

**Another Wave of Trauma: A Professional Development on Trauma-Informed Practices to
Support Students Impacted by Immigration**

By Prudencio Camacho Cabrera

A professional project submitted to Western Oregon University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

Masters of Education in Curriculum and Instruction

Graduation Date: June 2025

MASTER'S DEGREE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Completion Term: Summer 2025

Type of exit requirement: Professional Project

The supervisory committee met with the candidate for a final evaluation in which all aspects of the candidate's program were reviewed. The committee's assessment and recommendations are:

Recommendations:

- ✓ Degree should be awarded

Recommendations:

- ✓ Exit Requirement has been approved
-



**WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF
WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY HAVE EXAMINED THE ENCLOSED**

- ☐ Thesis
- ☒ Professional Project

Titled:

Another Wave of Trauma: A Professional Development on Trauma-Informed
Practices to Support Students Impacted by Immigration

Graduate Student: Prudencio Camacho Cabrera

Candidate for the degree of : MSEd: Curriculum & Instruction

*and hereby certify that in our opinion it is worthy of acceptance as partial fulfillment
of the requirements of this master's degree.*

Committee Chair:

Name: Jaclyn Caires-Hurley Signature: _____
Date: _____

Committee Members:

Name: Gregory Zobel Signature: _____
Date: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____
Date: _____

Director of Graduate Studies:

Name: _____ Signature: _____
Date: _____

Acknowledgements

Para si Dr. Jackie, Micah, and Dr. Zobel, si yu'us ma'ase. Your guidance, expertise, understanding, and care has gone and continues to go a long way as I further my work as an educator. The work of this project would not have been possible without your patience, feedback, check-ins, and knowledge. I deeply appreciate the time and space you have lent me to create this work.

Estudiante-ku. Ma'pos yan manmamaila. You have each taught me what it means to be an educator. "Real recognize real," one of you told me once, and you all have been the realest while I was your teacher. I am forever grateful and honored that I was witness to your stories and testimonies. Stories and testimonies that continuously teach me about your languages, cultures, and identities. Stories and testimonies that remain inspiring.

I familiâ-ku yan i manga'chong-hu siha. You've seen me at my most emotional while completing this project, but your love and support has never faltered. Our hangout sessions and Facetime calls, although postponed oftentimes, kept me grounded and level-headed throughout my schooling. I could not be more grateful for the endearing talks, crying sessions, and pieces of wisdom that you all share with me. You have all led me down this path of achievement.

Although the work is not done and I become doubtful of future prospects, I trust that all of you will be there to support me every step of the way.

Para si Izzy. Thank you for your unwavering patience and encouragement throughout this journey. It was filled with long nights and even longer days, but you and I made it through the roughest patches. Te quiero mucho.

Si yu'us ma'ase. Ghilisow. Salamat po. Gracias. Mahalo.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
List of Tables and Figures.....	5
Abstract.....	6
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	7
Background.....	7
Statement of Rationale and Purpose.....	11
Purpose.....	12
Connection to Bigger Ideas.....	13
Learning Outcome for Masters Candidate.....	14
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	18
Introduction.....	18
Literature Review Methods.....	20
Findings.....	22
Limitations.....	43
Conclusion.....	44
Chapter 3: Project Design.....	47
Context.....	47
Design Methods.....	49
Session Sequence.....	50
Structural Overview of the Sessions.....	56
Data Collection/Evaluation Procedures.....	57
Chapter 4: Final Products.....	58
Introduction.....	58
Artifacts.....	59
<i>Learn</i>	60

<i>Unlearn</i>	64
<i>Reflect</i>	67
<i>Act</i>	70
Conclusion.....	73
Chapter 5: Reflection	75
Reflection Introduction.....	75
Progress Toward Initial Goals.....	75
Reinforced Ideas from Literature Review.....	77
Development as an Educator.....	78
Reflection on Professional Standards and Development.....	79
Limitations.....	82
What next?.....	83
References	85

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1.....	50
Table 2.....	56
Figure 1.....	60
Figure 2.....	60
Figure 3.....	62
Figure 4.....	63
Figure 5.....	65
Figure 6.....	65
Figure 7.....	67
Figure 8.....	67
Figure 9.....	68
Figure 10.....	69
Figure 11.....	71
Figure 12.....	71
Figure 13.....	73

Abstract

This professional project contextualizes trauma-informed practices (TIP) for educators serving students impacted by immigration. With immigration reform and policy being carried out immediately by the current Republican administration, teachers need to become more equipped in catering to the social-emotional needs of their students. Students that now become targets of raids, deportations, family separations, and other systemic inequities. This project tailors forms of critical pedagogy to create a professional development (PD) focused on developing the practice of critical reflection. A practice that can be either self-reflective or reflective on systems that perpetuate inequity. TIP is problematized in this project, especially when structured to follow passive, White-dominant ideologies. As a challenge to educators, the PD urges educators to *unlearn* practices rooted in these ideologies. As replacement, the PD encourages educators to *learn* practices that enhance their awareness of immigrant identities, reframe TIP as social justice, and create spaces for student testimonies to be made and heard. This project adds to the discourse of critical pedagogy by tailoring and contextualizing practices to the identities, experiences, and narratives of students impacted by immigration.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Recent societal events have and are continuing to make rippling impacts across numerous human lives, especially on the premise of immigration and federal efforts to execute raids and arrests. On the receiving end of these events are the many immigrants that make their way through borders and hardships to construct livelihoods presumably reflective of the “American Dream”. Alongside them in this collective experience, their families and children that are part of school systems, that sit on seats within our classrooms, and that speak with us, English or other languages, about their life experiences. But recent events surrounding immigration have and will continue to alter the positionalities of students within our classrooms as familial structures are uprooted, disrupted, and devastated.

Most recently, Executive Order 14165: “Securing Our Borders” issued by the current Republican administration on January 20, 2025, has set several mandates in place to reform immigrant’s entry into the United States. Within Section 2 of this order, policies detailing actionary measures include: a) Detaining, to the maximum extent authorized by law, aliens apprehended on suspicion of violating Federal or State law, until such time as they are removed from the United States and b) Removing promptly all aliens who enter or remain in violation of Federal law (Exec. Order No. 14165, 2025). Additionally, further actions have been taken to reinforce immigration reform, specifically within previously determined protected areas. These include schools, places of worship, healthcare facilities, relief centers, protests, etc. (Mayorka, 2021). However, a new border-control directive supersedes and rescinds the previous memorandum declaring these areas as protected, enabling immigration agents to execute actionary measures (Huffman, 2025).

In turn, with familial structures ultimately broken, other impacts resulting from immigration entail “complete devastation of family economic security and [devastation] of mental and physical wellbeing” (Cervantes et al., 2020, p. 2). This, of course, includes the mental and physical wellbeing of all parties involved. But, considering school-age children, the impact of family separation and forced removal of students themselves, some of which can range from hours to days to months and long-term due to deportation, can truly leave them in a position of isolation and vulnerability. As they experience arrest first-hand or witness a parental arrest, holding, and possible deportation, school-age children are subject to immense moments of trauma during and following a immigration raid. Let me repeat that.

Trauma.

Trauma that results from an entire upheaval of a family life that a child once knew.

In 2019, several towns in Mississippi, Texas, and Ohio had undergone a series of immigrant raids, in which children bore witness to parents handcuffed, standing in lines, and transported away from their homes (Cervantes et al., 2020). While this may be an immediate traumatic moment during a raid, mental and emotional experiences that follow after are of worthy note. With the loss of a parent or both within the family, children were experiencing signs of post-traumatic stress disorder as well as increased feelings of fear and separation anxiety. Further consideration is paid to children who undergo “adverse behavioral changes,” which include delays in development for younger children and an increase in aggression and withdrawal for older children (Cervantes et al., 2020).

All while this had happened in distinct towns across three states within this large nation, each experience of every child, parent, family, and community becomes part of the immigrant narrative. A narrative that bleeds into our classrooms, and a narrative that I know and have heard

from my former students while completing my practicum. It is a collective narrative of past, current, and future trauma that will occur due to the ever-so-changing nature of immigration policy and management. Needless to say, students unknowingly bring this narrative to the classroom, and in turn, their individual traumas of loss, separation, and stress. With certain environmental triggers in the classroom, these traumas are bound to produce adverse behaviors that will negatively impact learning by means of delaying it, preventing teacher-student relationship building, and prioritizing apathetic views on overall learning.

I am not a child of immigrants, and I understand the certain privileges I have not needing to face that reality and contribute to that narrative. But, my students are, and they continue to live that reality and embody that narrative surrounding immigration. As several plans and actions are set and “promised” to be executed by political powers, educators—alongside countless service programs and organizations—must be equipped with certain trauma-informed practices to best support students in trying times. It became a professional and personal position to learn and teach practices that are meant to critically address and reform TIP in ways that center student experiences that are integral to challenging and disrupting White-dominant TIP approaches.

Within Oregon alone, a 2022-2023 English Learners in Oregon Report totaled 790 students across Oregon districts that had experienced interruptions or limitations in formal education. Often, the majority of this number included refugees and immigrants, some of which “had spent time in refugee camps and whose process of immigration to the U.S. prevented them from attending school for a time” (ODE, 2024, p.13). With current political efforts targeting certain communities, the school-aged children belonging to these communities are under immense pressure, stress, fear (the list goes on) as they experience these efforts almost immediately. Immigrant families, among the immense amount of others, know such pressures,

stressors, and fears first-hand. While in the past, people had some time to adjust and prepare for changes to immigration laws to come into effect, the current administration executive order both in focus and volume add an air of unpredictability and uncertainty that surrounds immigration policies.

Now, several Oregon school districts in Portland have made commitments to upholding Oregon law(s) that prohibit state and local law enforcement from making arrests and detainments based on immigrant status (Hou, 2024). These districts include Portland Public Schools, Parkrose School District, and David Douglas School District. Alongside them, Salem-Keizer School District had provided a thorough response on the protection of students by preventing the removal of students from school and ensuring the security and protection of student records (Banks, 2024). Further mention by Banks goes into the examples of student behaviors surrounding promises of immigration reform. Behaviors, of which, are reflective of racist and harmful rhetoric from students to others, such as contempt and racism towards others, deportation jokes, insulting one's culture, and threats to call U.S. immigration services (2024).

But are these commitments enough? While we read of school districts setting plans, actions, and commitments in place to maintain sanctuary for many students, prejudice and discrimination among students seems to be an added layer in the impact of immigration on families and communities. Hence the need for a professional development on the best trauma-informed practices that prepare educators on supporting students, perhaps families and communities, that feel the direct blow of immigration. This is what my project focuses on. This project intends to create a series of professional development sessions—a total of 5 sessions, each an hour long, placed throughout the school year—that provides educators with information as means of preparing teachers for the trauma that lives within students and that gradually

presents itself outward through adverse behaviors. Essentially, this project is geared toward teacher preparedness, as ever-so-changing policies and perspectives are bound to impact students across the nation, especially within Oregon.

Statement of Rationale and Purpose

I had not anticipated or expected to see throughout my clinical experience the harsh impacts of trauma on students so early on. Understandably so, everyone has experiences of trauma—childhood or adult—but my attention and intrigue was caught by my group(s) of students and the traumas they openly shared with me. It becomes overwhelming to describe the emotions I experienced in those moments of real and intense sharing. Some stories include a former student on parole, experiencing additional restrictions and several relocations between facilities—a huge disruption to their education, friendships, and overall life. But, I find myself proud and congratulatory of their high school completion and to have heard of their intention to start an apprenticeship in the construction trade. Another, a student going on 11 months of sobriety, battling against urges and post-traumatic experiences, yet attendance remained stellar within my classes. Recently, I ran into this student out in public, telling me that they had reached one year of sobriety and had received their one-year chip to mark the milestone. Another, a student sleeping in my class as they worked two jobs, explaining the numerous absences throughout his classes. Why? Father was deported back to Mexico, leaving a gap in financial security in their household. Last I spoke with this student, they had completed high school and entered the workforce straight away.

These narratives, for the lack of a better phrase, shook me to the core. Truthfully, they continue to do so today, for the preparedness to support these students and the many others experiencing traumas was rather insufficient in my experience. Teacher responses to addressing

trauma are more critical than ever, especially as nearly half of U.S. children experience one or more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in their life (Child and Adolescent Measurement Initiative, 2013). And with recent political “promises” surrounding immigration that are expected to impact certain states, we may experience a maintenance or increase in the amount of children experiencing ACEs. These could possibly be our students as immigration policy may change drastically and impact their lives, families, and communities. However, with a well-designed professional development plan geared towards supporting children of immigrant parents, teachers and districts may become better prepared in assisting children as they experience immense separation, loss, and anxiety.

Purpose

I approach this project with an understanding that schools and school districts are in need of constant professional development that is adaptive to the current sociopolitical climate. This project is integral to the continual preparation of educators when supporting students who experience traumatic events. As a purpose to this project, it aims to provide educators with certainty when entering the role of support as a student encounters a traumatic stressor. Research by Alisic (2012), found teachers to be uncertain about their role as well as what actions to take when assisting students after experiencing a traumatic event. This project, however, attempts to address that through the provision of information materials, facilitation techniques for coping, references for specialized services, and self-care strategies for those in traumatic conditions. Additionally, teaching resources will be provided in efforts to inform whole groups (primarily classrooms) of the impact of immigration on individuals. In turn, this provision hopes to mitigate negative attitudes towards children of immigrant families and communities. Further purpose of this project is to heavily consider the Education Standards for Trauma Informed Care, designed

Trauma Informed Oregon (2017), as points of reference to build sessions that reflect and focus on these standards.

Connection to Bigger Ideas

This project connects to rather broad ideas in education surrounding trauma informed practices, the meaning of being trauma informed, and the need for professional development(s) to ensure effective responses to the trauma experienced by students.

School year after school year, students walk through each school and classroom door carrying a history of personal traumas. Some of which are internalized and some of which are shown through adverse behaviors. Because of this trauma-informed practices (TIP) have received specialized interest these past few years. Through several research studies, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2017) has provided the following definition of trauma-informed systems:

“one in which all parties involved recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with the system including children, caregivers, staff, and service providers. Programs and agencies within such a system infuse and sustain trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills into their organizational cultures, practices, and policies. They act in collaboration with all those who are involved with the child, using the best available science, to maximize physical and psychological safety, facilitate the recovery or adjustment of the child and family, and support their ability to thrive.” (p. 2)

When contextualized to the classroom, trauma-informed practices, as described by the NEA (2023), include certain practices that address the impact of trauma by means of focusing on the creation of a safe school culture, relationship building, and the support of student self-efficacy.

Being able to serve students impacted by immigration entails several actions: 1.) the

recognition of certain and the impacts they pose onto students, 2.) continuous responses to those impacts influenced by research with the exceptional case-by-case basis, 3.) obtaining those skills by means of attending professional developments, 4.) possibly designing and delivering those professional developments to your respective school, and 5.) working alongside other educators, organizations, and community members to procure services and programs that help impacted members.

Learning Outcome for Masters Candidate

Considering the purpose and intention of this professional project, many hours will be spent on research, collaboration and discussion with colleagues, and the creation of a professional development to ensure teacher preparedness when supporting students who experience traumatic events resulting from immigration. All of which will allow me opportunities to meet the learning outcomes of the Curriculum and Instruction, Master of Education Degree. These learning outcomes include:

Effectively apply the professional content expertise, knowledge, skills, and dispositions of their education profession.

For the application of content expertise, developing a professional development requires that I apply a certain understanding of trauma, its sources and impacts on students, while considering evidence-based practices to support those students. Mostly, I will draw upon content expertise on educational psychology, pedagogical approaches, and trauma-informed standards. Skill development is also a product of this project as it provides an opportunity for instructional design that is informed by traumatic experiences, alongside this is the refinement of curriculum development as I craft materials and information meant for educators working with students impacted by the trauma of immigration. Lastly, professional dispositions are enhanced as I and

other educators become more empathetic, culturally responsive, and immediate in the way(s) we become committed to bettering and effectively supporting the well-being of students.

Use research and evidence to develop environments that support and assess learning and their own professional practice.

This project requires that I collect numerous pieces of evidence and research in order to integrate findings and themes within the professional development itself. This research will be focused on trauma-informed practices as well as standards, preparedness and competence in implementing these practices, and the addressing of the immigrant experience and traumas. Environment development is a goal of this project as I inform educators of ways to build trauma sensitive and responsive environments, especially to the needs of immigrant students. Trauma informed standards, a vital component to this professional development, is used to structure a plan for assessing current trauma informed practices, or lack thereof, within a given educational setting. Ultimately, this process of assessment will ensure that I and other educators refine their approaches with the consideration of improving by means of expanding or adjusting their approaches to trauma-informed practices.

Show commitment to and develop professional education leadership attributes.

The creation and delivery of a professional development program exhibits educational leadership with the educational community, especially as this project is a commitment to improving the practices of my colleagues and I by promoting a more responsive and supportive learning environment. Further leadership is apparent in the advocacy for immigrant students, which is highlighted in this project. Also, leadership takes root in the promotion of practices and approaches which are inclusive, equitable, and immensely supportive. This project is meant to recruit educators in positioning themselves as leaders who address trauma advocated for

impacted groups. On a more personal level, this project allows me to be a mentor and guide in the adoption of trauma-informed practices. This is set, in turn, to ultimately establish a collective responsibility of educational leaders to assist in student success.

Just as this project is aligned with the learning outcomes, mentioned above, of the Curriculum and Instruction, Masters of Education degree, it also holds alignment with the several professional standards for educational leaders. Some of these standards include:

Standard 1 Mission, Vision, and Core values. This standard includes the development, advocacy, and enactment of a shared mission, vision, and core values. While these may sound set, often singular, and general, this project is meant to wedge itself into established missions, visions, and core values of schools to ensure that it is shared and discussed among educators and students. Ultimately, this standard entails the articulation, advocacy, and cultivation of core values surrounding equity, inclusiveness, and social justice for those impacted by immigration.

Standard 3 Equity and Cultural Responsiveness. For this project, this standard is met through the confrontation and altering of institutional biases against marginalized students. Furthermore, the project ensures that educational leaders act with a cultural competence and responsiveness to the societal events (immigration) impacting our students. It also ensures that we address matters on inequities experienced by our students of immigrant families.

Standard 5 Community of Care and Support for Students. In this standard, we see more of a focus on cultivating school communities that protect its students. It emphasizes the establishment of social supports, services, and accommodations catered to students who experience the traumas of immigration.

Standard 8 Meaningful Engagement of Families and Communities. This project is heavy in its advocacy for educational leaders to create a means for school partnerships with communities

and families to ultimately support student learning. Now, considering the specifics of this professional development program, it encourages that leaders maintain a presence in the community so as to understand its needs and issues as well as engage its resources to the school, especially for students who experience trauma from immigration.

Standard 10 School Improvement. This standard is met by means of this project by means of managing the uncertainty and ever-so-changing politics that impact immigration reform. In turn, this impacts student lives and families, which requires that we approach the delicate situations with perseverance and courage for students. Further into this standard, this project assesses and attempts to develop, prepare, and aid staff in their capacity to accept and implement educational trends.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Neuroscience and cognitive research has found that traumatic experiences create great interference with memory, attention, and emotional stability (Sparks, 2019). It is easy to teach students who are focused and unburdened, but the bigger and more crucial question is how do we reach out to those students who enter disengaged, unmotivated, unresponsive to encouragement, apathetic, or with adverse behaviors? How do we ensure that their experiences are perceived as full of potential rather than approaching them with a deficit mentality? There is a notable amount of disadvantages when we view their experiences as a deficit, penalizing students for their low performances and behaviors as we remain unbeknownst of the exact traumas a student has encountered. This and an added layer of uninformed teaching and trauma insensitivity, students are bound to disconnect and disassociate from the learning environment.

Immigration raids leave an unwavering sense of fear, stress, and trauma to the communities who experience them, especially to the children that face separation and isolation from the holding and deportation of their families. Most recently, Executive Order 14165: “Securing Our Borders” issued by the current Republic administration on January 20, 2025 had set several mandates in place to reform entry of immigrants into the United States. Within Section 2 of this order, policies detailing actionary measures include: a) Detaining, to the maximum extent authorized by law, aliens apprehended on suspicion of violating Federal or State law, until such time as they are removed from the United States and b) Removing promptly all aliens who enter or remain in violation of Federal law (Exec. Order No. 14165, 2025). Additionally, further actions have been taken to reinforce immigration reform, specifically within

previously determined protected areas. These include schools, places of worship, healthcare facilities, relief centers, protests, etc. (Mayorka, 2021). However, a new border-control directive supersedes and rescinds the previous memorandum declaring these areas as protected, enabling immigration agents to execute actionary measures (Huffman, 2025).

Prior to research, general points of focus included the definition(s) of trauma-informed practices (TIP), the cruciality of utilizing these approaches within schools, and the best practices for students with varied immigration-related positionalities. These include, but are not limited to, unaccompanied immigrant students, U.S.-born students belonging to immigrant families, and students belonging to status-mixed families. While conducting research, there are certain themes found across the literature. These findings include: 1.) The need to understand trauma amongst immigrant youth, their families, and communities, 2.) The structuring of trauma-informed teaching as social justice, 3.) The role of the “narrative” & Testimony and Critical Witness in trauma-informed teaching, and 4.) The cruciality of teacher preparedness for trauma-informed teaching. Being an educator extends beyond the provision of continuous opportunities for academic growth and moments of academic success for students to thrive in. In reality, the profession requires that we be aware and informed of all the experiences—the traumas—that students carry with them into the classroom.

All these uncertainties affecting our students lead us to the question of how we can better our practices, as educators in current times, for the sake of the students who are impacted by the traumas brought about by new immigration policies? Hence the goal of this project to create professional development opportunities that prepare educators for the high likelihood of accommodating students that are impacted by immigration.

Literature Review Methods

Before proceeding with the development of this professional project, examples of current research were carefully examined and analyzed prior to selection. Much of the literature selected was meant to provide justification and reasoning to support the formation of a professional development that equips educators with evidence-based strategies to impactfully support students affected by immigration.

Political powers within the nation are executing orders and perpetuating the constant change of immigration policy, placing affected individuals, families, and communities within a constant state of anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. Ultimately, the goal of this review was to find studies and research of TIP and teaching impacts (and challenges) that could be condensed into a professional development that could be distributed across schools. The schools, in question, include the many within the state of Oregon that host the vast populations of immigrant youths and schools that have or have not attempted to establish connections with families and communities. Throughout the duration of this review, sources were initially meant to feature studies within secondary education—middle and high school settings; however, focus was shifted to include research pertaining to either early childhood or primary education. The purpose for this shift includes the recognition of trauma impacting students across all ages and learning levels. When important, it is crucial to include and voice narratives of individuals, primarily students, that have been greatly impacted by immigration.

Now, in order to have located research within this review, the help of several research-based search platforms was enlisted. These platforms were used to locate journals,

articles, columns, and other published work pertaining to trauma-informed practices and some in relation to immigration.

For one, a search was conducted through Western Oregon University's Hamersly Library website, which catalogued open resources as well as direct links for sources in the case the library did not have access. Using the search phrase "trauma-informed practices for immigrant and refugee students ", a total of 37 articles emerged. To help with narrowing research, I applied some exclusionary criteria. These include localizing research to the U.S, limiting research to peer-reviewed journals and articles, and selecting literature written within the past six years. However, I still used literature written before 2010 given the relevance of information to current issues. Then after reading through several abstracts, a total of three articles proved useful in the regard of specifically studying TIP for students of immigrant or refugee status or that belong to families of immigrant or refugee status.

Another platform used was EBSCOhost, provided via the Western Oregon University Hamersly Library, which produced seven sources after having used the search terms "trauma-informed practices," "schools," "teaching," and "frameworks." After reading through the abstracts as well as the main bodies of text within these sources, it was clear that much of these studies relied on interpretive-phenomenological methods of research which primarily entails experiential data. Needless to say, the entire concept of TIP within education is reliant on the perspectives of educators, stakeholders, administrators, and impacted communities for effective implementation, openness with these practices, and design. Much of these sources were foundational in nature, while addressing several shifts to TIP that could benefit students ten-fold.

The remaining sources were located by means of suggested reading from other sources. This required the reading of their abstracts to evaluate connections between content and the goal set for this professional project. For these sources, TIP with relation to education is maintained through specific studies like that of narrative writing (poetry), the critique of teaching trauma when not equivalent to TIP, complexities in the language surrounding trauma, and the importance of testimony and critical witness. While each can be brought into further detail, they generally focus on other aspects of TIP that are worth considering in the designing of this professional project.

Findings

Aforementioned within this chapter, four themes had emerged from the literature review. Each brought into view key concepts, frameworks, instruction, and arguments that will drive the design and possible implementation of this professional development project.

Finding 1: We need to understand the unique traumatic experiences that students (their families and communities) face in relation to immigration.

Though some educators may argue that their understanding of their students is greatly-informed, TIP confronts educators with the question: *just how well is it that we truly know our students?* Students with trauma in relation to immigration possess unique experiences that educators must be informed of and responsive to. One unique perspective on this is by Davila et al. (2020), which addresses the multiple stages of traumatic experiences of unaccompanied immigrant youth: experience in pre migration, experiences in perimigration (during migration), and experiences post migration. It goes without saying, heavy consideration must be placed onto the various realities of children experiencing trauma from immigration:

violence, forms of abuse, displacement, discrimination, and acculturation (Davila et al. 2020).

Davila et al. (2022) discuss discrimination and acculturation in relation to the impact of each on unaccompanied immigrant youth:

1. Acculturation-based difficulties originate from psychological impacts an individual may go through when integrating into a new culture. Acculturation entails certain distinctions and categories. For instance, the concept of mobility—ways a person interacts with the new dominant society—helps us understand the acculturation course one is on. Mobility is categorized into three main reasons: 1) voluntariness, or seeking out acculturation (typically, immigrants); 2) mobility, or those that do not seek out acculturation (typically, refugees); and 3) permanence, or those in a temporary asylum situation (typically, asylum seekers) (Berry, 1992 *as addressed in* Davila et al., 2020). Davila et al. furthers the concept of acculturation into four possible outcomes for those in the process: 1) integration, or the value and maintenance of one's original identity while simultaneously maintaining value with the new dominant society; 2) assimilation, or the high value of maintenance with the dominant society over one's identity; 3) separation/segregation, or the high value of maintenance of one's original identity over the dominant society; and 4) marginalization, or low value for maintaining one's identity and with the dominant society (Davila et al. 2020).
2. Discrimination-based difficulties entail the factors of perceived discrimination and low school belonging, which impact educational outcomes of immigrant youth (Davila et al., 2020). However, three resilience factors can counteract impacts on education outcome: 1) positive parental involvement; 2) supportive teaching climate; and 3) a positive self-concept (Blanco-Vega et al., 2008 *as addressed in* Davila et al. 2020). Parental

involvement has been shown to boost children's sense of belonging, especially when reinforced by a parent. Instilling a high sense of belonging to students within the entire school culture better mental health and academic outcomes (Davila et al. 2020). With these correlations, it becomes apparent that we take necessary steps to establish a positive and supportive environment to combat discrimination-based difficulties.

It remains integral to become aware of these factors and distinctions relative to acculturation and discrimination-based difficulties. However, a caveat to both becomes apparent when considering the status and involvement of families. Parkhouse et al. (2020) had addressed difficulties of educators to provide support to families if it meant risking disclosure of status. While this may not be necessary for establishing an immediate sense of belonging, involving families in the process may induce feelings of anxiety, fear and vulnerability. Schools may promote a sense of belonging and community through social events, but depending on sociopolitical climates, families of undocumented status may choose not to partake in those events to protect others (Parkhouse et al. 2020).

Additional to this, further research has shown that traumatic experiences due to unauthorized or undocumented status has attributed to great developmental implications for certain communities. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2011) have determined these implications to include: health, cognitive development and educational trajectories, socio-emotional development, civic engagement, and labor market access. Arguably, these developmental implications are to result if schools, political departments and divisions do not respond with compassion and necessary support. Unavoidably, systemic structures create barriers to the provision of support, which is also addressed within the research. Noteworthy to this research includes the recognition of familial groups and individuals with unique documentation status as well as the ecological

frameworks where trauma seeps into, and impacts the development of individuals (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011). The argument of trauma entering students' ecological systems reinforces the understanding that experiences extend beyond school. However, traumatic experiences can culminate into the learning environment, especially if triggered or retraumatized by the teacher, school culture, or others.

Understanding the unique traumas of our students is not learned within a day. However, the process can be eased with certain practices and principles in place that guide educators to enhance classroom safety. Carello and Butler (2015) and Acosta Price et al. (2012) posits several domains that the issue of safety requires heavy consideration. These include the individual characteristics of students, the content and context of what is taught, the requirements of assignments, alongside the aspects of both instructor and student behavior and interaction, characteristics of the classroom [environment], and the instruction on and practice of self-care. Despite a discussion for higher education, this article poses principles and practices that could possibly guide (serve as central points) for certain sessions within a workshop. It provides an argument that trauma extends beyond images and other trigger warnings—it includes belittling, shame, overwhelming factors, confusion, and lack of power. Stepping within these domains brings educators closer to understanding the various aspects of trauma(s) experienced by students.

Additional research in the expansion of teacher awareness toward policies impacting undocumented students had uncovered several aspects relative to the unique experiences of these students. Unfortunately, ambiguous and inflammatory policy contexts may influence educators beliefs toward undocumented students (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020). The result: a legitimization of perceptions about immigrants, such as undocumented populations and how they

are perceived. Additionally, dehumanizing language (i.e. “alien”, “illegal”) encourages fear, anxiety, and the propensity to label immigrants as “other” (Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017 *as addressed in* Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020). This exclusionary thinking shows how contexts of receptions facing immigrants tend to be unwelcoming with discrimination and racism manifested in the human-eliminating language mentioned (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020).

Further discussion extends into educator awareness towards policies impacting undocumented students. The findings within Rodriguez and McCorkle’s (2020) this study had shown a mixture of awareness and unawareness in education policy, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), false immigration narratives, and their attitudes towards educational policy as well as inclusivity and exclusivity in educators attitudes towards educational policies. For instance, the awareness amongst teachers toward the false narrative of undocumented students being eligible for public benefits remains high; however, educators tended to believe that there was a viable pathway to citizenship for most undocumented immigrants (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020). Another noteworthy example is that “teachers believed that undocumented students should be able to attend college, but the state should not help them pay for it” (p. 23). Teacher perceptions of undocumented students seem to create a binary of awareness and unawareness, inclusivity and exclusivity. While these are a part of the study’s findings, they posit that educators may possess a rather uninformed and incomprehensive awareness and attitude towards educational and public policies. This is suggested in the lack of awareness towards the broader financial constraints and insecurities that become a barrier to pursuing higher education (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020). Additionally, a viable pathway to citizenship eludes undocumented students as their positionality in society becomes complicated. They remain having the right to a K-12 education, but broader society and the encroachment of

immigration policy into protected areas (i.e. school) surrounds them with criminalizing views and categorize them under “illegal” in the larger citizenship dichotomy (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020; Rodriguez & Macias, 2022; Gonzalez et al. 2015).

Finding 2: We need to shift views on trauma-informed practices and teaching as social justice.

“Social justice education involves the process of acknowledging the systemic and institutional inequities that ubiquitously pervade our society and actively addressing mechanisms of privilege and oppression through critical self-reflection” (Cochran-Smith, 2004 *as cited in* Crosby et al. 2018, p. 16).

Further discussion on this proceeds to address how systems in place and institutional inequalities perpetuate strong sensations of disempowerment, primarily felt by marginalized student groups (Crosby et al., 2018). The concept of disempowerment, here, is crucial to understand for the sake of students impacted by immigration. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2011) and Davila et al. (2020) had shared the unique realities of children with unauthorized status and unaccompanied children during migration. Ultimately, as suggested by both, the systemic and institutional inequities established by the political powers of the country one immigrated to can result in a plethora of issues, challenges, and implications. Hence the argument for educational practices that pose a challenge to systemic disempowerment.

Luke (2014) introduces a theory to combat and criticize systemic disempowerment: *critical literacy*. As defined:

Critical literacy is an overtly political orientation to teaching and learning [...] Critical literacy has an explicit aim of the critique and transformation of dominant ideologies,

cultures and economies, institutions and political systems. As a practical approach to curriculum, it melds social, political and cultural debate and discussion with the analysis of how texts and discourses work, where, with what consequences, and in whose interests (p. 21).

Critical literacy places power, agency, and autonomy for knowledge production in the hands of learners whilst bringing to attention the issues of equity and justice (Luke, 2014).

While this definition remains foundational for the concept, Brownell (2021) places the theory into action in their study of cultural rhetorics to examine critical literacies in a time of increased immigration. A noteworthy claim in this study is how “problematic [it is] to assume that critical literacies reside outside of the “the basics” of literacies (Dyson, 2013 *as addressed in* Brownell, 2021, p. 267). Additionally, Brownell (2021) posits that critical literacies cannot exist outside of conversations concerning civic participation. Rather holistically, critical literacies are a branch of traditional literacies that provoke discourse(s) about society and the ways in which students engage or are prohibited from engaging with social structures.

Several structures and findings in this study are of worthy note. For one, when recognizing rhetoric, Brownell (2021) encourages a shift towards cultural rhetorics (CR). A view rooted in the ways knowledge production and understanding are from perspectives of one’s experiences as well as how cultural communities contribute to meaning-making (Ghiso, 2015; Bratta & Powell, 2016; Mukavetz, 2014 *as addressed in* Brownell, 2021). Cultural rhetoric, here, suggests communication to be influenced by the lived experiences and the deep cultural experiences one goes through. Meaning-making becomes a holistic process that intertwines identity with culture and culture with identity. This is integral to TIP that take up critical

perspectives when confronting and criticizing inequities. The use of cultural rhetoric here takes societal barriers into consideration (i.e. the construction of a border wall), and addresses these barriers head-on.

Cultural rhetoric is employed by three elementary-aged children in a persuasive writing unit focusing on immigration issues. After class discussions and discourses on refugee experiences, each student had created a persuasive artifact, which demonstrated how students engaged in critical literacies whilst utilizing rhetorical strategies to present their perspectives. Two notable experiences emerged from this:

1. A notable experience is from Gem, a student who had employed pathos onto her second text creation: a LEGO construction of the border wall. Gem's border wall rhetoric displayed a nuanced understanding of border politics, which are contentious on their own, but address immigration relations and policy. Additionally, in another LEGO wall adaptation, Gem included a dichotomy of proponents and opponents of the border wall (due to the time of the study, these individuals included Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton). Also, Gem used her recent refugee status to center her identity in relation to read-alouds as well as in persuasive letters towards state representatives.
2. Compared to Gem, Elliot, another student, voiced opposing opinions on the entrance of immigrants to the United States. Elliot's LEGO creation was rather similar to that of his peer; however, displayed weaponry from the "United States" side towards the "Mexico" side of the constructed wall. Elliot's reasoning for this creation, though, is not self-directed, but is influenced by false immigrant narratives involving potential job loss to immigrants. Ultimately, Elliot utilized pathos in the imagery created and in writing to

representatives, mirroring similar views made by proponents of the Republic Administration (Brownell, 2021).

The experience of these two students present some notable components towards this project. Firstly, both *make* and *produce* an artifact (LEGO borders walls) that employs rhetorical strategies but remains within a culturally rhetorical orientation expressing understanding towards immigration challenges and (physical) barriers (Brownell, 2021). What differentiates them, though, are the roles of opposition and advocacy that the students take. Aside from such a difference, Brownell's (2020) argument of integrating writing with making to promote the use, practice, and pedagogy of multiliteracies is reinforced in this study. The artifacts created layer understanding demonstrated in written literacy (a persuasive letter) with tactical and visual literacies (the LEGO border wall) to place a critical lens onto views of immigration. Secondly, the unique case of Elliot provides an awareness towards the “consideration that fostering critical literacies do not always guarantee shifts in individual perspectives towards equitable structures and futures” (Brownell, 2021, p. 283). This leaves gaps in social justice teaching that widen due to students’ diversion from justice, but requires educators to continue informing students of disenfranchising events and rhetoric that perpetuate marginalization. A caveat here, though, is entanglement of mandates and policy that prevent educators from “politically orienting teaching and learning” (Luke, 2014, p. 21).

The “making” of these artifacts can serve as catalysts for bolstered discussions on the use of critical literacies. The case studies of Gem and Elliot illustrate the importance of critical learning—learning that includes students in confronting acts of injustice and exclusion. These are clear examples of teaching that is responsive to students’ experiences and refrains from passive teaching that sidesteps the larger sociopolitical contexts students live in (Simmons, 2019

as addressed in Jacobson, 2021). Instead, embedding students' experiences in larger sociopolitical contexts is a catalyst for critical literacy, especially if for the purposes of transformation.

Trauma-informed infrastructure within schools becomes a concern in a study conducted by Davis et al. (2022). Such an infrastructure becomes foundational for social justice-centered teaching within schools that recognize the intersectionality of race and trauma. However, the absence of it leaves major gaps that leave educators unaware of the prevalence and impact of trauma in school systems, unable to recognize signs of trauma, and respond in ways that prevent retraumatization (Davis et al. 2022). To provide a framework as infrastructure, Davis et al. (2022) introduce the Safe School NOLA (SSNOLA) Framework: "a conceptual framework and implementation strategies [designed] to integrate trauma-informed approaches with a social justice agenda" (p. 2455). Much of the implementation and integration of this framework relies on foundational professional development (FPD), especially for the purpose of "acknowledging structural inequities and systemic oppression...that contribute to experiences of trauma for students of color and other marginalized youth" (Temkin et al. 2020 *as addressed in* Davis et al., 2022, p. 2). This expands the work of social justice from actions by students into actions by teachers that demonstrate readiness, competence, and responsiveness.

Social justice-teaching requires immense teacher capacities. Within the SSNOLA Framework, three skill areas are centered on trust and safety between teacher and student but also draw upon collaboration and mutuality, empowerment, voice, choice, and peer support (Davis et al., 2022). These skills include:

(1) establishing safe and supportive classroom environments that prioritize routines for community building (collaboration, peer support, voice and choice) and empowerment through student skill-building in emotional expression and regulation; (2) enhancing teacher emotional regulation skills as a driver of supportive teacher-student relationships (mutuality, peer support); and (3) fostering connected relationships between students and teachers (empowerment, mutuality) (p.2462).

Practically, these skills appear rather dispositional, which could serve as such within this project. Educators, although a part of the learning ecosystem, are integral to a school's trauma-informed infrastructure. In turn, responsibilities of educators within a social justice framework becomes a fully involved process of prioritizing safety and support whilst teaching skills relative to emotional regulation. Additionally, emotional regulation of educators becomes a priority, especially before effectively serving students impacted by trauma. Lastly, the connectedness of student and teacher bring further awareness to not only the traumas impacting students, but also the livelihoods they continuously experience.

Additional frameworks introduced by Crosby et al. (2018) include two frameworks that prioritizes student well-being through curriculum adjustments and empathetic classroom management. These include:

1. ***Compassionate Teaching***. Entails a curriculum plan that instructs educators on three primary tenets or goals: 1.) creating safety and connection, 2.) improving students' self-regulation, and 3.) helping students develop personal agency, social skills, and academic competence.

2. *The Flexible Framework.* A framework that advocates and encourages “ongoing professional development for teachers and school staff to become aware of the impact of trauma, practical classroom strategies and responses to students’ behavior, and legal considerations that may impact trauma-exposed students” (Crosby et al., 2018, p. 17).

In summation, these frameworks—especially when further explored and adopted by schools—highlight strategies that can be used to challenge systems in place. For the purpose of professional development, these frameworks could be structured as “reflective” walls that current classroom practices can reflect against to either be continued or improved upon.

Additional to this, an outside-of-research guide was considered in its structure as a source with reasonable use, especially in how it collects transparent methods/strategies that really support immigrant students. Safety and support remain at the center of this source, while also maintaining relevance to current yet continually changing immigration policies. Similar to Crosby et al. (2018), the guide “Supporting Immigrant Students in Uncertain Times: Strategies for Schools” highlights the role of teachers, administrators, and stakeholders in what strategies or implementations that can utilize in the creation and maintenance of a safe and inclusive learning environment. For professional development, several strategies can be introduced to educators for the sake of transforming in-classroom approaches that enable student empowerment and solidify a sense of belonging for students impacted by immigration.

Finding 3: The role of Narrative Writing, Testimony, and Critical Witness are crucial when implementing trauma-informed practice.

A growing body of research has been developing on the role and significance of storytelling and narrative writing in trauma-informed education. Wissman and Wiseman (2011) posit a strong argument from their research regarding their study on the use of narrative writing to establish control of one's trauma—a reclamation and healing from the impact of one's traumatic experiences. Their findings advocate for the use of narrative forms that allow students to “claim literacy as a practice of truth telling and meaning making about the social world” (p. 245). To accompany this, Dutro (2019) also argues the use of narrative forms within the classroom. “Children's writing illustrates how loss, love, longing, belonging, fear, and comfort are, so often, wrapped up in one another as lives unfold” (p. 58). A sentiment similar to the arguments of Wissman and Wiseman (2011), the use of narrative writing is imperative to the healing that trauma-informed practices concern itself with.

Another considerable argument that contributes to this finding is shared by Dutro (2022), which serves as a reminder to literacy educators. The “everydayness” of experiencing students' life stories does not make them mundane, ordinary, less powerful, or unmoving. Within professional development, this postulation may serve as a point for educators, posing the question: *how do you intentionally, purposefully, and actively listen to your students?* Following the structure of this finding, student life experiences can be transformed into written pieces of narrative.

Further discussion derives from Dutro (2019), especially on two imperative notions within trauma-informed teaching: 1.) Testimony and 2.) Witness. Witnessing is a practice of being present, rather actively at that, listening, and seeing; bearing witness to what is being shared directly or indirectly. This requires a keen sense of overall observations as what is being shared is not always obvious. Testimony can either be explicit (a written or spoken testimony) or

implicit (an object, lips quivering, eyes not focusing) (Dutro, 2019). Dutro's notions extend beyond the simplicities and obvious natures of share and acknowledgment. They point to foundational practices that amplify voices and experiences within the classroom while also encouraging those who listen to be active advocates who pursue support and provide love.

When considering trauma-informed literacy practices, it seems rather traditional that we focus on writing and speaking opportunities and instruction to amplify voices and narratives. But Brownell (2020), sets forth an expansion and remixing of traditional literacy practices into the realm of 'making' or into a 'makerspace'. This idea of making entails the use of "hands-on-activities a 'maker' does to design, build, transform, and/or produce various materials unto a new end" (p.2). Brownell's research, although tailored to the expansion of literacy opportunities for Black girls, critically fuses making and writing to promote a sense of agency and autonomy that enables students to develop meaning through their experiences with making, collaborating, and their testimonies. While this research may appear contextualized, it poses greater considerations for educators to enable a makerspace for students impacted by immigration to design and create their testimonies in multi-modalities/media that they are comfortable using while supporting the narrative they are choosing to share. A makerspace, when used impactfully, allows students to draw in witnesses (the educator included) to the commentary of their experiences.

Brownell's argument takes on an expansive view of Dutro's notion of testimony. Whilst Dutro's advocacy for testimony sharing is rather rooted in traditional literacy practices (writing across genre forms, mentor texts), Brownell's advocacy remains in the exercise of multiliteracies: a theory based on the use, practice, and learning of various, non-traditional literacies utilized in a multiplicity of discourse forms (New London Group, 1996). Such

advocacy provokes thought towards the multiliteracies of students impacted by trauma, and how such literacies could be exercised within instruction through the designing and creation of a product. Hence the necessity to shift the traditional learning environment to that of a makerspaces as suggested by Brownell (2020). Noteworthy in this argument are the tenets that framed the learning opportunities for the study participants to utilize their literacies:

1. **Multiple:** Literacies never remain isolated from other literacies. Students continuously engage with traditional and non-traditional literacies (visual, audio, tactile).
2. **Tied to identities:** Engaging with certain texts can induce moments of relation and mirroring, which ultimately brings the learner closer to understanding themselves.
3. **Historical:** The use of multiliteracies tend to be informed and connected by historical moments relative to one's identity. These can be larger, recorded histories or personal histories surrounding familial ancestors.
4. **Collaborative:** Multiliteracies entail the co-construction of knowledge with peers towards a certain topic or real-time event.
5. **Intellectual:** Multiliteracies are used in critical thought processes, discussions, and reflections about society and social problems (i.e. immigration policy).
6. **Political/Critical:** Multiliteracies are used to take political and critical stands on social problems. They are meant to criticize power, misconceptions, falsehoods, and advocate for societal transformation (Muhammad & Hadix, 2016 *as addressed in* Brownell, 2020).

These tenets, within this project, enable a framework that educators can utilize to design learning opportunities or makerspaces that allow students to exercise their multiliteracies relative to these tenets. Practically, this may venture out of traditional literacy practices and may require multimodalities and technologies to execute. However, testimonial creation and sharing is

augmented in the overall expansion of semiotic meaning-making through the integration of writing and making (Brownell, 2020).

Additional research in the sharing of testimonies by youth have uncovered a critical consideration for educators who, inadvertently, tend to fall susceptible to the perpetuation of trauma. Panther and Tolefree (2022) catalyze a critical discussion on adult and instructional responses to youth testimonies of racialized trauma. Traditionally, trauma tends to be construed towards physical adversities like that of physical abuse, neglect, and violence (Minahan, 2019 *as addressed in* Panther & Tolefree, 2022). However, this often overshadows other systemic sources of trauma that tend to manifest and sustain themselves within school systems that remain unchanged and unchallenged (Alvarez, 2020; Panther & Tolefree, 2022).

Teacher-student relationships may be a sustainable approach during trauma healing processes, but it may also prove detrimental. Two common practices—adult-centered testimony and privileging content coverage over testimony—tend to complicate trauma-informed literacy practices (Panther & Tolefree, 2022). These practices may induce a reduction of one's testimony from active narrative sharing to an adult-led conversation consumed by the adult's influence on the testimony. Alongside this, educators tend to be driven by the fulfillment of content standards, which prioritize content. In turn, educators fall subject to the recentering of youth testimony to adult-driven conversations and shifting focus to content materials that are meant to catalyze critiques of macrostructures that create or sustain trauma. These become crucial reminders to educators that their approaches can be contributing to sustained trauma rather than preventative.

A limitation to the entirety of discussions within this finding is introduced by Carello and Butler (2014). Caution must be exercised when considering both narrative writing & testimony

and witnessing. Although the study is localized to higher education, educators considering both trauma-informed practices must approach instruction with a critical lens so as not to retraumatize or vicariously traumatize participants within a lesson. Though mentioned within one source, it bears mentioning that sharing traumatic experiences must be structured, proactively, to prevent further traumatization.

Finding 4: The call for teacher preparedness and professional development is profound.

Several studies have sounded the call, highlighting the necessity for educator preparedness when implementing trauma-informed practices. Brunzell et al. (2016; 2019) have identified key challenges that educators face when implementing trauma-informed strategies, including the buy-in from students that affects participation and engagement, the management of emotional triggers, and maintaining the well-being of themselves as facilitators of TIP. This poses major concerns for educators who truly want to establish trauma-informed settings but lack the support and knowledge to do so. While educators remain adamant on implementing TIP, challenges remain a barrier to that. As a proactive approach to addressing these challenges, Mc Connico et al. (2016) posits the necessity for schools and school districts to assess their readiness to implement trauma-informed curricula, ensuring that schools identify potholes of knowledge and fill them accordingly through proper support and training. Teaching-training programs must include extensive strategies for addressing trauma. If done so, then teachers will feel more proficient in their abilities to discuss trauma-related issues with students, parents, and others.

Further research on teacher preparedness by Kostouros et al. (2023) has delved into a unique perspective: the vicarious transmission of trauma to educators within ELL classrooms. Findings here have unraveled that educators are not entirely shielded from the manifestations of

trauma within the classroom. Educational stakeholder participants within the study had recognized “teachers are the first point of contact, so learners go to teachers with their stories” (Kostouros et al., 2023, p. 186). This very article has brought into understanding that vicarious traumatization is plausible not only to students, but to educators as well. It brings into consideration the emotionality of educators who may take on much of the emotional workload that a given situation may require. Whilst doing so, such an issue requires educators to become advocates for themselves as they become integral members of students’ trauma navigation.

Another well-informed structure comes from Mansfield (2017), who discusses the Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR) program. This may remain as a program outside of schools and community-centered, but its detail of training that participants go through remains useful in the structuring of a professional development program. The program consists of a three-part journey consisting of a 5-day training which entails: Day 1: Orientation and Beginning of journey, Day 2: Impacts of Trauma and (continued) Cycles of Violence, Day 3: Breaking from Cycles of Violence and Building Resilience, Day 4: Continues activities from day 3, and Day 5: Resilience and Self Care (Mansfield, 2017, p. 268). While this may not be detailed, the structure of training could be adopted by schools and school districts who aim to embed trauma-informed practices as part of their curriculum. This could be adapted as gradual lessons for educators to use within their own classrooms.

In relation to educator preparedness, educator awareness of policies impacting undocumented students remains crucial and necessary. Sociopolitical climates tend to impact the learning ecosystem rather drastically, and when they do so, the participants of learning (educators and students) are left with either an increased or decreased awareness of such drastic impacts. For the sake educators, “unless [they] have greater sociopolitical knowledge concerning

national and local policy contexts, they will be limited in addressing the critical needs of undocumented youth and in understanding fears related to immigration enforcement” (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020, p. 6). This perspective is part of a more expansive discussion catalyzed by Rodriguez and McCorkle (2020), in which they conducted an analysis of teacher awareness towards several aspects: education policy, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), false immigration narratives, and their attitudes towards educational policy. The findings within this study had shown a mixture of awareness and unawareness in the aspects mentioned as well as inclusivity and exclusivity in educators attitudes towards educational policies. For instance, the awareness amongst teachers toward the false narrative of undocumented students being eligible for public benefits remains high; however, educators tended to believe that there was a viable pathway to citizenship for most undocumented immigrants (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020). Another noteworthy example is that “teachers believed that undocumented students should be able to attend college, but the state should not help them pay for it” (p. 23).

While these are a part of the study’s findings, they posit that educators may possess a rather uninformed and incomprehensive awareness and attitude towards educational and public policies. This is seen in the lack of awareness towards the broader financial constraints and insecurities that become a barrier to pursuing higher education (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020). Additional to this, a viable pathway to citizenship eludes undocumented students as their positionality in society becomes complicated. They remain having the right to a K-12 education, but broader society and the encroachment of immigration policy into protected areas (i.e. school) surrounds them with criminalizing views and categorize them under “illegal” in the larger citizenship dichotomy (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020; Rodriguez & Macias, 2022; Gonzalez et al. 2015). The lack of awareness within these aspects, despite the awareness in others, is rather

troubling in the thought of how prepared teachers are in responding to the needs of undocumented students. For a professional development, this study and other perspectives pose as a prospective assessment towards the awareness and attitudes of current staff and faculty within schools. This seems to be rather appropriate in the contemporary issue with the signing of ambiguous executive orders that pose a threat to the livelihood of undocumented students and communities. Ultimately, calling for educators to be comprehensively aware of educational and public policy by being willing to “enter the tedious political and policy arena, become aware of what their students face and [subsequently] become advocates” (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020, p. 26).

While ambiguous policy contexts and the lack of awareness towards these contexts may continue to oppress undocumented students, several educators make haste in adopting roles and responsibilities relative to advocacy, emotional support, establishing safe spaces within their respective schools, and being a provider of basic needs (Parkhouse et al., 2020). A study was conducted by Parkhouse et al. (2020) within the state of Virginia to understand how educators perceive and fulfill their roles and responsibilities as they relate to the undocumented students they serve. The findings of teacher roles and responsibilities are student-centered yet remain influenced and shaped by educational policy related to undocumented status. Parkhouse et al. (2020) summarizes this into the paradox teachers report: the ethical obligation to support students’ specific needs remains integral and foremost, but teachers cannot inquire about those needs if they relate to immigration status. Such a paradox comes into play within several teacher roles and responsibilities. For instance, teachers may seek to assist students with navigating college decisions; however, may need to know the status of students to determine whether funding options are impacted. Additionally, the need for background information to make

informed interpretations of a student's behavior(s) and decisions on the best supports for their education and well-being does not come easily (Parkhouse et al., 2020). Teachers remain as critical witnesses to student testimonies (Dutro, 2019); however, it comes with immense "emotional labor" and cost when testimonies bear immense trauma to witness (Parkhouse et al., 2020, p. 536).

Despite the paradox that seems to create a barrier towards providing support, participants within the study had shared several actions taken in attempt to not only fulfill their perceived responsibilities, but to also support families inside and outside of school. Some of the noteworthy actions include:

1. The provision of basic needs to students such as food, books, eyeglasses, transportation, etc. in moments where the mere request of those resources produce anxiety, fear, and vulnerability within undocumented families.
2. Providing a status-responsive curriculum that is effectively provided so as not to retraumatize or sustain trauma within students but to provide opportunities for relational testimony sharing.
3. Teachers take on adaptive advocacy for students by correcting misconceptions among colleagues that manifests in anti-immigration language, attitudes, and inaccessibility to family-facing resources (i.e. district-provided resolutions) (Parkhouse et al., 2020).

These actions serve several implications within this project. Firstly, it acknowledges efforts already taken by current educators that put into action advocacy in the form of basic necessities, instruction, and social justice teaching towards colleagues. Secondly, for educators unbeknownst to the various situational contexts of their undocumented students, this serves as a

rather obligatory evaluation of their awareness towards the immense societal challenges faced by undocumented students (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020). Lastly, especially within the educational setting, when similar actions are taken up by educators, then schools will begin to see where definite provision gaps exist. For instance, the provision of basic needs to students becomes a discreet and secretive activity in order to protect their job within restrictive school climates (Parkhouse et al., 2020). In uninformed, unaware, and unsupportive school climates, teacher's efforts and support seemingly become taboo where every form of advocacy provided is justly deserved rather than a jeopardizing act.

Limitations

It is understandable that the immigration politics of late are not new given past presidential administrations executing orders focused on detaining and deporting individuals with unauthorized entry into the United States. However, the current Republican administration displayed an immediacy in the signing of eight immigration-related executive orders upon inauguration into the White House (Federal Register of the United States). This is a span of a little over three months. This proves to be a limitation towards research as many of the measures (immigration raids and arrests) listed in executive orders are carried out with not ample time to understand the current sociopolitical contexts that impacted communities are part of. Hence the reliance on research influenced and created in accordance to past immigration politics (Brownell, 2020; Brownell, 2021; Parkhouse et al., 2020; Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020; Cervantes et al., 2020; Davila et al., 2020; Rodriguez & Macias, 2023). Again, while current immigration politics are familiar to past administrative measures, the time between now and the issuance of current policies has been insufficient in producing qualitative studies.

Additionally, a caveat to the analysis of policy impacts on students of undocumented status tends to be influenced by geographical locations, which may implement different policies and practices (Parkhouse et al. 2020; Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020). In turn, the findings of studies centered on analyzing policy contexts and impacts may not be generalizable or completely different to other schools in the nation. While there is a considerable amount of expansive trauma-informed practices surrounding testimony and witness (Panther & Tolefree, 2022; Brownell, 2020; Dutro, 2019), the literature seems to lack in preventative strategies related to retraumatization and secondary trauma stress. Only Carell & Butler (2014) weigh in the matter of retraumatization but within higher education contexts, suggesting that more research needs to be conducted on the issue.

Conclusion

The literature review underscores the growing consensus on the cruciality of trauma-informed practices and teaching for students impacted by immigration. Uncertainty floods the nation as well as all those within given the political climates that instill fear and anxiety within marginalized groups. In current times, educators are called to the forefront in which they must understand the trauma unique to students impacted by immigration, experience the shift of TIP as social justice, provide spaces for structured narrative writing, testimony, and witness all while advocating for support and training to prepare themselves in the use of TIP. Each forefront requests effort, resiliency, advocacy, and compassion from teachers, schools, districts, and communities. However, further information must be provided on each so that thorough understanding and competencies are strengthened come the time educators face trauma within their own classrooms.

The findings from the literature, although immense, truly highlight impactful strategies as well challenges in supporting immigrant students. One significant finding heightens the importance of culturally-responsive and status-responsive curriculum. Here, educators are called upon to acknowledge and integrate the diverse cultural and sociopolitical backgrounds of their students into the curriculum. This pulls from research within Finding #1, which posits that awareness and attitudes towards the unique lives of immigrant and undocumented youth are integral in the attempts of educators to be responsive to both culture and status. Educator awareness seems to be a rather troubling concept, though, with several on the dichotomies of awareness and unawareness as well as inclusivity and exclusivity. Research in Finding #2 suggest that in order for trauma-informed practices to shift towards social justice, teachers must make cultural adjustments by stepping into policy and political arenas in order to comprehend the extent of political and policy impacts on immigrant students. Additionally, opportunities to exercise critical literacies towards social problems empowers students in the production of a commentary that criticizes political measures. Further findings in research focus on literacy instruction as a means of sharing testimonies and witnessing those testimonies. While traditional literacies of writing, reading, and speaking have their benefits, other studies have called for the expansion of literacies to integrate writing with making. In turn, testimonial creation is augmented to enable the use of multiliteracies that enable meaning-making. Lastly, the call for teacher preparedness rings rather loudly in current times. Research surrounding teacher preparedness places great significance on teacher competencies and dispositions needed to respond to trauma-impacted students. It boils down to great awareness of political contexts challenging students, continued efforts to support students, and priority of teacher-care when responding to trauma

Further research considerations would seek to expand upon the significance and value of trauma-informed practices, especially in current times where such practices become a necessity. Becoming trauma-informed does not happen easily nor does it happen at once. Becoming trauma-informed is evermore changing in the light of unique reactions and experiences had by our students. Most importantly, just as educators pour forth immense support to students, they, too, need immense support in their efforts to support students impacted by trauma.

Chapter 3: Project Design

Context

At the start of this year, political powers within the current Republican Administration have produced societal waves that have rocked the lives of countless individuals within the nation. Out of these waves comes one concerning immigration policy and the impact(s) of such decisions on vast majorities of individuals of undocumented status. Most recently, Executive Order 14165: “Securing Our Borders” issued by the current Republican administration on January 20, 2025 had set several mandates in place to reform entry of immigrants into the United States. Within Section 2 of this order, policies detailing actionary measures include: a) Detaining, to the maximum extent authorized by law, aliens apprehended on suspicion of violating Federal or State law, until such time as they are removed from the United States and b) Removing promptly all aliens who enter or remain in violation of Federal law (Exec. Order No. 14165, 2025). Additionally, further actions have been taken to reinforce immigration reform, specifically within previously determined protected areas. These include schools, places of worship, healthcare facilities, relief centers, protests, etc. (Mayorka, 2021). However, a new border-control directive supersedes and rescinds the previous memorandum declaring these areas as protected, enabling immigration agents to execute actionary measures (Huffman, 2025).

These executive orders, in both language and actionary measures, are targeted towards specific demographics that experience increased pressure relative to fear, anxiety, and vulnerability due to drastic changes of immigration policy. Those at the center of this upheaval include communities of immigrants, families, and school-age children that enter our classrooms. Within Oregon alone, a 2022-2023 English Learners in Oregon Report totaled 790 students across Oregon districts that had experienced interruptions or limitations in formal education.

Often, the majority of this number included refugees and immigrants, some of which “had spent time in refugee camps and whose process of immigration to the U.S. prevented them from attending school for a time” (ODE, 2024, p.13). In knowing this context about Oregon schools, it becomes crucial to support students impacted by the traumas produced by immigration policy and action. It becomes just as integral for educators to become equipped in their efforts to support these students through trauma-informed approaches.

In my past experience as a pre-service educator and then a substitute teacher, I served at schools filled with students hailing from diverse communities, including those from immigrant backgrounds. While my work with these students was mostly concentrated in the districts Salem Keizer 24J and Central 13J, it is worth noting the other school districts that serve these populations of students impacted by immigration reform. These include Hillsboro, Portland, Beaverton, Herminston, Reynolds, Woodburn, South Lane, Morrow, and Klamath County (ODE, 2024). The development of this project places immense consideration on the work done by the districts, especially done at the educative and administrative levels. To these districts, this project’s development is meant to, expand on existing conceptual frames by means of providing knowledge relative to the unique experiences of students impacted by immigration, viewing trauma-informed practices (TIP) through a social justice lens, empowering student voice through testimony, emphasizing the importance of teacher self-care, and prioritizing sustained advocacy for continuous support.

Although I am not currently employed by a school district, I am concerned with the professional commitment to collaborating with educators and learning communities in the implementation of trauma-informed practice for students impacted by immigration. It becomes an ethically mandatory act for educators to establish and continually foster a safe and responsive

learning environment that allows for the empowerment of students who feel marginalized and underserved. Ultimately, for communities that are already engaged in the critical work that this project has to offer, this project serves as a written partnership that extends additional tools, perspectives, and conceptual frames for the support of students whose educational experiences are shifted by immigration policy.

Design Methods

When designing this professional project, the literature review was heavily relied upon to develop a research-informed model that had influenced the structure of the five-session professional development. In designing this project, each step was methodically planned to both ensure and maintain fidelity towards TIP within the classroom as well as the needs of students impacted by immigration.

As numerous concepts were uncovered throughout the duration of the literature review, the findings were condensed into four key pillars that serve as foundational themes to be explored within the professional development. They include:

- 1) The understanding of immigrant-specific trauma;
- 2) A social justice view on trauma-informed practices and teaching;
- 3) Narrative writing for purpose of testimony and critical witnessing;
- 4) Teacher-preparedness, self-care, and continued professional development.

These foundational pillars, especially when considering the specific research and studies behind each, provide an informed, research-based approach that helps with the sequencing of the sessions within this professional development. Each session is dedicated to certain aspects of trauma-informed practices and teaching that reflects the foundational pillars mentioned previously.

Session Sequence

For the professional development this project offers, each of the five sessions will be structured at 1-hour long, with collaborative and reflective activities embedded throughout. Trauma-informed practices and teaching require that educators work in tandem with either peers or other school officials to evaluate or criticize existing structures or implicit biases relative to TIP (Dutro, 2019; Parkhouse et al., 2020). Therefore, collaborative and reflective activities are essential within each session to ensure educators share and discuss perspectives relative to TIP centered on immigration policy impacts. Additionally, the reflective activities are equally essential given the opportunities for educators to criticize systemic structures that perpetuate trauma as well as personal biases that influence educator's views towards TIP and the communities these practices are meant to serve. Ultimately, the sequence of sessions within this professional development is meant to scaffold learning progressively, ranging from the initial understanding of trauma provoked by immigration policy to the caring of oneself as an educator supporting immigration-impacted students. The professional development will follow the sequence presented below.

Table 1

Scope and Sequence

Session	Title	Focus Area(s)	Research Connection
1	Understanding our Students: What is immigration-related trauma?	Overview of Trauma, Trauma-informed practices and teaching; migration trauma; teaching views on trauma	Davila et al., 2020; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011
2	Trauma-Informed Practices as Social Justice	Critical pedagogy; critical literacy; Trauma response shifts	Crosby et al., 2018; Luke, 2014; Alvarez, 2020

3	The Importance of Narrative Writing, Testimony, and Critical Witnessing	Student engagement in healing through writing and multimodal expression	Dutro, 2019; Brownell, 2020
4	Developing Safe and Inclusive Classrooms	Practical strategies for creating safe spaces responsive to trauma	Davis et al., 2022; Carello & Butler, 2015
5	Maintaining Resilience and Promoting Teacher Self-Care	Professional sustainability; secondary trauma prevention;	Kostorous et al., 2023; Mansfield, 2017

Session 1 Understanding our Students: What is immigration-related trauma? The focus of this session is to introduce participants of the professional development to the foundational concepts of trauma as experienced by students impacted by immigration. Additionally, this session is meant for educators to critically examine how well they understand or are aware of the unique realities experienced by immigration-impacted students. Content within this session is centered to the following:

- 1) Pre-migration, perimigration, and post-migration experiences of children immigrating unaccompanied. Challenges relative to acculturation and discrimination are also experienced as they settle into the new country they enter (Davila et al., 2020)
- 2) The extension and promotion of belonging of student to their families without the fear of endangering their immigration status (Parkhouse et al., 2020)
- 3) The understanding of the prevalence of systemic barriers and developmental impacts that the label of “undocumented status” can create (Suarez-Orozco et al. 2011)
- 4) The prioritization of student safety through the consideration of student characteristics, classroom environment, assignment design, and self-care practices (Carello & Butler, 2015; Acosta Price et al., 2012)

- 5) The overlap of dehumanizing language and exclusionary practices the influence biases relative to students impacted by immigration (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020)

To introduce these components would help educators understand that the distinct trauma experiences of students is critical for recognizing students' behaviors, emotional responses, and academic performance. Ultimately, these are deeply contextualized according to students' lived-experiences—several are immigrants themselves, refugees, children with undocumented status to parents of undocumented status, birth-right citizens to parents who immigrated themselves. Needless to say, students live within unique realities relative to immigration, and without that understanding, educators run the risk of ignorance and misinterpreting trauma responses as misbehavior or disengagement.

Session 2 Trauma-Informed Practices (TIP) as Social Justice. The focus of this session is intended to equip educators with a transformative understanding of trauma-informed practices through the critical lens of social justice education. TIP, here, is reframed as a social justice imperative, encouraging participants to reevaluate their positions as not only supporters of individual students, but also the disruptors of systemic inequities. Main concepts explored within this session include:

- 1) The recognition of system and institutional inequalities (Cochran-Smith, 2004 as addressed in Crosby et al., 2018) to emphasize the importance of addressing systems of disempowerment that impact marginalized student populations (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011, Davila et al., 2020).
- 2) The exploration of critical literacy (Luke, 2014) as an instructional strategy used to disrupt dominant ideologies and foster civic engagement (Brownell, 2021)

- 3) The introduction of frameworks—SSNOLA (Davis et al., 20220, Compassionate Teaching and the Flexible Framework (Crosby et al., 2018)—which sound the call for mutual empowerment in safe, supportive learning environments.
- 4) Strategies that contextualize practical approaches for promoting student agency and belonging.

This professional development session encourages shifting views of trauma-informed intervention. In turn, this session emphasizes the notion that trauma-informed education is not an isolated intervention. Instead, it is an expansive social justice practice that places student trauma within larger societal structures relative to oppression, racism, and xenophobia. Here, educators are encouraged to reflect on their role(s) in critical reflection, culturally responsive pedagogy, and systemic transformation.

Session 3 The Importance of Narrative Writing, Testimony, and Critical Witnessing. Within this session, the central focus is the examination of narrative writing as a method to testimony creation and sharing as well as to critical witnessing within trauma-informed instructional practices. Additionally, this session aims to educate teachers on the provision of structured opportunities for students to share their testimonies, either through traditional literacy practices or through multimodal projects or makerspaces that integrate writing with other modes (Dutro, 2019; Brownell, 2020). Content within this session includes:

- 1) The use of traditional literacy practices (writing) to reclaim agency over traumatic experiences; literacy becomes a transformative act (Wissman & Wiseman, 2011).
- 2) The unique positionality of educators to be critical witnesses to the everyday yet profound experiences of students; enhancing the recognition of explicit and implicit testimonies (Dutro, 2019; 2022)

- 3) The expansion of testimony to the makerspace, which integrates writing with multimodalities as a method for supporting students' use of multiple literacies (Brownell, 2020)
- 4) The interrogation of one's personal instructional practices, which might dominate testimony sharing and overshadow student narratives by content-driven agendas (Panther & Tolefree, 2022)
- 5) The caveat of retraumatization or vicarious traumatization within trauma-informed classrooms (Carello & Butler, 2014)

Ultimately, the purpose here is for educators to carefully consider narrative expression. It emphasizes a transformative, yet delicate, structure of narrative writing as testimony, urging educators to center and amplify student voices responsibly. It also encourages educators to be cautious in their healing attempts given the risk of retraumatization and adult disruptions to student testimonies.

Session 4 Developing Safe and Inclusive Classrooms. It is worth noting that this session will entail the collection and curation of practical, research-based strategies that are useful in the creation of trauma-sensitive and inclusive learning environments. In turn, this session aims to provide strategies focused on topics surrounding community-building within the classroom, emotional regulation strategies, anti-discrimination strategies, and culturally responsive teaching practices. The content of this session includes practical strategies relative to the points below:

- 1) Safe classrooms that are systematically structured around routines and emotional regulation (Davis et al., 2022)
- 2) Trauma-informed teaching extends to the relational as well as instructional environment (Carello & Butler, 2015)

- 3) Anti-discrimination is key to establishing safe, respectful, and empowered communities (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020)
- 4) The prioritization of student safety through the consideration of student characteristics, classroom environment, assignment design, and self-care practices (Carello & Butler, 2015; Acosta Price et al., 2012)
- 5) The extension and promotion of belonging of student to their families without the fear of endangering their immigration status (Parkhouse et al., 2020)

Ultimately, the purpose of this session is to shift gears from theoretical understanding to more practical action. This session attempts to equip educators with concrete tools and resources that fosters physical and psychological safety, ensures cultural belonging, and promotes healing from trauma produced by immigration policies.

Session 5 Maintaining Resilience and Promoting Teacher Self-Care. The focus of this last session addresses the challenging issue of secondary trauma and vicarious stress that educators tend to experience when working closely with students impacted by trauma relative to immigration. Additionally, this session is structured to explore self-care practices, resilience strategies, and the ability to establish professional boundaries to sustain their social-emotional and professional well-being within the career. Content within this session includes:

- 1) Addressing the key challenges that educators experience when implementing TIP—student buy-in, the management of emotional triggers, and maintaining teacher well-being (Brunzell et al., 2016; 2019).
- 2) Schools proactively assessing their readiness for trauma-informed curriculum and to provide through training in TIP (McConnico et al., 2016)

- 3) Risk of vicarious trauma for educators as well as to emphasize the importance of teacher self-advocacy (Kostouros et al., 2023)
- 4) Raising critical awareness towards sociopolitical contexts relative to immigration policies and (un)documentation (Rodriguez & McCorkle, 2020)
- 5) The paradox of educators: the supporting of students by educators while remaining constrained by legal limitations; the emotional labor needed to process this paradox (Parkhouse et al., 2020)

Ultimately, the purpose of this session is to communicate the importance of teacher self-care and school-provided support in trauma-informed learning environments. Needless to say, a trauma-informed school is not sustainable unless the educators within it are cared for and supported. Additionally, this final session normalizes the overarching conversation regarding the emotional demands of trauma-responsive work, while also providing preventative strategies to avoid burnout and toxic stress.

Structural Overview of the Sessions

For each of the sessions, the primary mode of information delivery will be a presentation utilizing Google Slides. Now, as an overall structure to maximize engagement, each session will follow the structured format:

Table 2

Session Format

Time Estimate	Component	Description
0-15 minutes	Brief lecture; information dissemination	An introduction to the central theme/focus of the session; an introduction to foundational research corresponding to the focus

15-35 minutes	Interactive Activity or Case Study	An activity that requires participants to engage in application through role playing, discussion of scenarios, collaborative creation activities, etc.
35-55 minutes	Reflection and Application Planning	An activity that requires participants to contextualize learning from the sessions into their own teaching practices
55-60 minutes	Closure and/or Self-Assessment	A rather quick, but effective self-evaluation; a check-in or other opportunity to set personal goals for applying the sessions content

Data Collection/Evaluation Procedures

The data collected for this project mainly consists of structured qualitative sources that are planned to capture the participants's learning experiences and transformations in professional practice. These data sources include session feedback forms with open-ended questions and reflective journals used throughout the professional development. These data tools are focused on gathering detailed professional narratives and self-assessments from participants to track growth in trauma awareness, shifts in instructional strategies, and an overall development of confidence in the application of TIP. As this project does not rely on quantitative data and measures, there is a rather heavy reliance on the depth and breadth of educator responses to reflection activities and/or collective dialogue. Additionally, the indicators of success in this professional development include participants' reports of increased awareness of both trauma and immigration impacts. Apace with these, evidence of instructional transformation, enhanced self-efficacy in the support towards trauma-impacted students, and an expressed commitment made by participants to continue professional learning.

Chapter 4: Final Products

Introduction

This chapter includes the materials and artifacts developed for this project. The overall intention of this project was to create sessions of professional development (PD) based on contextualizing trauma-informed practices for students impacted by immigration. Five sessions were anticipated during initial planning. However, it was found that three well-structured sessions were sufficient for reaching learning objectives. Critical pedagogy demands space for a more dialogic process, which requires reserving space for additional content to be created later in a way that would be tailored and responsive to the needs of specific communities. The final project reflects very intentional, pedagogical decision-making around content that was best structured into three, well-organized sessions, ready to be delivered throughout the school year. As mentioned before in Chapter 3 of this project, each slide deck follows a structural organization that entails the following: 1) a brief informational lecture on the session concept, 2) an interactive activity, 3) an application activity, and 4) a closing survey.

As addressed earlier, this project is paced by sessions rather than specific time allocations to allow for flexibility based on the availability for professional development for different school districts.. Organizing by “sessions,” was helpful in focusing, organizing, and condensing relevant information from the literature review pertaining to the session topic. Session topics are as follows:

- **Session 1:** [Understanding our Students: What is immigration-related trauma?](#)
- **Session 2:** [Trauma-Informed Practices as Social Justice](#)
- **Session 3:** [The Importance of Narrative Writing, Testimony, and Critical Witnessing](#)

Each session is elaborated on within this chapter, with images of slides detailing crucial information from research as well the activities designed relative to the session topic. The sessions were structured with the following placeholders: Learn, Unlearn, Reflect, and Act. Learn is meant to organize information that educators are about to learn relative to the topic of the session. Unlearn is meant to address specific practices—identified as problematic in research—that educators possibly use, explaining how such practices can be detrimental and should be shifted towards more constructive practices. Reflect is the placeholder for an activity that educators are to complete as they reflect on their practice, classroom or school culture. Act is the placeholder for the ending activity that requires educators to take ‘action’ toward bettering or implementing trauma-informed practices. Time constraints and the immense bandwidth needed to create comprehensive PD sessions made it difficult to create the complete sequence of sessions. While the three developed sessions are foundational to the concept of trauma-informed practices, my hope is to continue working on the completion of the remaining sessions. Mainly, this is for the purpose of delivering much-needed training and development on practices that serve students who are marginalized.

Artifacts

Figure 1 shows two templated slides that remain the same throughout the entirety of the sessions. The ‘Welcome’ slide provides background information about me, which details personal beliefs relative to trauma-informed practices and immigration. The purpose of sharing these beliefs is to provide a foundational footing for the topics of each session. Additionally, the teaching community expectations were written to maintain and encourage an air of respect for others and a belief in continual learning.

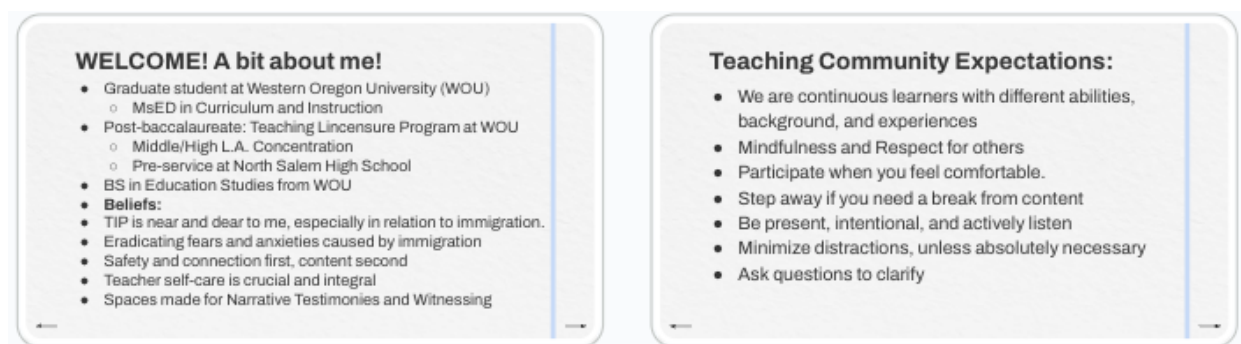
Figure 1*Templated Slides Throughout the Sessions****Learn***

Figure 2, 3, and 4 details information that will be delivered during the ‘lecture’ portion of each session. The main purpose of these slides is to centralize the professional knowledge on key pieces of information found in the literature review. Each key piece of information is structured into digestible bullet-points that would be elaborated on had this been delivered to an audience. Each lecture focuses on the following:

Figure 2 is the lecture for Session 1. The focus of this session is to introduce participants of the professional development to the foundational concepts of trauma as experienced by students impacted by immigration. Additionally, this session is meant for educators to critically examine how well they understand or are aware of the unique realities experienced by immigration-impacted students. This session would help educators understand that the distinct trauma experiences of students is critical for recognizing students’ behaviors, emotional responses, and academic performance.

Figure 2*Session 1 ‘Learn’ Placeholder and Content*

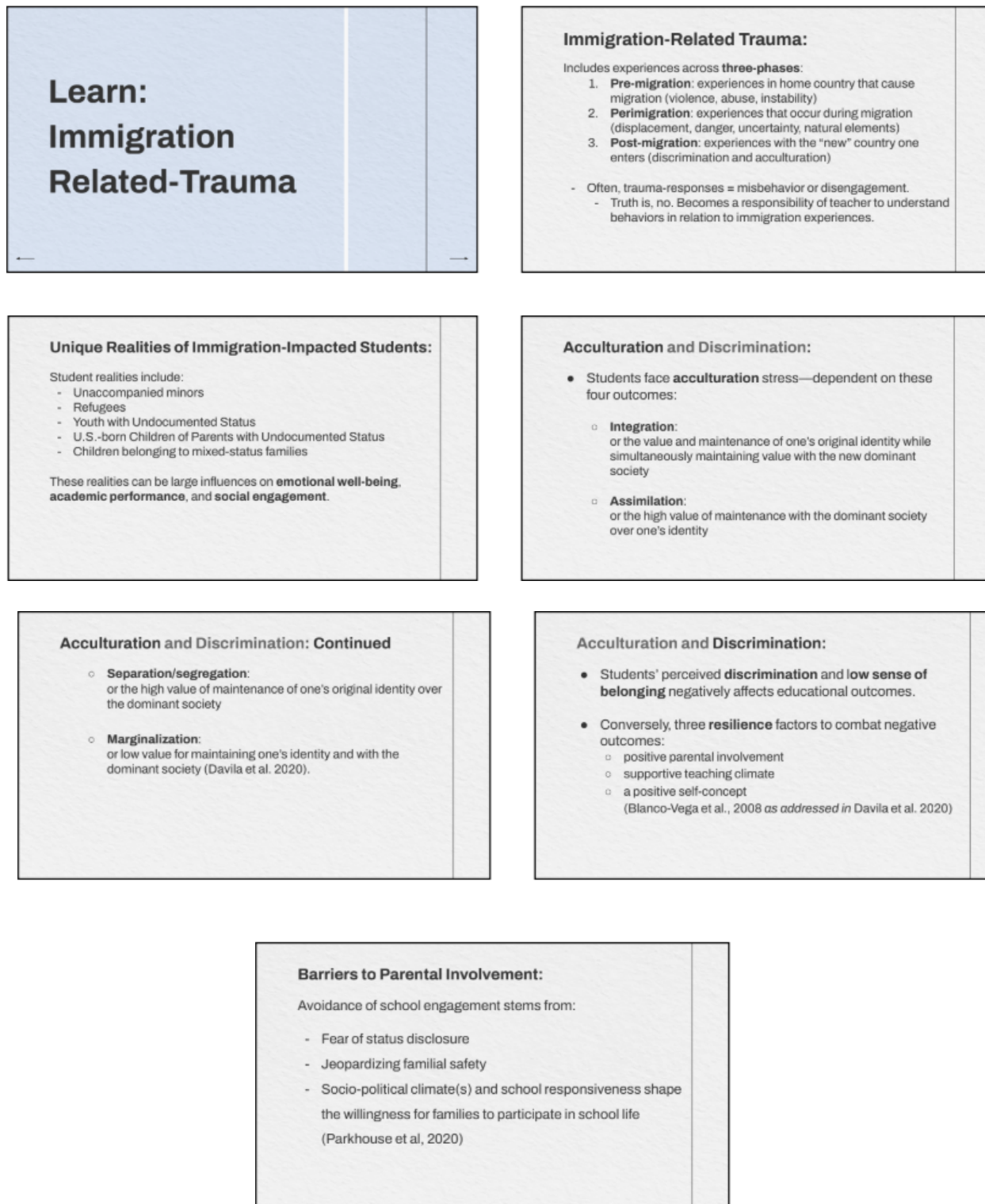


Figure 3 is the lecture for Session 2. The focus of this session is intended to equip educators with a transformative understanding of trauma-informed practices through the critical

lens of social justice education. TIP, here, is reframed as a social justice imperative, encouraging participants to reevaluate their positions as not only supporters of individual students, but also the disruptors of systemic inequities. Here, educators are encouraged to reflect on their role(s) in critical reflection, culturally responsive pedagogy, and systemic transformation.

Figure 3

Session 1 'Learn' Placeholder and Content

Learn: Transformative Strategies for Empowerment

Critical Literacy as a Tool for Justice
Critical literacy—

- Places power, agency, and autonomy for knowledge production in the hands of learners (Luke, 2014)
- Analyzes whose voices are heard—and whose are missing—in texts and society
- Center identity and lived experience in meaning-making (Brownell, 2021)

Considerations for Educators:

- Incorporate non-dominant literacy practices as academic discourse (i.e., storytelling and visual/multimodal expression)

Student Case Studies: Critical Literacy in Action
Brownell (2021) Study—Create LEGO models to express complex views on immigration and identity

Two students with similar LEGO constructions of a border wall:

Gem • LEGO construction and persuasive letters addressed immigration through a personal lens • Employed pathos and her refugee experience to critique the U.S. border wall	Elliot • LEGO construction displayed weaponry towards the "Mexico" side • Echoed anti-immigrant rhetoric shaped by misinformation
---	--

Student Case Studies: Critical Literacy in Action

This study reminds us that—

- Critical literacy **doesn't** guarantee equity-based outcomes.
- Educators must **guide discourse toward justice**, even amid ideological conflict.

Bridging Literacy and Making: Multimodal Justice Work

- Combine writing with **hands-on multimodal creation**
 - Supports identity expression and emotional safety (Brownell, 2020).
 - **Cultural knowledge and personal histories** shape how students read and write the world.
- **Keep in mind:**
 - Meaning-making must be **inclusive of diverse cultural rhetorics**, not limited to traditional academic norms.

"Supporting Immigrant Students in Uncertain Times"

A guide that collects transparent methods/strategies to support immigrant students

Recommendations for educator use:

- Ensure **safety and belonging** amid shifting immigration policy.
- Center **students' lived realities** in curriculum and school culture.
- Equip educators, administrators, and staff with **actionable strategies** to protect and empower.

Supporting Immigrant Students in Uncertain Times: Strategies for Schools
Re-imagining MIGRANT: N

Learn: Transformative Frameworks for Empowerment

School Infrastructure: Building Justice into Systems

Without trauma-informed infrastructure, **educators may overlook signs of trauma or respond harmfully** (Davis et al., 2022).

Safe School NOLA (SSNOLA) Framework

- "a conceptual framework and implementation strategies [designed] to integrate trauma-informed approaches with a social justice agenda" (p. 2455)
- Integrates **TIP** with social justice goals:
 - Acknowledge structural inequities.
 - Center professional development on race, trauma, and oppression (Temkin et al., 2020).

Skills for Trauma-Informed, Justice-Oriented Teaching

According to Davis et al. (2022), educators should:

- Create **safe, empowering classroom environments**
- Develop their own **emotional regulation** to foster supportive relationships
- Build **trust and mutuality** with students to sustain healing and advocacy.

Why is this important?

Educators must prioritize safety and support while teaching those who have experienced or are still experiencing trauma.

Frameworks for Reflective, Justice-Centered Teaching

- **Compassionate Teaching Framework** (Crosby et al., 2018):
 - Three primary tenets or goals:
 - **Create safety and connection.**
 - **Support student self-regulation.**
 - **Develop agency, social-emotional skills, and academic competence.**
- **Flexible Framework** (Crosby et al., 2018):
 - Encourages ongoing PD, trauma awareness, and practical strategies for inclusive classrooms.

Both frameworks challenge systems in place and help educators reflect on current practices to decide if they should be continued or improved upon.

Frameworks for Reflective, Justice-Centered Teaching

- **Compassionate Teaching Framework** (Crosby et al., 2018):
 - Three primary tenets or goals:
 - Create safety and connection.
 - Support student self-regulation.
 - Develop agency, social-emotional skills, and academic competence.
- **Flexible Framework** (Crosby et al., 2018):
 - Encourages ongoing PD, trauma awareness, and practical strategies for inclusive classrooms.

Both frameworks **challenge systems in place** and help educators **reflect on current practices to decide if they should be continued or improved upon.**

Figure 4 is the lecture for Session 3. Within this session, the central focus is the examination of narrative writing as a method to testimony creation and sharing as well as to critical witnessing within trauma-informed instructional practices. Additionally, this session aims to educate teachers on the provision of structured opportunities for students to share their testimonies, either through traditional literacy practices or through multimodal projects or makerspaces that integrate writing with other modes.

Figure 4

Session 3 'Learn' Placeholder and Content

Learn: Trauma-Informed Literacy Practices

Storytelling and Narrative Writing

- **Storytelling and narrative writing** play important roles in trauma-informed education.
- Can be a form of **truth-telling and identity expression**
- They enable students to—
 - **reclaim control of their trauma** and engage in healing (Wissman & Wiseman, 2011)
 - **construct meaning** around complex emotional experiences like loss, belonging, and fear (Dutro, 2019)

Testimony & Critical Witness

- **Two imperative notions within trauma-informed teaching**
- **Testimony is either—**
 - Explicit
 - Spoken
 - Written
 - Implicit
 - Non-Verbal cues (e.g., an object, lips quivering, eyes not focusing) (Dutro, 2019)

Testimony & Critical Witness

- **Witnessing is being fully present—**
 - Listening actively
 - Observing deeply
 - Validating student experiences without judgment
- **Ask yourself:** *How do I intentionally listen to and amplify student stories?*

Makerspaces

- **Makerspaces** (Brownell, 2020)
 - **Hands-on, creative** environments
 - Support expression through **multiple modalities**
 - Broadens literacy beyond traditional text
- **Activity for Students**
 - **“Make” testimonies**
 - Examples: art, audio, video, or tactile mediums
- This approach **fosters agency, voice, and identity development** through multiliteracies.

Multiliteracies

- A theory based on the **use, practice, and learning of various, non-traditional literacies** utilized in a **multiplicity of discourse forms** (New London Group, 1996).
- **Multiliteracies are—**
 - *Multiple*—interconnected forms of literacy
 - *Tied to identities*—mirroring personal/familial narratives
 - *Historical*—informed by personal and ancestral histories
 - *Collaborative*
 - *Intellectual*
 - *Political/Critical* (Muhammad & Hadix, 2016)

Unlearn

Figure 5 details information on practices—specifically dehumanizing language, policy, and perceptions—that tend to harm and oppress students of immigrant status, their families, and

communities. This information is meant to disrupt the deficit-thinking of educators who tend to view immigrant students through an exclusionary lens. Additionally, examples of misconceptions are included to bring awareness to the deficit-thinking that educators inadvertently or deliberately practice.

Figure 5

Session 1 'Unlearn' Placeholder and Content

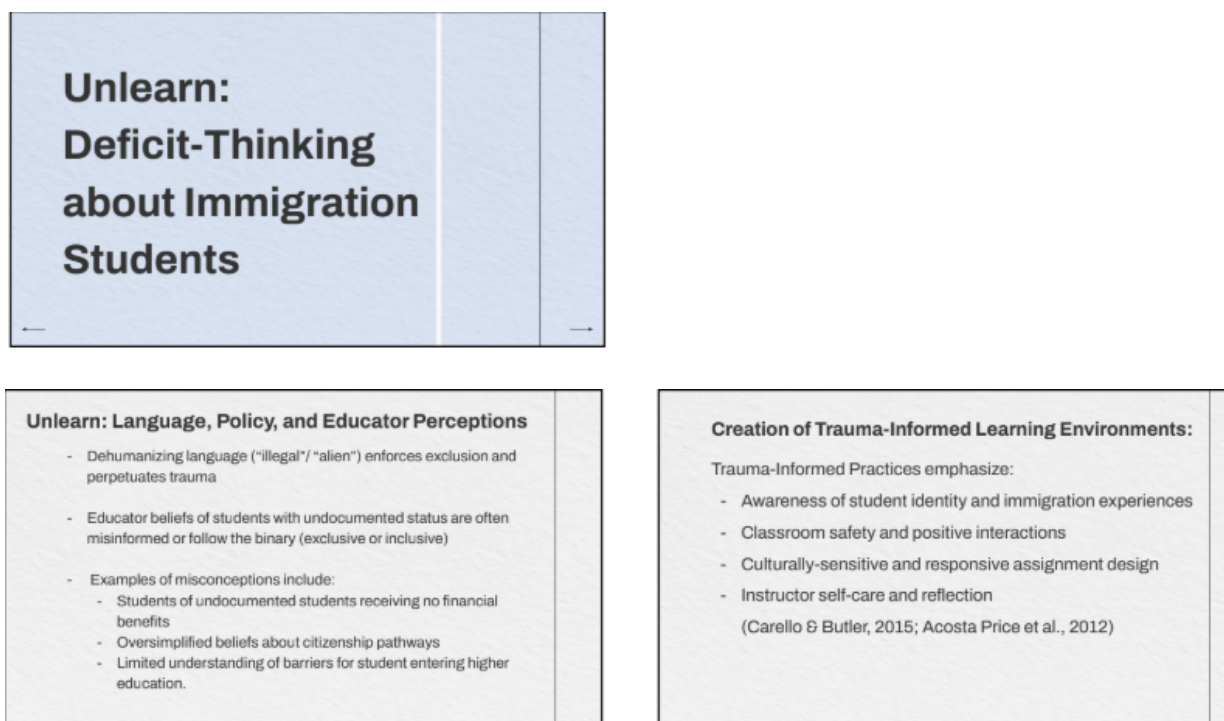


Figure 6 details information relative to disrupting the oppressive systems that challenge the implementation of trauma-informed practices. Additionally, this portion of the session is dedicated to unlearning the practices that perpetuate disempowerment and systematic inquiries for immigrant students. This information is presented with the encouragement to develop a critical lens towards trauma-informed practices by listing several detrimental effects.

Figure 6

Session 2 'Unlearn' Placeholder and Content

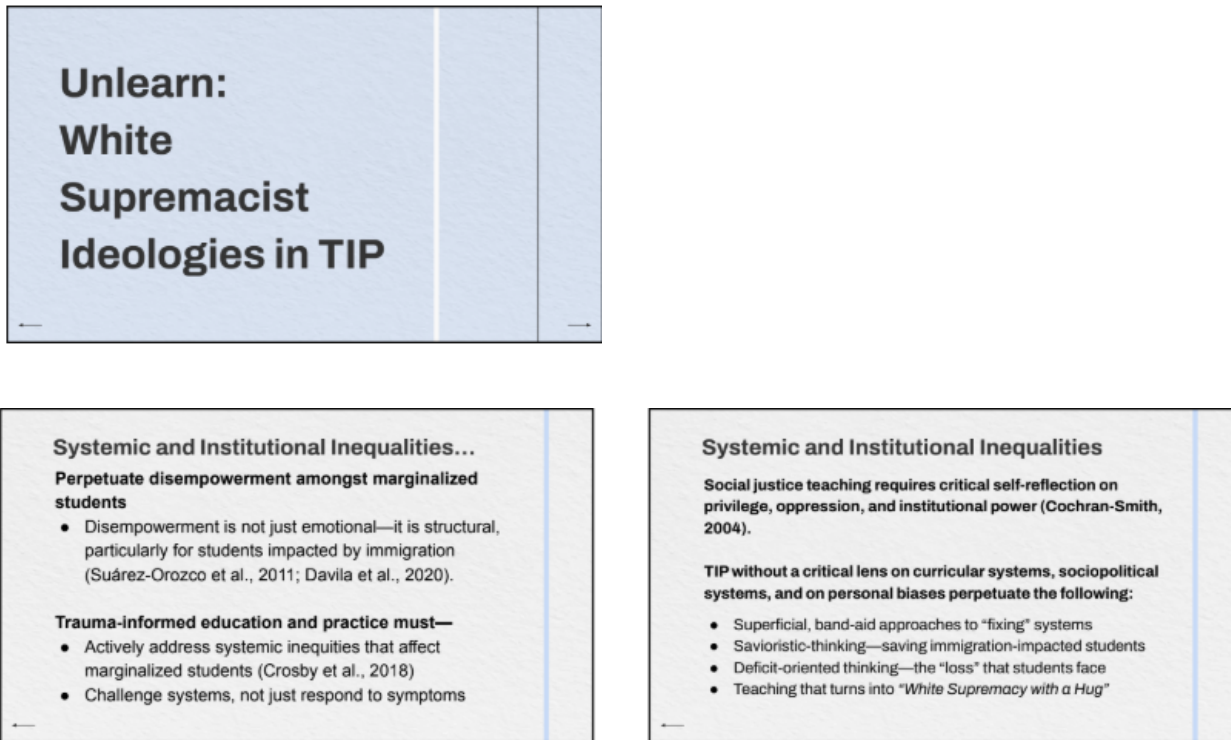


Figure 7 details information on unlearning adult-centered interpretations of youth stories as well as over-prioritizing standards and content coverage. This is meant to have educators think about the risks they inadvertently or deliberately cause when silencing the narratives/testimonies of students. The table within slides structure possible outcomes that result from those practices, bringing educators’ attention to the impacts of their personal choices. Ethical practices are also introduced so as to shift or transform practices to those that center student well-being and identity sharing.

Figure 7

Session 3 'Unlearn' Placeholder and Content

Unlearn: Risks in Trauma-Informed Literacy

Risks in Trauma-Informed Literacy Work

Two common practices complicating trauma-informed literacy practices:

1. Adult-centered interpretations of youth stories
2. Over-prioritizing standards and content coverage

Practices	Possible Outcomes
Adult-centered interpretations of youth stories	May silence or distort the student's authentic voice (Parfether & Tolstree, 2022)
Over-prioritizing standards and content coverage	Overshadow students' emotional needs and testimonies

Educators must acknowledge—

- Trauma isn't always physical
- Systemic and racialized trauma can be embedded in school environments

Ethical Practices

What	Educators must exercise caution when considering both narrative writing, testimony, and witnessing.
Why	Trauma-informed instruction must avoid retraumatization or vicarious trauma (Carelio & Butler, 2014).
How	• Maintain a critical, reflective stance • Center student well-being over performance or content pacing • Sharing testimonies should be structured, voluntary, and supported by relational safety

Reflect

Figure 8 details the reflection activity for Session 1. This is the first activity of the session, focusing on having educators reflect on their past or current experiences with students impacted by immigration. The activity requires that educators reflect on 1) what they know about the student—their emotional/behavioral responses, student background, and acculturation and assimilation; and 2) the implicit biases and assumptions that influenced an educator's reaction(s). Ultimately, this activity was designed to help educators disrupt their deficit ways of thinking towards students impacted by immigration.

Figure 8

Session 1 'Reflect' Placeholder and Activity Directions and Questions

Reflect : What beliefs have shifted for you?	
Application Activity: (15 minutes) 1. Think of a current or past student who may have been impacted by immigration. 2. Reflect on what you know about the student. a. What behavioral or emotional responses did you notice from the student that might be trauma-related? b. Did acculturation or discrimination impact this student's school experience? How? c. What do you know (or suspect) of this student's background related to immigration?	Application Activity: Continued (15 minutes) 3. On other side of paper, a. List three ways you may have misinterpreted or overlooked the student's behavior. b. Reflect on biases or assumptions you may have had towards the student and how your understanding has evolved.

Figure 9 details the reflection activity for Session 2. This activity was designed to have educators reflect on the TIP frameworks that are at work in their classrooms. For this activity, a series of statements were designed to embed certain frameworks found within the literature. For instance, the statement focused on critiquing power structures is rooted in the concept and practice of critical literacy meant to disrupt systematic inequities. Ultimately, the activity is meant to serve as reinforcement of current equitable practices or to reveal practices that are harmful.

Figure 9

Session 2 'Reflect' Placeholder and Activity Directions and Questions

Reflect & Act: Which frameworks are at work in your classroom?	Reflect Directions: Position yourself on a spot along the continuum based on how respond to the following reflective statements: <i>My classroom consistently gives students space to explore and share how their identities shape their learning.</i> <i>I feel confident in addressing false or harmful narratives students bring to the classroom.</i> <i>My curriculum invites students to critique power structures in meaningful ways</i>			
Application Activity: (15 minutes) <i>I am aware of how policies at my school can limit or support trauma-informed, justice-based teaching.</i> Discuss the following questions within your group: 1. What might this activity reveal about where we need more support or collaboration as staff? 2. What might this activity reveal about educators being agents of systemic change and not just classroom managers?	Application Activity: (15 minutes) <table border="1" data-bbox="919 644 1390 898"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #d9ead3; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">Agree</td> <td style="background-color: #fce4d6; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">Unsure</td> <td style="background-color: #f4cccc; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">Disagree</td> </tr> </table>	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Agree	Unsure	Disagree		

Figure 10 displays the reflection activity of Session 3. The activity was designed for educators to reflect on their current practices or newly learned methods of intentional witnessing and narrative writing/sharing. The activity encourages educators to think on the ways they construct spaces built on trust and purposed for transformation as students share their testimonies. Detailed within the activity handout, educators are to collaboratively create a writing activity that enables students to construct their narratives, allowing spaces for intentional sharing and witnessing.

Figure 10

Session 3 'Reflect' Placeholder and Activity Handout, Directions and Questions

Reflect:

How do you intentionally listen to and amplify student stories?

Interactive Activity:

20:00

Review this [document](#) for instructions on how on this interactive activity.

You will have 20 minutes to complete this activity.

Activity Title: "Understanding Trauma-Informed Literacy (even more)"

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to help educators understand the critical role of narrative writing, testimony, and witnessing in trauma-informed literacy instruction, reflect on their capacity to hold space for student narratives without retraumatization, practice designing multimodal, identity-centered storytelling opportunities that amplify student voice, particularly for students impacted by immigration and trauma.

Materials:

- Copies of Dutro's concepts of **Testimony** and **Witnessing** (excerpts or summary)
- Excerpts from student narratives (fictionalized composites based on Dutro, Brownell, Wissman & Wiseman)
- Chart paper and markers
- Sticky notes
- Sample "makerspace" materials (optional: LEGOs, visuals, storyboards, iPads, art supplies, audio-recording prompts)

Click on image to access Doc or scan QR code



SCAN ME

Act

Figure 11 displays the action activity for Session 1. The activity is designed to encourage educators in shifting their classroom practices through a critical lens. Here, educators collaboratively work to challenge their implicit biases and other misinterpretations of students' emotional or physical responses. Through the activity, educators are encouraged to position themselves with a role of critically evaluating the approaches and responses that they and the school take. These approaches and responses can either be destructive or restorative—a binary that is crucial in establishing for the sake of purposefully serving students impacted by immigration.

Figure 11

Session 1 'Act' Placeholder and Activity Handout, Directions and Questions

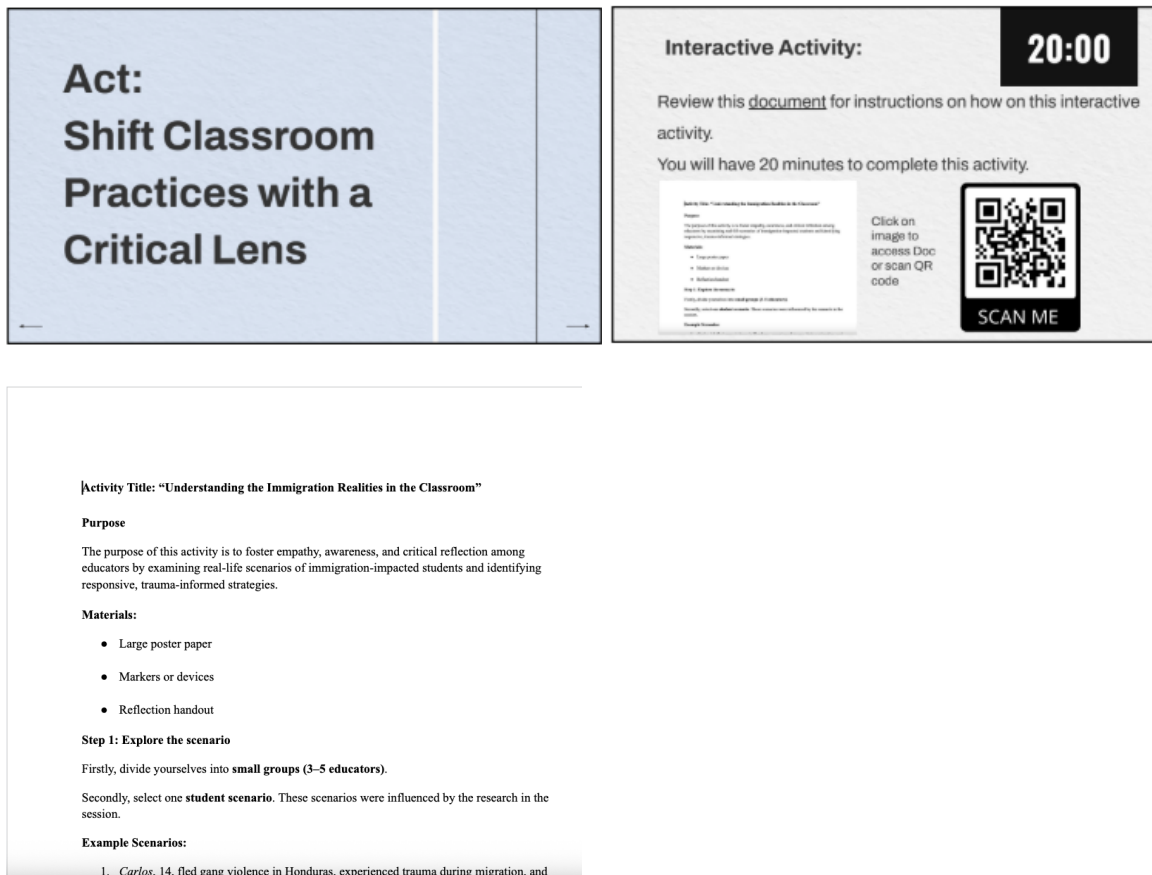


Figure 12 details the action activity for Session 2. This activity was designed to have educators complete the act of reflecting on the TIP frameworks that are at work in their classrooms. For this activity, a series of statements were designed to embed certain frameworks found within the literature. For instance, the statement focused on critiquing power structures is rooted in the concept and practice of critical literacy meant to disrupt systematic inequities. Ultimately, the activity is meant to serve as reinforcement of current equitable practices *or* to reveal practices that are harmful and destructive.

Figure 12

Session 2 'Act' Placeholder and Activity Directions and Questions

Reflect & Act: Which frameworks are at work in your classroom?	Reflect Directions: Position yourself on a spot along the continuum based on how respond to the following reflective statements: <i>My classroom consistently gives students space to explore and share how their identities shape their learning.</i> <i>I feel confident in addressing false or harmful narratives students bring to the classroom.</i> <i>My curriculum invites students to critique power structures in meaningful ways</i>			
Application Activity: (15 minutes) <i>I am aware of how policies at my school can limit or support trauma-informed, justice-based teaching.</i> Discuss the following questions within your group: 1. What might this activity reveal about where we need more support or collaboration as staff? 2. What might this activity reveal about educators being agents of systemic change and not just classroom managers?	Application Activity: (15 minutes) <table border="1" data-bbox="919 646 1390 898"> <tr> <td data-bbox="919 646 1097 898">Agree</td> <td data-bbox="1097 646 1211 898">Unsure</td> <td data-bbox="1211 646 1390 898">Disagree</td> </tr> </table>	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Agree	Unsure	Disagree		

Figure 13 details the action activity for Session 3. This activity fuses all the content that was discussed previously in the session. It is designed for educators to plan narrative/testimonio writing that enables 1) students to choose their preferred method of narrative construction; 2) students to practice agency and trust when sharing; 3) students to engage as active witnesses when one shares; and 4) students to be at the center of sharing rather than the adult/educator. This activity aligns with the overarching principles of critical pedagogy, especially those that center students' experiences as literacy assets rather than emotional deficits.

Figure 13

Session 3 'Act' Placeholder and Directions, Questions, and Criteria

Act:
Create a Narrative Writing and Witness Activity

Application Activity: Part 1: (5 minutes)

1. Quickwrite:

Prompt: Think of a moment when a student shared something personal to you—either written or spoken. How did you respond? What did you notice about your role in that moment?

2. Pair and Share:

- What does it mean to be an “active” witness to testimonies in a classroom?
- How might adult-responses shift the focus away from student testimony?

Application Activity: Part 2: (10 minutes)

Scenario:
You are preparing a narrative writing activity for students to share a challenge they have faced. You want to design a space for student testimony that is trauma-informed, encourages agency, and integrate multiliteracies.

Application Activity: Part 2: (10 minutes)

Using the scenario, design a 10-15 minute classroom activity using the following criteria:

Modality Choice:	Testimony Structure:	Witnessing Practice:	Avoiding Adult-Centering:
Do student have the opportunity to share experiences through writing, visual art, oral storytelling, digital media, or other maker approaches?	Does the activity provide clear guidance for student agency? How is trust established before testimony is shared?	How can students practice being active witnesses? What does that practice look or sound like?	What can be done to prevent adult-led reframing or shifting of student stories?

Conclusion

In all, these professional development sessions complete the task of providing critical insights for educators seeking to reframe and expand upon their use of trauma-informed practices. The pairing of content for which educators are to learn and unlearn is intentionally meant for two purposes. Firstly, encouraging the acceptance and practice of critical strategies, frameworks, resources, realities, etc. that cater to the emotional and academic needs of students

impacted by immigration. Secondly, urging the disruption and challenging of previously held beliefs and practices that inadvertently or deliberately hinder the emotional and academic growth of students. Irrefutably, the concept of inclusivity bears some weight in this professional development. However, it is reframed to include deeper engagement with critical practices meant to criticize systematic inequities that manifest in society, in school, and within ourselves. In terms of educator preparedness, these sessions focus on personal and professional confrontation meant to reform and restore better trauma-informed practices.

Chapter 5: Reflection

Reflection Introduction

To speak quite honestly, the creation of this professional project was one that came with the cost of high emotions and effort to maintain level-headedness in a time of uncertainty, fear, vulnerability. Such a time is especially real for the communities of immigrants, refugees, and others with undocumented status. Therefore, I took on this project with the priority of contextualizing trauma-informed practices to serve students and schools impacted by immigration. Initially grounded in finding evidence-based strategies for academic and emotional support, the project progressed into something more critical and complex. The literature revealed many traditional TIP frameworks that are deeply embedded within White-dominant ideologies, requiring educators to not only learn new practices, but also unlearn those that continue inequity. The motif of *learning* and *unlearning* emerged as a central theme in the design of this project. As a product guided by research, critical reflection, and a complete commitment to advocacy, the creation of this project calls for educators to approach TIP with a critical lens. A lens that actively interrogates their own practices and centers the lived experiences of immigrant students in their classrooms.

Progress Toward Initial Goals

The initial goal of this project was to contextualize trauma-informed practices that best serve students and schools impacted by immigration. To do so required that I conduct the research necessary for uncovering and learning the best practices that serve students academically and emotionally. However, as I went through the research, it was equally interesting to find literature that problematized TIP, especially on the premise of traditional practices being influenced by White-dominant ideologies. This slightly changed the course of my

project. It became a realization of mine that to contextualize trauma-informed practices for immigration-impacted students and school required two practices: *learning* and *unlearning*. Oftentimes, if not all the time, are teachers subject to the discipline of constant, perpetual learning. However, the development of this project has revealed to me that teachers should dedicate as much time to unlearning practices as they do learning new ones. They must do so with a critical and self-reflective lens, which I believe this project provided successfully.

Several aspects of my project went well and helped with the progression towards reaching my goals. Firstly, the location of relevant literature was no easy feat. Immigration policies, especially now, are undergoing abrupt and unanticipated reform. Research struggles to keep up with such change, limiting the literature rooted in studying the societal impacts brought about by such current reform. However, literature spanning the past five years exists with extreme relevance to current immigration-related events. The literature uncovered crucial and critical information about immigrant experiences, critical reframing of TIP as social justice, and the importance of narrative writing for purposes of healing and transformation. The three sessions I created structured these pieces of information through the *learning* of responsive practices that centralize the student and the *unlearning* of practices rooted in White-dominant ideologies.

Another aspect that went well would be the development of reflection and action activities that embed the processes of *learning* and *unlearning*. Each session structured activities that required educators to implement newly learned information to scenarios while also challenging the practices that they use within their classrooms. The main purpose of these activities was to position educators in a role of critical self-reflection. They were to reflect upon their traditional practices, analyzing whether their approaches were constructive or destructive,

and change or strengthen those approaches accordingly. Additionally, a call to action prompts educators in devising plans, lessons, and adjusting their practices for the betterment of their teaching and classroom culture.

A challenge to this project's development was the struggle to balance the emotional labor of the overall work. Honestly, this work was fueled by frustration and anger towards the uncertainty and unrest caused by immigration reform, raids, and detainment. Especially as I heard news of the community I once served enduring these acts; my emotions ran rather high. Such emotions gave me purpose in completing this work, but it required bouts of self-reflection and mediation to find level-headedness throughout the writing process. Fortunately, conversations with professionals and experts on these concepts were helpful in gaining advice. They also shared and discussed practices that helped approach this work with responsibility and responsiveness.

Reinforced Ideas from Literature Review

The project reinforced and confirmed the major themes presented in my literature review. The choices I made in the development of each session were reflective of a running motif presented within almost every piece of literature. The motif of *learning* and *unlearning* was presented in the research, which communicated the importance of TIP reformation and reframing. To ensure that educators became participants of TIP reformation and reframing, content was directly labeled and categorized:

- information that needs to be learned and comprehended and
- practices that need to be unlearned or challenged.

For instance, Session 1 was dedicated to learning the unique experiences of student immigrants and reframing those experiences as cultural capital that can be used to better their academic

experiences. Also, Session 1 was dedicated to unlearning patterns of thinking that minimize student experiences and stories.

From the reviewing process, I learned a plethora of things relative to TIP and immigration. Developing a critical lens necessary for TIP is bar-none the most crucial aspect of the literature found. TIP becomes a process more so than an approach to teaching, where curriculum, school systems, and professional practices should be critiqued for their amplification or silencing of voices. The literature emphasized that teaching influenced by trauma-informed practices requires critical self-reflection on privilege, oppression, and institutional power (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Such a requirement positions teachers in this perpetual cycle of learning and unlearning practices that either oppress or restore students' experiences in schools. The development of a critical lens is one that calls teachers to action and reflection rather than simply relying on checking off tasks on a multicultural responsiveness checklist.

Development as an Educator

As I engaged in this project, I learned a lot about myself as an educator. For one, advocacy is a pillar to the profession of education and a pillar to my teaching philosophy. Advocacy requires more than tolerating the elephant that takes up tremendous space in the room. Advocacy requires making waves that manifest as criticism of curriculum, school cultures, and policy. Advocacy is an action that says to students: "*You have a voice in this. Let's hear it!*" Just as much as I can challenge the ways schools and policies restrict or consolidate TIP to superficial, band-aid approaches, students can also provide their criticism of systems and structures that silence them. These are challenging issues to address within the classroom; however, that should not deter educators from encouraging a discussion about them. I built this project to prepare educators for such discussions. I built this project with the intention of

providing educators with a toolkit, frameworks, and other confidences in challenging oppressive ideologies.

Additionally, I learned that I have the propensity to support my fellow educators in the hard work of becoming more trauma-informed. I do not mean to paint myself as an official of TIP, but I do encourage the collaboration between educators—myself included or not—in reframing and reforming TIP to the realities and needs of their students. Becoming effectively trauma-informed is not an isolated task nor the sole responsibility of just one teacher. It is a collective effort and process involving multiple educational stakeholders in learning new, critical practices while unlearning traditional practices that perpetuated oppression. Through such collaboration, educators can begin to develop a classroom culture of acceptance and criticality that extends into school culture.

Reflection on Professional Standards and Development

Learning Outcomes of the Curriculum and Instruction, Master of Education Degree

- **Effectively apply the professional content expertise, knowledge, skills, and dispositions of their education profession** — For the application of content expertise, by developing these professional development sessions, I applied a certain understanding of trauma, its sources and impacts on students, while considering evidence-based practices to support those students. I drew upon content expertise on educational psychology, pedagogical approaches, and trauma-informed standards. Although I did not specify this professional development to any one school district, I was able to contextualize TIP for school districts that serve large populations of immigrant students. Skill development was emphasized in the sessions, providing an opportunity for instructional design that is informed by traumatic experiences. Lastly, professional

dispositions are enhanced as I provided information on how educators become more empathetic, culturally responsive, and immediate in the way(s) they become committed to bettering and effectively supporting the well-being of students.

- **Use research and evidence to develop environments that support and assess learning**

and their own professional practice — I collected numerous pieces of evidence and research that integrated findings and themes into the professional development sessions. The research was focused on trauma-informed practices as well as standards, preparedness and competence in implementing these practices, and the addressing of the immigrant experience and traumas. Environment development was a goal met in this project's development, especially as I inform educators of ways to build trauma sensitive and responsive environments, especially to the needs of immigrant students. Ultimately, this project provides strategies of critical self-reflection that encourage educators to refine their instructional approaches. This was done with the consideration of improving their teaching by means of expanding or adjusting their approaches to trauma-informed practices.

- **Show commitment to and develop professional education leadership attributes** —

The creation of these professional development sessions allowed me to exhibit educational leadership within the educational community. This is especially apparent as this project emphasizes a commitment to improving the practices of my colleagues and I by promoting a more responsive and supportive learning environment. Leadership is also apparent in my advocacy for immigrant students, which is demonstrated throughout the created sessions. Also, leadership takes root in the promotion of practices and approaches which are inclusive, equitable, and immensely supportive. This project is successful in

recruiting educators in positioning themselves as leaders who address trauma for impacted groups. On a more personal level, this project allowed me to be a mentor and guide in the adoption of trauma-informed practices. This is set, in turn, to ultimately establish a collective responsibility of educational leaders to assist in student success.

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders

- **Standard 1 Mission, Vision, and Core values** — This standard includes the development, advocacy, and enactment of a shared mission, vision, and core values. While these may sound set, often singular, and general, this project is structured to wedge itself into established missions, visions, and core values of schools to ensure that it is shared and discussed among educators and students. Developing a critical lens is central to this project, even in considering the critiquing of school missions, visions, and core values. Ultimately, this standard is met as the project encourages the articulation, advocacy, and cultivation of core values surrounding equity, inclusiveness, and social justice for those impacted by immigration.
- **Standard 3 Equity and Cultural Responsiveness** — For this project, this standard is met through the confrontation and altering of institutional biases against marginalized students. Furthermore, this project has ensured that educational leaders act with a cultural competence and responsiveness to the societal events (immigration) impacting our students. The project is framed to address matters on inequities experienced by our student immigrants, their families, and communities.
- **Standard 5 Community of Care and Support for Students** — In this standard, we see more of a focus on cultivating school communities that protect its students. The project emphasizes the establishment of social supports, frameworks, and strategies catered to

students who experience the traumas of immigration. The essence of care starts within the classroom, which is emphasized within this project.

- **Standard 10 School Improvement** — This standard is met by means of this project by means of managing the uncertainty and ever-so-changing politics that impact immigration reform. This project effectively communicates that we approach the delicate situations of immigration reform with perseverance and courage for students. This project emphasizes that narratives surrounding immigration are shared and witnessed—a form of active listening meant to amplify student voices. Further into this standard, this project is successful in developing, preparing, and aiding staff in their capacity to accept and implement critical approaches to teaching.

Limitations

As mentioned before in Chapter 2, immigration policies, especially now, are undergoing abrupt and unanticipated reform. Research struggles to keep up with such change, limiting the literature rooted in studying the societal impacts brought about by such current reform. The current Republican administration displayed an immediacy in the signing of eight immigration-related executive orders upon inauguration into the White House. This is a span of a little over three months. This proves to be a limitation towards research as many of the measures (immigration raids and arrests) listed in executive orders are carried out with not ample time to understand the current sociopolitical contexts that impacted communities are part of. It may be the case that current immigration policies are familiar to past administrative measures; however, the time between now and the issuance of current policies has been insufficient in producing qualitative studies.

Other limitations include time constraints and the realization of how much effort is needed for the development of an entire professional development program in general. Additionally, a project on trauma-informed pedagogy to support students impacted by immigration during a period of ongoing political trauma created an emotional tax and revealed the need to leave space for responsive pedagogy. This led to the creation of three well-structured professional development sessions that achieve objectives while allowing the teacher the cultural dexterity to adapt learning to different contexts. All information reviewed within the literature was critical to the concept of TIP, but was holistically overwhelming. It caused some challenge in condensing information into digestible yet impactful pieces that would resonate, but not overburden, a target audience. The challenge of designing a quality professional development program is that it takes time and intentionality. For a critical educator especially, I learned to be open to flexibility in the process. It is a pedagogical fallacy to expect critical work to fossilize learning into a predictable template. Rather, flexibility in lesson design allows both the teacher and the students space to navigate the emotionality inherent to critical pedagogy.

What next?

This project is not the end of my work with TIP. With certainty, I can say that I will be returning to this work with intentions to either complete or revise it. This project reinforced my philosophy of advocacy being a continuous process, which fuels my desire to continue the work of bridging students impacted by immigration to schools themselves. They are part and central to a school's culture yet experience traditional approaches that isolate and distinguish them. They are crucial to the heterogeneity of school environments, and emphasize the importance of teacher preparedness when responding to this heterogeneity.

Additionally, I would like to expand on my research of narrative testimony and

witnessing. I find myself in a state of professional curiosity towards the concepts, especially how strategies can be embedded within literacy. Come Fall 2025, I will be entering the classroom as a temporary teacher. With what I learned about the concept, I hope to utilize strategies that engage students in sharing their narratives and that engage students in active witness. This may be purely experimental, but at least I will have the opportunity of practicing a crucial integration of TIP and literacy. Nonetheless, since the start of this project, I have become a part of a professional educational community dedicated to serving students through reformed trauma-informed practices meant to center, support, and advocate for them throughout their learning journeys.

References

- Acosta Price, O., Heidi Ellis, B., Escudero, P. V., Huffman-Gottschling, K., Sander, M. A., Birman, D., & Notaro, S. R. (2012). Implementing Trauma Interventions in Schools: Addressing the Immigrant and Refugee Experience. In *Health Disparities Among Under-served Populations: Implications for Research, Policy and Praxis* (Vol. 9, pp. 95–119). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
[https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-358X\(2012\)0000009008](https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-358X(2012)0000009008)
- Alvarez, A. (2020). Seeing Race in the Research on Youth Trauma and Education: A Critical Review. *Review of Educational Research*, 90(5), 583–626.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654320938131>
- Brownell, C. J. (2020). “Keep Walls Down Instead of Up”: Interrogating Writing/Making as a Vehicle for Black Girls’ Literacies. *Education Sciences*, 10(6), 159-.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10060159>
- Brownell, C. J. (2021). Children’s Rhetoric in an Era of (Im)Migration: Examining Critical Literacies Using a Cultural Rhetorics Orientation in the Elementary Classroom. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 55(3), 265–288. <https://doi.org/10.58680/rte202131186>
- Brunzell, T., Stokes, H., & Waters, L. (2016). Trauma-Informed Positive Education: Using Positive Psychology to Strengthen Vulnerable Students. *California School Psychologist*, 20(1), 63–83. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-015-0070-x>
- Brunzell, T., Stokes, H., & Waters, L. (2019). Shifting Teacher Practice in Trauma-Affected Classrooms: Practice Pedagogy Strategies Within a Trauma-Informed Positive Education

Model. *School Mental Health*, 11(3), 600–614.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-018-09308-8>

Carello, J., & Butler, L. D. (2014). Potentially Perilous Pedagogies: Teaching Trauma Is Not the Same as Trauma-Informed Teaching. *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 15(2), 153–168.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299732.2014.867571>

Carello, J., & Butler, L. D. (2015). Practicing What We Teach: Trauma-Informed Educational Practice. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 35(3), 262–278.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08841233.2015.1030059>

Cervantes, W., Ullrich, R., & Meraz, V. (2020). *The Day That ICE Came: How Worksite Raids Are Once Again Harming Children and Families*. CLASP.

<https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/day-ice-came-how-worksite-raids-are-once-again-harming-children-and/>

Crosby, S. D., Howell, P., & Thomas, S. (2018). Social justice education through trauma-informed teaching. *Middle School Journal*, 49(4), 15–23.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00940771.2018.1488470>

Davila, C., Hill, D., Sohn McCormick, A., & L. Villarreal, A. (2020). Child Immigration from Both Sides of the Border: Implications for Trauma-Informed Practices in the Schools. *California School Psychologist*, 24(4), 469–477.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-020-00286-w>

Davis, W., Petrovic, L., Whalen, K., Danna, L., Zeigler, K., Brewton, A., Joseph, M., Baker, C. N., & Overstreet, S. (2022). Centering trauma-informed approaches in schools within a

- social justice framework. *Psychology in the Schools*, 59(12), 2453–2470.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22664>
- Dutro, E., & Caasi, E. (2022). The Complexities of Trauma in Responsive Teaching. *Language Arts*, 99(5), 358–362. <https://doi.org/10.58680/la202231796>
- Dutro, E., Campano, G., & Ollett, M. (2019). *The Vulnerable Heart of Literacy : Centering Trauma as Powerful *Pedagogy*. Teachers College Press.
- Exec. Order No. 14165, 90 FR 8467 (2025).
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-01-30/pdf/2025-02015.pdf>
- Gonzales, R. G., Heredia, L. L., & Negrón-Gonzales, G. (2015). Untangling Plyler’s Legacy: Undocumented Students, Schools, and Citizenship. *Harvard Educational Review*, 85(3), 318–341. <https://doi.org/10.17763/0017-8055.85.3.318>
- Jacobson, L. (n.d.). *Social-Emotional Learning or “White Supremacy with a Hug”? Yale Official’s Departure Sparks a Racial Reckoning*.
<https://www.the74million.org/article/social-emotional-learning-racial-reckoning-yale-center-departure/>
- Kostouros, P., Scarff, B., Millar, N., & Crossman, K. (Katie). (2023). Trauma-Informed Teaching for Teachers of English as an Additional Language. *Traumatology (Tallahassee, Fla.)*, 29(2), 183–190. <https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000381>
- Luke, A. (2014). Defining critical literacy. In J. Z. Pandya & J. Ávila (Eds.), *Moving critical literacies forward: A new look at praxis across contexts* (pp. 19–31). Routledge.
- Mansfield, K. (2017). Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience programme: experiential education towards resilience and trauma informed people and practice. *Intervention*

(*Amstelveen, Netherlands*), 15(3), 264–277.

<https://doi.org/10.1097/WTF.0000000000000164>

McConnico, N., Boynton-Jarrett, R., Bailey, C., & Nandi, M. (2016). A Framework for Trauma-Sensitive Schools: Infusing Trauma-Informed Practices into Early Childhood Education Systems. In *Zero to three* (Vol. 36, Number 5, p. 36). ZERO TO THREE.

Parkhouse, H., Massaro, V. R., Cuba, M. J., & Waters, C. N. (2020). Teachers' Efforts to Support Undocumented Students within Ambiguous Policy Contexts. *Harvard Educational Review*, 90(4), 525–549. <https://doi.org/10.17763/1943-5045-90.4.525>

Panther, L., & Tolefree, L. (2022). Youth Testimony to Contend with Trauma. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 18(1). <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1358429>

Rodriguez, S., & Macias, E. (2023). “Even Being a Citizen Is Not a Privilege Here”: Undocumented Latinx Immigrant Youth and Perceptions of Racialized Citizenship. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.), 9(1), 21–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23326492221114812>

Rodriguez, S., & Mccorkle, W. (2020). On the Educational Rights of Undocumented Students: A Call to Expand Teachers' Awareness of Policies Impacting Undocumented Students and Strategic Empathy. *Teachers College Record* (1970), 122(12), 1–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146812012201203>

Sparks, S. D. (2019, August 21). “Nobody Learns It in a Day”: Creating Trauma-Sensitive Schools. *Education Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/nobody-learns-it-in-a-day-creating-trauma-sensitive-schools/2019/08>

Suarez-Orozco, C., Yoshikawa, H., Teranishi, R. T., & Suarez-Orozco, M. M. (2011). Growing up in the Shadows: The Developmental Implications of Unauthorized Status. *Harvard Educational Review*, 81(3), 438–473.

<https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.81.3.g23x203763783m75>

Supporting Immigrant Students in Uncertain Times: Strategies for Schools. *Re-Imagining Migration*, 2024,

reimaginingmigration.org/resource-items/supporting-immigrant-students-in-uncertain-times-strategies-for-schools/ . Accessed 4 Mar. 2025.

Wissman, K. K., & Wiseman, A. M. (2011). “That’s my worst nightmare”: poetry and trauma in the middle school classroom. *Pedagogies (Mahwah, N.J.)*, 6(3), 234–249.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1554480X.2011.579051>