have a mild impact at best on our students.

Theoretical Framework

The paradox of education is precisely this—that as one begins to become conscious, one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated. (Baldwin, 1985, p. 326)

The foundation of this project sits on the basis of three concepts: abolitionist teaching (Love, 2019), trauma stewardship (van Dernoot Lipsky, 2009), and the dialectic of educational (re)production (Au, 2018). These three concepts overlap and complement each other to form a sound approach for combating trauma. These three concepts converge in a way that elevates our understanding of trauma from simply an individual issue or issues that children bring to the classroom by contextualizing trauma in a socially conscious way that seeks to liberate students from capitalist oppression.

While abolitionist teaching calls for the dismantling of systems of oppression, trauma stewardship calls for the preservation of those who dare to stand up and continue on this bittersweet journey of caring in an unequal world, exacerbated by the 2020 global pandemic. The dialectic of educational (re)production, moreover, provides key socio-political insights needed to resist and stand up to systemic dysfunctions in the education system as we do this work in a platform that diminishes humanity.

Abolitionist Teaching

“Abolitionist teaching” is a term coined by Bettina L. Love (2019), an educational scholar working at the nexus of critical race theory, de-colonialism, Black feminism, intersectionality, and dis/ability studies. The term “abolitionist,” as Love (2019) explains, comes

from a long tradition of Black struggle carried on by individuals organizing themselves to fight for a more just and equitable society for all.

Abolitionist teaching calls for an antiracist and anticapitalist pedagogy. In her book, *We Want to Do More than Survive*, Love (2019) states, “Abolitionist teaching is a practice of working in solidarity with communities of color while drawing on the imagination, creativity, and refusal (re)membering, visionary thinking healing, rebellious spirit, boldness and determination, and subversiveness of abolitionists to eradicate injustices inside and outside of schools” (p. 2). Abolitionist teaching calls for the restoration of the humanity of all children in schools, but mainly Black and Brown children, who have been tremendously hurt by our educational system and, by extension, American policies, national and international. Even more, abolitionist teaching calls to dismantle the educational system as we know it and build a new one where students can thrive, feeling safe, protected, and loved by adults around them.

Trauma Stewardship

Trauma stewardship is a term coined by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky (2009) in her book, *Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*. As van Dernoot Lipsky (2009) writes, “Trauma Stewardship calls us to engage oppression and trauma whether through our careers or personal lives--by caring for, tending to, and responsibly guiding others beings who are struggling” (p. 11). van Dernoot Lipsky’s framework for the concept of trauma stewardship sits on the grounds of liberation theories (e.g. liberation theology, liberation pedagogy, etc.). This theoretical strand is crucial to the survival of those who commit to make

school a place where students can thrive. This particular approach looks to safeguard the preservation and humanity of those who dare to do this work.

The Dialectic of Educational (Re)Production

Furthermore, in order to “realize our hopes of creating and re-creating a society in which we are all free from suffering” (van Dernoort Lipsky, 2009, p. 27) and in order “to demand what seems impossible” (Love, 2019, p. 12), we need to situate ourselves within material and historical reality. This brings us to our third concept, “the dialectic of educational (re)production” in American Schools. In *A Marxist Education*, Wayne Au (2018) explores the role of schools within the capitalist system. Understanding that the economy is the stronger pillar in the organization of society, he poses the question: “what is the role of schools in our society?” (Au, 2018, p. 75). In demonstrating how the institution of schooling functions as an appendix to an economic system that favors elites, Au (2018) makes the distinction between liberal and Marxist approaches in the context of educational theory and practice. While many liberals remain ensconced within a firm belief that the educational system is a well-functioning meritocracy—seeing schools and education as a whole as an opportunity to overcome poverty and climb up the social ladder—Marxists examine the structural inequalities of this system and how it can limit our humanity (Au, 2018). Furthermore, Au (2018) claims that “because of the relative autonomy of schools, and the power of people to resist inequalities, and hegemonic ideologies all the time and everywhere, individual schools and classrooms have been and can be seeding grounds for building critical consciousness and building revolutionary resistance, among teachers and students” (p. 104). This understanding of classrooms as “seeding grounds for

building critical consciousness” must be placed at the core of our own daily existence, not only to mitigate trauma in our classrooms but to offer strategic tools and spaces for dialogue so that our students and colleagues can dissipate the impacts of trauma wherever it manifests. At the same time, this critical orientation pushes the mind to dialogue and offers a space to take part in the possibilities of creating a just society for all and to activate the struggle for the liberation of future generations.

Limitations of The Project

I will mention here not only the limitations of this project, but also my personal limitations. I want to highlight that this is just an attempt from a brown, immigrant woman, a mother of a toddler, and a full-time teacher in one of the most vulnerable schools in America with limited academic experience, to pose a way to start addressing trauma in the classroom with a refusal, as Love (2019) states it, to just “survive.” Limiting ourselves to addressing trauma in the classroom is not enough. We need to do more, and that entails taking the risks to not only imagine social transformation but to actually attempt to transform society. Since this project offers tools and resources to not only mitigate trauma in the classroom but to also understand its root causes, the proposed readings might change as society moves forward. My suggestion is that educators and school personnel deciding to bring this project into their schools become vigilantly aware of new material and keep the table clear and open to new readings and dialogue.

Definition of Terms

Woke

“Woke” is a word that derives from African-American Vernacular English. I use the term woke in the section Statement of the Project in lack of any other term in the American Standard English that could encompass the strength, historical weight, and sounding beauty of this term. According to the online Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.), “awake is often rendered as woke, as in, ‘I was sleeping and now I’m woke’” (“Stay Woke,” n.d.). To me, the term “woke” is a descriptor that digs deep into and widely pervades our collective consciousness of America’s racist history. Woke refers to the continued awareness of injustices done upon dark bodies.

Meritocracy

Meritocracy is a term coined by British sociologist Michael Young (1958) in his book *The Rise of Meritocracy*. The term has been widely used, particularly in the United States, in a way that is contrary to what Young (2001) intended. Meritocracy, as explained by Young (2001), is the idea that holds that people achieve status in society according to their own individual merit, ignoring social and structural inequalities.

Structural Inequality

Structural inequality is defined as a “condition where one category of people is attributed an unequal status in relation to other categories of people. This relationship is perpetuated and

reinforced by a confluence of unequal relations in roles, functions, decisions, rights, and opportunities” (Dani and de Haan, 2008).

Hegemonic Ideology

Ideological hegemony is “the embedding of relations of domination and exploitation in the dominant ideas of society. When internalized, these dominant ideas induce consent to these relationships on the part of the dominated and exploited” (Mahutga & Stepan-Norris, 2015).

Autonomy of Schools

In *A Marxist Education*, Au (2018) offers a theoretical understanding on how dialectical materialism informs on the role of school in our capitalistic society and expands on the discussion among Marxist and neo-Marxists, concluding that because schools have “relative autonomy” (p. 104) they can offer space for resistance and liberation.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In the search for a sound approach to combating trauma, I mentioned three concepts (abolitionist teaching, trauma stewardship, and the dialectic of educational (re)production) that converge in a way that elevates our understanding of trauma from simply an individual issue or issues that children bring to the classroom. These concepts enable us to contextualize trauma in a socially conscious way that seeks to liberate students from capitalist oppression. In this chapter, I review the work of scholars and educators who have been tirelessly working towards ameliorating trauma in the classroom, and offer strategies, techniques, frameworks, and wide institutional approaches to mitigate trauma and aid teachers in their quest for supporting students in the learning journey, despite so much pain. In these pages, the reader will encounter a combination of theories and approaches, from more conservative to more radical understandings of trauma in the classroom. I divide this chapter into three sections. The first addresses trauma-informed practices, which is divided into five segments: background research on trauma, how to recognize trauma in the classroom, trauma-informed care, immigrant students and the institution, and trauma-informed teaching. The second section addresses a view on the micro- and macro-level of analysis, including the scholars' understanding of the lives of immigrant students. Finally, the last and third section addresses the implementation of mindfulness in the classroom from the perspective of people of color and scholars with an understanding of the implementation of mindfulness from a trauma-informed lens. The last segment dives into the implementation of socio-emotional learning from an antiracist perspective.

Trauma-Informed Practices

Background

According to The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) (2020), “a traumatic event is a frightening, dangerous, or violent event that poses a threat to a child’s life or bodily integrity. Witnessing a traumatic event that threatens the life or physical security of a loved one can also be traumatic. This is particularly important for young children as their sense of safety depends on the perceived safety of their attachment figures” (“About Child Trauma,” 2020). As the National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative’s (2015) infographic explains, these events can have lasting consequences in a person’s life and can be triggered by emotions associated with bodily experiences (“Understanding Child Trauma,” 2015). More than two-thirds of children reported at least one traumatic event by age 16. Moreover, Minahan (2019) states that “trauma is possibly the largest public health issue facing our children today” (“Trauma-Informed,” 2019).

Recognizing Trauma in the Classroom

Trauma-informed teaching can help teachers form a relationship of empathy with students, a relationship that impacts student learning and growth. Moreover, developing tools and theoretical understandings that help teachers recognize trauma in the classroom can build safe spaces. The literature review highlights the needs for support of teachers (Alisic, 2012; Abenavoli, et al., 2014) and most important of all, the need for collaboration to address trauma in the classroom (Wolpow & Askov, 1998; Collins Sitler, 2009; Dutro, 2011; Medley, 2012; Jennings, 2019; Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu, 2019; Minahan, 2019). For instance, in the article

“Writing Wounded: Trauma, Testimony, and Critical Witness Literacy,” Dutro (2011) embraces the idea of a “speaking wound,” where Dutro highlights the most genuine encounter between two human beings, in this case, teacher and student, as one which mirrors each other as survivors of trauma in a reciprocal relationship that overflows with empathy and respect. Linked to Dutro’s emphasis on relationships among teachers and students, Collins Sitler (2009) discusses the intersection between trauma and learning, identifying teachers as the main agents in mitigating trauma in the classroom.

Both Bell, Limberg, and Robinson’s (2013) article and Wolpow and Askov’s (1998) article discuss the Three Stages of Recovery theorized by American psychiatrist Judith Lewis Herman (safety, mourning, and recovering). Both articles’ analyses of Hermans’s work give teachers necessary insight and tangible tools, such as Bell, Limberg, and Robinson’s “Table of Trauma Symptoms and Classroom Examples” (2013), to recognize trauma and take action.

Lastly, although its main focus is not on trauma, Lang’s (2009) study on translanguaging practices and safe spaces offers a particularly important lens for a teacher’s understanding of safe spaces and how translanguaging practices, if implemented properly, might be relevant to mitigating trauma. One possible addition to future iterations of my field project, the teach-in, would be to include articles on the use of translanguaging in the classroom, insofar as these practices help dissipate anxiety and promote language learning and literacy development. This would be of particular interest to teachers of newcomers. These articles are connected by the same underpinning worldview on educational practice: the transformation of the student. Indeed, the end goal of all these articles is to reach out to educators and district officials, and most

importantly of all, to reach out to teachers: to awaken the lives of all teachers as unique, active, and fierce agents of change who guide the journey of young scholars in their learning quest.

After reading these articles and studies, it is clear to me that there is a lack of awareness about trauma in schools. I now feel a more compelling urge to push for school and district officials to support teachers by offering training on trauma and trauma intervention, and to offer professional development for teachers to feel knowledgeable when addressing trauma. There are many tools that can help teachers mitigate trauma in the classroom. As previously mentioned, documents such as the Table of Trauma Symptoms and Classroom Examples offered by Bell, Limberg, and Robinson (2013) offer insight into the recurrent cues teachers need to look for in order to intervene. Furthermore, Herman's model of the Three Stages of Trauma Therapy (Bell, Limberg, and Robinson, 2013) needs to be incorporated into every teacher's practice in order to understand and initiate the process of recovery.

In many of the articles I reviewed, I notice that Herman is often cited due to her work on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). An aspect of this issue that I was hoping to find information on was trauma in the adolescent newcomers' experiences. In refining my future research, I look forward to studies and research on unaccompanied minors and adolescents, in particular, in the experience of immigrant or refugee high school students in the classroom while they are developing their literacy. With my field project, I intend to lay out the most relevant information in the realm of mitigating trauma in the classroom for teachers working with newcomers and refugee students. Providing the most relevant up-to-date theories of trauma and its mitigation will help envision specific classroom practices for teachers in various contexts and large-scale agendas for trauma-based professional development in district-wide programs.

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC)

Considering the many aforementioned issues, a wide institutional approach might be the more sound approach to mitigating trauma. The most important aspect of trauma-informed care (TIC) is the institutional approach to dealing with trauma (Bell, Limberg, & Robinson, 2013; Venet, 2019). This approach takes into consideration all the different parts involved in the mitigation of trauma. It approaches the pervasiveness of trauma in a holistic manner. The flowchart for TIC as presented by the Buffalo Center for Social Research (BCSR) (2015) quotes from Bloom (2010): “Trauma-Informed Care calls for a change in organizational culture, where an emphasis is placed on understanding, respecting and appropriately responding to the effects of trauma at all levels” (BCSR, 2015). According to the flow chart (BCSR, 2015), trauma-informed care involves the following milestones:

- Ensures administrative commitment to integrating a trauma-informed culture.
- Provides introductory training to all staff.
- Established an internal trauma team.
- Includes providers and providees in the planning and evaluation of services.
- Addresses any potential retraumatizing policies and procedures.
- Conducts early and respectful trauma screening and assessment for all. (Fallot & Harris 2001, cited in BCSR, 2015).

This model requires leadership and vision to the institution. It also calls for support and care with those providers facing trauma exposure to succeed in their daily jobs.

Immigrant Students and The Institution

There are a variety of approaches to the issue of trauma at the macro- and micro-level (Garcia, 2011; Dutro, 2011; Medley, 2012; Bell, Limberg, & Robinson, 2013; Crosby, 2015; Hood, 2018; Patel, 2018). Different scholars and researchers offer different approaches and concepts not only to aid educators and school personnel, but also to shed light on the impact that policymakers have in alleviating the pressing issue of trauma's effects on American schools (Patel, 2018).

The articles “An Ecological Perspective on Emerging Trauma-Informed Teaching Practices” (Crosby, 2015) and “Treating Toxic Stress in Immigrant Children” (Garcia, 2011) offer a different lens to approaching trauma in the classroom other than the more conventional approaches based on isolating specific symptoms of trauma, making individual referrals for psychological counseling, and one-to-one interventions. These pieces propose the “ecological system” perspective in order to understand students' lives in a more holistic way. Within the concept of an “ecological system,” teachers are able to place a student's life in a variety of contexts, from the micro to macro, thus expanding the horizon upon which any specific trauma-informed teaching practice occurs.

The view of ecological system perspective proposed by Crosby (2015) articulates a holistic way to approach trauma in the classroom, encompassing all aspects of a student's life--from daily conflicts with friends to family history to economic pressures in a county, district budgets, etc.—thus putting together different working parts of the system in order to address the issue of trauma in the context of the entire range of a student's life experience.

I appreciate this holistic view and approach of the ecological system theory for embracing all the parts involved in the school system and student's life. Lastly, it is imperative to understand how all the working parts of the system respond to each other in order to have a more sound outcome in mitigating trauma in American schools, particularly in the newcomer classroom.

Trauma-Informed Teaching

In order to lay out what trauma-informed education is and how it takes place in the institution, I explore and present the model of Fall-Hamilton Elementary, at Nashville School in Tennessee, led by renowned school administrator, Mathew Portell, Executive Principal (Venet, 2019). I also present a set of strategies on Trauma-Informed Teaching described by Jessica Minahan (2019) in her article, "Trauma-Informed Teaching Strategies." *Edutopia* profiled Fall-Hamilton Elementary in May 2017, and Alex Shevrin Venet, also a renowned scholar on trauma-informed practices, interviewed him a year later to find out about the progress of trauma-informed implementation. In "The Evolution of a Trauma-Informed School" (Venet 2019), Potrell's main point is that the understanding that trauma-informed practices, as he says, "is not a checklist but work in progress" ("Evolution"). In saying this, he explains that the answer lays in community and teamwork, acknowledging that we, educators, administrators, and school personnel, are not here to fix the kids, or as he says, "to do for them, but to think about what we are doing for them" ("Evolution"). Moreover, it is very revealing that this model does not emphasize only supporting the students but also the faculty that works with the children.

In supporting students, Fall-Hamilton Elementary has a system called the student check-ins, where students meet up with an adult at the beginning and at the end of the day to check in with an adult, which creates connections with adults (Venet, 2019). It turned out that the system became so popular that all kids wanted to do it, and it didn't carry any stigma and all students wanted to be part of this. The school organized the system by tiers, so in this way, they could attend to the needs of all the children. Another strategy for supporting children was the incorporation of peaceful corners, which offer students a peaceful space for de-escalation when they feel strong emotions and are unable to concentrate on their learning. And lastly, Portell (Venet, 2019) talks about the tap in tap out system, which offers teachers a breather if they find themselves overwhelmed. This strategy looks forward to aid teachers and offers them an opportunity for self-care, de-escalation, and reflection. Since Trauma-Informed Teaching implementation began, Fall-Hamilton Elementary School's suspensions and behavior infractions leading to referrals went down to 76%, and in 2016 Fall- Hamilton outperformed peer schools on the Achievement's Network English Language Arts Measures. In 2017, 98% of students felt there was an adult at the school who cared about them.

With the same approach and understanding, I find that "Trauma Informed-Teaching Strategies" by Minihan (2019) offers tangible tools that align with those of Portell's implementation, giving specific advice for teachers on how to ameliorate trauma in the classroom:

1. **Expect Unexpected Responses:** Teachers must learn to understand students' reactions within context and not take them personally. Students that have been exposed to trauma can react in unexpected ways.

2. Employ Thoughtful Interactions: Teachers must think about the language they used with students, and how those interactions may trigger students that have experienced trauma. One strategy that Minahan offers is to give students time to comply with directions.

3. Be Specific About Relationship Building: A strategy offered here is two by ten, talking to students 10 days in a row for two minutes about non-academics with the focus of building relationships and trust.

4. Promote Predictability and Consistency: Most veteran teachers and parents understand this. When children know what will happen they respond more thoughtfully, whether they have experienced trauma or not. Minahan offers a simple strategy, pairs check-in to help students switch from negative to positive thoughts. For example, when the students enter the classroom and hand a sticky note saying if you do not understand the material do not worry, we will check in together during independent practice.

5. Teach Strategies to "Change the Channel" Minahan explains how traumatized children tend to engage in negative thinking, offering activities would help change channels and move away from negative thinking. For example, like "find the picture," Mad Libs, or saying the alphabet backwards, etc would help students de-escalate their thinking.

6. Give Supportive Feedback to Reduce Negative Thinking: An specific example Minihan offers to understand the appropriate feedback if instead of stating verbally what went wrong, the teacher can stay positive, underlining something that went well, and then state the errors in a very positive tone.

7. Create Islands of Competence: In this section, the main question for teachers is: do students feel competent in our classroom? Thinks strategically about creating an environment of

competence where students can dream of their future and see their strength.

8. Limit Exclusionary Practices: Minihan says, “Behavior is communication” not only for students but for teachers as well. Oftentimes, a teacher's behavior does not communicate their intentions. Miniham offers two strategies in avoiding trauma response in children.

I want to highlight the tips and strategies offered by Minihan (2019) for teachers to implement in the classroom, but also highlight the powerful impact that trauma-informed education can have on an institutional level when carried out as a community, and with leadership and vision, as in the case of Fall-Hamilton Elementary School.

Micro- and Macro-Levels of Analysis

Advancing Our Knowledge of Mitigating Trauma in the Classroom

The literature reviewed in this section is organized into three segments. The first segment involves promoting trauma-informed practices in the classroom, and addresses not only how to aid teachers by providing tools and techniques for the classroom, but also by offering more substantive professional development. Secondly, I address the lack of research on assessing teachers’ experiences in the classroom while trying to mitigate trauma, the tools teachers actually do have, and how the role of trauma mitigator affects teachers. Lastly, there is a critical push to understand what it means to offer genuine education to traumatized immigrant children in sanctuary schools.

Teacher’s Role in Mitigating Trauma

In the first area, Medley’s (2012) article talks about conflict transformation and the role

of teachers in the classroom. The piece discusses how to align trauma mitigation and instruction through different venues in order to foster student investment in their own education. Jennings's article, in the same way, emphasizes the role of the teacher in dissipating trauma through "sensitive awareness" in order to truly connect with students, which in turn encourages student autonomy and elicits their own voices. Hood's (2018) article, like the aforementioned, emphasizes the teacher's responsibility in addressing trauma and calls for teacher training. Hood underlines the need for responding to the bio-social and emotional needs of students.

Lack of Teacher Training in Mitigating Trauma

In the second area, I place Alisic's (2012) qualitative research, which points to the lack of knowledge of teachers' experiences of mitigating trauma. In the third, but not less important (in fact the most systemically challenging), view on education for immigrant and refugee students, I place Patel's (2018) article, which offers a critical view on sanctuary schools and challenges the current pedagogical approaches and practices in our current educational system. Although there are different objectives in these articles (and each approaches their questions through different lenses), they all look into both the specific dynamics of the classroom and the greater problems and challenges of the educational system. That is, this body of research offers both a micro- and macro level of analysis of how to advance our knowledge of mitigating trauma in the classroom. Seeking to enter into this critical discussion and to add my own perspective, I apply the fundamental data in order to inform my thesis/field project on both of these levels.

After reviewing these articles and studies, I am able to see the similarities among previous articles in their aim to inform and train teachers how to best mitigate trauma--a growing

concern in public schools. Moreover, I was pleased to read Patel's (2018) article. Patel's fierce tone spoke to me and my worldview, as it was rooted in the present-day influx of immigrants to the United States, particularly immigrant youth during 2018. I agree that this passionate critique of the educational system is imperative in the face of inequality, racism, and discrimination in the United States. Patel's critique rests at the core of our dire need for social transformation, a need for which many throughout history have been struggling. This last article is intense but challenging, and it is a necessary argument if we are ready to stand up and fight for change that will include every human being in this country and in the world.

Teacher-Student Relationships

Lastly, I notice that in most articles on trauma there are two aspects underlined: teacher-student relationships, and the need for teacher training on mitigating trauma. Alisic's (2012) study made me think of the lack of teachers' say in this matter, which brings me to think that we teachers may have countless pieces of advice for, untheorized techniques of, and off-the-record experiences with mitigating trauma. Many teachers already do help students to dissipate their internal upheaval enough to be able to engage with learning, but what is lacking in the discussion is a serious consideration of what is going on in the lives of teachers who daily face the struggles of many students in the classroom. In my field project, I have compiled all the established tools to aid teachers with mitigating trauma, but I also want to challenge teachers to think outside the norm, or the established "feasible" possibilities for change. Time is calling us to be creative, and standing up to the occasion is the best we can do for ourselves, our students, and future generations.

The Implementation of Anti-Racist Socio Emotional-Education and Mindfulness

Mindfulness for Teachers and Students

Firstly, I present here two articles that speak of the importance of Mindfulness: “Mindfulness Promotes Educators’ Efficacy in the Classroom” (Abenavoli, et al., 2013) and “Alternative Approaches: Implementing Mindfulness Practices in the Classroom to Improve Challenging Behavior” (Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu, 2019). Both address mindfulness practices in the classroom and evaluate its benefits not only for students, but also for teachers. Secondly, I present a more challenging understanding of the implementation of mindfulness in the classroom from the more radical perspectives of Christina Torres (2019), Angela Rose Black (“Disrupting” 2019), and Katrina Schwartz (2019).

Mindfulness serves as a tangible tool for teachers who are willing to practice and risk trying new strategies to have a more wholesome pedagogy. In the case of Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu (2019), those who are ready to implement such strategies should practice mindfulness with students, thus “providing students with emotional behavioral challenges tools in managing their emotions; it can improve their overall wellbeing and have lasting positive effects” (Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu, 2019). In Abernoli et al. (2013), the authors address educators’ stress in American schools, offering data on the teacher’s journey and struggles. They also promote mindfulness practice as a possibility to improve one’s teaching. Mindfulness in the classroom has been a growing practice in American schools in the last few decades, and the overall report has been positive (Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu, 2019).

Nonetheless, some scholars challenge the idea of mindfulness as the end all be all, and push educators to think deeply about how we are using these practices, particularly in the most vulnerable communities. I would like to start with Torres's (2019) statement, which says, "mindfulness will not save us, fixing the system will" ("Mindfulness Won't"). Torres (2019) places a tremendous emphasis on understanding systemic issues as the problem and not the students. She states:

For educators to create classrooms where students can truly practice mindfulness, we must do the work to understand the challenges our students face, the world they inhabit, and our roles in it. We must learn the history of the community where we teach and create assignments where students share their voices, explore their hurts, or question themselves. We must open our classrooms to the full spectrum of human experience, both beauty and heartbreak. ("Mindfulness Won't")

With the same understanding, Rose Black (2019) questions mindfulness in a deeply racialized world and asks the questions: "...if we cannot live unracialized lives in a racialized world, when then will the mindfulness movement respond in kind?" ("Disrupting," 2019). Rose Black explains that the mindfulness curricula is rooted in whiteness, saying that:

[...] lack of inquiry—not having to ask which bodies receive benefit and which ones don't; which ones were included in research studies and which ones weren't, all the while garnering major dollars to further the development of this blind spot—is not only an oversight, but a demonstration of how capitalism and White privilege is driving the mindfulness movement. ("Disrupting," 2019)

Rose Black calls for the reimagination of the mindfulness movement which is grounded in the experiences of people of color. We are all victims of oppression and might have a lot in common but “the way in which we arrived at suffering might look very different” (“Disrupting,” 2019). Lastly, Schwartz (2019) presents psychologist Sam Hilmestein’s approach on trauma-informed mindfulness, proposing the following tips for teachers when conducting mindfulness in the classroom:

- Don’t force it
- Don’t focus on the logistics like sitting with eyes closed
- Somatic awareness, like counting breaths, could be a good place to start. “There’s different types of awareness. Sometimes we’re really aware of what’s going on in the mind and sometimes we’re more aware of what’s going on in the body,”
- Think about the child’s window of tolerance and whether he is already triggered or not. “It’s good to strike when the iron is cold in a lot of these cases,”
- Build relationships

Lastly, Hilmestein (Schwartz, 2019) highlights a teacher’s self-care list:

- Regular cultivation of relaxation response (3Rs): things like watching TV, going into nature, getting a massage.
- Effortful training: These are things like more sustained meditation or exercise where the payoff comes over a longer time period.
- Creativity: something that gives purpose and adds vibrancy to life. Writing, reading, painting, or other passions are examples.

- Advocacy: everything from learning to say “No” (set boundaries), to working at a higher level to impact policy or structural change.

In closing this segment, I would like to highlight that the benefits of mindfulness are real and research has demonstrated the potential of mindfulness when mitigating trauma. However, as Torres (2019) and Rose Black (2019) state, this approach is empty of meaning to the humanity of students of color and children of the working class if those who apply it do not understand or have the capacity to grasp a history of oppression towards people of color and the working class. Hilmenstein offers tangible tips to navigate the implementation of mindfulness from a trauma-informed perspective, nevertheless, educators of colors and educators who address the needs of the most vulnerable students in America need to be conscious in order to implement a practice that might have been white-centered for many years in America.

The Implementation of Socio-Emotional Learning Addressing Trauma

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) offers an evidence-based approach to the development of social and emotional learning as an integral part of human development. CASEL’s SEL framework includes five interrelated areas for the students to know, do, and develop in order to become successful in academics, civic engagement, and in their own lives. These five areas are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

In the implementation of this framework, I would like to quote Dena Simmons (Leadership for Educational Equity, n.d.), who expresses in an interview that “without an antiracist and equity lens, SEL could become white supremacy with a hug” (“Intersection”). The

newcomer classroom is not the exception. For this reason, the implementation of socio-emotional learning strategies needs to be done through an equity lens. Simmons agrees to the benefits of social and emotional learning, but is also aware of the many structural and societal barriers our students and communities face (“Intersection,” n.d.). She argues that the removal of these barriers would aid in having a more just and equitable lens on the teaching of SEL. The five barriers contributing to inequitable access are systemic, institutional, and also individual. The five barriers are poverty, exclusionary discipline practices and policies, lack of trauma-informed school practices, implicit bias in school staff, and educators' stress and burnout (Simmons, Brackett & Adler, 2018).

Systemic challenges notwithstanding, these authors offer opportunities and attempts to address these issues, and one of the solutions would be the integration of schools. This entails restorative justice practices in school discipline, trauma-informed system approaches and trauma-specific interventions, culturally competent and equity-literate educators, and robust SEL and mindfulness approaches.

Summary

This literature review is an outline of some of the vast pool of research on trauma that must continue and be carried out at every level of the educational system. Without understanding the issue of trauma as a systemic issue rooted in our patriarchal, economically unequal, and racist system, trauma can not be fiercely and consciously fought with the justice those affected by it deserve. Nonetheless, a few aspects remain clear, must be highlighted, and must be implemented in order to do what is at hand to combat trauma.

In the first place, approaching trauma-informed teaching from the framework offered by the Buffalo Center for Social Research's "The Road to Trauma-Informed Care" (TIC), where all the institutional parts are being considered in their stakes addressing trauma (BCSR, 2015). Moreover, the examples set out already, in our country, by schools, and leaders that have taken the bold, genuine, and brave step forward to trauma-informed practice applying it to the institutional level, such as Fall-Hamilton Elementary school under the leadership of Mathew Portell, must be studied and emulated (Venet, 2019).

Secondly, vast literature informs as of the possibility of a holistic approach as that of the view of ecological system perspective proposed by Crosby (2018) and Garcia (2011), calling for understanding students not only in the classroom but in other spheres of their lives.

Furthermore, Alisic's (2012) qualitative research points to the lack of knowledge on teachers' experiences of mitigating trauma. Teachers need the appropriate training and care and respect by our system so they can be able to enter and exit their classroom with healthy hearts and minds and a thorough understanding of trauma. Adding to this, Patel's (2018) critique rests at the core of our dire need for social transformation, a need for which many throughout history have been struggling. Patel poses a necessary argument if we are ready to stand up and fight for the change and justice our immigrant students deserve.

Lastly, as it is true for other minorities, an antiracist, anti-capitalist, and anti-patriarchal social and emotional education is at the core of educating and guiding our immigrant youth. This education can only be carried out with boldness, braveness, and with the solidarity of abolitionist teachers.

CHAPTER III: THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Brief Description of the Project

Opening Thoughts

This project is a teach-in that hopes to synthesize macro- and micro-perspectives on the mitigation of trauma in the newcomer classroom. The goal of this project is to foster humanity and critical thinking when it comes to guiding immigrant and refugee students in their learning journey. For many years in the field of English teaching and education, I have encountered many educators, instructors, and teachers who have shown themselves to be disconnected from the immigrant experience, particularly those immigrants and refugee students who have experienced a lack of educational, financial, and cultural capital. I have heard things like, “they are just lazy,” “they do not try hard enough,” “they just don’t want to learn,” or, “this is it, I’m done with him.” These remarks carry a heavy weight in my heart. I was once also an English learner, and I was once also the struggling, newly arrived, and completely lost immigrant student.

At the same time, I have encountered many educators who are present and informed. The teachers, who are knowledgeable about the United States’ foreign policies have a sense of and thirst for social justice, will become more effective teachers and instructors overall, as they are able to build a strong rapport with and understanding of their students. These are the teachers who make a huge difference, the one whose name or face a student never forgets. Many of these teachers are my colleagues today. In this project, I look forward to involving both types of teachers, the ones that are disconnected from immigrant and refugee students’ realities, and the ones that are present and informed. Those in the first category will have an opportunity to reflect

and continue on a path of awakening and exposing themselves to information that will change the way in which they think or speak of their students. The second category will have the opportunity to share their knowledge or guide others in this quest for the truth and empathy our immigrant and refugee students deserve.

A Background Story

At the beginning of the school year at my high school during the age of Covid-19, I was asked to lead a professional development (PD) with one of my colleagues, Luis Chacon (Ethnic Studies), on implementing social and emotional learning and the implementation of trauma-informed practices. Since I was in the process of reading and collecting information for my field project, I was thrilled to be asked to lead this PD. I was excited to share my compilation of articles and the names of incredible scholars I had recently discovered in the field of trauma-informed practices. However, I didn't like the idea of calling it a "professional development," since this gave me a sense of expertise, placing participants as passive listeners. I wanted my colleagues to collaborate, to be a part of the quest to understand and implement trauma-informed practices.

What you will see here is what I would like to call a "teach-in." In 2009, I participated in teach-ins in regard to educational budget cuts in the state of California. I was impressed by the discussions and active participation on a horizontal level by students, instructors, parents, and sometimes young children. I experienced teach-ins for the second time in 2011, during the Occupy Movement. Teach-ins gave me a sense of self-agency and the possibility of being an active participant in changing society's course. They give one a sense both of one's agency and

freedom: the idea and reality that you do not have to wait to vote for politicians to come and solve our problems, politicians who know little about the people's struggles. What I experienced in teach-ins was a participatory space in constant discussion and collaborative exploration, a space to face and solve social problems for the well-being of all. In a teach-in, every voice counts, and everyone works towards the same goal.

Brief Description

In this teach-in, I seek to lay the groundwork for community, for critical thinking, and for solidarity among educational workers of all levels. The common goal in this teach-in is to bring love and support to our classrooms so our newcomers can succeed in their learning journey and be able to dream for a better world.

The project is designed to host no more than 40 participants. This teach-in is divided into two parts of an hour and a half each. The first part, *The United States of America, the "Best Country in the World": Exploring the United States' Foreign Policies and How These Policies Affect Migration*, is divided into five sections. The second part, *The Newcomer Classroom: What Is in My Locus of Control? What Can I Do to Ameliorate Trauma so Students Can Thrive?* is divided into four sections.

Development of the Project

Part I: The United States of America, the "Best Country in the World": Exploring the United States' Foreign Policies and How These Policies Affect Migration.

The first part of the teach-in looks forward to bringing about discussion among, challenging the thoughts, or expanding the knowledge of participants. The first section offers an

opening where participants will be able to norm the space of dialogue before starting the conversation. In this section, I offer three community agreements: 1) be honest and open, 2) ensure equity of voice, and 3) respect confidentiality. These agreements are a starting point and facilitators should guide participants to add or change them according to what the group prefers or embrace as agreements to create a safe space. In the second section, the preparation for the fishbowl begins. The fishbowl format enables participants to digest the material and reflect more consciously on it by listening in on another group's conversation. In this section, participants will be given 20 minutes to read two short articles and to jot down their notes and thoughts, using the following questions as a guide for the fishbowl exchange:

1. What do these articles tell us about U.S. intervention in foreign affairs?
2. How do the readings of these articles challenge or affirm your understanding of the history of migration to the United States?
3. How do these articles inform your pedagogy when approaching the newcomer classroom?
4. What do these articles tell us about global racism?
5. What are ways in which you, as a teacher and citizen of this country, can participate to break systems of oppression that generate trauma?

In the third section, the first round of discussion will take place for 20 minutes. The group of participants will be divided into two equal numbers of participants. There will be two circles: one circle will sit in the middle, and the second group in the outer circle. The ones in the outer circle will only listen as they take notes. The participants in the inner circle will carry on with the discussion, offering their responses to the questions while debating their takes on each of these

questions. There are five questions, and perhaps not all of them will be addressed, so it is at the facilitator's discretion to pick, according to their judgment, the most relevant ones. Once the group reaches 20 minutes of discussion, participants can have a short break, before coming back to the next round of discussion. In the fourth section, the same procedure will be repeated, but this time the outer and inner circles will switch roles. In this way, every participant will have the chance to speak, listen, debate, and take notes on the articles provided.

Lastly, the fifth section will allow participants to reflect on the lives of migrant students through Richard Blanco's poem, "Como Tú / Like You / Like Me." Richard Blanco was part of Obama's second inauguration, and the poem I included here is a continuation of Roque Dalton's poem, "Cómo tú." Dalton was a Salvadoran poet and revolutionary assassinated in Salvador in 1975. This last section offers participants the opportunity to reflect and feel through the poetry of struggle, solidarity, belonging, and beauty.

Part II: The Newcomer Classroom: What Is in My Locus of Control? What Can I Do to Ameliorate Trauma So Students Can Thrive?

The second part of the teach-in hopes to invite participants to reflect on ideas and strategies they have implemented already, or would like to implement in the classroom through the reading of articles by trauma-informed scholars. I included in this chapter a combination of 17 articles from different online journals and magazines, such as *Teaching Tolerance*, *The American Federation of Teachers*, KQED articles engaging the work of Zaretta Hammond and Alex Shevrin Venet, articles from *EdSurge*, an article from Alex Shevrin Venet's blog, *Unconditional Learning*, and two articles from Karen Costa's LinkedIn page. Costa's work

focuses on higher education and online pedagogy. Her articles are extremely relevant to understanding the use of cameras in the age of Covid, and they shed light on trauma awareness from an equity perspective in the classroom, especially when asking students to turn their cameras on. Furthermore, I included an article from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), an article from Communities for Just Schools Fund (CJSF), a national philanthropy that supports the power of grassroots organizing to transform the education system, and two articles by Dena Simmons from Leadership for Educational Equity. All these articles offer inspiring ideas, advice, and strategies to implement in the classroom, while at the same time challenge or de-center or normatively white understanding of social-emotional learning and trauma-informed practices.

In the first section, participants will be invited to do a check-in called “the rose and the thorn,” per Alex Shevrin Venet’s check-in. From the start, this check-in offers participants the opportunity to have their voices heard. They are invited to share a rose, something positive, and a thorn, something negative going on in their life. From the very beginning, every voice is heard in the community space. This section should take 20 minutes. To ensure this timing, each participant has one minute to reflect on their day and feelings, so once the group completes sharing everyone will be ready to participate.

In the second section, participants will be divided into groups or pairs (two to three participants per group), in preparation for the gallery walk. They will read the article assigned to their pair/small group and they will make a poster. Participants will have 30 minutes for the process. First, they will read the article and discuss their takeaways, strategies, and ideas offered by the article. Then they will make a poster, including the name of the article, the author’s name,

and their takeaways, plus one to three strategies to mitigate trauma in the classroom. Participants will spend around 15 minutes to read the article and another 15 minutes to discuss and create their poster. Once the poster is created, each group will place the poster on the walls of the room, approximately six inches apart from each other. Under each poster, there should be a table with Post-its and pens. By now, facilitators will offer participants a break of five minutes.

In the third section, the gallery walk will take place, where each group will have the opportunity to read and review the poster in the room. The gallery walk allows a space in which information can flow in a seamless and open exchange, and a wide range of material and perspectives can enter into one conversation. Facilitators can offer each group three to five minutes to review and write notes on a Post-it about a strategy named on the poster they have already implemented, how successful they were in doing it, or a strategy they will be interested in applying and why. Post-its will be placed on top of the poster, and after the time allotted groups will rotate to inquire into another poster.

Lastly, the fourth section will allow participants to reflect on Lilla Watson's poem, "If You Have Come Here to Help Me," which expresses the power of understanding that liberation is a collective struggle that must be fought by all people, with all people, and for all people. This last section offers participants the opportunity to reflect and feel through poetry of authenticity and liberation.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

[They are] full of strength but surrounded with trouble. Glory to the one who in the heavy hour of trial by fire, will be on the side of the people—such as it is, and shame on those who forsake it. (Lunacharsky, 1918)

Conclusions

The bottom line for educators working with newcomer students in the United States today is that trauma gravely affects the chances those students have to grow and thrive. As I mentioned at the outset, trauma enters and exits classrooms daily, whether teachers see it or not (Dutro, 2011). Moreover, as I have highlighted in this project, trauma frequently intensifies due to the lack of cultural and sociopolitical awareness on the part of educators, school staff, and administration. Furthermore, trauma's consequences are high, not only for learners, but also for teachers, schools, communities, and society at large. This project offers an entry point into conversations on how socio-political awareness and the implementation of strategies to mitigate trauma in the classroom are part and parcel of the work of newcomers educators, administrators and school staff need to address.

On the one hand, conversations on sociopolitical awareness comprise a necessary step for educators to break away from the conservative, anti-immigrant, and white-centered understanding of immigrant students' lives. In the first section of the teach-in, I offer an excerpt from Aviva Chomsky's (2007) book, *They Take Our Jobs! And 20 Other Myths About Migration* called, "Myth 7: The Rules Apply to Everyone, so new immigrants need to follow them just as immigrants in the past did." In this excerpt, Aviva Chomsky (2007) reminds us that "most of

today's immigrants come from countries where the United States has been deeply involved in the past hundred years” (pp. 56-57). Also, the author challenges what Americans have been taught, a curriculum and general cultural episteme that centers on whiteness and where everyone else’s experience is secondary.

Moreover, I offer a more recent article by economist Jeff Faux (2017), “How US Foreign Policy Helped Create the Immigration Crisis,” which aligns with Chomsky’s affirmation on U.S intervention. Faux (2017) states that “for at least 150 years, the United States has intervened with arms, political pressure, and foreign aid in order to protect the business and military elites of these countries who have prospered by impoverishing their people” (“How US Foreign Policy”). Although Faux focuses on Latin American migration, the article remains relevant to understanding and reflecting on U.S. foreign policy in a number of contemporary contexts. What is particularly relevant about this article is that Faux does not only address the issue of migration as only a domestic issue. He talks about the debate on immigration, how different sectors of our nation prey upon the lives of migrants, from Republicans to Democrats, and he further addresses how these debates lose focus on the role of foreign policies in pushing people out of their countries, driving immigrants to be stuck in between US domestic policy and US foreign policy.

This first section offers teachers an entry point to address, study, implement strategies, and advocate for the well being of students inside and outside classrooms and schools. I consider this first part a robust bedrock on which to offer support for our newcomer students inside and outside the school. Yet it is most importantly a way to dismantle an imperialist and white-centered understanding of international issues, thus allowing teachers to be allies, and even more, freedom fighters for the liberation of all peoples from any nation on the globe.

On the other hand, I present articles that I collected throughout the project. These articles provide the most relevant advice to mitigate trauma, offering strategies and the teaching of social and emotional learning to students through an anti-racist lens. In this second part of the teach-in, I offer teachers a variety of articles from renowned educators and scholars, addressing the issue of trauma by decentering whiteness, bringing about tangible tools to implement in the classroom. As I desired, this section offers participants the possibility to explore and share different strategies and techniques they have been implementing and those they would like to acquire in order to ameliorate trauma in their classrooms.

Lastly, the significance of this project rests on the push for collaboration and dialogue among school personnel and teachers. All adults involved in educating young and newly arrived scholars to the country should be involved in these efforts. We (educators and school personnel) are all in need of tools for listening, empathizing, and supporting immigrant students succeed. The teach-in is designed to bring together the entire school community to collectively reflect on our history, our biases, and our resources. It is only in unity that we can be stronger and more successful in supporting our newcomer students. This work can only be done in solidarity with one another and in perpetual communication and support of each other.

“We Are Still in the Middle of a Freaking Global Pandemic”

As I’m finishing putting this project together, and as Alex Shevrin Venet (2020) said in one of her workshops, I have to reiterate: “we are still in the middle of a freaking global pandemic” (“Teaching Unpacked,” 2020). These words resonated deeply, as they probably did with the rest of the participants. Indeed two months after that workshop, we are still undergoing

this issue. I have written this project in the middle of a pandemic, teaching from home with a toddler and a husband who is also a high school teacher. Like most of my fellow citizens and non-citizens, but residents of this land with or without documentation, I have struggled. More or less than others, but I have struggled. This project was born from a request for the creation of a workshop for my fellow colleagues during a time of global and institutional crises, ones that further expose the inequities in our educational and political system. Moreover, the theory and ideas needed to perpetuate these conversations are rooted in my experience as an immigrant and an immigrant teacher working with immigrant and refugee students. Since this is all happening “in the middle of a freaking global pandemic,” the project can be adapted and done online, but also in person. It offers a space for both, and also for creativity and the expansion and addition of more meetings.

Another aspect experienced during this pandemic was my life on social media, something I have refused until Covid hit. I wanted to be in touch with my students and then opened an Instagram account. That led to being more active on my previously unused Twitter account. On this platform, I met amazing educators and scholars of trauma-informed practice. Although I was always afraid and skeptical of social media, I manage to place boundaries, and yet make connections and community with people and educators worth meeting, like my new friend Erin E. Silcox, whose blog (<https://www.traumainformedteachers.com/>) offers valuable resources in the implementation of trauma informed-practices and literacy equity.

Lastly, I wish I would have the time to include the work of Paul Gorsky on literacy equity and social justice in education, Gholdy Muhammad’s work on *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework For Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy* (2020), Zaretta Hammond’s

work on *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* (2015), and Alex Shevrin Venet's forthcoming book *Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education* (2021), which can be preordered at <https://www.phoenixbooks.biz/book/9780393714739>.

This project is an ongoing process so that those who struggle and look for light to mitigate trauma in the field of education can keep pushing and moving forward. I would like to think that we got each other, those of us many working at many different levels, in the classroom, in research, and in leadership positions. My hope is that we all continue this work and persevere and preserve ourselves in these positions with love, strength, and commitment for the transformation of society and the world.

Recommendations

I finish this project with a feeling of incompleteness, perhaps because my life intertwines with this work in such a profound manner that I feel there is so much left unsaid. However, it may also be the feeling of what lays ahead. I open this section with the words of van Dernoort Lipsky (2009), "trauma stewardship is based on age-old wisdom. It isn't necessarily fast acting--but it is reliable, trustworthy, accessible, and doable. It requires some trust that taking the first step, and then the second, and then the third step matters" (p. 123). These words are a reminder that nothing is incomplete but a process. I will add a few recommendations that I was envisioning to add to this project but that time and life circumstances did not allow for it. I will state what I recommend for *Teach-In Part I: The United States of America, the "Best Country in the World": Exploring The United States' Foreign Policies and How These Policies Affect*

Migration, and for *Teach-In Part 2: The Newcomer Classroom: What is In My Locus of Control? What Can I Do to Ameliorate Trauma so Students Can Thrive?*, as well as some final thoughts.

In *Teach-In Part I: The United States of America, the “Best Country in the World”*: *Exploring The United States’ Foreign Policies and How These Policies Affect Migration*, I would like to invite the facilitator to have a partner with whom to read and discuss the articles before the day of the teach-in. In fact, the co-facilitation of the space would make it more engaging and smooth. Reading and discussing the articles will allow for a more clear presentation from part of the facilitators, smoothing the connection between understanding foreign policies and the implementation of trauma-informed practices in the newcomer classroom, eliminating white-centered and conservative understanding of what newcomers students support entails. As I stated in the project itself, we need to bring to the surface the devastating consequences of neoliberalism and the United States’ policies around the world. Educating ourselves is a way to connect to our students’ journeys and make our interventions relevant to effectively embrace and support our immigrant and refugee students.

In *Teach-In Part 2: The Newcomer Classroom: What is In My Locus of Control? What Can I Do to Ameliorate Trauma so Students Can Thrive?*, I will encourage the facilitators to read the articles and discuss them prior to the teach-in. However, it is not necessary. These articles are fairly short, concise, and powerful. My only recommendation would be to check the dates of the articles and feel free to replace them according to the relevant context of your teach-in’s implementation. The conversation about articles that I offer here range from 2018 to 2020, and many are related to the age of COVID-19. This is a section that can be easily modified and adjusted according to the times. My advice is that facilitators rely on the writers and authors I

have included in the section. Most of these writers are well-known and committed to unbiased and antiracist trauma-informed practices and socio-emotional teaching.

Furthermore, this is just a take-off, and facilitators and those looking to address trauma in the newcomer classroom should be courageous and fearless to expand. As I close this chapter, I lament two sections that for a matter of time I had to leave out: one on intergenerational trauma, and one on secondary traumatic stress disorder (also called, vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue trauma exposure-response, and empathic strain). First, on intergenerational trauma, I would like to leave the names of Resmaa Menakem and Nadine Burke Harris to be explored and discussed. Their work and analysis on intergenerational trauma have been insightful and powerful to our present times. Second, on secondary traumatic stress disorder (also called vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, trauma exposure-response, and empathic strain), or what Laura Van Dernoot Lipsky (2009) takes and turns into the “trauma stewardship,” I would like to recommend the readings of the aforementioned author and text. In *Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*, van Dernoot Lipsky (2009) addresses the hardships and lives of all those people, among these teachers, at the forefront of dealing with trauma in a way that demands attention, accountability, critical thinking, and courageous reflection.

As a final thought, a third part should be added including students’ and teachers’ narratives on trauma: what students experience in the classroom and what teachers struggle with in mitigating trauma. However, I have reached the end of this project and have done the best with the minimum time I have carved out into my busy life as a mother and a teacher. Nonetheless, I feel that this is a small burst toward a bigger idea and even bigger work that fearless educators will be able to take on, expand on, and implement in their workplaces.

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APPENDIX

Mitigating Trauma in The Newcomer Classroom: A Commitment Beyond Borders

Mitigating Trauma in The Newcomer Classroom: A Commitment Beyond Borders

Justice is what love looks like in public. (West, n.d.)

A Brief Introduction

At the beginning of the school year during the age of Covid-19, I was asked to lead a professional development (PD) with one of my colleagues on implementing social and emotional learning and the implementation of trauma-informed practices. Since I was in the process of reading and collecting information for my field project, I was thrilled to be asked to lead this PD. I was excited to share my compilation of articles and the names of incredible scholars I had recently discovered in the field of trauma-informed practices. However, I didn't like the idea of calling it a "professional development," since this gave me a sense of expertise, placing participants as passive listeners. I wanted my colleagues to collaborate, to be a part of the quest to understand and implement trauma-informed best practices.

What you will see here is what I would like to call a Teach-In. In 2009, I participated in teach-ins in regard to educational budget cuts in the state of California. I was impressed by the discussions and active participation on a horizontal level by students, instructors, parents, and sometimes young children. I experienced teach-ins for the second time in 2011, during the Occupy Movement. Teach-ins gave me a sense of self-agency and the possibility of being an active participant in changing society's course. They give one a sense of freedom: the idea that you do not have to wait to vote for politicians to come and solve our problems, politicians who know little about the people's struggles. What I experienced in teach-ins was a participatory

space in constant discussion and collaborative exploration, a space to face and solve social problems for the well-being of all. In a teach-in, every voice counts, and everyone works towards the same goal.

In this teach-in, I seek out seeds for a community, for critical thinking, and for solidarity among educational workers of all levels in order to bring love and support to our classrooms so our newcomers can succeed in their learning journey and be able to dream for a better world.

-Laura Soledad Garriguez

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Teach-In Part I

The United States of America, the “Best Country in the World”: Exploring the United States’ Foreign Policies and How These Policies Affect Migration.

Goal: To bring the school community into a deep reflection on the social and political economic context and factors that led to their students’ migration journey. In addition, to deeply reflect on how our understanding of social and political economic developments affect our pedagogies.

Day 1 Agenda (1 hour and 30 minutes)

Section 1 10 min.	Opening and norming the space
Section 2 20 min.	In preparation for the fishbowl: Readings and notes taken. Offer participants 20 minutes to read the two articles and take notes on the discussion questions.
Section 3 20 min.	Fishbowl Activity (round 1): Have participants discuss the readings in the inner circle.
5 min	Break!
Section 4 20 min.	Fishbowl Activity (round 2): Have participants switch from the outer circle to the inner circle to continue the discussion.
Section 5 15 min.	Closing: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read (or have someone volunteer to read) aloud the poem: <i>Cómo tú/ Like you/ Like Me</i> by Richard Blanco. 2. Offer participants 5 minutes to think and write their reactions to the poem. 3. Whip Around: Have participants share their responses to the poem.

PART I: Detailed Explanation of Activities by Sections

Section 1: Opening and Norming the Space

In this first section, you will need a facilitator to explain to participants that for time purposes we have laid out some common community agreements and values. This is an important part of building community in the classroom. Ask participants if they agree with the community agreements initially proposed, and if there is anything they would like to add, this is the time they can do so.

Community Agreements:

1. Be honest and open
2. Ensure equity of voice
3. Respect confidentiality

Section 2: Preparation for the Fishbowl

Materials needed for this activity:

- *Photocopies of each article according to the number of participants.*
- *Highlighters*
- *Pencils and pens*

In this section, we would want to offer time for participants to read the articles, to reflect on the questions, and to take notes. The facilitator will share with participants that as we embark on addressing trauma in the newcomer classroom, we need to bring the socioeconomic reality of our world to the surface. We need to bring to the surface the devastating consequences of neoliberalism and the United States' policies around the world. Educating ourselves is a way to connect to our students' journeys and make our interventions relevant to effectively embrace and support our immigrant and refugee students.

Here are some questions to offer participants to start out the discussion:

1. What do these articles tell us about US intervention in foreign affairs?
2. How do the readings of these articles challenge or affirm your understanding on the history of migration to the United States?
3. How do these articles inform your pedagogy when approaching the newcomer classroom?
4. What do these articles tell us about global racism?
5. What are ways in which you, as a teacher and citizen of this country, can participate to break systems of oppression that generate trauma?

Readings:

How US Foreign Policy Helped Create the Immigration Crisis

By Jeff Faux, October 18, 2017

<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/how-us-foreign-policy-helped-create-the-immigration-crisis/>

Immigration Mythology: The Rules Apply to Everyone

By Aviva Chomsky, July 29, 2010

<https://www.beaconbroadside.com/broadside/2010/07/immigration-mythology-the-rules-apply-to-everyone.html>

Section 3: Fishbowl Activity (Round 1)

The Fishbowl Activity is a well-known activity among educators. The participants are divided in two groups. One-half of the participants will sit in an inner circle (or the fishbowl) and the other half of the participants will sit in an outer circle. In the inner circle participants will carry out the discussion, and in the outer circle, participants will take notes. Allow 20 minutes for this first round. Lastly, the facilitator will be posing questions to move the conversation alone.

Section 4: Fishbowl Activity (Round 2)

After 20 minutes, the facilitator will give the signal to switch seats. Participants in the outer circle will step into the inner circle (fishbowl) and start talking, and the participants in the fishbowl will sit in the outer circle and start taking notes. The conversation will continue for another 20 minutes. If you need extra information on how to conduct the fishbowl activity, check this article from [Teaching Tolerance](#).

Section 5: Closing

This is the closing section where we will invite participants to reflect deeply on the lives of immigrants. The reading of the poem will take less than three minutes. You can also play the recording depending on where and how the teach-in takes place. Offer participants time to reflect and write their own reactions to the poem. Finally, offer a space for participants to voice their feelings and reactions to the poem in relation to the readings.

Teach-In Part II

The Newcomer Classroom: What Is in My Locus of Control? What Can I Do to Ameliorate Trauma so Students Can Thrive?

Goal: To explore strategies and ideas to mitigate trauma in the newcomer classroom, and to exchange prior expertise, knowledge, and experiences relating to this issue.

Materials needed for this activity:

- 3 copies of each article according to the numbers of participants.
- Markers
- Poster paper
- Pens
- Post-its

Day 2 Agenda (1 hour and 30 minutes)

Section 1 20 min	Rose and Thorn Check-In
Section 2 30 min.	Gallery Walk (round 1): In preparation for the Gallery Walk <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The participants take 15 minutes to read the article 2. The participants take 15 to create a poster
5 min	Break!
Section 3 15 min.	Gallery Walk (round 2): Gallery Walk <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants walk around the room to learn about the colleague's work 2. Participant leave comments in post-its
Section 4 20 min.	Closing: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Read (or have someone volunteer to read) the poem aloud <i>If you have come here to help me</i> by Lila Watson. (page 11) 5. Offer participants 5 minutes to think and write their reactions to the poem. 6. Whip Around: Have participants share their responses to the poem.

PART II: Detailed Explanation of Activities by Sections

Section 1: Rose And Thorn Check-In

As trauma-informed scholar Alex Shevrin Venet calls it, the “rose and thorn” check-in is a simple but powerful class opening activity that gives everyone the opportunity to be heard. This is an activity designed for students, but nevertheless, it has also offered adults a space to show vulnerability and respect for what others in the same space are enduring.

In this opening, a facilitator will ask the group to share their rose and thorn. The rose will be something positive, and the thorn something negative. Depending on the size of the group, you can invite participants to share a word or a phrase as their rose and thorn. For example, my rose is that today is Halloween, and my thorn is that I do not have a costume.

Section 2: In Preparation for the Gallery Walk Activity

Materials needed for this activity:

- 20 Posters (or 1 for each group, depending on the size of teach-in)
- 18 boxes with different colored markers (or 1 box of markers per group)
- Postits
- Black Pens

First, assign 3 participants per article. Offer participants 15 minutes to read the articles, and discuss strategies they have already implemented, strategies they would like to implement.

Second, offer approximately 15 minutes for participants to create a poster with:

1. Name of the article and author
2. Major key takeaways
3. One to three strategies, techniques, or ideas to implement in the classroom.

Articles to be Explored (facilitator(s) will select the most relevant or diverse range to share with the participants):

#	Title and Link	Author	Theme	Group Participants
1	<u>Making Shapes in Zoom</u>	Karen Costa July, 2020	Engagement in the synchronous classroom.	
2	<u>How to Develop Culturally Responsive Teaching for Distance Learning</u>	Amielle Major (draws from the work of Zaretta Hammond) May, 2020	Culturally Responsive Teaching	
3	<u>How Can Educators Tap Into Research to Increase Engagement During Remote Learning?</u>	Kerry Rice Kristin Kipp May, 2020	Community Building/ Engagement	
4	<u>When SEL is used as Another Form of Policing</u>	Cierra Kaler-Jones May 7, 2020	SEL for Black and Brown Student	
5	<u>An Intersection of SEL and Equity</u>	An interview with Dena Simmons 2020	SEL and equity	
6	<u>Self-Determination, SEL, and hating yoga</u>	Alex Shevrin Venet January, 2019	We are here to guide not to save.	
7	<u>Educational Equity Issues: Bio-Social-Emotional Needs of Immigrant Students, with a focus on Central Americans.</u>	Beth Hood 2018	Immigrant Students/ Additional Challenges	
8	<u>A Trauma-Informed Approach to Teaching Trough Coronavirus</u>	Teaching Tolerance Staff March, 2020	Supporting students in the transition to distance learning	

9	<u>Four Core Priorities For Trauma-Informed Distance Learning</u>	Kara Newhouse April, 2020	Trauma-Informed Distance Learning	
10	<u>Focusing on Students Well-being in Times of Crisis</u>	Cathleen Beachboard March, 2020	Supporting Students Safety through the 3 C's	
11	<u>If We Aren't Addressing Racism, We Aren't Addressing Trauma</u>	Dena Simmons June, 2020	Addressing Trauma and Confronting the dangers of white privilege	
12	<u>We Can't Afford Whitewashed Socio-Emotional Learning</u>	Dena Simmons April, 2019	Looking for Courageous educators	
13	<u>Mindfulness Won't Save Us. Fixing the System Will</u>	Cristina Torres May, 2019	Meditation is not the solution; it's a tool.	
14	<u>Cameras Be Damned</u>	Karen Costa May, 2020	Trauma aware teaching practices during online synchronous learning.	
15	<u>Trauma-Informed Teaching Strategies</u>	Jessica Minahan October, 2019	Student-Teacher Interactions as a mitigator of Trauma	
16	<u>Why mindfulness and Trauma-Informed Teaching Don't Always Go Together</u>	Katrina Shwartz January, 2019	Responding in an empathetic way	
17	<u>Teaching in a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom</u>	Patricia A. Jennings 2019	What can teachers do to support students who have experienced Trauma?	

Section 3: Gallery Walk Activity

In this section, posters should be placed around the room. Invite participants to walk around and read each poster, leaving comments, written in postits, on the posters about a strategy named on the poster they have already implemented, and how successful they were in doing it, or a strategy they will be interested in applying and why. Remember, right next to each poster you will like to have a table with Post-its and pens.

Section 4: Closing

This is the closing section where we would want to invite participants to reflect deeply on the lives of immigrants. The reading of the poem will take less than three minutes. Offer participants time to reflect and write their own reactions to the poem. Finally, offer a space for participants to voice their feelings and reactions to the poem in relation to the readings.

excerpt from *If You Have Come Here to Help Me*

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.

If you have come here to blame others,
You are wasting your time...
But if you have come because
Your liberation is bound up with mine,
Then let us work together.

If you have come here in defense of yourself
You are wasting your time...
But if you have come because
Your liberation is bound up with mine,
Then let us work together.

- Lilla Watson, an Indigenous Australian woman