

Supporting All Students: Teacher Education and the Realities of Trauma

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses the potential for preparing teachers to instruct students who are living in contexts of trauma as well as the implications of excluding such preparation. Literature in education, social work, and health care are drawn from to highlight important concepts related to trauma. These include types of trauma, effects of trauma on learning, trauma-informed teaching strategies, and the secondary trauma often experienced by bystanders such as teachers. The current state of trauma training in U.S. teacher educational programs is considered generally as well as within the authors' specific institutions. Against this backdrop, case study research was conducted of novice and experienced teachers in the United States teaching in contexts in which their students with immigrant and refugee backgrounds were experiencing the impacts of political trauma. Interviews took place immediately after executive orders imposing immigration limits intended to stop or reduce refugee resettlement and asylum applications were signed. Interviews were analyzed using a qualitative theoretical analysis methodology to identify how teachers supported their students, each other, and themselves during this time of trauma. The findings included both promising teaching approaches as well as a glaring absence of explicit support given to teachers directly and a lack of teacher self-care. The authors suggest a re-envisioning of teacher preparation responsive to the impact of trauma that can lead to the well-being of both students and their teachers.

KEYWORDS: Teacher preparation; trauma-sensitive teaching; secondary trauma; teacher support.

Apoyo a todos los estudiantes: la formación del profesorado y las realidades del trauma

RESUMEN

Este artículo aborda el potencial para preparar a los maestros para instruir a los estudiantes que viven en contextos de trauma, así como las implicaciones de excluir dicha preparación. La literatura en educación, trabajo social y atención médica se extrae para resaltar conceptos importantes relacionados con el trauma. Estos incluyen tipos de trauma, efectos del trauma en el aprendizaje, estrategias de enseñanza informadas sobre el trauma y el trauma secundario que a menudo experimentan los espectadores, como los maestros. El estado actual de la capacitación en trauma en los programas educativos para maestros de EE. UU. Se considera generalmente, así como dentro de las instituciones específicas de los autores. En este contexto, se realizó una investigación de estudio de caso de maestros novatos y experimentados en los Estados Unidos que enseñaban en contextos en los que sus estudiantes con antecedentes de inmigrantes y refugiados experimentaban los impactos del trauma político. Las entrevistas tuvieron lugar inmediatamente después de que se firmaron órdenes ejecutivas que imponían límites de inmigración destinados a detener o reducir el reasentamiento de refugiados y las solicitudes de asilo. Las entrevistas se analizaron utilizando una metodología de análisis teórico cualitativo para identificar cómo los maestros apoyaron a sus estudiantes, entre ellos y a ellos mismos durante este tiempo de trauma. Los hallazgos incluyeron tanto enfoques de enseñanza prometedores como una evidente ausencia de apoyo explícito brindado directamente a los maestros y la falta de autocuidado de los maestros. Los autores sugieren una nueva visualización de la preparación del maestro que responda al impacto del trauma que puede conducir al bienestar de los estudiantes y sus maestros.

PALABRAS CLAVE: preparación del maestro; enseñanza sensible al trauma; trauma secundario; apoyo al profesorado.

Introduction

In the chaos and turmoil of 2020, as practically every corner of the globe, economy, and institutions were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures put into place to limit exposure, teachers' work transitioning to online teaching was a tremendous shift. Within just a matter of months K-12 teachers across the United States transformed shaky, hesitant synchronous sessions into engaging, fluent, tech-savvy lessons for students. Truly newsworthy, this aspect of teachers' lives did not make headlines. Instead, tales of teachers' roles as first responders in their students' lives shocked the populace. Teachers called 911 and managed their students' well-being when, on live camera, a student was assaulted (Gesualdi-Gilmore, 2020), an intruder broke into two students' home (Rahman, 2020), a student's mother was shot during a domestic violence incident (Peiser, 2020), a student shot himself during class

(Ahumada, 2020), and a student's grandmother needed an ambulance (Bush, 2021). Trusted teachers have always been one of the first places students turn to in the midst of stress or the aftermath of a tragedy. The headlines in these cases arose from the limelight, exemplifying this additional burden teachers bare of acting as first responders of a different sort when students experience trauma. It is this role that the authors believe needs special consideration in the teacher education curriculum. In this article, we build context for the consideration of trauma impacts on students and teachers, report the results of a study focused on one specific type of trauma, and then share implications that we see for our own teacher education programs and possibly others as well.

Trauma, as defined by the American Psychological Association, is "an emotional response to a terrible event" (para. 1). Types of trauma include one-time catastrophic events such as accidents, violence, and natural disasters; repeated chronic exposure to ongoing stressful situations such as abuse or poverty; and insidious trauma in which a sociocultural setting (such as a dangerous neighborhood or an unwelcoming community) incites fear. A study by the Kaiser Foundation found that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are "linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021, para. 3). For example, when children grow up in repeated stressful, traumatic circumstances such as experiencing or witnessing violence, living in a household with substance use/abuse, mental illness, and/ or food insecurity, there is an increased likelihood that there will be impacts on the child's physical, mental, emotional, and academic well-being, and that these negative impacts may follow the child into adulthood. The more ACEs a child has experienced, the more likely they are to have lasting negative effects (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) and the more likely they are to have challenges with their academics in the present day. A study of students in primary school reported that "children with at least three ACEs were three times more likely to experience academic failure, four times more likely to experience health problems, five times more likely to experience attendance problems, and six times more likely to have behavioral problems" than their peers with fewer/ no ACEs (Blodgett & Lanigan, 2018, p. 137).

Having ACEs is common, and does not mean that a person will absolutely have challenges in childhood and later in life; however, research clearly shows that the risk is higher. It is estimated that over 60% of all adults have experienced at least one ACE, and over 15% have four or more. When acute trauma (e.g., accidents, natural disasters) and chronic trauma (e.g., ACEs) are taken into consideration along with recent insidious political trauma such as Asian American hate crimes, exacerbated by financial, social, familial, and emotional impacts connected to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is probable that more people are living with trauma today than ever before. With prevalence rates so high, it is certain that teachers will have learners in their classrooms who come from contexts of trauma. As such, it is imperative that all educators understand the effects that trauma can have on the brain and learning as well as trauma-sensitive teaching strategies that can be utilized to both mitigate the effects of trauma on the brain and to better support all students within the classroom.

Trauma exposure produces chemical and physical changes in the brain that impede typical brain function. The areas of the brain that are most affected by these changes are those that are responsible for functions such as memory, organizing and recalling information, attention, and emotion regulation- all skills that are required for learning and performing well in school. As such, it is no surprise that students who have been exposed to trauma are more likely to have poor academic achievement (Chafouleas et al., 2019). Moreover, adolescents who come from traumatic backgrounds have an increased risk for low self-esteem, drug and alcohol use/abuse, truancy, suicide, and other risk-taking behaviors (Woodbridge et al., 2016).

While supporting students who have experienced trauma may feel daunting, research does show that the effects of trauma can be reversed. Neuroplasticity, “a general umbrella term that refers to the brain’s ability to modify, change, and adapt both structure and function throughout life and in response to experience” (Voss et al., 2017, para 1), is the brain’s capacity to heal and recover from trauma. Research shows that for children, the most important factor to facilitate neuroplasticity is having at least one caring, competent, stable adult in the child’s life (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2017). While ideally that adult would be a parent or a family member, it need not be; it could be a teacher. Salvatore and Crain de Galarce (2017) give hopeful urgency for teachers to develop trauma-sensitive strategies:

Research also shows that children are resilient, and their brains are flexible. Given the right environmental conditions and appropriate interventions, the severity of trauma symptoms can be reduced..., and when teachers fully understand their students’ needs, they can provide the physical and emotional space that support what researchers call neuroplasticity—or the brain’s ability to rewire itself, forming new neural connections.

Thus, while trauma has a negative effect on learning, learning also can undo trauma. (37)

Research on inclusion of trauma-sensitivity training at the university level can predominately be found in the medical, psychological, counseling, and social work fields. Clearly there is a necessity for these programs to include trauma-training; however, we posit that the education field should do so as well. Teacher preparation programs are tasked with providing instruction to help new teachers be successful in the profession. In order to prepare future teachers to support all students, it is imperative that trauma-sensitive pedagogy be included in the teacher preparation curriculum. However, in our personal experiences, the inclusion of trauma as a topic to be explored is glaringly absent from teacher preparation classes. For example, while our own universities do include training on meeting the diverse learning needs of students and culturally-responsive teaching strategies, supporting students who have experienced trauma is not explicitly included in the curriculum. Individual instructors may intentionally address trauma in their courses, but it is not because it is required nor even suggested. Rather, it is included because the instructor has a personal interest in the topic and chooses to include it in their individual classes.

It appears that across the United States, our universities are not alone in their lack of focus on preparing teachers to support learners who have experienced trauma in general and students who come from refugee and immigrant backgrounds specifically. A review of teacher education literature spanning 1980-2001 found that “in an examination of 579 articles published by the Journal of Teacher Education between

1980 and 2001... No articles spoke practically or concretely in terms of strategies, skills, appropriate content knowledge for teachers” (Goodwin, 2002, p. 160). Like Goodwin, we found a dearth of research regarding trauma-sensitive teaching as a component of teacher preparation, even when spanning the search to the present day. However, in our search for scholarship surrounding trauma-training in teacher preparation, we were heartened to see a recent uptick in articles highlighting the importance of teaching about compassion fatigue and steps that can be taken to combat it. Because teachers’ roles as first responders of a different sort can take a grave toll, they need to understand the importance of self-care and setting boundaries as well as specific actions they can take in order to help themselves to be emotionally healthy so that they can be the best teachers for their students. Explains Maryam Kia-Keating in an interview regarding stress and coping strategies for students from immigrant backgrounds and their teachers: “Best practices need to start at the organizational and structural level, where schools themselves are attuned to the needs of their staff, and provide accommodations and resources to improve the health and well-being of their faculty” (Strom, n.d., para. 13).

It is against this backdrop that we explored case studies of novice and experienced teachers in the United States teaching in contexts in which their students with immigrant and refugee backgrounds were experiencing the impacts of insidious political trauma (see description below), and we posit that these findings can be applied to the complex traumas students are facing around the world today. Specifically, in this study we sought to answer the following research questions: How did teachers identify and experience support immediately following the signing of Executive Orders 13,767 and 13,769?

Methodology

This study is part of a larger study (Darragh & Petrie, 2019; Petrie & Darragh, 2018) that investigated the emotions of eight K-12 ESL teachers in the United States immediately after the then President of the United States signed Executive Orders 13,767 and 13,769. These orders, which the media called the “Muslim Ban” had several components focused on immigrants and refugees, such as restricting travel and refugee resettlement, primarily from countries with majority-Muslim populations; calling for massive deportation for those who are undocumented; and calling for the building of a border wall and additional detention facilities for undocumented immigrants attempting to enter the United States. In this current study, we look more deeply at the teachers’ individual and combined responses to the political trauma their students were experiencing at that time immediately following the signing of the Orders, specifically focusing on how teachers identified and experienced support during this time of trauma for their students.

As professors of TESOL teacher preparation with a combined forty years’ teaching experience, we first received expedited ethical approval through our universities’ Institutional Review Board. Upon gaining approval, we utilized a convenience sample for our participants, directly contacting via phone, text, and email several K-12 teachers of English Language Learners that we knew, as well as inviting teachers

through social media sources such as facebook, facebook messenger, and WhatsApp. We specifically reached out to teachers who primarily worked with students from refugee and immigrant backgrounds, targeting those we felt would be interested in participating in our research. Eight teachers agreed to be interviewed for this case study project. The participants all identified as White, with seven participants identifying as female and one identifying as male. While not a diverse representation, these demographics do match the overall demographics of the teacher work force in the United States. The participants taught in K-12 schools across the United States, and their teaching experience ranged from a student teaching intern with no solo classroom teaching experience to a veteran teacher of thirty-five years. Interviews were conducted within six weeks of the signing of the Executive Orders in order to best capture the experiences of the teachers while they and their students were in the midst of the emotional trauma they were feeling. Interviews were conducted in the mode that each individual teacher chose (in person, Skype, phone), with the first author interviewing five teachers, and the second author interviewing three. We prepared seventeen questions for the interview protocol (see Appendix), asking a variety of questions such as, “Have you seen evidence of an impact from any recent events in your school community? Has your school community carried out any deliberate responses to recent events?, and What is your vision of your role as a teacher of ELLs?

All interviews were transcribed verbatim by the two researchers and then were analyzed utilizing a qualitative theoretical analysis using pre-determined categories (Flick, 2014). Previous research indicated three potential effective means by which to mitigate the effects of secondary trauma and compassion fatigue: access to similar others, colleagues who were simultaneously working to manage their feelings (Petrie & Darragh, 2018), practicing self-care, and seeking outside support (Salvatore & Crain de Galarce, 2017). Thus, for this study we were especially interested in how and from where the teachers perceived that they were getting support during a challenging time. As such, while reading and re-reading the interviews, we focused on the comments when teachers discussed anything connected to feelings of support. Both researchers read and re-read the interview transcripts, identifying individual patterns and themes. Then the researchers met together and talked through individual codes, noting overlaps. Ultimately, three categories emerged: teachers supporting their own students; colleagues and administrators supporting the teachers’ students; and, a lack of support experienced.

Results

The findings in this study were significant both for what the teachers said as well as what they did not. Alongside teachers’ thundering reports of their own attempts to support their students of refugee and immigrant backgrounds was their silence on how they took care of themselves. Also present were a few powerful stories of the impact of colleagues. Below we share how teachers experienced support during a context of political trauma in the aftermath of the signing the Executive Orders

Teachers supporting their students

All eight teachers interviewed shared multiple examples of ways in which they attempted to support the distraught students in their classrooms. First and foremost, teachers sought to reaffirm their caring relationships with their students. They did so, for example, by carefully attending to how they greeted students, using the opportunity to reinforce their connection. Other teachers described their intentional demonstrations of support for students. For example, one teacher shared that she, tried “to make sure that by the end of the day everybody was told that we are happy you are here and we want you here.” Another explained, “I started this week with a conversation in all of my classes telling them that I love them and they are welcome in my classroom.”

Teachers’ reinforcement of their relationships with students included an interesting dimension—creating a boundary of an accepting space within the classroom beyond the reach of those associated with rejecting the students. One teacher found herself answering her students’ questions about her political beliefs and the political party she associated with. Although she had previously avoided revealing such personal information over the years, she felt that this time was different—that the students of refugee and immigrant backgrounds were actually asking whether she truly accepted and welcomed them in her classroom. Thus, she signaled that she did not belong among those that the students perceived were in favor of the Executive Orders which painted them as threats. Another teacher carried out a similar rhetorical move by creating a demarcation between the attitudes the Executive Orders encouraged citizens to take (to view refugees and immigrants as terrorists and criminals) and her own relationship to them. She explained, “I never had to be so direct about assuring them that they were safe, and that I am not the agent of the government, you know? That I am here for *them* and their success, not to follow some law.” Teachers were successful in creating a safe space in their classrooms that emanated from their own caring for their students. This created a place where students could then consider the Executive Orders in an academic way. For example, one teacher described the high emotions her students brought to class with them immediately following the signing of the Orders this way, “It was very tense and [we were] just kind of talking about... what people were saying in the media.”

When students reported multiple cases of bullying at many of the schools in the days following the signing of the Executive Orders, teachers responded by contrasting these anecdotal experiences against the attitudes of a majority of US residents. For example, one teacher tried to support her students by letting them know that she and so many others cared about and supported them by explicitly telling them, “You know the majority of Americans don’t feel this way. Yes, some kids said this (e.g. ‘They’re going to deport your ass; go back to Mexico’) to you, but you know that the majority of us, the vast majority of us, are happy to have you here.” She firmly planted herself before the students as belonging to the majority- those who welcomed and accepted all in the school, regardless of background.

Another element the teachers reported in their support of the students was the explicit information shared with students about their civil rights both to empower and reassure them.

Three of the teachers talked specifically about introducing rights as a vehicle to show support. For example, one teacher explained, “Well, we talked about Civil Rights, we talked about their immigration status. Since most of them are refugees, I said, ‘Well you know these are your rights here. You don’t have to let police into your house. You got here legally. You’re okay.’” Similarly, another teacher shared:

I gave them the information that our district shared with us about how to not answer the door if Immigration knocks and stuff like that. I’ve had to talk to them about, like, we will never ask them, and it’s nobody’s business about their status. We won’t allow the government or the police to come and try and take them; it’s the district policy.

Even the teachers of young children sensed their students’ heightened emotions. When speaking about her kindergarten students, for example, one teacher shared, “I had to kind of stop and explain to them that... everybody’s safe, and they’re not trying to come after you.” Clearly, the teachers interviewed for this study anticipated, sensed, and felt their students’ trauma and addressed it head-on through providing them with knowledge, resources, and affirmations of safety and support.

Colleagues and administrators supporting students

Five of the eight teachers interviewed also shared many examples of their colleagues and administrators showing support for their students, and, moreover, how much that meant to them as teachers of this vulnerable population. For example, one teacher mentioned that other teachers in the building had come to her to express interest in her students’ well-being. She said, “I’ve had conversations that have been started by mainstream teachers asking me, ‘How are your students doing? Are they worried? Are they scared? What can we do to help them?’” Another teacher shared, “I think they (the principal and other school leaders) are going out of their way to talk to the ELD (English Language Development) kids and just say ‘Hi.’ They are always in the cafeteria during lunch time and just asking ‘Hey, how are you doing?’ And having that friendly conversation in a very public place so people see it.” These teachers recognized the power in small gestures and felt supported personally when others were showing support to their students.

It wasn’t just verbally that members of the school community were showing support, they also were sending inclusive affirmations through visuals. Explained one teacher about her colleague, “Another teacher, she was making up signs like, ‘You’re always welcome here,’ and we made them in different languages.” Similarly, a teacher shared, “We have stickers that say Refugees Welcome, and many of our teachers have taken it upon themselves to put those up on their doors.” This teacher went on to share that explicit messages of support from the administrative level also had positive impacts. “We did get an email from the superintendent with the position of supporting our students and that students that are immigrants and newcomers are welcome in our community, and that has been really good to see that from the top of our school district we have people that have the same ideas that I do.” Another teacher said, “I

know a lot of teachers that see those (immigrant/refugee) students frequently have started wearing the safety pins as like a silent protest and a ‘we’re here for you.’” From safety pins to signs and verbal affirmations, in all cases, support for students from colleagues and the school community lightened the load for the teachers of the students in need. Teachers felt encouraged through the fact that they weren’t alone in with the heavy task of supporting their students in crisis.

Lack of support

The final category that emerged was with regards to a lack of support. Four teachers did not mention support coming from others, and one specifically indicated feeling unsupported. For these teachers, the effects of this perceived lack of support had negative impacts on both their students’ and their own emotional health. Explained one, “One of the reasons I have to reassure them (my students), is because our administration doesn’t really vocally support the district’s position on immigration, racism, bullying and those kind of things... There is no effort... So, I feel kind of disappointed.” Expanding on the concept that support for students should be a community-wide effort, not just the task of individual teachers, one participant shared, “I think that there is a general sense that everybody needs to be a stronger advocate. The feeling that I got a lot just in the couple weeks after the election was that we really need to just keep doing what we’re going to do, that we really need to just continue to love our students, and listen to our students, and make sure that they understand that we are a resource for them in the community.” Working together as a school community not only lightens the load for individuals but also can help develop esprit de corps, the feeling that all members are important and valued and that all involved are working toward the same goal. When this support is not offered explicitly to teachers and students, it can exacerbate the primary and secondary trauma that is already being felt.

Discussion

In this study we sought to investigate how teachers identified and experienced support immediately following an event that introduced political trauma into their classrooms through the signing of Executive Orders 13,767 and 13,769. Not surprisingly, we found ample examples of teachers supporting their own students. They instinctively understood that the current events would cause emotional stress and trauma for individuals—especially for those who had family members in other countries, as the Executive Orders made plans for families being reunited an impossibility. These teachers intentionally planned curriculum and classroom activities to support their students and to mitigate the trauma they were feeling (Darragh & Petrie, 2019). The teachers themselves felt emotionally drained after spending stressful days trying to ameliorate anxious students’ emotions; however, they knew it was what needed to be done, and they felt proud and satisfied that they could offer that support.

For those teachers who experienced other colleagues acknowledging and offering support to their students, their burden of emotion labor (Benesch, 2012; Petrie & Darragh, 2018;) was somewhat lifted. While the colleagues did not necessarily offer the teachers support, the fact that they were offering support to their students was powerful. Even small gestures (such as putting up a welcoming sign or asking how the students were doing) had profound effects on the teachers' own emotional well-being. They did not feel so alone in the burden of managing their students' trauma; the weight was lifted in knowing that others cared about their students too. Relatedly, the teachers who did not feel support from colleagues and administration felt overwhelmed and exhausted. Not only did their comments illustrate the burden they felt at having to solely support students in such great need, but the emotion, exhaustion, and despair was revealed in their voices, and some broke into tears when expressing how alone they felt.

Finally, the interviews yielded no examples of colleagues directly supporting teachers; nor did they include any cases of teachers supporting themselves. The teachers' focus and attention was clearly on the needs of students in their classrooms, and their own perceived support was intertwined with that of their students'. In fact, the teachers felt they had to be strong for their students and brushed off any questions we asked regarding how they were doing. This glaring absence of teacher-to-teacher and teacher self-care support is, we posit, the most significant finding of our study.

Implications for Teacher Preparation

As teacher educators we need to prepare our students to support all learners in their classroom including those who have experienced or who are experiencing trauma. Trauma is not a new concept, of course. In the late 19th Century, Pierre Janet identified and named the idea from his work with patients in Parisian hospitals (Janet, 1889). However, we have increasingly recognized its prevalence and impact—including its impact on learning—even while factors that can bring about human distress have increased around the globe such as rising displacement (UNHCR, 2019) and increased domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic (WHO, 2020). It is reasonable to conclude that the experiences and successes of future teachers will be greatly shaped by responding to traumatized students. We see many implications for our own English language learner teacher preparation programs, implications which are commensurate with the very competencies we are already tasked with addressing in our programs. We believe these form potential recommendations for others as well.

Creating supportive teachers

As mentioned before, the ACES study (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) and the prolific work that has followed it has uncovered the approaches that teachers can take in their classrooms to mitigate rather than amplify the residual effects of acute trauma. Recent work has also highlighted productive specific responses for instructors in the face of political trauma (Darragh & Petrie, 2019; Petrie & Darragh, 2018; Sondel et al., 2018).

Given that these pedagogies exist, they should certainly be put into the hands of teachers who will soon need to use them, leading to the following recommendations.

Highlight the concept of trauma in a unit early in the teacher preparation program that directly connects with the content. For language teacher courses, this can naturally fall within the teaching of individual differences, as students recognize how language learners in their class may vary from each other. In our experience, students learning about the severe impact of trauma have immediate heightened interest in learning about what they can do in their own future classrooms.

Include socio-political elements as a source of trauma. Within our focus of teaching, this naturally connects with several elements within language education programs such as: exploring cultural diversity, connecting home and school for refugee and immigrant communities, and recognizing the negative impacts of social distance (Schumann, 1976) that can arise when the receiving community is experienced as not very welcoming. As with trauma-sensitive teaching, we can now draw as well upon such tools as pedagogies of political trauma (Darragh & Petrie, 2019; Sondel et al., 2018).

Use spiraling learning in which these ideas are returned to repeatedly throughout the program. This will avoid a “one and done” approach that would minimize the significance of trauma. For example, in language education programs, second language acquisition courses introducing Krashen’s (1986) idea of the affective filter (which explains how stress can limit language learning) can return to how the language learning classroom can best support those experiencing the impacts of trauma on their learning. In courses in which students create lesson plans and/or assessments, feedback can be given about how certain choices may add to rather than decrease the impacts of trauma as well as trauma-sensitive teaching strategies.

Such amendments to the curriculum are no longer optional add-ons, we believe, but required to meet the spirit of our tasks to truly prepare future teachers. For example, the Washington State competencies include a standard focused on culture and equity, which requires that teacher candidates are able to discern the different biases learners may encounter and the varying experiences they may bring to the classroom (PESB, 2015).

Creating supportive colleagues

When we encounter similar others (Petrie & Darragh, 2018; Tracy, 2005) who share our concerns, our own burdens are lightened. For teachers, this can stave off burn-out, a constant threat to those who are the most caring and attentive to student needs. Burn-out, of course, threatens the success of schools and programs when high turnover interrupts institutional memory and community stability. Curriculum can be adapted in the following ways to encourage the development of supportive colleagues.

Foster advocacy skills. If all staff and teachers within a school recognize the presence and impact of trauma, are able to use trauma-sensitive strategies, and are committed to the success of all students, then entire school buildings would show support for the students experiencing trauma. This show of support in itself reduces the secondary distress of teachers. To create trauma-sensitive schools so that all

teachers are staff are aware of the trauma students might experience will likely take advocacy skills (Lander, 2018). Including case studies whereby pre-service teachers to have to imagine different routes they could take with advocacy, and what the effects of each might be is one activity that can easily be incorporated into any class designed to prepare teachers. Developing pre-service teachers' skills with regards to creating persuasive and engaging workshops centered on bringing colleagues on board with advocating for their students may also be an important tool that could potentially be made into a culminating assignment or final capstone course. In addition, instructors can include role-plays in methods courses in which pre-service teachers explore both the alienation and care of colleagues in challenging situations with students, as an exercise to reinforce the impact teacher colleagues can have on each other.

Include the experience of support-focused groups in the curriculum. Most educators include partner or group projects in their classes to carry out a shared task. When this pattern repeats in schools, teachers gather merely to *do*—to complete work-together rather than to *be*—to support each other through their struggles, thus denying themselves an opportunity to give and receive collegial support. Pre-service teachers need to recognize the importance of not only forming learning communities or task committees but also forming supportive groups in their buildings (Lander, 2018). In cohort programs, instructors might consider assigning small support groups who are responsible for checking in about each other's well-being throughout the program, demonstrating value for these groups by checking in with them and using discussion prompts that highlight the dimensions of collegial support.

Here, too, the competencies that guide our universities' language teacher education make such changes an imperative. For example, the Idaho standards include one focused on partnerships, which requires that students develop the ability to partner with colleagues, among others, to bring about an optimal learning environment for English language learners. (Idaho State Board of Education, 2019). Likewise, the Washington state competencies require that candidates develop professional leadership and advocacy skills (PESB, 2015). Thus, again, we argue that to exclude the realities of trauma, compassion fatigue, and the beneficial effects of similar others in our teacher education programs would be professionally unethical.

Creating teachers who self-care

Unfortunately, the fact that the teachers in our study reported no use of self-care strategies is most likely true for many in the field. In such an other-focused profession, self-care is rarely rewarded if even acknowledged. This makes it unlikely that novice teachers would naturally learn appropriate self-care behaviors from the more experienced teachers they work with on a daily basis, pointing out the importance of including this in the pre-service teacher curriculum. The suggestions below provide a pathway to do so.

Introduce self-care immediately in the program. Grise-Owens et al. (2018), drawing upon their research preparing students for social work, suggest that new student orientations could include information about self-care. Alternatively, teacher education programs could include it in practicum courses in which focus naturally

turns to developing teaching personas, developing persistence, and carrying out self-reflection. However, in most programs, practical courses occur at the end of the program. To provide self-care information earlier in the program experience, program coordinators might wish to include it as part of the advising process before students even begin coursework. Just as we often lay out potential pathways for success in our programs such as behaviors, routines, and time management strategies, that former students found effective, self-care could be introduced as an element needed for success.

Require that students create and provide updates on their use of a self-care plan. Drawing upon the work of Grise-Owens et al. (2018) in social work, the value of self-care can be emphasized by its placement in continued curricular discussions with faculty. Many teacher education programs include a course about joining the profession or about general teaching concerns. In these courses, pre-service teachers often produce authentic professional artifacts such as teaching philosophies and professional development plans. A self-care plan would be a logical and powerful addition. More than simply a course assignment, the use of the plan should then be a regular part of faculty-student conversations.

Share tools for self-care. At the very least, we should provide resources that pre-service teachers can then use in their professional lives and share with colleagues (Grise-Owens et al., 2018). For examples, the Learning for Justice provides a fantastic resource in their *Toolkit for “I thought about quitting today”* (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/fall-2015/toolkit-for-i-thought-about-quitting-today>), which can be used by individuals or groups to consider their professional quality of life and to make self-care a regular part of it. If the earlier suggestion to create supportive groups within a cohort is enacted, this toolkit or a similar resource could be used by the groups as they begin their practicum experiences in classrooms, bridging theory with praxis.

Although self-care for teachers is clearly important, it does not appear in the standards that guide us in preparing future teachers at our universities. In this case, state competencies do not logically invite inclusion of the ideas resulting from our study. However, our professional ethics dictate that we go beyond standards and prepare teachers for the world they will encounter so that they have successful careers. Including self-care as part of the curriculum takes on urgency as we consider the real threat of burn-out due to compassion fatigue on the teachers who are the most empathetic and dedicated, the very teachers we hope will remain in the teaching profession.

Conclusion

Today’s teachers are tasked with the weighty and important work of helping all students learn and grow. In the span of a day they must make, some estimate, over 1,500 decisions (Goldberg & Houser, 2017). They must support students in their academic, social, and emotional growth, which is hard—and sometimes, overwhelming—work. It is imperative that teacher preparation programs equip their teacher candidates with the tools and strategies they need to succeed. Just as we would

not send a teacher into a classroom without understanding of pedagogy, content, planning, and assessment, we should not send teachers into the field unprepared to support their students who have experienced trauma, nor how to support their colleagues and themselves. As the realities of trauma reshape the worlds in which teachers work, educators now often find themselves as first responders of a different sort. Our study suggests that without foundational preparation for responding to trauma, teachers may happen upon strategies that are supportive of students. They may also be fortunate enough to have colleagues and administrators who partner with them to support these students. However, without the type of intervention teacher education can provide, they are unlikely to experience the type of collegial-support and self-care that can prevent burn-out from compassion fatigue. Framed in this way, including trauma-sensitive elements in teacher preparation no longer appears as an optional add-on if time allows but rather as a rational response to the endangerment of the profession.

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Appendix

Interview questions

1. Where do you teach? (Name of school, city, state)
2. What is your degree?
3. How long have you been teaching?
4. What is your teaching assignment this year?
5. How long have you been teaching English language learners?
6. How many ELLs do you have in your class(es) this year?
7. From which original countries do your students or their families come?
8. Which languages do they speak?
9. If you happen to be aware of your ELL students' pathways to your community, are there any refugees among your students?
10. Have your experiences teaching ELLs differed this year, from previous years? If so, how?
11. What are your biggest concerns for your ELLs?
12. Have you seen evidence of an impact from any recent events in your school community?
13. Has your school community carried out any deliberate responses to recent events?
14. Has President Trump's executive order on immigration impacted your teaching in any way? If so, how?
15. Has President Trump's executive order on immigration impacted your students in any way? If so, how?
16. How do you feel about being a teacher of English language learners in 2017?
17. What is your vision of your role as a teacher of ELLs? Has this vision changed recently? If so, how?
18. What else would you like to tell me that I haven't asked about?

