FACILITATING AWARENESS OF TRAUMA FOR ALL STAFF IN AN

EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

By

Kelly Rygh

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts in TESOL

Hamline University

St. Paul, Minnesota

August 2021

Capstone Project Facilitator: Shelley Orr, Julianne Scullen

Content Expert: Adam Klein

Peer Editor: Leah Seal-Gray

INTRODUCTION

Project Summary

Research Question

I have worked with many students that have experienced trauma for a myriad of reasons, however, I never had any understanding of what that truly meant. This identified a need that was lacking as part of the necessary training for people working with students. This past year has brought many challenges globally because of the COVID-19 pandemic, increased political polarization, and widening socio-economic division. My experiences and the stress of 2020 lead me to ask, *how to facilitate a comprehensive awareness about trauma for all staff in an educational environment?*

Project Description

The research showed there were many conflicting ways to define trauma, what the causes were, how to recognize it, potential long-term effects, and exploring the various methods schools have used to treat it. It also revealed why it was crucial to examine and understand trauma in schools. To address this need my project is an adult workshop to build a cohesive understanding and to foster increased communication among staff. It is critical that when we work together, we have a shared language, and understanding when it comes to a word that has had many different meanings in the past and even currently.

The project will be presented in two sessions. They will start at the beginning of the school year to benefit the students and staff in the best way possible. The first session will begin with a gallery walk of things that present the meaning of trauma. For example, words such as bullying, sexual abuse, refugee. Also, images such as. 9-11, George Floyd, or war for the participants to observe. This is to engage them immediately as they walk in the door. Next, the

session will focus on the definition of trauma. The participants will then get into circles to do an agreement circle that will be interactive and shows their comfort level of understanding trauma. Then they will be asked to define trauma individually, in small groups, and to the large group on a collective Google Slides presentation. This process will be repeated with the causes of trauma and how it can be recognized. The session will end with an exit ticket to assess the success of the first workshop.

The second session will explore the potential long-term effects of trauma and the positives and negatives of methods used in schools to address trauma for our students. It will begin with remembering and reflecting on what they learned in the first session. After people have shared out in the large group they will be asked to brainstorm what they know about the potential long term effects of trauma. At their tables, they will discuss similarities and differences they wrote and then contribute to the Google Slides presentation. The majority of the session will focus on the methods used in schools to address trauma in a jigsaw. Different groups will be given some of the models used such as social-emotional learning, equity, multi-tiered systems of support, trauma sensitive schools, trauma informed schools, and growth mindset. Each group will be given the opportunity to look at the positive and negative research that has shown and then share out to the entire group using Google Slides. Each handout will also give a description of how that method works, this is necessary because everyone in the audience will not be familiar with the terms, and to be able to communicate they need to feel they can contribute to the conversation. The session will end with giving additional resources and providing the staff access to our collaborative work about trauma.

Project Format

The format of this project uses adult learning theories to increase engagement and retention of the information presented. Andragogy from Malcolm Knowles informs my workshop because he focused on how adults are better at directing their own learning, the need to have a voice in planning and assessment, and it uses their own knowledge and experience to guide their learning (1980). This workshop will build on the work of Mezirow's Transformation Theory, it will expand and challenge the understanding of trauma and models used to address it in schools by examining the research through multiple lenses, discourse, and uses reflection (2000).

This theory also stresses the role of discourse because it is "devoted to searching for a common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief. This involves assessing reasons advanced by weighing the supporting evidence and arguments and by examining alternative perspectives" (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 10-11). It highlights reflective discourse because it leads to more clarity (Frost & Harris, 2003). The workshop will present many opportunities for discourse to take a closer look at the varying perspectives (Taylor, 2006). It is vital to take all viewpoints from research and our collective community to make sense of trauma with the best understanding possible.

Another important feature of the workshop is that it is not prescriptive. There are no right or wrong answers. Adult learners draw from their past experiences and gain knowledge to move in the most productive way possible for learning. This is necessary because adult learners need to draw motivation from their own lives to make it more accessible, usable, and necessary (Cox, 2015; Heinrich& Green 2020, Knight, 2011).

Audience

For the purpose of this project, the workshop is for all staff in a middle school who come into contact with students, however, the workshop could be used in any type or level of school. The audience for the workshop will include bus drivers, substitutes, paraprofessionals, hall monitors, kitchen staff, library staff, custodians, teachers, other student support staff, volunteers, and administration. This is important because everyone in the school should have a unified understanding of trauma. Equity should not just be for students.

Session One: Trauma Awareness

Learning targets:

1. Reflect on what trauma means

2. Understand what trauma is

3. How trauma can be observed

Agenda:

- 15 minutes - gallery walk, settle into their tables

- 15 minutes - circles of agreement

- ½ hour break out groups - what is trauma?

- 20 minutes - discussion of our definitions - handout

Required materials for the participants are the laptops (which can be shared if it wasn't provided in their position) that the school provides and a writing utensil.

The instructor will need a large enough space to accommodate the number of participants, a computer, and a smartboard.

Required materials for the instructor to bring:

Gallery walk: (this is only an example, feel free to bring in content that may be more relevant to your environment.) [Gallery Walk](#)

Slide show: [Session 1](#)

Script Notes: [Session 1](#)

Session Two:

Learning targets:

1. Long term effects of trauma

2. Understanding what we are doing in schools to address it

3. Feedback on how effective these methods are.

Schedule:

- 5 minutes to welcome them back and get settled in

- 8 minutes to review the last session

- 12 minutes to discuss our understanding of the long term effects of trauma

- 40 minutes to discuss the methods used in schools and create a jigsaw.

- 15 minutes to turn and talk about the various methods

- 5 minutes to wrap up and set expectations for needing feedback to further inform my practice.

Required materials for the participants are the laptops (which can be shared if it wasn't provided in their position) that the school provides and a writing utensil.

The instructor will need a large enough space to accommodate the number of participants, a computer, and a smartboard.

Required materials for the instructor to bring:

Slide Show: [Session 2](#)

Script Notes: [Session 2](#)

Jigsaw worksheets:

- [Equity](#)
- [Growth Mindset](#)
- [Trauma informed schools](#),
- [Trauma sensitive schools](#)
- [Multi tiered systems of support (MTSS)](#)
- [Social Emotional Learning (SEL)](#)

References

Cox, E. (2015). Coaching and adult learning: Theory and practice. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education, 2015*(148), 27-38. https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.20149

Fowler, K., Windschitl, M., & Richards, J. (2019). Exit tickets: Understanding students, adapting instruction, and addressing equity. *Science Teacher, 86*(8), 18-26. https://ezproxy.hamline.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=135589034

Frost, D., & Harris, A. (2003). Teacher leadership: Towards a research agenda. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 33*(3), 479-498. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764032000122078

Heinrich, W. F., & Green, P. M. (2020). Remixing approaches to experiential learning, design, and assessment. *Journal of Experiential Education, 43*(2), 205-223. https://doi.org/10.1177/1053825920915608

Knight, J. (2011). What good coaches do. *Educational Leadership, 69*(2), 18-22. https://ezproxy.hamline.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=66319687

Knowles, M. (1980). Malcolm Knowles on. *Training & Development Journal, 34*(5), 96. https://ezproxy.hamline.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=9069883

Lousberg, L., Rooij, R., Jansen, S., van Dooren, E., Heintz, J., & van der Zaag, E. (2020). Reflection in design education. *International Journal of Technology & Design Education, 30*(5), 885-897. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10798-019-09532-6

MCLAGAN, P. (2017). Unleashing the unstoppable learner. *TD: Talent Development, 71*(7),

44-49.

https://ezproxy.hamline.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=t

rue&db=aph&AN=123844355

Smith, R., Ralston, N. C., Naegele, Z., & Waggoner, J. (2020). Team teaching and learning:

A model of effective professional development for teachers. *Professional Educator,*

43(1), 80-90.

https://ezproxy.hamline.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=t

rue&db=aph&AN=147144255

Taylor, K. (2006). Brain function and adult learning: Implications for practice. *New*

Directions for Adult & Continuing Education, 2006(110), 71-85.

https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.221