

Journey to Refuge

Understanding Refugees, Exploring Trauma,
and Best Practices for Newcomers and Schools



Trina D. Harlow, Editor

Journey to Refuge:

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Kansas State University

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY | College of Education

*Produced by Dean Debbie Mercer and the
Kansas State University College of Education*

Companion Website with Bonus Video Content and Resources:

coe.k-state.edu/journey-to-refuge/



Where you see this button, related video content is available.
Click on the link to open your web browser.

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New Prairie Press, Kansas State University Libraries, Manhattan, Kansas

Cover Artwork by Marie Taylor
Book Designed by Mary L. Hammel

Electronic edition available online at: <http://newprairiepress.org/ebooks>

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ISBN 978-1-944548-20-9

NEW prairie PRESS
open access scholarly publishing

Cover and sidebar photo of sky: Elenamiv/Shutterstock



Thank You



A profound thank you to Marie Taylor, a 2018 graduate of the K-State College of Education Art Education Program, for her beautiful colored-pencil artwork gracing the cover of this book. The artwork of refugee children is based on a photograph from a refugee camp.

Additionally, thank you to Miss Taylor's art students at Valley Center Middle School in Valley Center, Kansas, U.S.A. where she is a first year teacher for providing the multi-media art situated throughout this book – beautiful square pieces of artwork in which her students used various kinds of paint, oil pastels, colored pencil, markers, collage, and stitching to answer one of the following four prompts:

- 1) The world is a family when...
- 2) When I am nervous I...
- 3) All kids need a good education because...
- 4) "We are the world! We are the kids!"

Please enjoy the artwork situated throughout the book.
It helps to tell the important story of this book

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the millions of children across the world that do not get to lay their head down at night to sleep in peacefulness and safety, and who live as forced migrants and refugees. It is also dedicated to those who are resettled in countries around the world and to their teachers – may the relationships they develop be life-changing for both.

Dedicated to Brodie, a former student of mine, who at the age of eleven was killed by a purposeful act of terrorism in Nice, France. He was a joy to all who knew him and his memory inspires us all to reach around the world in kindness and peace.

Dedicated to Ben, a brilliant young man who was dedicating his life to the plight of refugees, who worked for a global refugee organization, and who was going to write a chapter for this book. He was sent from Kenya to help with the refugee crisis in Libya and was not heard from again. This book is dedicated to those human beings who make sacrifices so that others may have their needs met.



***"Blue skies, smilin' at me,
Nothin' but blue skies, do I see."***

– Irving Berlin –

Preface

Dean Debbie Mercer

Our world is changing. Historically, many people lived their entire lives in a curbed geographic area. Generations of family members were close to assist in raising children, building barns, farming, celebrating, making memories and providing support during trying times. Today, people are scattered around the globe. Sometimes this is purposeful as family members follow loved ones or employment opportunities. Sometimes, unfortunately, this separation is forced.

Forcible displacement is a broad term used to define the many reasons families might have no choice but to move such as due to natural disasters or ongoing conflict. The world refugee epidemic is of growing concern. As educators, humanitarians, and community leaders our first responsibility is to understand.

It is our hope that this resource will serve as a stepping stone for you regardless of your background knowledge. As our College of Education began examining the issues surrounding refugee children in our classrooms, we immediately knew we needed to increase our knowledge base. The vocabulary and identifiers – children on the move, displaced people, refugee, undocumented children, newcomer, alien – are often confusing in their definition nuances. This resource is designed to build that initial knowledge base and provide the foundation for discussion from a common starting point. Our second responsibility is to learn.

Each chapter provides a unique perspective. The three sections define the refugee experience, trauma, and highlight effective practices. Multiple authors share their expertise and their passion. Spotlights are sprinkled throughout this volume and designed to highlight real-life experiences and perspectives

of contributors. Video links provide not only knowledge, but insight into the realities of refugee children and their families. Much like a good teacher, this book provides multiple modalities of learning opportunities.

This book takes you on a journey – a journey of real experiences from real teachers and students that provide insight and knowledge to help us all best serve children in their educational endeavors. It is a quest to learn.

Our goal is to nurture knowledgeable and caring teachers, support workers and volunteers. Our goal is help each child reach their potential. Our goal is to positively impact lives. Join us on the journey.

Debbie K. Mercer
Dean, College of Education
Kansas State University

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Acknowledgements

Joining the Journey

Trina Harlow

Some journeys one must take alone. Some journeys involve others traveling with us. Some journeys we must figure out on our own and for some journeys we depend on the help and assistance of others. A journey first embarks often in our minds and then we make plans. Sometimes journeys must happen quickly without much time for preparation and other journeys require a lengthy amount of time to prepare. In some ways, I have been preparing for this journey all of my life.

Born as a Kansas farm girl in a very small town where everyone looked like me, sounded like me, and went to churches similar to mine, my first real encounter with someone who did not look like me was when a family moved to our area to work at a pig feedlot. Their dad was an American military veteran and their mother was from Japan. Their kids, Vivian, Danny, and Naomi all went to my two-room red brick school house for a couple of years. They spoke Japanese and English and they taught me how to sing *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* in Japanese, something I can do to this day, over forty years later. Back in the 1960's there was also one black family in my entire county in Kansas and they were good friends of my family, and occasionally Mexican itinerant farm workers passed through our area. That was the extent of my childhood personal experiences with people whose skin was a different shade than my own.

At the outset of this book, I want to thank my mom and dad, especially my dad who had grown up in the Deep South of the United States, for teaching me that we are all equal in God's eyes and to be a friend to all – this is something I truly learned

from my dad who modeled this at all times. Soon, my life was also impacted by an Irish woman who moved to our rural area and became a sewing teacher to me. For years, Liz and I worked together on sewing competitions, but she quickly became much more than a teacher to me – she wanted me to know more than Modoc, Kansas and she wanted me to see the world and experience it. She had immigrated to the United States from Ireland with Catholic Charities when she was 16 years old, met an American Navy sailor whom she married, and ended up on his family farm, which was near my family's farm. Liz changed my life. To this day, she is the greatest teacher I have ever had and she didn't even have a high school diploma. Along my journey of life, I learned to be thankful for people and I was taught to embrace and befriend everyone, no matter their race, ethnicity, or culture. This was ingrained in me by my farmer father and, although he no longer walks the Earth, I thank him for this up in the heavenly realms.

An effort such as this text, which has the purpose to inform what it means to be a refugee, gain an understanding of trauma, and provide best practices for the classroom, is an undertaking of such complexity that one could not do it as a solo journey. This journey was a caravan of educators, colleagues, volunteers, faculty and staff, friends and family... people I have met as I traveled on the journey of life, always observant of what was and is happening around me, and always reaching out with a smile, handshake, or exchange of words to people I have met along the way. For this book, and also the documentary film I co-directed, I reached out to some of those people and they joined this journey with me and the others who made this project a priority.

First, I must thank Dean Debbie Mercer of Kansas State University's College of Education. Dean Mercer is a visionary in education and knowing my interest in refugee studies, she approached me with the idea for this book. That is how *Journey to Refuge* was born – out of the concern a committed



educational leader has for all students and educators in our schools. One thing I admire about Dean Mercer is she provided the idea, but then she sat back and let me form and shape the book into the vision I had for it. I respond so well to her leadership; she truly surrounds herself with good people and then encourages them to soar. Secondly, I want to thank Rusty Earl, the video producer for the KSU College of Education, for partnering with me on the documentary film, *Refuge in the Heartland*, which pairs with this text, yet the text goes beyond the film. I want to thank Mary Hammel, associate director of KSU's College of Education Catalyst Technology and Media Services Center, who served as the digital editor for this book, laying it out with such creativity and skill on its digital pages. Mary is a very busy media specialist, but her smiles in our meetings encouraged me throughout this process. Dr. Jeff Zacharakis, a national leader in adult education who serves as a national publication editor and publishes in that field as well as other fields, volunteered to be the copy editor for this book, reading hundreds of pages of manuscripts as they were submitted, but he also served in a role much larger than that. He answered hundreds of publishing questions for me and also gave good, solid advice when I had questions regarding editing of the book. As a tenured university professor at Kansas State University, he also served as an advisor, so to speak, sometimes marveling at the ideas generated for this undertaking. I would also like to thank Rachel Harlow, an elementary educator holding a master's of education degree, for her assistance in editing the book.

The journey called for me to reach out to others – people I had crossed paths with personally, professionally, and even people I did not know. I looked through personal records or social media to find people I had met during various personal experiences. I looked through my notes from conferences and workshops for contact information of people I had met. In some cases, I called a friend, someone I had stayed in touch with, and asked them

to pack their bags to go on a literary journey with me. After an Internet search to reach those I did not know and wanted to invite to participate and to find their contact information, I would take a deep breath, and I would write an energetic email purporting the genuineness of this project, and hold my breath until I heard back from them. Without exception, everyone I contacted reached back to me and nearly all contributed to this text. I offer a profound thank you to the contributors for this meaningful text – the chapter authors, the Spotlight authors and contributors, the support team, and the university and college where I work with the leaders I work under, for supporting this kind of visionary educational leadership in the field of newcomer education affecting displaced people the world over, and providing knowledge to help both educators and newcomers as they now walk a new journey together.



Attending the York University Centre for Refugee Studies Summer Institute in Toronto, Canada.

Finally, I must acknowledge the newcomer, refugee, resettled students and families I met as a part of this journey. While they may still feel displaced, it is my profound desire that knowing that they are surrounded by educators who value them, their biographies, and life stories, will help to heal their pasts and give them hope for the future. To the refugee child from the



Congo who told me about her sister – I will never forget you.
To the refugee girl who told me about her friend's father –
I will never forget you. To the refugee mother who told me about
her son's school cafeteria experience – I will never forget you.
And to the young refugee boy I taught in Uganda, who sat and
leaned up against a tree while his young body was leaving this
earth – I will never forget you.

Editing this text has been one of the honors of my life and I am
grateful for this opportunity. This text and the documentary
film have been made free in cost to the world, with no profit
of any kind being made from either resource. I often say the
following and I say it now, "If all of us would do something,
anything, right where our two feet stand, wherever that is in the
world, we might just collectively do something about the world's
humanitarian crisis called forced displacement and help the
people who call it home." I'm not a world policy maker, I'm not
an elected leader, but I'm someone who chose to be a teacher
because I want to make a difference and I want to encourage
others to do the same.

Come along on the journey,

Trina Harlow
Kansas State University
College of Education
Art Education
2019

Introduction

How the Journey Began

Trina Harlow

*"Taking Mum's hand, I whispered,
'are we really safe, here?'"*

– Alwyn Evans, *Walk in My Shoes*

The journey that led to this text began about ten years ago in
an orphanage in Ecuador and a school in Uganda. Yet, let's back
up a few decades. You see, I had lived a careful and cautious
life, while carefree, as a farm girl from the midwestern part of
the United States. I learned how to plan, care take, and produce
from the life I lived as a farmer's daughter, living with modest
means on the plains of Kansas. Money was tight and life was
deliberate, unless the weather or financial markets deemed
otherwise. I lived an idyllic life walking down a dirt road to a
rural elementary school, playing with friends, learning from
Mrs. Walk and Mrs. Cupp, and riding my horse after school. I
participated in a youth organization called 4-H in a variety of
ways, and I also spent about every weekend showing my horse
at horse shows around Kansas. I loved to bake homemade bread
and play with my Collie dogs, Missy and Jody. I loved to go to
my Aunt Shirley's house and play with my cousins, and I loved
to go to Arkansas to visit my dad's very loving family, who loved
to eat, laugh, play cards, and go fishing. I always felt safe, I was
never hungry for more than an hour or two, I always had a roof
over my head, and electricity to heat the house where I lived. I
always had nice, clean clothes to wear and my own car to drive
as a teenager. I learned how to work, how to study, and how to
be a good person and help others. When I walked up and down
the road to my school or to a neighbor's house to play, I didn't
have to worry about my safety. And, at my own home and at my



neighbors', we had running water, clean and safe to drink. We also had a television to watch our favorite after school programs or Saturday morning cartoons, though we often just played outside in the sunshine and blue skies. As also mentioned, I lived a careful life in this idyllic world. I followed the rules, I did what I was supposed to, I didn't cheat and I didn't steal, and I didn't take risks – I wouldn't even ride a roller coaster.

“If you judge people, you have no time to love them.”

– Mother Teresa

Now let's move forward in time. About ten years ago, I began to think about how much struggle there seemed to be in the world. As I watched national cable news, I saw the real struggles of people around the world. I grew restless and I began to feel guilty that my own life, while not the life of a debutant but rather the life of a farm girl with patches on the knees of my blue jeans, had been so easy and charmed. I began to feel a sense of responsibility that I needed to do something, anything, to help with some of the world's suffering. I pondered these things often, sometimes as I stood in line at Starbucks for my \$4.00 cup of coffee, sometimes while loading my grocery cart full of the best and most beautiful produce available, sometimes while taking my children shopping for new shoes or a new toy, and on many other occasions. I heard friends or moms at the school where I taught standing around excitedly admiring their new purses and asking how much they cost (A staggering four digits!). I finally decided to get out of the zone of comfort I had lived in most of my life. While I wouldn't ride a roller coaster, I ventured to far off places and did ride a large bus up a one lane dirt road winding around the side of a mountain, maneuvering hairpin turns in the Andes to go to communities where the Quechua people lived. While no one in my family could talk me into riding the roller coaster at the big theme park where we lived in a suburb of Dallas, Texas, I walked red dirt paths in a

rural area of Uganda as men, crowded in the backs of trucks and carrying guns, drove past me, fogging me with fine dirt while yelling at me. I began to open my eyes. I saw things I do not want to write about here and I experienced things that were so dangerous I shouldn't have survived them – this is true, but this is another book.



The editor while teaching school in a Quito, Ecuador orphanage.

Yet through all of these experiences in far off places that were unfamiliar to me, I met and worked with children and their families. I painted and made bracelets with Quechua children, their faces covered in ash from the volcano dust in the area. I taught the names of farm animals in English to orphans in an orphanage in Quito while they sat staring into space, having woke up under a pile of debris

and rubble on the beach in Guayaquil a few days prior after the tsunami that came up the western coast of South America upended their lives. I felt like the pied piper with 240 children following me all over the schoolyard in Uganda as we sang and did hand motions. I also taught art to some of the world's wealthiest children and those of world leaders at a private school in Switzerland. I conversed with an adolescent artist at a school in Cuba about the paintings I was looking at, while he whispered to me that they never had paint, signaling to me that the brand new tubes of paint laying in plain sight were for my benefit and not for his use.

“How wonderful it is that no one has to wait, but can start right now to gradually change the world! How wonderful it is that everyone great and small, can immediately help bring about justice by giving of themselves.”

– Anne Frank

Even with the long list of many experiences during these teaching adventures, one experience in Uganda seriously impacted my life, so much so that I have told the story of a single blue crayon repeatedly since that comfortable, breezy, sunny day in rural Uganda. A colorful, beautiful crayon makes most of us think of an innocent time, childhood, coloring books, getting those highly anticipated school supplies, and represents a time of innocence and even the naivety of childhood. While most of us can also probably think of significant events or happenstances that changed our lives, I imagine that most of us would not say a single crayon changed our lives, but crayons did change my life. In fact, one single, blue crayon did exactly that.



I enjoyed singing and dancing with Masai women in Kenya—connecting with mothers and women everywhere I journey is a priority.



My lunch break in Uganda happily involved singing with the children who followed me everywhere I went.

About ten years ago I went to Uganda on a mission trip where one of our goals was to teach people how they could acquire and prevent HIV/AIDS. We were hosted by the Ugandan government who had an aggressive plan to tackle this horrific disease. Their plan involved education and there was evidence the targeted focus on educating citizens was helping to reduce the number of HIV/AIDS cases (Bolliner, Stover, Kibibige, 1999). I went to several trainings in the Dallas, Texas area with the organization I was going to Africa with and learned details about the disease. We learned how to use a manipulative, much like a rubrics cube, that through images showed the steps a person goes through to acquire the disease. During the day, I taught school and after school I walked with a young Ugandan who served as my interpreter down dirt paths to rural homes. And after a long day of teaching 243 children in one small room, I would teach the adults they lived with (Many of the children’s parents had died of HIV/AIDS.) how a person got AIDS. A limitless number of stories and life lessons came out of this trip, but one story changed my life and it happened at the school where I taught.

It took us two hours by van on an extremely bumpy dirt road to get to the school each morning and two hours back to the



city where the group had us stay. We dropped volunteers off in villages on the way. My school happened to be the farthest. I was a guest teacher in a classroom with 243 children with one teacher who also interpreted for me, a wonderful woman from this rural area of Uganda. Most of my students were displaced children. While most were not official, legally designated refugees, they were in fact refugees who had lost their parents to HIV/AIDs or conflict.



Video: Trina's Journey and Crayon Story

I brought two-gallon bags of crayons with me, some coloring sheets, and some yardages of fabric to wrap around children as costumes to teach art and drama. The leader of our group said the headmaster of the school did not want us to bring any supplies to the school because they would cause the modest school to get vandalized at night. I asked if I could bring the crayons and simple supplies. The headmaster said yes, as long as the kids all saw me leaving with them each day, held up high and out in the open, in clear bags.

On the first day I used the crayons, I only had enough for one per child. I had no idea that I would have 243 children, very quiet, and crowded in one room, and thought I had most likely brought enough for the children to all have a handful. I held a crayon and a coloring sheet up to tell the students what we were going to do, and I will never forget the sound I heard-all 243 children made this ethereal, choir like sound in unison. I turned to the teacher and asked what the reaction was about... she said, "They have never seen this beautiful thing." I passed out the coloring sheets and the children got down in the dirt, using the benches they were sitting on as desks. There were literally no school supplies in the room, none of any kind, and I noticed the elementary aged children of all ages really couldn't color in the lines at all, but they loved it! Shortly, two little girls came up to me, one was crying so much, while the other had her

arm around her as if to take care of her. The girl held her hands in a closed fist. I asked the interpreter what was wrong, and she nodded to the girl to open her hands. In her hands was a blue crayon, snapped in two. The teacher said, "She has broken this beautiful thing." She was gently and carefully cradling it in her hands like a newborn baby bird that had fallen out of a tree. In her childlike naivety, she thought she had done something terrible and was overcome with grief and emotion. I comforted her and assured her it was ok and that they break all the time. She shook her head in sad disbelief.



When my placement at the school ended and our time in Uganda was over, I flew back to Texas, the very night before students came back to school at the elementary school where I taught art. Exhausted, with jet lag, and feeling sick I welcomed students and went over our year and gave them crayons to use to keep their hands busy doing something productive while I spoke to them. That's the only time all year we used crayons in my art classes. Shortly, I noticed crayons rolling off the tables and onto the floor and noticed the student did not care about this. I'd probably witnessed this many times before, but on this day it was much different. As if in slow motion, I saw a boy get up to get the restroom pass. He had been in my class the year



before and knew my restroom policy. While I was talking he stepped on a navy blue crayon, smashing it into what seemed like a thousand pieces. It was almost as if I felt the crayon's pain. I felt the room spinning! I walked over to the crayon. I bent down without speaking a sound and scooped up every piece of the crayon, every microscopic piece into my hands. The room became completely and totally quiet. I stood up, looked silently around the room, and I told my Ugandan crayon story to this classroom of twenty-two 3rd grade students from a very affluent suburb of Dallas, Texas. The students were totally silent. They listened intently and I'm sure the look on my face and the sound of my voice was different than anything they had seen from me before.

That story – my Ugandan Crayon Story – has been a part of the first week of school in every class I have taught since that day which was about ten years ago. I now share the story with pre-service teachers at Kansas State University. I even get emails now from students who have come through my program at the university telling me they told my Ugandan crayon story to their students. There are many morals to be learned by the story and it is also a solid, visual way to help children understand the world and develop a better global understanding.

“The particular refugee camp we were in, they were hungry for play, they were hungry for any kind of normalcy.”

– Connie Sellecca

These life experiences have laid the foundation for this book. You see, I taught refugee children before I really fully understood what it meant to be a refugee. I was a middle-aged woman who was fairly worldly and schooled and I watched the news and felt informed, but even I didn't fully understand that the children I taught in Uganda were forced migrants because of conflict and health, and the children in Ecuador



Aleksandr Lutcenko/Shutterstock

A young Syrian girl is taken to dry ground on the coast of Lesvos, Greece after a harrowing journey across the sea.

were forced migrants because of the environment. Whether or not they were legally designated refugees matters not, some were and some were not—what stands out to me is that I did not really fully understand the situation. Speaking honestly, in my own mind and by my own understanding, I was teaching kids from another country, albeit with very difficult lives and circumstances which I was highly empathetic of, but I did not fully understand the potential life-long realities they could face as forced immigrants or refugees. In subsequent years and as I became more knowledgeable, I understood more fully that the world was a hotbed for many of its inhabitants and forced displacement was growing out of control. I began to put my experiences in Ecuador and Uganda, but especially Uganda, together with what I was seeing on the news. The crayon experience had really changed me and teaching children in these other far-off places had also changed me. I worried about less and thought about other things more – things that used to cause me great worry were no longer even a concern. I began to teach my students to have this same mindset.



“In a sea of human beings, it is difficult, at times even impossible, to see the human as being.”

– Aysha Taryam

As the opportunity to coordinate the art education program at Kansas State University presented itself, I came to the university excited to teach future elementary teachers how to incorporate art into their future classrooms and I was also thrilled to work with future art teachers. I also wanted to continue my love of travel and continue with teaching experiences like I had experienced in Ecuador and Uganda. Once at the university, I decided to begin working on my doctoral degree in educational curriculum and instruction. From the outset, I wanted to focus my research on a refugee topic and in a roundabout way, that did happen (At the time I write this book introduction, I’m only a few months away from becoming Dr. Harlow and obtaining my Ph.D.). Simultaneously, an opportunity developed to work on a refugee text and a documentary film—this book, *Journey to Refuge*, and the film – *Refuge in the Heartland*.

“If you cannot read the beautiful things that have happened in someone’s life, why should you care about the sadness?”

– Christ Cleave, *Little Bell*

As I sit and write this introduction, I am attending an international refugee conference in Canada. Having taught children of forced migration and refugees in Ecuador and Uganda, I realize that the journey of my own life has been and continues to be full of twists and turns down a winding road, sometimes with hills and valleys, sometimes with sunrises and sunsets, and sometimes with dark valleys. As a child, I used to spend my carefree days playing in the windbreak of trees in western Kansas and riding my horse carelessly over the sunflowered prairie. Now, four decades later I sit in a room

with professionals and students from all over the world, many of whom are refugees themselves. From Brazil, Iran, the UK, Japan, Italy, Germany, Ireland, Australia, Sierra Leon, Mexico, Uganda, the Philippine’s, Korea, Lebanon, Syria, Romania, and elsewhere, we have gathered here to discuss the overwhelming world crisis of forced migration and the refugee issue.



At the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey with Fund for Teachers.

Everyone in this room feels both helpless and fervently passionate while living during the world’s worst time period regarding forced displacement. Yet, we each know we must all be a part of the conversation in discovery of a solution and take action. We bring different voices. We are researchers, civil servants, policy makers, university faculty, students, foundation representatives, videographers, and concerned world citizens.

Each of us brings a different knowledge base and voice to this issue. The gravity of what we discuss can be seen on everyone’s faces as we feel the cool Canadian breeze wafting in the open door and hear children playing outside on the preschool playground in the same facility. Some of us sitting in this room move so freely about our daily lives, others in the room are not so fortunate. Some of us go to the local espresso shop every day, others may rarely have the opportunity to have a cup of coffee. Some of our children are growing up freely, while some of our children have experienced the difficulty of human existence. Some of us ride roller coasters, and some do not.



Just as the collective global citizens in this room in Canada are attempting to be a part of the conversation, so are the authors and various individuals featured in this book, which partners with our documentary film, *Refuge in the Heartland*. The film was released in November of 2018, a few months before the book's release. The book's contributors come from all walks of life. They are elementary, middle, and high school teachers. They are ESOL/ESL teachers. They are young people who are world changers. They are university professors. They are international refugee policy makers and trauma experts. They are musicians, artists, and videographers. They are children and adults. They are refugees and they work in refugee camps. They are global change makers.

More importantly, the book's authors all speak and write from their own voice, with different tones, which directly reflect their own professional or volunteer roles or careers in the refugee crisis.

The authors all understand that everyone must play a role in the world refugee crisis. They lend their unique voices here to the teacher, the educator, the concerned world citizen, the volunteer, the change maker who knows they too must join the dialogue and take action to help the nearly 68.5 million displaced people worldwide, 25 million of whom are refugees and half of these are children under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 2019). I hope the reader learns from this text. Then I hope the reader takes action, does something, even something small to contribute in a significant way to the issue. I hope the educator grows their practice and implements the strategies and tools shared in this book. I hope the student, teacher, school, and community become better because of the heartfelt emotion and knowledge poured onto the pages of this book by its many authors and contributors. I hope ideas are generated that can be implemented at the local level, wherever in the world the locale

may be. And, I hope this book spurs many more ideas and great dialogue... for the children affected by forced displacement.



Video: *The Journey Matters*

Returning to the words of Anne Frank, a young Jewish girl who lived in an attic with her family during World War II and who eventually was taken from the world by tyrants, "How wonderful it is that no one has to wait, but can start right now to gradually change the world! How wonderful it is that everyone great and small, can immediately help bring about justice by giving of themselves." The problem of human displacement is so massive in size that it is quite overwhelming to even begin to think about how to tackle it, but if we all take a microscopic part of the problem and contribute our talents, skills, time, energy, and expertise, I am certain we can make headway. It's a global issue and it must have global attention. You see, I believe that every man, woman, and child should have the ability to live a long life of twists and turns, as I have, and I believe every child should be able to play freely on the prairie and ride roller coasters if they so choose.

"... you have to understand, no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land."

– Warsan Shire, British-Somali poet, *Home*

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Section One

Understanding the Journey





Chapter 1

The Refugee Experience: Journey to Somewhere

Trina Harlow

As educators, we are familiar with the Flight to Freedom, the often dangerous 19th century journey of African-American slaves in the United States towards a quest for freedom from astounding human-created oppression and violence. While the United States abolished slavery in 1865, the memory of this atrocity of humanity still affects our country, society, and world. Though people do sometimes learn from experience, the world is very difficult and challenging for many of its inhabitants. Many people suffering the hard and real effects of difficult 21st century existence are refugee and migrant children. These children may live in a refugee camp far across an ocean or they may sit in a classroom in rural America. They may have been a casualty of war, a soldier, or a survivor of war (Stewart, 2011). There is a new kind of freedom that some of these children and their families are experiencing, a *Freedom from Flight*. The 19th century freedom sought by so many in the United States



“I heard over and over again from many levels of education professionals that they need more trauma training or professional development to be able to contribute effectively to the refugee students’ acculturation and opportunity to settle into a more peaceful life in their welcoming schools.”

was a journey or a flight to freedom. In 2018, it is the opposite. Refugee families and other displaced people are seeking a freedom *from* fleeing, a freedom *from* flight, a freedom *from* having to run, sometimes in the middle of the night, to safety. In some cases, people only know fleeing. Some refugees have lived in turmoil their entire lives; some have even lived in refugee camps since birth and have never known what it is to live freely and safely in the outside world (Stewart, 2011).

There are more than 68.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide (UNHCR, 2018a). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provides staggering statistics regarding displaced people around the world and was created in 1950 after World War II to assist thousands of struggling European refugees (UNHCR, 2018b). Today, UNHCR works diligently to assist with the world refugee crisis and forcible displacement.



UNHCR facts and statistics

<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>

Forcible displacement is a term that social scientists and others use to cover the many types of displacement (UNHCR, 2018c). Forced migration is caused by a variety of reasons including “environmental disasters, conflict, famine, or large scale development projects” (UNHCR, 2018c). Regardless of the reason, forcible displacement from one’s home, community, or region is disruptive to life as one knows it and causes a wandering, sometimes never-ending, journey and a desire to seek freedom from the flight.



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The world refugee and forced migration crisis is full of volcanic hot spots, one of which is the disrupted education of children and the trauma



that can be caused by the displacement experience (Ager, Ager, Stavrou, & Boothby, 2011; Stewart, 2011). The word refugee has a very specific meaning, as does other terminology associated with displaced people. This text has an overall purpose of informing educators about the experience of displaced people, newcomers, refugees, and forced migrants, providing important background knowledge in this field, exploring a basic understanding of trauma that can be manifested in P-12 refugee and migrant students, and furnishing some strategies and best practices for P-12 classrooms where these demographics of students are enrolled. This is a raw, human issue and no single book or text can do justice to solving the complex problem (Flaitz, 2006). It is truly a world crisis, yet as educators, we are a link in the very important chain that assists refugee and migrant students in making a successful adaptation to their new communities (Zhao, 2009). This first chapter will provide basic terminology and understanding of this global issue in an effort to educate not only the educator, but anyone who volunteers or works with displaced populations, especially school children. Pseudonyms have been used, when possible, to protect the identity of both educators and schools.

Relevant Definitions

It's important for educators to use proper terminology and be informed. This video explains what it means to be a refugee:



Video: What does it mean to be a refugee?

The following definitions provide legal and casual descriptions of varying terms associated with the refugee experience:

- *Acculturation* – The process whereby people adapt to or borrow traits from another culture or merging of cultures because of prolonged contact. In acculturation, refugees do not give up their original culture, but gain another culture. (acculturation, 2018; Banks, 2009)
- *Asylum Seekers* – People whose request for sanctuary has not yet been processed (asylum seeker, 2018). In many cases, asylum seekers have moved across an international border and are hoping and applying for refugee status within the country they have gone to.
- *Children on the Move* – Professor Jacqueline Bhabha of Harvard University is involved with global policy making for refugees. She speaks of the United Nations 1st world reform addressing child migration as developing terms such as child asylum seekers, separated children, and independent child migrants (Bhabha et al., 2016). The UN Barcelona Convention of 1995 adopted a more inclusive term, Children on the Move (Bhabha et al., 2016). Some people say children left behind, or children in migration. The problem, however, isn't what to "call" these children. The problem is what to do with them. Without legal guardians, they fall between the policy-protected cracks of being able to legally move from one country to another. Sadly, they are often left to the streets and experience worse fates. In some countries around the world, children are seen being sold on the street corner or roaming cities young, dirty, and alone, scrambling for food and safety, yet there are many wonderful organizations working with these unattended child refugees and the lucky ones are in protected schools or refugee resettlement camps or homes. One wonders what memories young refugee children could share or if they will ever be able to share their memories. Those who have experienced this very real life of flight say it is important for children to tell their stories (Salloum, 2015). Psychosocial counseling and programming needs to be a part of the child refugee's recovery and education (Ager, et al., 2011).



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- *Country of Origin* – This is the home country of newcomer students or what they consider to be their original home, yet educators must remember that many refugee families have not lived in their country of origin for quite some time and may have lived in numerous countries while moving as a displaced person or forced migrant. Some refugee children may also have lived in refugee camps for their entire lives.
- *Displaced People* – Men, women and children of all ages that for a variety of reasons have had to leave what they considered to be their homes (displaced people, 2018). There are currently more than 68.5 million (UNHCR, 2018a). Another term used is forced migrant.
- *English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)* – also known as English as Second Language (ESL) – While the criteria to qualify as an English learner (EL) and be eligible for ESOL services vary from state to state in the United States and other country's educational systems have their own method for designated language learners, for this research the Kansas Department of Education definition will be used. It specifies that to meet the criteria for ESOL services, a language other than English must be indicated on Home Language Surveys schools are required to send home with students. The survey asks what language the child first learned to speak, what language the child currently speaks at home, and what language adults speak at home and to the child. If another language besides English is listed, assessments must be given to students. If assessments indicate students are limited in any domain of English, students must receive ESOL services by a qualified, Kansas ESOL endorsed teacher. Schools receive special funding for ESOL students in Kansas (ESOL, 2017).
- *Forced Migration* – A term that refers to the movement of internally displaced people, asylum seekers, and refugees, who are seeking refuge from conflicts or environmental

disasters and issues within their country of origin (UNHCR, 2018c). Conflicts include war, the threat of genocide, and persecution. Environmental disasters can be man-made or natural. Examples of environmental disasters causing people to seek refuge include catastrophes such as the 2010 flooding caused by heavy monsoon rains in Pakistan and the 2011 earthquake and tsunami that hit Sendai, Japan, also causing a nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Other environmental issues refugees sometimes face are caused by land being taken by governments for various reasons, including nature preserves or for more capitalistic ventures of real estate development. Health and illness can also be environmental disasters with disease and the threat of the spread of disease causing people to move.

- *Internally Displaced People* – People who have been forced to flee their homes. Many times, this is for the same reasons as refugees. War, civil conflict, political strife, and serious human rights abuses are the reason for displacement. They remain within their country of origin and have not crossed an international border (internally displaced people, 2017)

- *Refugee* – The very word, refugee, signals a place of refuge. The definition of refuge is a place of shelter or protection from danger or distress and a place of recourse in difficulty (refuge, 2018).



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With the addition of only one letter, another “e” on the end of the word refuge, suddenly the word comes to mean someone who flees from something (refugee, 2018). According to the UNHCR, 68.5 million people are displaced because of forced migration, 22.5 million of these are refugees, and more than half of those are children (UNHCR, 2018a). Though the root word is a word of solace, the word refugee has



developed a undesirable undertone in recent years. The legal definition of refugee was formed at the 1951 United Nations Convention (UNHCR, 2018d). It defines a refugee as “a person residing outside his or her country of nationality, who is unable or unwilling to return because of a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a political social group, or political opinion” (UNHCR, 2018a). Those who are legally given the designation of refugee have a clear and legal international status and are protected by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, also known as UNHCR (UNHCR, 2018a). It is important for educators to know that the word refugee has a very specific, legal meaning and not all newcomers in our schools are refugees, even if from areas where there are known to be refugees.

- *Undocumented Children*
– Children who have crossed borders without identification or through legal methods, in some cases unattended by parents or guardians.



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Newcomers and Welcoming Schools

Newcomer is the respectful descriptor used for recent immigrants in P-12 schools (H. Kincaid, personal communication, February 18, 2016). Throughout this text, newcomer will be used interchangeably with refugee students. Newcomer students can be recent immigrants who have come through the traditional immigration application program, children from documented migrant families, undocumented children, or designated refugee children. To receive newcomer designation a language other than English is generally spoken both by the student and at home (Bardack, 2010). Welcoming students are non-newcomer students in the host school in the

country where refugee or migrant students and their families have received designated refugee status or are awaiting asylum (H. Kincaid, personal communication, September 27, 2015). The goal is for welcoming students and school staff help to create an accepting, nurturing, and friendly atmosphere for newcomer students. This text has the goal of addressing the experience of refugee children in schools in the United States and other developed countries that have welcomed them, even schools in refugee camps or developing countries. While newcomer students are a larger demographic of child, this text’s focus is the refugee child or student when the term newcomer is used.

Newcomer students’ country of origin or home country is where they came from originally or where they consider to be “home”, yet educators must remember that many refugee families have not lived in their country of origin for quite some time (Stewart, 2011). Many have been on what must have seemed like a never-ending journey to find freedom from flight. This flight may have taken them to the streets of multiple countries or to refugee camps in countries nearby their country of origin or to a safer location within their country of origin. I know from interviews that I have conducted with refugee students that many see their placement in their new schools and communities as temporary. Many wish to go back to their country of origin or certainly their parents hope this happens. Whether or not this ever occurs depends on politics, finances, conflict, environmental and health related concerns, and how deeply refugees find roots in their new countries and communities. Regardless, it is proper to refer to the refugee student in host schools as a newcomer and the host school as the welcoming school. As educators, we know that words convey meaning. When educators and schools are interacting with students who have experienced great difficulty in life, the simplest word usage can have great meaning in for students. How long we refer to a newcomer student as a newcomer depends on their rate of academic growth in their new school environment and is



essentially dependent upon the criteria set forth by individual schools. Newcomer Intake Centers, which are departments within school districts, determine which school and grade level newcomer students are placed in (S. Bird-Hutchison, personal communication, November 10, 2017). Newcomer students are typically assessed by the multilingual education service within the school district. The goal is for newcomer students to reach proficiency with ESOL program requirements so that they can then be mainstreamed full-time into general classrooms (J. Millen, personal communication, May 7, 2016).

Assimilation or Acculturation

Assimilation is what some professionals call the act of integrating refugee children into American schools (Banks, 2009). Some in the refugee studies and multicultural educational field do not like the term and prefer the term acculturation (Banks, 2009). Assimilation can indicate an effort to blend in with the new culture, losing all indicating aspects of the refugee's former life. According to Banks, the goal should be acculturation, which is an ability to grasp the new culture and feel more at home in it, but maintaining the unique aspects of the culture one was born into. The ultimate goal is to create culturally sensitive, biography-driven schools, helping refugee children feel comfortable in new environments, furthering their development and growth, and helping them deal with trauma and anxiety.



Video: *Assimilation vs. Acculturation*

Strategies for Working with Newcomer Students

While there are many highly informed, committed educators working in a variety of capacities with newcomer students and their families, first and foremost, teachers must be acutely aware of their own personal and cultural biases when working

with newcomer students and should be open to varying interpretations and language conveyance methods (Bey & Wellman, 2015; Dokter, 1998; el Habir et al., 1994; Stewart, 2011). Throughout my interviews and various research in this field, I have heard over and over from various professionals that the largest obstacle all who work in the refugee field must overcome is that of stereotypes (S. Bird-Hutchison, personal communication, November 10, 2017; J. Millen, personal communication, May 8, 2016; J. Mow, personal communication, November 10, 2017). Even the most well-meaning of educator can sometimes make mistakes with the refugee student. Sometimes stereotypes are known and sometimes they are unknown. Sometimes these stereotypes are highly insensitive and sometimes they are uninformed (Stewart, 2011). Educators need to examine their stereotypes, bias, and pedagogical choices in depth to create the nurturing environment for refugee and migrant students in the classroom. One study reported teachers mistakenly giving newcomer students *National Geographic* magazines to make a collage, yet images in some of the magazines were problematic for refugee children showing uncomfortable situations from former countries, so selection of course materials and supplies are critical (Bey & Wellman, 2015). Another study reported a realization that some items used in the classroom were a product of capitalist, wealthier countries, meaning some tangible items used with refugee students could be unfamiliar to them (Bigelow, 2001). A study by Baraitser (2014) revealed that in some instances, combining boys and girls in the same classroom may slow progress due to previous cultural norms of expressing oneself in front of a child of the other sex. Teaching with cultural sensitivity and with a biography-driven pedagogy is essential for the academic success of refugee students. Seidel and Jardine (2016) remind that everything we do teaches us. From the first footsteps into a welcoming school, newcomer children are bombarded with cultural, academic, and psychological and social learning (Suárez-Orozco & Gaytan, 2010). The newcomer



program and the ESL/ESOL program provide a fundamental first point of security in the learning process.



Video: *Dorcas' Message for Teachers*



Video: *Alain's Message for Teachers*

Types of Classrooms

The school classroom, especially the ESL (English as Second Language) or ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) or newcomer class, obviously must give newcomer students a place to improve communication skills (Bey & Wellman, 2015), yet it also must help newcomer students learn cultural proficiency, gaining a better understanding of how to function and live in their hosting schools, community, and country. Allowing risk-taking and experimentation is important in their first classroom in the welcoming school, as well as giving newcomer students a place to relax and not be scared to attempt simple school-related requests (Bey & Wellman, 2015).

Newcomer intake program. Larger population centers with a large demographic of refugee students and families generally offer a *newcomer intake* program. This school district program assists refugee families in becoming settled and situated within the school district. According to the newcomer intake specialist in one large city, one of her roles is determining which school within the district is the best fit for the family (S. Bird-Hutchison, personal communication, November 10, 2017). There is huge benefit to refugee families from well-structured intake programs. For example, in one very large public school district, refugee students enter a phased newcomer program (J. Millen, personal communication, May 8, 2016). While there are a variety of ways to structure newcomer stage levels,

I will discuss one large school district's newcomer stage class levels in the remainder of this section (J. Millen, personal communication, May 8, 2016). This video provides basic information about being a newcomer:



Video: *Newcomer Program for Immigrant and Refugee Students*

All newcomer students begin in Stage 1, which has a variety of purposes. In this important stage, their ability to integrate into the general classroom from the academic and social perspective is assessed, as well as any use of English which is the language of the welcoming school. Stage 1 also helps newcomer students understand cultural norms for the geographical area of the new school. For example, a newcomer specialist revealed a situation in which a new student's body odor was really unpleasant, causing other students to shy away from the girl. Upon investigation, the newcomer specialist learned that daily baths were not possible where the girl grew up. In fact, baths were taken by rubbing sand on the skin and this was only done occasionally. So, the role of the newcomer specialist in this particular school even involved teaching about bathing with water so that the girl would be more accepted by other students, which was also very important to her success in her new community. One girl from an African country exclaimed with great enthusiasm that her new home had a "raining room", also known as a shower (G. Adeyemo, personal communication, April 24, 2018). The simplest of human activity or effort can be completely normal in a refugee student's home country, yet problematic in another culture or country. This is an important realization for educators of refugee and migrant children. It is extremely important for teachers of refugee children to fully understand the background, as well as the cultural norms of the student prior to enrolling in their newcomer school. Stage 1 also serves the orientational role of being a friendly, nurturing, and warm welcoming classroom, assisting students with adjustment



to their new school in highly interactive, relational way. During Stage 1 students are also assessed for placement in the varying levels of stage classes students should be placed in after completing Stage 1.

Stages 2-4 offer varying skill levels of academic support and the students begin to spend varying lengths of time in the generalist classroom. While all students should complete Stage 1, after Stage 1 is mastered, students can then be moved into any of the remaining levels. For example, a student may complete Stage 1 and then be prepared to move directly to Stage 4. Some students may need to repeat Stage 1 multiple times before they are ready to move to another Stage. In Stage 5 the student spends the entire school day in regular school classes and monitoring by the newcomer specialist is minimal. It is not essential that all schools have five stages of intake programs, but multiple levels serve students better and allow school administration and educators to monitor and assess students' progress more efficiently, signaling needed interventions of varying degrees.

ESL/ESOL classes. ESL classes are absolutely vital to the success of newcomer students. Larger school districts can generally fund teacher's salaries, while small, rural school districts may need to investigate available grants or other sources of funding in order to provide this essential program for newcomer students. Research proven ESL/ESOL strategies offer many meaningful ways to work with students. Schools are generally familiar with many available ESL curricula. ESL/ESOL classes have two goals, according to Stewart (2011) in working with refugee children. One goal is to help them acquire basic communication skills in order to navigate through the school system. Secondly, they need academic language and literacy skills in order to advance their academic education (Stewart). One mistake often made by non-English speaking students, according to Stewart, is that they often think that once they have gained enough English to participate in

conversations that they have also gained enough language to be successful in academic courses. Stewart explains that it is not unusual for non-English speaking students to have to retake ESL/ESOL courses. It is also not unusual for the newcomer student to reserve speaking, even after developing basic understanding of their new language, as they gain confidence and develop a better understanding of communicating with their new skills (Hyder, 1998). Banks (2006) reminds that both the sender and receiver of communication interpret the communication, so students and educators both need to be aware of how they are communicating. Eisner (2016) reminds us that all communication is not verbal and that visual communication is powerful.

Biography-driven, culturally responsive education.

Dr. Socorro Herrera from Kansas State University is internationally known in biography-driven, culturally responsive education and provides important resources and informed pedagogy for educators when working with newcomer students (Herrera, 2010). Building on previous research (Thomas & Collier, 1995; Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2010; Herrera, 2010; Herrera & Murrey, 2005, 2011;), Herrera, Perez, Kavimandan, and Wessells (2013) remind the importance of two distinct biographies: the school situated biography and the personal biography of the student which includes home and family. Every student has a personal life and a school life. Herrera et al. (2013) reminds us of the sociocultural dimension of education including "a student's life, love, and laughter" (p. 3). The culturally sensitive teacher understands that education is relationship driven and that by focusing on creating relationships with refugee students, they will have more opportunity to further students' academic success. This is, of course, true for any student-teacher relationship, but it is absolutely vital for the newcomer teacher-student relationship and the academic success of the newcomer student.



Pedagogical Strategies

A wealth of pedagogical strategies assist with newcomer students. Hands on demonstrations (non-verbal communication) and flash cards with images and words in their original language and English (written communication) will only help if students can read their original language and may serve to assist refugee students in learning how to complete teachers' directions and understand how to use school materials and tools that they might be unfamiliar with. Games like Mind Maps, Picture This, Tic-Tac-Tell, and others make learning engaging and give expanded opportunity for linguistic acquisition (Herrera, Perez, Kavimandan, & Wessells, 2013). Even the simplest of necessities such as how to use toilet paper or the importance of washing hands, or understanding new and different flavors of new food items, can be learned by demonstration, charades, and flash cards. Collaborative projects in which newcomer students are paired with a newcomer who has been in the school for a longer period of time are useful to build community and teach understanding, which is an important aspect of successfully acculturating into their welcoming schools. School and life lessons that allow newcomer students to problem solve and gain understanding will have transfer and make inference to other areas of their life and education, ensuring important life skills that will allow important problem solving in their new country. Students, in most cases, will even use this knowledge to assist their parents and families adjust to life in their welcoming community and country. In fact, the school is reported to be the single, most important ecological system to ensure the students' success and that of their family (LeVine, 2007; Stewart, 2011). All of these skills work cumulatively to assist newcomer students' academic growth and personal success.

Self-Advocacy

Bey and Wellman (2015) stress self-advocacy being added to the curriculum as important in assisting newcomer

students as they “negotiate their environments, identify support, communicate their needs, and take responsibility for their decisions while transitioning into their schools and communities” (Bey & Wellman, 2015, p. 39). The goal of schools is to create learners and thinkers who can become independent members of our society. This is highly relevant when teaching newcomer students whose prior frame of knowledge resided in another country and culture. Schools must help newcomer students learn more than math and other normative subjects in welcoming schools. Educators must also help students know how to do life.



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Self-Esteem

Additionally, refugee students can struggle with self-esteem. Simply said, they have been through a lot. The very fact that they have refugee status means their family has endured great hardship or difficulty. While momentary relief, even excitement, happens when they are given refugee status and passage to a new life in a new country, soon the realities and rigor set in of attending school in a more organized school system than students may have been in prior to coming to their welcoming country (Stewart, 2011). Gude (2011) states the rigid structure of public schools can be difficult for new populations of students. For example, walking in a straight class line down the hallway or staying seated in a desk for long periods of time may be new experiences for newcomer children. Exploration, experimentation, and expression can assist refugee students with anxiety and empower them (Bey & Wellman, 2015). The culturally-sensitive educator should use a variety of strategies to engage newcomer students into comfortably learning coping skills in their new school for everything from learning how to grammatically form a sentence to how to line up after recess.



Variety of Choice

Additionally, Brunick (1999) states newcomer students should be given a variety of choices in the classroom so that they can attempt to use tools and materials that do not intimidate them with unfamiliarity. Teachers need to remember that refugee children may or may not have ever seen or used what might be considered basic school supplies and tools in the welcoming school. One teacher interviewed mentioned refugee students quickly hoarding supplies from the supply table, worried they would not have enough items to complete their project (A. Shamp, personal communication, April 17, 2018). One teacher mentioned students' awkward use of scissors and the electric pencil sharpener. (H. Kincaid, personal communication, October, 2015).

Listening

One important activity for all educators is listening (Stewart, 2011). While elementary newcomer students report being excited to learn how to read and write, secondary newcomer students report that listening to their teachers is difficult because the course content is more difficult than elementary school and because teachers talk too fast (various refugee students, personal communication, November 10, 2017). Because of language barriers that can exist with traumatized refugee students, it is important for teachers to listen to more than spoken language (Brunick, 1999). While auditory processing from student to teacher or teacher to student generally happens by listening, other learning styles such as visual and tactile methods, which are normative methods of learning in the art classroom, assist learners who cannot understand verbal communication (Bresba, 2009; Brunick, 1999; Carey, 2006). Educators also need to learn to “listen” to newcomer students non-textual mark making. Since newcomer students may have had interrupted education, they may not even be able to read or write in their original language, let alone their welcoming schools most prominently used language.

Stewart found that all refugee students interviewed in a research study indicated their first priority in life was being educated so that they could have a better future.



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Need for Educator Training

All over the United States, dedicated educators are gathering research and attempting to develop curriculum that is refugee-student focused. A quick Internet search reveals this. As dedicated educators are writing a great deal of instructional material, availability of curriculum is not the problem (Brunick, 1999). According to Brunick, the larger issue is addressing the psychosocial needs of refugee students in the classroom. Educators must work with students, families, and communities to grow their cultural understandings, understand shared values, and develop pragmatic solutions for a school system that is more socially just (Stewart, 2011). Both cultural and linguistic education is needed (Kirova, 2012).

Need for Trauma Training

In my research for this text and the documentary video associated with it, I heard over and over again from many levels of education professionals that they need more trauma training or professional development to be able to contribute effectively



to the refugee students' acculturation and opportunity to settle into a more peaceful life in their welcoming schools (S. Bird-Hutchison, personal communication, November 10, 2017; B. J. Millen, personal communication, May 8, 2016; S. Wasko, personal communication, November 10, 2017). Stewart (2011) confirms the need for trauma training because of lived experiences of both students and their parents. While I do believe it is entirely possible that these educators are doing what educators do best, worrying about their students, there is a real and expressed need for more professional development in working with refugee students. The essence of the worry stems from a variety of reasons. How can a teacher who has never traveled outside of their own country fully understand the many cultural norms brought into their classroom by students who have grown up in another country? How can a teacher who has never experienced a harsh reality of life understand the conflict and trauma a refugee child may have endured? How can a teacher who speaks one language teach a classroom full of students who speak many languages? While we know that educators possess a unique ability to care for and individualize learning for all students within their classrooms, these are some aspects that cause anxiety in teachers (S. Bird-Hutchison, personal communication November 10, 2017). Beneficial research and knowledge exists for educators on a multitude of helpful issues, including trauma, yet the problem is getting it into the hands of P-12 educators. The busy educator can barely keep up with normal academic responsibilities, let alone spend hours in the evening searching the Internet for resources to use with small populations of students. Trauma-training seems to be a priority (S. Bird-Hutchison, personal communication, November 2017; J. Millen, May 8, 2016). I also found in my research that many schools are having their own staff do trauma training, rather than bringing in experienced and informed experts on the topic of trauma in children. While I know the educated teacher or administrator can teach the fundamentals of trauma training after doing exhaustive

research, educators will benefit in exponential ways from trauma-sensitive training done by professionals in the trauma field.

Hegemonic Misunderstandings

With existing language barriers, cultural non-understandings, and various issues relating to establishing a new life, refugee students enter their welcoming schools unsure of the most basic of human understandings, especially that of a culture they are not familiar with. One refugee parent spoke of her 10-year-old son, a recent refugee from Burma (Myanmar) in an American school, spitting out the school cafeteria food because he did not like the taste (refugee parent, personal communication, June 20, 2017). Her child got in trouble by the teacher for bad manners. The refugee mother visited the school and explained how different the tastes of food are here in America, compared to the country where they were from and that her son was still trying to get used to these new flavors. It was a culturally hegemonic action by the teacher and the parent reports that the teacher did not lessen the punishment she assigned for the student or apologize to her or her son; it was a misunderstanding based on her positionality and lack of cultural training, an example of the social injustice some newcomer students and families experience. As teachers, even well-meaning teachers, we must understand that it is perfectly fine for us to admit we made a mistake, especially when working with refugee students. A simple apology can make a huge difference. This, and similar school situations, demonstrate a need for newcomer, refugee and immigrant specific, professional development for American educators, especially schools in communities that have refugee populations. Educators should critically examine and reflect on their current practice, using this knowledge to inform future practice (Stewart, 2011).



Pre-Service Training

While educators participate in varying topics of professional development all throughout their careers as educators, one way university education programs can contribute to the academic success of refugee students is exposing college students to the specific biographies of what it means to be a refugee student. Some teachers have chosen to work in a school with a high refugee demographic of student, yet others find themselves teaching students they feel unprepared to teach (Stewart, 2011). Preservice educators and teacher preparation programs need to offer assistance in understanding the cultural implications of teaching students from other countries and especially refugee children and adolescents with the focus that goes beyond ESL/ESOL training. In fact, teachers in the field report that current and customary ESL curriculum does not meet all of the needs of refugee students (L. Anderson, personal communication, Nov. 10, 2017; J. Mow, personal communication, November 10, 2017; J. Millen, personal communication, May 8, 2016). These students often find the difficulties of life a shadow for current learning. Social justice education implores educators to offer an equitable classroom for all students; this includes teaching refugee children (Adams et al., 2016). Also of important note, first-year teachers should not be the responsible educator for newcomer students (Bey & Wellman, 2015). Based on my research in the field, I have also been informed by those interviewed that it is important to place more experienced educators with refugee students.

Art Education

While ESL programs are the significant point of entry for refugee students, as well as newcomer programs established by schools, art education can also play a role in newcomer acculturation, as decades of established research in the trauma field indicates the importance of art in healing from trauma (Howie, Prasad, & Kristel, 2013; Jones, 2018; Kaplan, 2007; Rubin, 2005). The important notation about the use of art with

refugee students is that both generalist and art teachers can implement this visual language of creativity, storytelling, and healing.

Bey and Wellman (2015) developed a college art education course for pre-service teachers, with a social justice education lens, called *Cultural Knowledge and Community Engagement: The Inner World of the Refugee Child*. This course provided important sensitivity training in the area of refugee studies and teaching newcomer students. This course could also be used as a model for professional development by school districts. The objectives of the course were Bey & Wellman, 2015):

- Understand the diverse social, political, and historical conditions revolving around the refugee experiences in the U.S.
- Learn to foster community, navigate difference, and assist students in doing the same.
- Gain exposure to the hardships, realities, and challenges affecting families and students beyond their familiar worlds.
- Problematize the inaccuracies and omissions of traditional Western art education curricular models and the power structures (e.g., the Western Canon), which sustain these falsifications or injustices.
- Articulate the challenges of teaching and learning in multicultural environments in and out of school. (p. 37)

A goal of this text and its companion documentary video is a concentrated effort to raise awareness of American educators (and educators all over the globe) about the needs of newcomer students. Though educator training based on the above criteria would potentially produce great results for educators and students, it would also ultimately assist with and contribute to this staggering world issue. Essentially and simply said, if everyone employed and volunteering in schools as well as community members would take a small piece of this global



puzzle, collectively we could all work together to improve the quality of life for refugee children, not just their academic success.

Trauma-sensitive Schools

An additional focus of this text is trauma-sensitive schools. Section two of this text is devoted to the topic of trauma. Focusing on the needs of the refugee learner, providing professional trauma training for the teacher of refugee newcomers, and providing professional development training for staff are important criteria for working with refugee students. In a trauma-sensitive school, the teacher's role is to combine knowledge of children's neurodevelopment into the classroom practice in order to help students overcome challenges attributed to trauma (Craig, 2016). Many challenges exist. Stewart (2011) defines four main categories of challenges contributing to anxiety for newcomer students including educational, economic, environmental, and psychosocial challenges. It is vital that practice is informed by research.

Universal Design for Learning

One theory for working with newcomer students is Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL principles are used by trauma-sensitive schools (Craig, 2016). UDL was initially developed for children with disabilities, but UDL principles emphasize the need for flexibly designed instruction that can be adapted to students' individual needs. According to Craig (2016), three primary neural networks are associated with learning:

1. Recognition Network – the “what” of learning: This is how children gather and categorize facts. Children often select the facts they are most comfortable with. Traumatized children demonstrate a need for information to be presented in multiple modalities. They also need a way to relate the facts with the language they speak. They will often respond more to the teacher's facial expressions and body language

than to what is being said; with refugee children, this may be because they have language challenges.

2. Strategic Network – the “how” of learning: This involves how children organize and express ideas and how they plan and perform tasks. Traumatized children have great difficulty organizing themselves. They have difficulty paying attention. They are known to “act” before thinking and give up easily. Scaffolding management of low-level skills such as word banks, number lines, calculators, and predictive software can save students' brain power for higher-level functions such as goal setting and performance monitoring. Goal setting is highly important for the traumatized student.
3. Affective Network – the “why” of learning: This strategy involves educators knowing how to get children's attention, engage them in learning, and focuses on how to sustain the students' efforts. In working with refugee or traumatized children, this strategy involves teachers working together with students to plan engaging learning that keep the students interested. This phase of learning is vitally important in helping children replace their sense of doom and despair with hope for the future. By including the students in choice making and constructivism, students become more engaged. Using dialogic teaching, the educator can create learning activities and settings in order to have more notable accomplishment with traumatized children.

Once educators develop a better understanding of trauma and receive vital training in working with newcomer students, become more knowledgeable in available practice, understand the journey of the refugee or newcomer student more fully, and begin implementing the best practices for these students, schools will be much more successful in meeting the needs of newcomer students (Flaitz, 2006).



Conclusion

The purpose of this text, and the companion documentary video, is to raise awareness of the P-12 newcomer students' needs in schools, as well as that of their families. The intent of this text is to increase the knowledge base of educators regarding this issue, convey a basic understanding of working with potentially traumatized students, and provide a manual of best practices and classroom strategies and ideas in order to help with acculturation, coping skills, and the possibility of healing from trauma that might be needed by some newcomer students. This is not a standard research text, but rather an informative text combining the voices of many professionals including educators of all levels, professionals in varying fields, authors, artists, volunteers, and refugees themselves, written to assist the dedicated P-12 educator, the world over, who wants to make a difference in the lives of their newcomer students. Working with newcomer students will require the classroom placement of proven educators with a great deal of field knowledge, vast experiences with children, anxiety and trauma, and comfortability in teaching so they can also focus on the coping and healing of newcomer students (Bey & Wellman, 2015). Teachers, essentially, are responsible for putting national policies into practical action in our schools (Krastea, 2013). By conveying how to find and use research and field experience available on working with traumatized students, best classroom practices, and a base knowledge of the refugee issue, this text has the goal of equipping all P-12 educators, whether seasoned educators or new teachers, with important teaching tools so they can provide newcomer students with the skills and coping mechanisms needed to regain a life that was put on hold.

As you read this text remember that a twelve-year-old child who comes to a community in the United States or another country as a refugee may have had interrupted education for years and may have a kindergarten level of education even though they are twelve years old (Stewart, 2011). Additionally,

Stewart reports children may have had to lie about their age to gain access to another country or they may not even know their age. These are the kinds of challenges that both the students and their schools face. Yet, there is something remarkable about the refugee child. Many have a human capacity for hope and resilience that seems impossible because of their lived experiences (Stewart, 2011). It's important to note that while students may feel hopeful, teachers and educators may be frustrated with the school system's functioning (Stewart, 2011).

Richard Baker said, "For most people, we often marvel at the beauty of a sunrise or the magnificence of a full moon, but it is impossible to fathom the magnitude of the universe that surrounds us." It is certain that there has been many a refugee child that sat in a dark and scary place, looking up at the full moon, and imagining a larger universe, a better place, and a world where they could return to their childish ways. Schools are to be a place of equity and comfort for students, yet the social justice of available education is an ongoing problem the world over. Resources such as this text provide the training needed by educators to provide informed knowledge in assisting them to meet important educational goals. The goal of this text is simple. As the author of various chapters and editor, I do not claim to be an expert on this very enormous world issue. My goal is to help further the educational discussion and informative quest to teach our students, all of them. Students and teachers that I work with often hear me say, if we all made a difference right where our two feet stand, the world would be a better place for children and education. This text will explore the topic of refugee students in our schools in three sections which involve raising awareness, understanding the basics of trauma, and providing some best practices and strategies for the classroom.

**About the author**

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Questions for Further Discussion

Use the following questions as helpful inputs into your own meaning making and reflection on the content of this chapter.

1. What does it mean to truly be a refugee in terms of the human condition? Think about practical, every day, human kinds of issues and think of larger social, geographical, and political issues. Discuss or think about the strength a refugee must have to survive and to hopefully rebuild their lives.
2. What are some steps that world leaders and also the common, ordinary person can take to help rid the world of a human's need for refuge?
3. What does it mean to be forcibly displaced?
4. Watch and discuss this video:

**Video: Draw my Life – Amal's Story**

5. Think about the thoughts and feelings of a refugee adult. How must they feel? What might their concerns be? What health needs might they have – either physical or psychological?
6. Think about the thoughts and feelings of a refugee child. Are their thoughts or feelings any different than that of an adult refugee? What might their concerns and unique needs be?

7. If you were a refugee, how would you feel? Would you be able to cope with the enormous life changes you would have to deal with? What would you hope for?
8. Now that you know a basic definition of a newcomer program for schools in countries such as the United States, what are some unique ideas you can think of that newcomer programs could offer?
9. What is the difference between assimilation and acculturation? What are the benefits of each, if any, and what are the problems associated with each, if any?
10. What are some important strategies and pedagogical decisions teachers of newcomer students should use? What else can you add to this list that is not listed in this short chapter?

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Spotlight 1

It Takes a Village

Trina Harlow

C. S. Lewis once said, “Children are not a distraction from more important work, they are the most important work.” Although it may sound cliché, children are the future of our world. Their well-being and that of their family must matter to the global community by way of the local community.

Once a refugee family has been given asylum in the United States and makes their way here to begin a new life, free from the harshness and difficulty that made them have to leave their homeland and friends and family, the effort really then begins to adjust and adapt to life in a new country, in a new culture, with a new way of doing life. It truly takes a village, but refugee families also have to be keenly aware of how to survive in their new home. Across the United States there are many individuals, organizations, and communities that work in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and the state and federal governments to welcome these newcomers to our communities.





Friends of Refugees

The community of Clarkston, Georgia works in partnership with a non-profit organization called *Friends of Refugees* to help these new Americans “seize opportunities, while bringing them into relationships that will help them to flourish” (*friendsofrefugees.com*, Our Mission). They offer numerous programs for refugees and their website would be a valuable tool for other communities and school districts wanting to develop community partnerships. A program called *Café Clarkston* provides career training and technology support for new American friends in their communities. *Embrace* is a program that provides pre-natal, birth, and post-partum support for mothers. The *Jolly Avenue Garden* program provides refugee families with land and resources to grow gardens.

Refugee Family Literacy is a program that provides simultaneous literacy programs for refugee mothers and their pre-school children. *Start Me-Business Accelerator Youth Program* is an innovative program that creates cohorts of refugee entrepreneurs or those interested in starting a business to help them successfully learn how to run a business in the United States and provides a pathway of resources for this to happen. *Friends of Refugees* is also working on establishing an innovative headquarters for the organization, which will be called the *Jolly Avenue Development Center*. Their many and varied programs provide essential programs to help newcomers be successful in the local community.



Read about *Friends of Refugees* here:

 **Friends of Refugees**
<https://friendsofrefugees.com/about-refugees/>

 **Friends of Refugees Facebook Page**
<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfRefugees/>

The *Civic Atlanta* blog can be seen here, describing the *Start Me* and *Civic Innovation Fellow Program*:

 **Civic Atlanta Blog**
<https://www.civicatlanta.org/ci-news/2018/10/24/introducing-our-2019-civic-innovation-fellows>





New Roots for Refugees

New Roots for Refugees is a successful program run by Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas in the Kansas City area. The program provides services such as community supported agriculture, which is a “unique model of direct farmer-to-consumer marketing where members build a partnership with one farmer” (catholiccharitiesks.org, New Roots for Refugees). The program provides refugees the opportunity to farm with a local farmer, sharing risks and bumper crops, and bringing their produce to various markets in the Kansas City area. The program builds upon skills refugee families already have, helps them start their own small business, earn income, and contribute to their new communities. They also run a training garden in the Kansas City area for refugees to learn farming and growing techniques utilized in the region.



sanddebeautheil/Shutterstock

You can read about *New Roots for Refugees* here:

 **New Roots for Refugees**
<https://newrootsforrefugees.org>

 **New Roots for Refugees (Catholic Charities)**
<https://catholiccharitiesks.org/new-roots-for-refugees/>

 **New Roots for Refugees Facebook Page**
<https://www.facebook.com/newrootsforrefugees/>

Friendships Are A Blessing

In our Kansas State University College of Education film, *Refuge in the Heartland*, we show how the friendship of Blessing, from Congo, and Kim, from the Wichita, Kansas area, was meaningful for both women. Through Blessing’s friendship with Kim, Blessing felt like she was not alone, that someone cared about her and her life, and she had someone to turn to ask questions and make her way in her new home of Wichita, Kansas. Through Kim’s friendship with Blessing, Kim learned more about the world and about the struggles that many people across the world are faced with, and she learned ways in which she could be of benefit to refugees like Blessing who were making their new home right in her own community.



Watch this short film about their friendship:



Video: *Blessing and Kim’s Journey*



Chapter 2

What it Means for a Child to be a Refugee or a Distress Migrant

Jacqueline Bhabha

Introduction

How does someone become a refugee? The question has many dimensions. It asks about the factors that force people to leave home; the journeys – physical and bureaucratic - that must be endured to secure safety; the quotidian life that so often separates a refugee from neighbors or fellow residents; the changes that transform someone’s public and perhaps innermost identity from that of a citizen, a school child, a teenager, a grandson or even an ordinary human being like those around him or her, to that of a “refugee.” And, the focus of this chapter, it asks how the concept has become at once international and local, part of the fabric of a global world experiencing an unprecedented scale of distress migration,



“To better understand what it means to be a refugee child, the starting point is to take note of the very broad range of situations that force children to leave home.”

including of distress child migration, and of local communities addressing the inclusion and protection needs of neighbors.



Many refugees are children – babies, toddlers, primary school kids and adolescents. Indeed, not only do children constitute over half the world’s refugees; a sizeable proportion of these children are forced, for one reason or another, to seek refugee protection alone, without the support of their parents or other relatives. Understanding the policies that apply to this large, diverse and often highly vulnerable population could not be more urgent. It is a precondition for comprehending the backdrop to the more common challenges facing all children of coping with the demands of school, peers, family, physical and sexual development; and facing all refugees coping with the challenges of loss, displacement, insecurity and perhaps trauma.



Video: Defending Children on the Move

Range of Child Migration Situations

To better understand what it means to be a refugee child, the starting point is to take note of the very broad range of situations that force children to leave home. Though this



phenomenon is not new, the attention paid to it is relatively recent. Why? Because, children have long been thought of as mere appendages of their parents, always migrating with them and entirely dependent for their legal status on the outcome of legal considerations applied to their parents. But it has become increasingly apparent that this is often not the case. As the media daily brings to our attention, many children travel independently, unaccompanied or separated from family. Some are trapped in oppressive and under-resourced refugee camps, fugitives from brutal wars. Welcome though the escape from ongoing conflict is – consider, for example, the circumstances of Rohingya children fleeing their burning homes in Rakhine State, Myanmar as Buddhist mobs hounded them out, or of Syrian children escaping the bombs in Aleppo or Homs – it often devolves into a “from the frying pan into the fire” situation. From the acute violence or conflict back home, children move to situations of great insecurity, harassment and even labor and sexual exploitation. This has been shown to be the case for children living in refugee camps in a wide range of settings – from Guinea in Africa to Greece in Europe. The threats to these children originate from a range of sources – hostile or predatory “host” populations, other camp residents and, most shocking perhaps, humanitarian workers charged with the children’s care.



Other child migrants, in devastating numbers, have not even managed to complete the journey away from danger – drowning in their thousands in the Mediterranean, dying from dehydration or exposure in the Mexican desert, fatally injured in transit because of perilous travel arrangements on the top of inter-country trains or the undercarriages of planes. Yet others arrive at a border where they intend to seek protection only to be turned back or detained, because they are held to be ineligible for a legal status, or because they are wrongly considered adults and thus improperly disqualified from the more protective procedures that apply to children.

Finally, many children cross borders in search of safety but find the process of gaining legal protection unmanageable or treacherous. Its complexity, its protracted process, its punitive and intimidating practices and the restrictive interpretation of who qualifies for protection militate against a speedy and just resolution of legal status and the reassuring promise of a safe and permanent home for many children.

It is not just the children who travel alone who experience these serious challenges to secure the protection they deserve. Even when children travel with relatives, the legal considerations that apply to their child specific circumstances may be different from those that apply to their adult relatives. For example, a child forced to flee threats of recruitment as a child soldier or the clutches of sex traffickers may have a claim to refugee protection even if his or her accompanying parents have no such claim because they face no threats to their life or freedom. Yet in practice it is rare for decision makers or advocates to investigate let alone prioritize the child specific circumstances when whole families are traveling together.

Paradoxically, despite their manifest claim to protection as minors, as people displaced from home, and – where this is the case – as children separated from their families - only limited legal avenues to legal mobility and protection exist for



children and young people by comparison with adults. These legal avenues include family reunification as the primary source of legal migration, a strategy often beset by long delays and economic and bureaucratic obstacles. Another recognized means for children to migrate is where they qualify for refugee resettlement (if they have been recognized as a refugee and are in a temporary setting such as a camp or transit area) or where they successfully gain asylum (where they enter the country without a pre-existing visa and apply for refugee status on arrival at the port of entry). As already noted, children have considerable difficulties securing that status.



Apart from these legal strategies, few alternatives exist unless children are from wealthy families able to fund foreign study, internships or travel, or are gifted enough to secure one of the relatively few scholarships available to fund foreign travel or study or work experience. The result of this situation is that most children and young people, especially if they cannot travel with or to join family members, have little choice but to use irregular and unsafe channels if they need or desire to migrate. As a result, children fleeing abuse, adolescents desperate to support indigent or sick relatives with unmet medical needs by finding income generating opportunities unavailable back home, young people eager to escape the clutches of drug networks or other criminal gangs, find themselves forced into migration strategies that are irregular, unsafe and not readily accepted by receiving authorities.

Terms Applicable to Migrating and Refugee

In part because of this dearth of legal options, a range of terms has been used to accommodate children who manifestly need and deserve the protection of a legal status and to create elasticity within the established categories for children seeking to regularize their migration. The overarching framework within which these terms have been developed is set by the universally accepted definition of a child, the definition set out in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. A child is defined there as “every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.”

The label “child asylum seekers” was used during the early 1990s to cover the broad spectrum of children arriving and in need of protection, because other categories of protection had not been developed. It covered children trafficked for labor or sex, as well as children fleeing civil war, or simply arriving unaccompanied through the mediation of traffickers. But, as advocates learnt to our chagrin, not all child migrants migrating alone were actually asylum seekers or eligible for another legal status. Some were seeking to reunify with undocumented parents who had migrated earlier, others were coming to find desperately needed work, yet others were hoping to get an education unavailable back home.

Later the term “separated children” was added to the more common phrase “unaccompanied children”. By contrast with the latter who were children traveling completely alone, the phrase “separated children” was introduced to highlight the vulnerability caused by children traveling unaccompanied by a family member or customary guardian but not necessarily completely alone: such children travel with family friends or co-villagers, or with paid escorts, smugglers, charged with facilitating their travel. Like the unaccompanied children, these

separated children are also at risk of abuse or exploitation, including from the accompanying adults.

The implication of abuse or coercion associated with the phrase “separated children” did not adequately cover migrant children seeking to improve their life chances, to study, to find work to support themselves or their families, and so the phraseology of “independent child migrant” was introduced to more accurately reflect a sizeable phenomenon. Whereas separated children had prospects of qualifying for a humanitarian status (even if it expired when the child turned 18), independent child migrants rarely did. Instead, in a cynical and instrumental use of the principle of the best interests of the child, a fundamental child protection principle articulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, many such children were sent back home against their wishes, allegedly to enjoy the benefits of “respect for their family life”: from Spain to Morocco, from the UK to Afghanistan, from Italy to Albania, from France to West Africa, from the US to Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador. Children who had struggled to leave home for another destination were forced back, supposedly for their own protection, though typically they were not consulted about this strategy.

Recently, there has been a widespread acknowledgement that most child migration, like adult migration, is in fact “mixed migration”, and that it is not susceptible to the dichotomous, morally loaded classification of migrants into bona fide refugees covered by the 1951 UN Convention on the Status



of Refugees, and economic or “illegal” migrants searching for a better life. At a seminal conference in 2010, an international group of experts on child migration, in an effort to move away from these incomplete and inaccurate categories, and to highlight the common situations of risk, vulnerability and denial of rights facing child migrants, decided to adopt the inclusive terminology of “children on the move”. They were defined as “all children who move within or between countries, voluntarily or involuntarily, for survival or safety, family reunification, educational or economic advancement, or as a result of exploitation”. This definition obviously covers children moving with or without parents or other primary caregivers, and indeed it covers those whose movement may enhance their opportunities for protection and a better quality of life, as well as those placed at risk (or increased risk) of economic or sexual exploitation, abuse, neglect and violence.

Capacious though it is, this definition does not cover all “migration affected” children. Because it is focused on movement, it excludes children in destination countries born to immigrant parents, such as the 3 million US citizen children at risk of “constructive” deportation because their parents are undocumented and so they face the possibility of unwanted dislocation if their parents are forced out of the country. The term also excludes millions of children still in their home countries despite their parents’ migration (often referred to by the unfortunate term “Children left behind”). Because of these terminological issues, some therefore prefer the more all-encompassing phrase “children in migration”.

What this definitional detour illustrates is a more fundamental point about child migration. I suggest that child migration, and more generally human mobility itself, is epiphenomenal, that is, the migration is driven by a broader set of overdetermining factors. The impact of migration on individuals and societies depends on a wide, multidimensional but intersecting range of issues, not on a single individual “purpose,” such as border



crossing or earning or marrying for example. This point is anything but academic. It explains why our current system of refugee and migration management works poorly and ineffectively, and why it fails to accord the protective outcomes it should.

A Malfunctioning System

Though the current system works smoothly for some refugees and migrants, this is not the case overall. In particular, many who desperately need access to migration are excluded from legal and safe mobility options. Several aspects of this serious systemic breakdown are noteworthy and have enduring impacts on children. One is the length of time millions face in supposedly “temporary” situations – the average length of time spent in a refugee camp is now 10 years, an indictment of the encampment approach to protection and of humanitarianism more broadly. For many populations, including Palestinians, Somalis, Rohingya, a third generation is eeking out a painful and minimal existence in camps, a “zone of exclusion” beyond the bounds of ordinary social intercourse.

Another symptom of systemic failure is the maldistribution of hosting responsibility. Over 86% percent of refugees live in the developing world, many marooned in some of its poorest countries, often in inhospitable – arid and isolated – areas, a situation which militates against the possibility of self-sufficiency, of reconstructing a productive and fulfilling life.

Perhaps most egregious of all is the growing sense that millions of distress migrants – refugees and others forced to leave their homes – have no legal or safe exit strategy available to them because they do not meet the criteria for an award of refugee status or for any other legal immigration category. The choice then is entrapment in unlivable situations or hazardous, even life threatening, but hope-fueled migration towards an uncertain future plagued by the burden of irregular



migration status, with the ever-present risk of deportation and exploitation that accompany that status.

It may be helpful, in concluding, to explain the different strategies open to distress migrants including children and their families for securing protection. The international definition of a refugee is set out in the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees, and that definition has been widely incorporated into domestic legal regimes.¹ Qualifying as a refugee gives a distress migrant a substantial advantage over other migrants, because refugee status protects the person from being sent back to the place they have fled from. Syrians fleeing persecution by the Assad regime are likely to qualify as refugees and to receive a legal status in the first host country they flee to, if they make an asylum (synonymous with refugee) application. By contrast Libyans, Somalis, Afghans, Hondurans, Salvadorians or Pakistanis migrating because of political instability and state failure are much less likely to qualify as refugees or to be allowed to remain in the countries they seek refuge in.

I have already touched upon the fact that refugee status as defined, does not cover the circumstances of millions leaving home to escape chronic destitution or hopelessness. These are distress migrants, many of them children, who feel that



mobility presents the only viable exit option from a life of endless scarcity, suffering and lack of opportunity. They are people who could barely survive at home, people who do not face immediate life-threatening persecution or other existential threats but who would not enjoy fundamental elements of a rights respecting life, including the hope of fulfilling basic aspirations. Many of us think these distress migrants should be entitled to exercise mobility as a matter of fundamental justice, as one strategy (among others) for reducing global inequality. The term “distress migration” covers the African teenager facing a life of unemployment and penury, anxious to secure an education that delivers the possibility of a good job; it covers the Central American woman desperate to leave a gang infested neighborhood with her small children before they are recruited or killed; it covers the Afghan youth charged with finding resources to support a widowed mother and younger siblings forced back to a war-torn country. It covers adolescents from Morocco, Eritrea, Pakistan, Colombia abandoning dead end situations in search of a future. What are the basic building blocks of the system that regulates border control internationally as a whole, into which these distress migrants must try and fit themselves?

Understanding the Basic Building Blocks of Current Immigration Control

A central building block of our current immigration control system is general acceptance that the state has the right to scrutinize every individual as they enter state territory. A precondition for the implementation of comprehensive border control is the development of an unequivocal means to identify each entrant, a second building block. Passports and identity documents are the tools for unique identification that enable states to clearly identify their citizens and to distinguish between different categories of border crosser and their eligibility for entry. Together these two building blocks of our current system of migration management, an insistence on the

legitimacy of border control and the ability to uniquely identify individuals presenting themselves at a border by national status and other attributes relevant to admissibility, remain fundamental elements in the administration of immigration control.

While citizens do not need a visa or any special permission to enter their countries (a valid national passport is sufficient), non-citizens, including children require legal authority to enter, whether on a temporary or permanent basis. Travel is often motivated by multiple reasons (work and study, family reunification) but the permission to enter is based on the primary motive for migrating. Though each country has its own precise immigration categories and qualifying conditions attached to them, there are four broad types of migration situation, excluding refugee or humanitarian categories, that cover non-citizens who do not already have permanent residence: travel for work, travel to visit, travel for family reunification, and travel for study. Within these broad categories, many sub divisions exist.

Migration that takes place outside this system of controls is, by definition, irregular. Adult or child migrants who enter without presenting themselves to an immigration officer (clandestine entry), people who enter with false documents or on the basis of false statements, or people who enter legally but then overstay the length of their temporary permission are all considered irregular. Regrettably, they are routinely referred to as “illegals” or by other derogatory terms such as “bogus refugees,” as if the person rather than his or her legal status were flawed. Irregular migrants are increasingly treated as criminals, charged with immigration offences and imprisoned, a process that aggravates vulnerability and misery.

Though the entry of non-citizens is always subject to control at the external border of a country, one group of migrants has maintained a privileged status, at least as a matter of



international law and public policy. This group, already described in some detail above, is refugees. Unlike the migration system, which as I just noted, is governed by domestic laws and domestic institutions, the modern refugee system has been more closely governed by international obligations.

The modern refugee protection system, which applies to children as much as it applies to adults, originates in the period surrounding World War II. The 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees (together with a significant revision to its reach developed in 1967) is the central legal element of the contemporary refugee system. As I already noted, there are broadly speaking 2 ways in which refugees including children, whether accompanied or not, get legal residence in western countries. One is through the refugee resettlement program, which brings in from abroad people already recognized as refugees. The other way refugees gain legal status is by making a successful refugee (or asylum) application at the port of entry of a country outside their own. Both procedures are, in practice, fraught with difficulty. In the case of the refugee resettlement program, the resettlement rate is vastly inadequate to the demand, so that only a fraction of the 21 million global refugees have any prospects of benefitting. This explains the dramatic rise in the numbers of so-called “protracted” refugees, trapped in camps and other very harsh and unsatisfactory settings. The limited availability of resettlement slots is compounded by increasingly harsh security screening procedures, by restrictive family unity rules (forcing people to separate from relatives they consider members of their immediate family) and in some cases by onerous sponsorship requirements. The result is years, sometimes decades, of debilitating limbo for refugees. Children often spend their whole childhood and well beyond in camps, divorced from the possibility of a normal and integrated community life.

The in-country asylum procedure is also beset with difficulties and uncertainties. The imposition of visa requirements on nationals from war torn or unstable countries, of onerous fines on airlines or shipping companies who transport passengers without the required visa, and of draconian interdiction measures blocking sea access to safe ports, have made the process of seeking asylum increasingly dangerous, expensive and physically and psychologically oppressive. This is why rates of mortality are high and the use of smugglers is virtually obligatory to reach a border where an asylum application can be made. Even when the border is reached, border officials often refuse entry and send asylum applicants back because they consider them ineligible to have their cases considered. For those asylum seekers lucky enough not to be summarily removed, other challenges often arise. Many, including families and sometimes even unaccompanied children, are detained while their cases are considered. Lengthy and often hostile questioning to establish eligibility for refugee status follows every asylum application, and, despite the significant legal complexities of the process, access to legal representation and quality interpretation are elusive. These extreme hardships of course compound the trauma of exile and loss afflicting distress migrants as they await news of their fate. Small wonder that suicide of asylum seekers is a not infrequent occurrence and that evidence of mental illness and trauma among refugee children is growing.





Added to these personal difficulties are the significant legal uncertainties relating to the outcome of the asylum application. Despite the uniform definition of a refugee, decision makers exercise considerable discretion. What is more government policies change, so that asylum seekers including unaccompanied adolescents who may rely on the experience of relatives or peers who precede them in the quest for protection may face unexpected exclusion.

In addition, there is little uniformity in the interpretation of the Refugee Convention. In the U.S., the discrepancy between different immigration judges is so large that the system has been called a “refugee roulette,” with some decision makers granting over 90% of cases and others under 10%. As a result, predicting the outcome of an asylum case is difficult; delay and uncertainty create psychologically corrosive hardship which compound the difficulties asylum seeking children already face. Despite these severe obstacles and challenges, refugee status remains a precious and critically important humanitarian remedy. Few if any other legal protections have delivered desperately needed safety and rescue from harm, saved lives at risk and enabled dramatic improvements in survival prospects for so many children and families who would otherwise be trapped in or forced back to murderous states.

Footnote

¹ Refugee flight is the forced movement of persons defined as refugees by Art. 1(a) of the *1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees*. The definition and its scope are discussed elsewhere in this book.

About the Author

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Questions for Further Discussion

Use the following questions as helpful inputs into your own meaning making and reflection on the content of this chapter.

1. How does a child become a refugee?
2. What unique circumstances must a child refugee encounter?
3. Are children who travel with parents always safe to travel freely? Why or why not?
4. If you were a refugee child how would you feel? Describe in detail.
5. How do a country's immigration laws affect children?
6. How does systemic failure of the programs designed to referee child migration affect children?
7. What is The 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees?
8. Do you think it is easier for children of certain countries to become legal refugees than those from other countries? Why or why not?
9. What is the difference between being a refugee and an asylum seeker?
10. Is world policy on refugees and the laws in place to protect child refugees working? Why or why not?



Spotlight 2

Borderless Education at Dadaab Refugee Camp

Hawa Sabriye and HaEun Kim

Hawa Sabriye and HaEun Kim are teachers from Toronto, Canada who have a passion for education and investigating barriers that prevent access to higher learning — both in urban contexts such as inner-city Toronto as well as settings considered to be ‘education in emergencies.’ Their Masters of Education research was embedded in forced migration and refugee studies from an educational context and took place in Dadaab Refugee camps in Kenya. They worked as Teaching Assistants for York University’s Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) Project, supporting and promoting higher education for refugees in Dadaab. Dadaab is a town located in the northeastern region of Kenya, roughly 90 kilometers east from the Kenyan-Somali border. In 1992, refugee camps were established in Dadaab as temporary shelters for 90,000 civilians fleeing the civil war in Somalia. Today, Dadaab is host to over 350,000 refugees, not including the many undocumented refugees, making it one of the largest and oldest refugee camps in the world. The majority of its residents are Somali, as well as asylum-seekers from neighbouring African countries fleeing violence and insecurity. Today, Dadaab is divided into a complex of five refugee camps: Hagadera, Ifo 1, Ifo 2, Dagahaley, and Kambioos.



The Borderless Higher Education for Refugees Project is an international collaboration among Canadian/Kenyan universities and NGOs working together to provide internationally recognized certificates, diplomas, and degree programs to refugees and locals living in the refugee encampments of Dadaab. As Teaching Assistants for the project, we provided academic support, tutorials, evaluations, and mentoring for the students in Dadaab at the BHER Learning Centre, which was based right outside of Dadaab town. We worked intensive sessions on-site in Dadaab, running workshops, remedial sessions, and one-on-one tutoring help. These sessions were often very rigorous as a result of limited time. From Toronto, we provided online support via Moodle, Skype, and Whatsapp. We conducted online tutorial sessions across time zones and provided academic writing support for our students in Dadaab as well.





The BHER Project had their very first cohort of students graduate with a Bachelor Degree in Geography from York University, on Wednesday April 25, 2018. The ceremony took place at the Red Cross Compound in Dadaab and included the family members and friends of the graduating class. These students were made up of members from different ethnicities and from different camps within Dadaab. This achievement opened the door to a number of new opportunities beyond the life in the camps. Graduating students have shared their desire to complete Masters degrees, return to their homeland, and take on jobs that they are now academically and professionally qualified for. Their hard work and dedication has developed a growing number of new students from within the Dadaab refugee camps, who are now also interested in completing degrees from within Dadaab through the BHER Project. Perhaps the most incredible thing we've learned in our journey with BHER is the value of relationships and community in face of precarious and unpredictable challenges.

Throughout the course of the students' studies, there have been numerous instances of violent insecurity, political instability, floodings as well as limited resources, and more. Students, lecturers, project leaders, and field staff alike have all learned to push together across geographical, cultural, and linguistic barriers in order to pursue meaningful educational opportunities for all. This project has sparked cross-continental friendships and collaborations. We would encourage other educators, practitioners, policymakers, researchers, humanitarian workers and more to consider how valuable higher education for refugees can be. Refugee education, particularly higher education, can open the doorway to reconciliation, nation-building and more hopeful futures.



To get a glimpse of their time at Dadaab Refugee Camp, watch this video that HaEun made of their time at Dadaab:



Video: Dadaab Refugee Camp

Videos about Borderless Higher Education for Refugees:



Video: Borderless Higher Education for Refugees



Video: Dadaab



Read about York University's cohort at Dadaab Refugee Camp and see Hawa and HaEun in the photo:



Dadaab Refugee Camp

<http://yfile.news.yorku.ca/2016/06/27/second-cohort-of-dadaab-students-graduate-with-york-u-certificate/>

Read more about York University's ground breaking distance-education program at Dadaab and see Hawa in the photos:



York University's Dadaab Education Program

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-york-universitys-distance-education-program-breaks-barriers-for/>



Chapter 3

Dadaab: In the Eyes of an Insider

Joshua Orawo, Jr.

Introduction

An aerial view of Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya is a particularly striking spectacle, especially if you are landing here for the first time. It is even more spectacular if this is your first time in a refugee camp as the sight is not your normal village or even urban set-up. The expansive human settlement at one corner of the relatively sparsely populated Northern Frontier District tells a story of conflict and political instability in the Horn of Africa. The camps are not new, one can tell from the numerous structures, a good number of which are permanent. This part of Garissa County is densely populated, probably the only rural setting in the county with the highest number of people per square kilometer.



“School is one of the leading places where resilience of refugee children is built as they interact with other children and listen to stories that embody courage and stoicism.”

Camp Description

The area covered by the refugee camps that have kept *giving birth* to other camps is a beehive of activities. Without these camps, however, without the refugee crisis that is the hallmark of this region’s political wobbliness; there would be no Dadaab town. Many other structures that have been constructed by international humanitarian organizations would not be here. Dadaab would

be a sleepy village, far east of Kenya’s north. No one would particularly talk of Dadaab’s potential because no one would be aware of her potential in the first place. But owing to the role this region has played for the last over twenty six years as home to the predominantly Somali refugees, Dadaab constituency is not the small sleepy village it would otherwise be. There exist booming businesses in Dadaab town, most of which serve as suppliers of various material to humanitarian organizations in Dadaab refugee camps.



Joshua Orawo, Jr., UNHCR Sr. Protection Assistant at Kakuma Sub Office, Kenya



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At the time of drafting this chapter, there are only three camps – with a population of 235,000 refugees according to UNHCR – in the expansive landmass covering two constituencies. Dadaab area has hosted five refugee camps between 2011 and early 2018.



The oldest camps, namely Dagahaley, Ifo and Hagadera, have been in existence since the onset of the Somali refugee crisis in or about 1991. The numbers in the three oldest camps have systematically grown across the years with the highest figures being registered in 2011 and 2012. It is also in 2011 that two additional camps came into existence to take care of the refugee influx as a result of drought and famine in Somalia in the said year. Kambioos and Ifo 2 became home to a good number of people who fled from hostile climatic conditions, with equally big numbers occupying the three older camps.

Whereas Dadaab camps were primarily intended for the hosting of refugees fleeing from conflict in Somalia, it later became home for refugees drawn from many other nationalities. In spite of this reality, the vast majority of the refugees in Dadaab are Somali nationals owing to the proximity of Dadaab from the Kenya-Somalia border. Other nationals that have found home in Dadaab over the years include Ethiopians, mainly from these communities: Oromo, Anyuak, Somali and Amharic; South Sudanese especially those of Dinka descent; Burundians; Rwandese; nationals of the Democratic Republic of Congo; Ugandans; and Sudanese. A good number of these people have been residents of Dadaab for as long as the age of the oldest camps and still some considerable numbers are fairly new.

Organizational Structure

Over thirty organizations – both international and national are found in what has come to be known as Dadaab Refugee Complex. These organizations exist as either implementing

Joshua frequently meets with Dadaab, and now Kakuma, refugee camp residents to discuss matters of concern



partners (IPs) of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) or operational partners OPs. By definition, implementing partners are organizations that receive funds from UNHCR to implement certain programmes in the camps and their surrounding; while operational partners are not directly funded by UNHCR but still play a major role in refugee operations. Operational partners usually have their own sources of funding to carry out projects targeted at either refugees, hosts, or both. UNHCR's partners, whether implementing or operational implement an array of activities. The following are some of the thematic areas implemented by the many partners of UNHCR: a) education; b) child protection and gender-based violence programming; c) refugee profiling and registration; d) health and nutrition; e) water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH); f) livelihood programming; g) shelter; environmental conservation; h) peaceful coexistence and host community projects; i) information counseling and legal assistance (ICLA) programming; j) programmes targeting persons with specific needs (PSN), including persons living with disabilities (PLWDs) and the elderly; k) camp management; and l) etc.

Children of the Camp

Like in any refugee context globally; Dadaab refugee camps is not short of unaccompanied minors (UAM) and separated children (SC). A combination of these two categories of children is abbreviated as UASC. Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied Minors and Separated Children define unaccompanied minors as “children who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so” (UNHCR, 2019, p. 12). Separated children are defined in the same document as children “separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary care-giver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members” (UNHCR, 2019, p. 12). UNHCR partners with Save the



Sadik Gulec/Shutterstock

Children and *Terre des hommes* – a Swiss child relief agency to implement child protection programming in Dadaab camps. Both organizations oversee associations of foster parents who are either fostering currently or are on standby in case need for foster placement arises. While separated children more often than not live in stable care arrangements with relatives, most of whom are often members of their immediate families; unaccompanied minors are in all cases in need of foster arrangements.

Child protection agencies implement foster placement arrangements in partnership with the Sub-County Children's Officer, who is a government employee under the Department of Children's Services within the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. The Sub-County Children's Officer – formally known as the District Children's Officer is authorized to approve foster arrangements, where in his assessment, the foster arrangement is in the child's best interest. In the absence of the Sub-County Children's Officer, temporary care arrangements for unaccompanied minors are determined by protection experts, sitting as a panel referred to as Best

Interest Determination (BID) Panel. The members of the panel are usually people with a solid background in refugee protection, including child protection through training and work experience. Detailed assessments on individual children are then presented before the panel for their consideration and approval. The assessments are usually conducted by the child protection agencies. The working of the BID process, including the role of the BID panel is guided by BID Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which are developed, contextualized and reviewed by the Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) and BID Panel from time to time. The BID Panel has been known to determine the fate of hundreds of refugee children in Dadaab and indeed in other refugee operations, including in the context of durable solutions framework. UNHCR Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child require that all unaccompanied and separated children go through the BID process as a prerequisite to durable solutions consideration.

Many children, particularly those that have not been separated from their parents and immediate families by the displacement cycle leading to their being in Dadaab, go about their lives oblivious of the dynamics of camp-life. Whilst these children are part and parcel of the refugee life that their parents and caregivers have found themselves in; their young age coupled with parental protection cushions them to a certain extent from incurring the attendant implications of displacement. Thus, it is not unusual to see children playing and having fun around the camps. Yet even those children that are most affected by the displacement cycle leading to their becoming refugees soon forget about their misfortunes as they meet and interact with their peers.

The Dadaab School Experience

School is one of the leading places where the resilience of refugee children is built as they interact with other children and listen to stories that embody courage and stoicism. The



school environment makes it near impossible to distinguish the children based on their backgrounds, hence can provide an ideal healing ground for those still hurting from the experience of displacement. Schools in Dadaab refugee camps operate like most Kenyan schools. Refugee learners use the same syllabus as Kenyan learners in the Kenyan schools; and participate in national examinations both at Standard 8 and Form 4, just like Kenyan learners. The majority are primary schools, most of which have an Early Childhood Development (ECD) section, as happens in many Kenyan public schools. Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is the agency charged with implementing primary education and early childhood development in all the three camps – as they currently are at the time of the writing of this chapter. (There were five camps making up Dadaab refugee complex up until the end of 2017. Here is the process that led to the reduction in the number of camps to three: On November 10, 2013, governments of Kenya and Somalia, and UNHCR signed a Tripartite Agreement for the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees. Subsequently, UNHCR and partners drafted an operations plan for a pilot project to support the return process under the auspices of the Tripartite Commission, established under the Tripartite Agreement. From December 2014, UNHCR has supported the return of tens of thousands of Somali refugees leading to a closure of two refugee camps making up Dadaab Complex. These are Kambioos and Ifo 2.)

Secondary schools on the other hand are managed by Windle International Kenya (WIK), a subsidiary of Windle Trust International. Apart from overseeing all functions pertaining to the running of secondary schools in the camps, WIK, along with others, provide scholarships for refugees and host communities at the tertiary level in universities and polytechnics in partnership with other organizations, institutions and initiatives on a limited basis. A few students graduating from the camp schools have benefitted from the scholarships to national and international universities. Roughly



Sadik Gulec/Shutterstock

9% of KCSE (Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education) graduates per year have benefited from higher education programmes either in the camp or outside.

All schools managed by respective organizations in Dadaab camps are free for all refugee and host children. Teaching staff are drawn from both Kenyan nationals and refugees. A number of head-teachers are Kenyans registered with the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) – although the plan is to have all head teachers registered with the Commission eventually. The camp schools apply the Kenyan curriculum as approved by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD).

A Glimpse Into a Day at Dadaab

A lot of activity concerning lives of refugees goes on at the camps on a typical weekday: from students and teachers attending schools to patients visiting the health facilities to traders and buyers attending the markets, and to women and children visiting water points. One other constant here in Dadaab is refugees visiting UNHCR and other agencies' field posts to seek various services. A number of activities take place at UNHCR field posts, with some refugees coming on appointment while many others come on walk-in basis.



In Dadaab, appointment cases are mainly those going for resettlement interviews and general resettlement counselling. Most walk-ins fall under what is referred to as continuous registration cases, although an equally substantial number of refugees approaching field posts in Dadaab in recent times have been persons considering voluntary repatriation to Somalia.

A number of refugees approaching UNHCR field posts on daily basis do so with various protection concerns, ranging from insecurity incidents in the camps and from country of origin, to disputes of various natures, to needs for specialized services targeting persons living with disabilities, the elderly, etc., and also to persons seeking family tracing and reunification, to child protection and gender based violence cases. As a way of handling presented concerns; UNHCR personnel refers most of the protection concerns to sector-specialist partners to provide specialized services. For instance, family tracing cases would be referred to the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), which is the agency working with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in tracing and reunification for persons whose family members are refugees and asylum seekers in Kenya, gender-based violence cases would be referred to the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), which is the GBV IP for follow-up on the different stages of response etcetera. Equally busy on a typical weekday are partner field offices as refugees stream in to seek various specialized services, either based on referral or on walk-in basis. Sources of referrals are numerous – these can be other organizations; community leaders; refugee incentive staff; the various community structures; individual community members; the list is not exhaustive.

The food distribution cycle is another busy period in the camps as refugees throng the food distribution centres to receive their ratio. The distribution is done based on household sizes and takes up to one week for everyone to receive their ratio. Once completed, the ration is expected to last one month until the subsequent distribution cycle.

Durable Solutions

The discourse on refugees would not be complete without a mention of the durable solutions framework. This is particularly so because the refugee situation is expected to be temporary and should usher in a durable solutions framework, which serves to put an end to the refugee situation. The three traditional durable solutions include repatriation, resettlement, and local integration. Whilst there is no hierarchy of durable solutions; rather, an integrated approach that combines all three solutions and is implemented in close cooperation with countries of origin, host States, humanitarian and development actors, as well as the refugees themselves usually offers the best chances for success. Different people and groups prefer some durable solutions to others. A greater percentage of refugees prefer resettlement to the other two durable solutions. Whilst they have their reasons for this preference; sustained conflict in countries of origin and perceived better life in countries of resettlement are leading factors behind this preference. Many countries of origin would prefer repatriation of refugees as this signifies end of conflict and return of calm- which is beneficial for their international rating. A few refugee hosting countries may from time to time consider local integration of refugees through naturalization, especially in protracted refugee contexts. However most hosting countries are predominantly reluctant to walk this path owing to diverse reasons, essentially political.

Dadaab refugees have benefitted from both resettlement and voluntary repatriation in the context of the durable solutions framework – for a better part of its existence. While resettlement is determined by the quota and criteria from the resettlement countries; voluntary repatriation is largely determined by safety of intended returnees in the country of origin including the willingness and ability of the country of origin to receive and support reintegrate the returnees.



Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to assist educators around the world in understanding basic organization and structure of refugee camps such as Dadaab. It takes a large staff, many volunteers, and the organizational efforts of the refugees themselves to efficiently run the camp. By understanding life in the camps, educators around the world will have better opportunity to understand refugee and resettled students.

About the Author

Joshua Orawo is a Senior Protection Assistant for UNHCR, residing in Kenya.

Questions for Further Discussion

Use the following questions as helpful inputs into your own meaning making and reflection on the content of this chapter.

1. What is UNHCR, what does the organization do, and who is the leader of UNHCR?
2. What are the world's five largest refugee camps, where are they located, and what is the current population of them?
3. What is the difference between implementing partners and operational partners within refugee camps?
4. What themed areas do organizations assist with within the camp?
5. What is the meaning of durable solutions framework? Explain the significance of this.
6. How would you feel if you lived in a refugee camp and what needs would you hope would be met?
7. Research some personal stories on the Internet of refugees living in refugee camps. Share a significant personal story you read about.

8. Become familiar with UNHCR's website. Explain three things you learn about UNHCR.
9. What educational information and materials are supplied or shared on the UNHCR website?
10. Would you volunteer in a refugee camp? Why or why not?

References

UNHCR. (2019). Inter-agency guiding principles on unaccompanied and separated children. *International Committee of the Red Cross-Central Tracing Agency and Protection Division*, 2004. Retrieved from: <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/children/4098b3172/inter-agency-guiding-principles-unaccompanied-separated-children.html>



Spotlight 3

Engaging Youth in a Refugee Camp

Pat Rubio Bertran



“Refugees are normal people. In my opinion, there is no difference between colours or religions - we are all human. Refugees are not killers: they incite, they build, they think. And if you think negatively about refugees, come and meet us. Know us and what we do. You will discover that we are normal people. But half of the world doesn’t like us. Why? Do we look like killers? Look at our faces, at our pictures. Think about the things we want.”

– Hamza, age 16, from Syria

Extract from the 3rd issue of the *Ritsona Kingdom Journal*.

In the summer of 2017, young residents of Ritsona refugee camp outside of Chalkida, Greece had a bold idea — to create a magazine that allowed them to tell their stories in their own voice, and in their own way. During the months that followed, they worked with Lighthouse Relief to launch the *Ritsona Kingdom Journal*, a selection of thought-provoking artworks, articles, poems and photographs that bear witness to their diversity and creative talent.



“We created the magazine because we wanted to tell people that we are here and that we are people with many talents,” says George, age 21, from Syria [residing in Ritsona]. George writes poetry, plays guitar, designed the camp’s logo, and helped put the first issue together. In their maiden issue, his friend Bassem christened the camp ‘Ritsona Kingdom’ and anointed himself King, as a joke – because there’s nothing regal about this place.



The *Ritsona Kingdom Journal* features artwork, writing and photography from youth participants aged 16-25 at our Youth Engagement Space (YES) in Ritsona. Past content has

included everything from letters to global leaders, essays on displacement issues, and many beautiful pieces of artwork depicting life in Ritsona. Together, this incredible body of work demonstrates the creativity, resilience, and untapped potential of these inspiring young men and women.



Our Youth Engagement Space provides a safe setting for young people between the ages of 16 and 25 to attend workshops and take the lead on projects that reveal all of their creativity, critical thinking and untapped potential. While children from 6 to 15 have access to the national school system, this older demographic is often sidelined in emergency settings when it comes to service provision. This leaves many vulnerable to marginalization and, particularly in the case of young men, increases the risk of exploitation, exposure to violence and substance abuse. To breach this gap, Lighthouse Relief provides a space for these talented young people to retain hope and constructively invest in their long-term futures.



“This period helped me a lot in self-discovery and attending the space allowed me to make friends among the other teenagers. We worked on several small projects at the beginning. I did not know I could draw nor that I love to write until we started the magazine. The space made me and my wonderful friends realize that we can create something from nothing.”

– Malak, age 18, from Syria

“It made us dream. Instead of being trapped with all the frustrations we had from being stuck in Greece, it allowed us to talk and choose our way. The thought of the magazine was wonderful and amazing. It was a representation of all of us and we were going to deliver our message to the world. When the first issue of the magazine was ready, we were confident that we could do a lot.”

– Musstafa, age 23, from Syria

Young people of Ritsona enthusiastically drove every stage of this publication’s development - from content creation to graphic design and dissemination in camp. The magazine is, proudly and unambiguously, their own. The images in this Spotlight show the inspiring, entrepreneurial work of youth at the Ritsona Youth Engagement Space and *The Kingdom Journal*.

THE MAKING OF A NATION: THE RITSONA FLAG



Red: Indicates the Turkish territory, and the yellow line in the middle of the red represents refugees who want to go to Europe, via Turkey.
Blue: Indicates the Greek territory, and the yellow line in the middle of the blue represents stranded refugees in Greece.
Yellow: Indicates the refugees... the long yellow line between blue and red represents the refugees who sank in the Aegean between Turkey and Greece.



The Flag of Ritsona Kingdom was created by Bassam Omar, also known as the King of Ritsona!





Editor's Note: Ritsona Refugee Camp is one of many refugee camps around the world and Lighthouse Relief is one of even more humanitarian organizations joining the effort to help with the world crisis of forced migration and displacement of human beings across the globe. Many of these organizations and camps depend of volunteers. Potential volunteers should do an exhaustive Internet search for an organization with which they share common interests and meets personal safety standards and concerns, geographic potential, and potential volunteers should also understand associated costs. Most of all, please understand that there will be far more joys than struggles when volunteering in a refugee camp, yet camps are generally lacking in resources and are staffed with people who give up their own comforts to serve others.



In 2015, Lighthouse Relief, a Swedish humanitarian NGO, was founded to help with the crisis of refugees arriving on the Greek island of Lesbos every day — men, women, and children landing on the north shore of the island cold, scared, hungry, and ill, fleeing conflict and war in their country. Lighthouse was one of the first organizations to offer emergency response in the area. Today, Lighthouse helps people to regain dignity and community during the harshness of life that led them to leave their homeland and seek safety for themselves and their families. They operate two core programs at Ritsona camp including the Child Friendly Space and the Youth Engagement Space. Their core purpose at Ritsona involves education of young children and youth.

Read more about The *Ritsona Kingdom Journal* here:

 ***Ritsona Kingdom Journal***
<https://www.lighthouserelief.org/ritsona-kingdom-journal>

Watch this video about the *Ritsona Kingdom Journal*:

 **Video: *Ritsona Kingdom Journal***

More information about the youth engagement space and the journal:

 ***Youth Engagement Space and Kingdom Journal***
<https://www.huckmag.com/perspectives/activism-2/magazine-takes-inside-greeces-refugee-kingdom/>

Learn more about Lighthouse Relief here:

 ***Lighthouse Relief***
<https://www.lighthouserelief.org>





Chapter 4

From Ritsona With Love

Diana Delbecchi

This chapter is an emotional account of my personal growth and research experiences regarding the plight of refugees and a calling I felt to go work in a refugee camp in Greece. The experience was very real, joyful, and often raw and frustrating. The memories are vivid. The emotion I express in this narrative will hopefully assist educators of refugee children grow in their understanding of what it means to be a refugee. In writing an account of my experiences working in the camp and conducting research for a humanitarian organization on the ground in Greece, I must explain to the reader that one cannot volunteer in this capacity, within this huge humanitarian crisis, and not have it affect you in profound, even disturbing ways. I share my experiences in this chapter for one reason. I would like to help educators of refugee children, wherever they work in the world, have a better understanding of the resiliency of the children who

finally make it to your classroom, in a far off country. This chapter is a discussion of both my time serving in Ritsona Refugee Camp in rural Greece, the people I encountered, the educational work I performed, and how it relates to the larger narrative of the global refugee crisis facing the world today. I am delighted to share my personal story and the stories of those I remain close with as a mechanism for building greater understanding.

– Diana Delbecchi

Yazan

“Sometimes I think the war brought us together, as you gave me hope and encouragement. ...Thanks a lot for you and all people in your city who helps and supports me in a difficult part in my life.”

– Yazan, age 15, from Aleppo, Syria in a letter written to me before I left camp in June 2017.

How could I have reasonably responded to this handwritten letter... knowing what I knew about the unknowns regarding his future?

Yazan, a brilliant young Syrian, found the silver lining of thankfulness on a monstrous black cloud that had the potential to hang over him for decades to come. Yet, he wished to believe that it might be possible that the war — in all of its horror — was the reason our paths crossed. Little did he know that our chance meeting was truly the result of hostile policies against refugees, and had the world been more humane in their reactions to the migration of people from war and persecution there was a very good possibility that Yazan and I would never have met. In fact, recent research on the European refugee crisis has concluded “the late, chaotic and uncoordinated nature of the response was not simply a consequence of the large numbers of people arriving” (Crawley et al., 2018, p. 129).



“No one could have really prepared me for how much these scenes were going to weigh on my soul.”



This leads me to believe that it is plausible that our accidental meeting in a refugee camp could have been under better circumstances with decent policy-making and appropriate funding provided by European Union (EU) member states. The refugee crisis is a complicated issue, stretching the opinions, temperaments, and finances of concerned citizens and countries.

The Camp

As I reflect back on my time working in a Greek refugee camp, I am the most shocked by how furious I have become with the whole issue based on my personal experiences. Working at the camp was difficult. Some days were more difficult than others. The very need to have serious evacuation level plans and to communicate them to volunteers reveals this. So does the number of times a resident of the camp, child or adult, attempts to commit suicide.

The lack of formal infrastructure and expert knowledge on-the-ground overseeing the camp's functioning and surrounding the crisis meant that not only the refugees themselves received subpar assistance, but that the volunteers serving them also suffered tremendously from the shared indignity of the camp experience. This is not to say that all experiences were



Panayotis Tzamaros/Shutterstock

difficult for me, but actually they were. If it were up to me, no person would have to live in a refugee camp. While camp staff and volunteers did the best they could under dire circumstances, taking care of people whose lives had been turned upside down, it was also easy to see how simple changes or additions to programming, structure, or organization could have greatly improved the conditions for those in the camp. As Crawley et al. reported

... smaller agencies and their volunteers provided immediate support and assistance to hundreds of thousands of people arriving on the beaches of southern Europe, saving hundreds of lives. They emerged as a fifth force not only complementing state agencies, international organizations, international and national CSOs [community service organizations] but indeed bearing the brunt of the emergency response. (2018, p. 121)

As hard as the volunteers tried, we were amateurs that could barely comprehend what we had gotten ourselves into. The silver lining to that was an intense solidarity felt amongst the many groups working within the camp toward a common goal, which included the refugees (or residents in the camp), volunteers from around the world, and the local Greek people who spent time serving the camp. There was plenty of common ground built and found from this shared experience.

Working in the camp affected volunteers in a variety of ways. Many volunteers commonly extended their stays weeks or even months past what they had originally planned or kept returning time and again to continue their work (Walding, 2017). It seemed as though this refugee camp in Greece was a vortex that kept pulling people back in. Many volunteers felt that incredible tug to remain or to return, and for better or for worse, I did both. Originally, I had travelled to Greece under the notion I would volunteer for one month. Upon completion



of that month I realized what a ridiculously short period of time it was. I was barely just getting started and had only just began my way around camp, built a basic level of trust between myself and the residents, and completed part of my research for the organization that had secured my assistance. After discussions with the NGO, it was decided that I would remain another month and implement my research findings. October quickly faded into another month, and then into January, three months longer than expected, and then a return trip in May lasting another two months.



Panayotis Tzamaros/Shutterstock

In total, I spent close to six months serving as a volunteer with a small Swedish-based organization working on educational programming for children and youth in a rural refugee camp strategically placed out of sight on a mountain an hour outside of Athens, Greece. The camp was home to between 500-800 residents, with numbers in flux due to the volatility of the situation. In these times where human rights are in jeopardy and dignity is hard to find, it is often easier for outsiders to speak of the situation in terms of objects or numbers. Victoria Sanford (2003) so poignantly writes of stories becoming lost when people become numbers. It is my belief that pursuing

human rights for all people means recognizing them as autonomous individuals that have the power to write their own story. Upon returning home to the United States I was fearful that these stories happening in this refugee camp in Greece and other places, these stories that I now knew, might be in jeopardy of being lost among the media coverage fixated on numbers and not the people behind them. As a result, I found solidarity giving talks to my community, sharing stories from residents in Ritsona, and with the underlying message of demonstrating and explaining that we are much more alike than we are different. Sharing my experiences became very therapeutic and facilitated my own processing of these experiences and also served as an important way of ensuring individual stories, the stories of people I now cared deeply about, would not go untold.

Why I Was at Ritsona



Before we get too far, let me back up a little. I want to preface this by saying that I had never done volunteer work resembling anything of this magnitude prior to this experience. I did not have training in humanitarian assistance and I am not fluent in any foreign languages. I did

have a background working with vulnerable youth populations and a passion for education. So why was I even in Ritsona? And why did I go back?

On one level, I would like to believe that similar to those that had come before me and those that came after me, we have all felt a strong call to action at some point in our lives; particularly after witnessing the news media over the course of 2015 – a year that anyone working with refugees will remember for a very, very long time. Everyone can remember the images of



severely overcrowded rubber dinghies washing up on the shores of the Greek islands and the scenes of chaos as rescue workers attempted to safely receive those traumatized individuals – men, women, children, teenagers – all having fled for their lives. A particular moment that raised social consciousness all over the world involved the image of a drowned toddler's body discovered on a Turkish beach after his family attempted the perilous journey across the sea to Greece. These shocking and various news stories, coupled with me being physically located in Europe studying human rights, made it feel like my duty to go serve. This was especially true since I had just completed my master's degree in August of 2016 in gender, globalization. I was suddenly gifted with incredible amounts of free time. With the crisis playing out on the shores of the European Union for the world to see on cable news, I knew I had a chance to put my newly acquired knowledge to good use. Looking back, it was an obvious choice, but I will admit it scared the hell out of me in the moment. I had huge reservations about traveling to Greece and working on-the-ground in an extreme crisis situation.

Many of the hesitations I felt can be attributed to my naivety, lack of experience, and, one must not forget, the media reports sensationalizing the work of extremist groups in recent attacks in Europe as stemming from the welcoming of (supposedly) too many unvetted refugees. I was wary but determined.

I'll add that I am also a very naïve optimist who wishes to see the best in humanity. This means I am steadfast in my belief that if an opportunity presented itself for you to lend either your hand, your treasure, or your talents to help a fellow human, that you would do this too. I will resurrect the overused quote by Mahatma Gandhi and argue that you must "be the change you wish to see in the world." I recognize that a decision such as this, to upend one's life for the sake of others, is often one made based from the heart rather than on logic. This process of thinking from my heart followed my decision-making around the camp as a volunteer during the months I spent at Ritsona.

Finding a Camp for Volunteer Effort

Once I had determined that this was a path I wanted to explore, it was much like any other job hunt. I began researching organizations on the ground in Europe and open roles that needed filling. I used Facebook to join groups of other volunteers in Greece to get the latest posting information and share my own skillset in the groups hoping someone from an organization would see it and find my skillset appealing for a project in which they were engaged. I applied for many positions and hoped to land one that would be able to cover my living expenses while I was on the ground. Most of the organizations at that time were so desperate for hands that they were offering housing for volunteers that stayed longer than one month. Most of the positions I applied for were in the area of youth education, particularly because of my background working with underserved youth populations and experience working in higher education, assisting first generation college students at a United States institution.

Although it certainly was a unique combination of events that led me to Greece, like any job hunt, it ended up being a personal connection that led me to Ritsona Refugee Camp. Ultimately, a classmate from my master's program went to Greece ahead of me and her experiences gave me the courage to do the same. While she was in Greece she discovered that Ritsona was in desperate need of educational resources and offered my name to a volunteer coordinator. It was through that connection that I was offered a position researching educational opportunities for the refugee youth trapped in Greece for the organization I AM YOU.

I AM YOU is a small Swedish-based organization that was founded in 2015 on the shores of Lesbos, the Greek island that became a hotspot for refugee boat arrivals. Its two co-founders served as volunteer emergency responders – note that neither had humanitarian experience or expertise – during



the unfolding humanitarian crisis, and due to demand they felt compelled to create I AM YOU, a volunteer-based humanitarian response organization. I AM YOU first functioned primarily on Lesbos assisting with sea arrivals and providing donations and support to Moria refugee camp on the island. After the EU-Turkey deal was signed in March 2016, Moria camp was closed to NGOs and was reverted back into a detention center (I AM YOU, n.d.). At the same time, Greece saw over 40 *hospitality* centers (camps) emerge virtually overnight as an estimated 61,000 refugees became trapped as borders officially shut (Harris, 2016a). I AM YOU was then asked to provide support for a new camp that had been established on the site of an abandoned Greek military base, which became known as Ritsona refugee camp. Since then, I AM YOU continues to have a presence in the camp along with several other small to medium sized NGOs, the International Organization of Migration (IOM), and the Greek Military who oversee the camp.



The Need for Refugee Education in Greece

In September 2016, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants was drafted with special commitments towards ensuring that education is a priority and that it is provided within a few months of the migrant or refugees' arrival. The bold commitments outlined in the declaration are expressions of political will from leaders around the world. Section 32 reads:

We will comply with our obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We will work to provide for basic health, education and psychosocial development and for the registration of all births on our territories. **We are determined to ensure that all children are receiving education within a few months of arrival**, and we will prioritize budgetary provision to facilitate this, including support for host countries as required. We will strive to provide refugee and migrant children with a nurturing environment for the full realization of their rights and capabilities. (UNGA, 2016, p. 7)

Providing schooling for refugee children and youth falls under Greece's own international obligations and this declaration was further proof of the international community's recommitment to see education take a priority for this population. In a 2015 survey by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) conducted at various border locations around Greece regarding the surge of Syrian refugees, the most frequently mentioned occupation of those fleeing was student (UNHCR, 2015). In my own surveying of the youth in Ritsona, I found most had been forced to leave their studies, either high school or university, with only one or two years left until graduation and they were eager to pick it back up again. In Greece, the youth population represented 30% of the total refugee numbers (MCNRC, 2016) which at the time the country was reported to be hosting over 61,000 refugees (Harris, 2016a).

Since the borders to the former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia closed in March 2016 shifting the refugee situation in Greece from transitory to static, providing formalized education became a large priority for advocacy groups and NGOs. A report by Save the Children found that in May 2016 one hundred percent of the children and youth refugees in Greece were out of school (StC, 2016). This was because at the time Greece was unable to accommodate refugee children



or youth into their formal education system. It wasn't until October 10th, 2016 that the first refugee students were allowed into formal classrooms, eight months after the borders closed (Kolasa-Sikiaridi, 2016). In their initial reporting, Save the Children found that it had been an average of 18.2 months (or a year and a half) since refugee children were last in school (StC, 2016, p11). Many organizations, refugee parents, and the youth themselves called upon Greece to prevent further disruption of learning and provide these children and youth a chance to get back into school (StC, 2016).

In their response, the Greek Ministry of Education Research and Religious Affairs put together an education plan that addressed all ages (MERRA, 2016). The first stage of the plan concerned immediate interventions at the reception centers and camps across Greece and began with gathering data on the children in camps and creating child friendly areas (MERRA, 2016). This process took 90 days to complete with the report being released in June of 2016. It was later decided that children would be integrated into local Greek schools between the times of 2:00-6:00 p.m. in order to offer psychosocial support and not to overwhelm the school systems.

Ritsona was one of a small number of camps to introduce students to Greek schools with the piloting of this program. Children between the ages of 6-15 were the first to gain education hours in the formal public school system but the Greek system was slow to receive them. By February 2017 the ministry was still working on the first phase of its education program attempting to place every child between the ages of 6-15 in a Greek public school. The second stage which focused on adolescents and adults had still not begun. During this time, adolescents in Ritsona continued to remain out of school and desperate for structure and direction.

My Initial Educational Experience at the Camp

When I arrived in October 2016, I AM YOU had identified the youth as a target group that needed educational intervention. This became increasingly more apparent as I first entered the camp to see zero gathering spaces designated for youth. There was an established female-friendly space, a clearly marked off and secure area for children and even a makeshift gym building where adult men tended to gather; the youth were all but invisible. In fact, a report titled *Don't forget about us: Voices of young migrants and refugees in Greece* highlighted that youth are "often overlooked in humanitarian action, these adolescents and youth rarely have access to educational and skill-building opportunities, or to adequate healthcare and protective environments" (MCNRC, 2016, p. 5).

During the first month I spent a great deal of time meeting with youth in camp and researching educational policies produced by the Greek Ministry of Education Research and Religious Affairs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), along with the international practices for education in emergency situations. Although the population would sometimes fluctuate, my reports tallied an estimated 158 residents in Ritsona were between the ages of 15-25. In an effort to build a foundation for





future success I concluded that it was most important to equip this population with the tools they would need to make a smooth transition into a formal educational setting once relocated to their next country. Because there was no way of knowing for sure which country any resident would be relocated to – it was determined that English language lessons should be the underpinnings of any engagement with the residents 15 years of age and older and that were interested in furthering their education. To do this, we needed to create a designated space for the youth that offered them a space of their own; not only to learn but to build agency and develop a voice for themselves.

Creating a Youth Space in Ritsona

In mid-November, after securing space in an unused part of camp the first youth program in Ritsona was born. I AM YOU did not have funding to financially support this endeavor which meant we had to get creative. We first named the program Createens to be short for creative teenagers, but the name didn't last long. From November through January the program offered English language classes in the afternoons specifically for youth ages 15-25. The lessons would start sometime after lunch and typically lasted an hour and a half. What we ended up learning during this time was just how mind-numbingly bored the youth in camp were and therefore, how eager they were to absorb any new skills we were willing to teach. Seeing the new space as an alternative to being bored in their cramped living quarters the youth would stick around for hours after class had ended. At first, we hadn't planned anything so we would use that time to share tea and coffee and get to know one another. It was through this space that we generated art projects, offered training classes for resume writing and together wrote a Ritsona newsletter which was sparked out of their desire to be storytellers.



Recognizing the camp was made up of failed volunteer initiatives, either due to issues with funding, a gap in volunteer support or little institutional knowledge being passed down from volunteer to volunteer, this seemed to be the norm for projects inside these inhospitable and unstable living environments. Regardless I was determined not to disappoint the youth. English was still a main priority and there never seemed to be enough time in the day. Part of my initial research was recognizing the importance of the youth having access to computers and internet that allows continued learning via online resources, registration in free online courses offering skill development or even providing a place to do research on their next country. However, a huge obstacle remained: the absence of internet and infrastructure such as computers in the camp.

In early January, after putting a call out for donations a fellow volunteer was able to secure 15 laptops for use in the Createen space. I then started a GoFundMe request for 325 U.S. dollars to purchase wifi hotspots, SIM cards and internet credit, a printer, USB sticks for the students and additional furniture for the space. Within a few days the goal had been met by many generous donors and I was able to purchase all the



materials needed to furnish the youth space into a wifi study zone. Each of the laptops were loaded with various educational apps and Microsoft Office™ products. Specific websites were blocked and unsafe word searches were identified as a means of safeguarding the youth using the computers. The space was redesigned to resemble more of a casual coffee shop feel and look less like a classroom. It provided the youth in camp time to use websites and enroll in online courses that required Internet. This independent studying was meant to bolster the learning taking place inside of the structured English classes.

More Than a Space

The creation of a pilot youth program at Ritsona was about more than filling an educational gap for these ambitious out-of-school teens. By having a designated space where they could come relax and be themselves, it opened up windows for me and other I AM YOU volunteers to provide aid, guidance, and support on issues that we could have never learned of without the creation of this space.



After several weeks of attending classes one unaccompanied twenty-year-old boy revealed his glasses had been broken along his journey from Syria and he struggled with seeing and reading. He was embarrassed to ask for help, but with the trust built in the space he came forward to seek assistance.

Unfortunately, in a crisis situation there is little attention paid to non-life threatening problems such as needing corrective lenses. Mohamad had visited the Red Cross in camp, but was told an eye exam wouldn't be possible for months. Several volunteers decided to pool their money together and pay for the doctor's appointment and a new pair of glasses. Speaking of the gesture and his new glasses, Mohamad wrote, "you gave me a new view of life." It was my experience that the volunteers gave everything they had to give while working in the camp. Volunteers were eager to assist with Mohamad's problem in this way (quick and independently) because it was something we actually had the power to solve. Oftentimes the problems were not that black and white. Many problems we encountered simply didn't have a solution at all.

One Monday another young boy, Ahmed, didn't show up to English class. When we went looking for him it was discovered that he had injured his foot over the weekend and was in a lot of pain. A sharp metal scrap commonly found strewn all over the ground at camp had broken through his tattered flip-flops and had dug through his skin, leaving him with a nasty open wound that made it hard for him to walk. I was completely distraught over the situation and bothered by the fact that he had received no medical attention because the Red Cross functioned only during the week inside the camp. It was because he trusted us that we were able to get him into see the professional medical staff who cleaned the wound and bandaged up his foot. Due to the timing of the injury and the lack of immediate health care, once he was seen by professionals they were unable to provide him with a tetanus shot. This was an infuriating consequence and could have put Ahmed's life in danger had he contracted the deadly bacteria.

Another incident that volunteers often felt helpless over were the attempts by the youth to be smuggled out of Greece. Over the course of the six months I spent in Ritsona, several unaccompanied youth were successfully smuggled to other



countries in Europe where they planned to seek asylum. Not all were a success but each time we would hold our breath waiting to hear that they were safe. It is important to differentiate traffickers from smugglers because the two are often conflated but carry distinctions. “Traffickers smuggle their passengers without their consent, and with the intent of enslaving them, forcing them into prostitution or imprisoning them until the repayment of a debt” (Kingsley, 2017, p.73). By contrast, people smugglers, although they may be cruel or even mistreat their passengers, are paid to transport migrants from one country to another. Ultimately “their role is one performed with the consent of the migrant” (Kingsley, 2017, p. 73).

One incident that is particularly memorable for me was when an English student, Ali, aged 16, revealed his plans to be smuggled out of Greece that evening. He had already tried 13 times – all unsuccessful – and he confided in me that he would commit suicide if returned to Greece a 14th time. As a show of his gratitude he gave me his watch for me to remember him and we said our tearful goodbyes. This was an absolutely devastating moment for me knowing that there was little I could do but provide him support and try to encourage him to stay and follow the legal asylum process. It should be noted that asylum claims in Greece and the pace of relocation at that time was very slow. In 2016, it was reported that only 5% of the total accepted for relocation were actually sent to their next country (Crawley et al., 2018, p. 136). Truly, there was nothing I could do except pray that he was in good hands and that he would make it safely. The choice to be smuggled was his to make and in a dire situation where most choices had been taken from him, I was not inclined to impose any additional restrictions. Ali messaged me several days after to proudly announce his safe arrival in the Netherlands. He has since flourished and moved from a camp to a youth center near the city. He was allowed to enroll in school almost immediately and provided with the dignity that was not provided for him in Greece. Now, whenever

he posts a photo on social media he is smiling, which was something I rarely witnessed from him in camp.

Although I might have often felt helpless, it became abundantly clear that the relationships that had been built between volunteers and refugees as a result of creating the youth space offered an avenue for young people to seek the support they were otherwise lacking. Having someone to listen to their problems and to care about them as autonomous beings was an especially important outcome of this educational endeavor. After my departure in late January 2017 another organization onsite took over the Createens program and morphed it into an exceptional version of my initial hopes and dreams for the space. Lighthouse Relief now runs what has been renamed the Youth Engagement Space (YES) at Ritsona and have built it into a model that I believe should be carried forward in humanitarian situations worldwide. Learn more here:



Lighthouse Relief Youth Engagement Space
<https://www.lighthouserelief.org/operations/#yes>

Reflection on Volunteering in a Humanitarian Crisis

“When you’re there, every single minute of your day you’re doing something important for people. When you get back, every minute of every day is inconsequential. And now you’re aware of what’s happening in the world and there’s nothing you can do” (Walding, 2017, n.p.). This quote is from a former volunteer on the Greek island of Chios and perfectly captures my own reaction to the experience. We physically showed up, gave all of ourselves to every minute of every day and there was such an honor in being able to do this important work that anything after it felt meaningless. The work was emotionally, physically, and spiritually demanding. The term volunteering simply does not capture the experience nor does it pay tribute to the incredible influence of dedicated volunteers and due to a



lack of a coordinated EU response. As a result, many volunteers from all over the world provided the necessary infrastructure, but also bore the burden of that surmounting pressure.

“This grassroots response to a humanitarian crisis was unprecedented in modern times. There is no doubt it saved countless lives. But there are also signs it has taken a huge psychological toll” (Walding, 2017, n.p.). The psychological impacts of taking on an experience such as this one were heightened for various reasons. In my research I’ve identified a major reason for the psychological effects on volunteers being the overall lack of experience some volunteers had in aid work, coupled with the inadequate living conditions refugees were forced to endure. Memories I have of the camp environment still shake me to my core.

When I first arrived in Ritsona the 500 plus residents were living in canvas tents provided by the UNHCR. These tents served as only designated sleeping spaces and to call them a shelter was laughable as they provided very little shelter from the elements. The tents trapped the blistering summer heat making them unbearable to remain inside with the soaring Greek summer temperatures. Then by early November as temperatures fell at night the tents were equally as useless and residents were worried about their fate as winter approached.

As winter finally arrived other camps reported deaths due to freezing temperatures and poor living conditions. Residents were stuck sleeping on the ground for nine months in Ritsona where they endured snakes and scorpions creeping into their tents or were forced to find their way to the shared toilets in pure darkness each nightfall when wild dogs and a wild boar would roam the camp in search of food scraps. A hot shower didn’t exist in Ritsona for a full ten months after the camps inception and there were regular shortages of food, water, and basic medical supplies. The food provided by the army consisted of small, bland prepackaged meals often accompanied by an orange or rationed pita bread. These meals were the only food served in camp for an entire year before the Greek government transitioned all camps to food cards.

No one could have really prepared me for how much these scenes were going to weigh on my soul. Being witness to how we as a humanity have cast aside entire childhoods, demoralized and dehumanized the most vulnerable of people in such a casual setting was and continues to be infuriating for me personally. I grew very angry over what I felt was stupid bureaucracy. I know that sounds blunt, but these are my opinions based on my very real experiences. The Greek asylum process or medical services for refugees never seemed to move as fast as they should have when human lives were on the line. There were arbitrary rules enforced that only added to human suffering and indignity, such as the distribution of clothing or food being designated for only specific times and days. This forced residents to line up and walk one-by-one to be handed their rations; a deeply humiliating process. An example that comes to mind was of the distribution of donated shoes for residents. The organization in-charge declared Tuesdays to be shoe distribution day which meant if a resident’s shoe broke or wore out in the days between they were forced to make due or walk barefoot until the next distribution day.



The overwhelming dejection was tangible inside the camp; I would describe it as the feeling of forgottenness. After continued research and reading, I now know that this sense of forgottenness is the status quo for refugees around the world. Especially for those in protracted refugee situations, “[r]efugees may be counted as humanitarian beneficiaries, but they often do not count as rights-bearing subjects, nor even as recognizably human, like us” (Hyndman & Giles, 2017, p. 1). My inexperience allowed me to wear a cloak of ignorance that soon became weathered and worn.

There is still an unimaginable weight on my shoulders although the helplessness I first felt has subsided. When you are there it goes unspoken that everyone feels overwhelmed, heartbroken, and angry as hell, all while being called to action. But then you leave and you return home and are surrounded by people who don’t quite understand what you’ve been through. I began to feel incredibly guilty and discovered that this is a burden experienced by many former volunteers as those interviewed by Walding (2107) confirm. The guilt was paralyzing at times. I have since come to terms with my anger and guilt and, ultimately, I’ve had to reconcile that there is equally meaningful work to be done to assist refugees and immigrants here at home, outside of the emergency response.

Given the human suffering taking place in a humanitarian crisis, I argue that as a volunteer you inevitably give more of yourself than you may have planned to, which differentiates the experience from how we typically define volunteering. An experience such as this should change you and if it doesn’t then maybe we need to be immensely concerned that empathy has been lost. In this context it is generally understood that volunteering means working for an organization without pay. However, I felt that my time spent volunteering was significantly more encompassing than that limited definition implies. Instead I have chosen to identify my time in Ritsona

as an exercise in what Deborah Dunn calls *bearing-witness*; seeing my time through a lens of service as opposed to volunteering (Dunn, 2014).

To bear-witness is about more than seeing, more than simply observing or being present. Dunn argues it goes one step further and we must ‘bear some responsibility for what we have seen’ (Dunn, 2014, n.p.). During my time in Ritsona I did witness unimaginable suffering, however I also witnessed incredible strength and the ingenuity of the human spirit. I had the privilege of befriending residents, sharing meals together, welcoming babies into the world, celebrating holidays, and even partnering on projects or initiatives to help other residents. These experiences reshaped my limited understanding of the label refugee into one less focused on the trauma that forced this label upon them, but centered around their capacities as individuals. Upon my departure I knew that I had a responsibility to hold a light for those I had the privilege of knowing in Ritsona. I felt a duty to not let their stories go untold or be washed away by the headlines or politicians more concerned with numbers instead of names; trauma over capacities.



Video: *An Afternoon in Toronto with Diana: Her Ritsona Refugee Camp Journey*

Advice to Others

While this cannot be repeated enough, educate yourself on the international precedent and standards when it comes to refugees and migrants rights. Learn how current United States policies are either in accord with or in violation to the 1951 Refugee Convention. Stay up to date on the high-level United Nations conferences being held to address the topic worldwide. After the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants was signed in September 2016 the world promised more initiatives and more conversations. Right now the world is at a moment



of transition and is reshaping the way we talk about and treat refugees and migrants both in domestic policy and on an international stage. Stay informed and inform others. Migration has suddenly become a hot topic, but history tells us that people have migrated since the dawn of time.

I cannot stress this enough but seek out reputable NGOs and explore smaller organizations such as I AM YOU or Lighthouse Relief to support with financial contributions. These small organizations are more than likely doing the boots-on-the-ground work and your support of their good efforts is critical. Supporting the work of organizations such as these that recruit volunteers from all over the world provides essential help that is needed.

While it is not my intention to stop anyone interested in pursuing a path of volunteering, I do want to advise against blindly embarking on just any international opportunity. There are likely endless possibilities available locally that offer a more lasting positive impact and have potential for real long-term change. My advice to others would be to seek out local opportunities with organizations involved in the resettlement of refugees, immigrant rights organizations, literacy groups, or human rights groups. These are all excellent ways of serving similar populations of people that often don't receive as much news coverage.

If you do feel compelled to dedicate a part of your life to aiding refugees trapped in Greece my biggest piece of advice would be to spend some time reflecting. First identify your own strengths, educational background, trainings, and specialties to figure out what you can bring to the situation. Be honest with yourself and be sure to manage your expectations. A key part to this is finding a position that will provide the most benefit to those in need so be sure to research organizations and review the positions they are looking to fill. If you can't seem to find a call for your specific talents then maybe it is

best to support and uplift those already on the ground with a financial contribution. Oftentimes what I witnessed was that organizations needed funding more than they needed bodies. Our initial Createens project could have never been a success without small donations from family and friends back home. I promise you that your money can often go further than you would ever think in situations such as these. However, if you do travel to volunteer promise me a few things: (a) You will do your homework on the organization you plan to volunteer with; (b) you will commit at least three months of your life because truly anything less is not worth it; and (c) you will practice good self-care both during and after your return and find a network of other volunteers you can lean on. Believe me, you'll need it.

I don't mean to downplay the incredible work of all the volunteers in Greece who gave up so much time in their lives. From my own experience and formal research, the lack of formal infrastructure and the reliance placed on the backs of amateurs was a huge failure of the EU's response. By continuing to serve as volunteers we may, in fact, be contributing to the problem—it provides a scapegoat for governments and the international community and has the potential to take away precious resources that organizations should be putting into the residents. A great example of this is the volunteer structure some organizations have adopted which requires volunteers to pay for the 'experience.' Some organizations have even been seen charging thousands of euros and promising a volunteering experience which focuses much more attention to the recruitment of volunteers (their housing, food options, and weekend excursions) than it does to the humanitarian work it claims to stand for.

Concluding Thoughts

Europe and the world's response to the influx of refugees to the shores of Greece has faced wide criticism both during and particularly after the height of 2015. Crawley et al. (2018)



document that the EU was slow to respond and failed to effectively share responsibility in a “pragmatic and principled way” (p.135). While we won’t ever know for sure, we can assume that had EU member states altered their approach the crisis would not have required mass amounts of ordinary volunteers and small NGOs such as I AM YOU to bear the “brunt of the emergency response” (Crawley et al., 2018, p.121). However, with this response also came fresh initiatives often overlooked or not traditionally considered part of humanitarian action such as educational and skill-building opportunities for youth. In Greece we saw refugee youth represent 30% of the total refugee numbers (MCNRC, 2016) yet they were left out of formalized education in the Greek system and often not provided a designated safe space inside the camps.

Yazan, Mohamad, Ali, Ahmed and all other youth experiencing exile deserve a space to be seen and heard in crises everywhere. What we found in Ristona was that providing youth education and access to educational opportunities proved to be key to building strong relationships with this vulnerable population. The establishment of Ritsona’s first youth program, Createens, provided the foundation that generated an avenue for the youth to seek support they were otherwise lacking. Creating space for these young people to explore their unique capacities, develop further as individuals, and continue to exist in an educational environment helped affirm themselves as autonomous beings and not simply as ‘refugees.’

Returning to the question of how one should respond to the words written by Yazan, a 15-year-old refugee boy wishing to believe the war was to blame for his path and my path crossing, I see the larger question as one about dignity and rights. Although I am deeply touched by his words, such gratitude should have never been needed. Yazan, like the thousands of other refugees who travelled through Greece to reach safety in the EU, was entitled to a more coordinated response. Ideally the response would have avoided what has been coined

the containment chronotype which focused too heavily on preventing migration over providing protection and support to those who needed it (Landau, 2017 in Crawley et al., 2018, p. 136). Therefore, I believe the best way to respond to Yazan’s words are to live up to them. Don’t let his gratitude be a pat on your back, but instead let us let his life be a call for further action and questioning. We must all bear-witness to his story and assume responsibility for why he and the 68.5 million others living in exile around the world today are continuously denied their human right to seek asylum, to be treated with dignity, to safety, to education, to adequate housing and more.

This chapter is a reflection and discussion of my personal experience while serving in Ritsona Refugee Camp in rural Greece from October 2016 to January 2017 and again from May to June 2017. The stories I have told were chosen to provide examples of the relationships I was able to build as a result of a designated youth educational program. I have great respect and admiration for all those I met while serving in Greece, residents and volunteers alike, and continue to maintain friendships with many. Each of their stories, mine included, contribute to the larger narrative of both the global refugee crisis and the self-proclaimed European crisis. I am honored to have been asked to share my personal story and the stories of those I remain close with as a mechanism for building greater understanding regarding the situation in Greece.

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Questions for Further Discussion

Use the following questions as helpful inputs into your own meaning making and reflection on the content of this chapter.

1. Why do you think the European ‘crisis’ of 2015 was labelled this way? Do you think it was a crisis? Why or why not?



2. Do refugees have the right to education in host countries?
3. Why is it that youth are often left out of response plans in humanitarian situations? How can humanitarian responses be improved to include initiatives for youth?
4. Can you find three first-person stories on the Internet of refugees' experiences and explain what you have learned by reading them?
5. Discuss how tools such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees could help inform the world's response to the growing refugee 'crisis'?
6. Why does the world generally respond by placing refugees in camps? Can you think of one alternative to housing refugees in camps?
7. How can educators use knowledge of life in a refugee camp thousands of miles away to assist them with refugee students in their classrooms?
8. What is the difference between volunteering and bearing-witness?
9. Is volunteering always the best option? Discuss some of the problems of volunteering in humanitarian crises.
10. Would you ever go volunteer in a refugee camp? Why or why not?

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Spotlight 4

Refugee Organizations: A World Effort

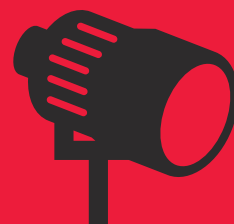
Trina Harlow

Several international and national organizations work passionately and tirelessly as they tend to the issues, policies, and assistance needed by displaced and stateless people. These organizations have regional, state, or local offices in many countries and districts or states. Their work is complex and often difficult, yet vital to the continued safety, security, and well-being of displaced people, those displaced within and without of their home countries. Informed world citizens should know of these organizations, and the role of other organizations, joining in concern to work together to address this growing and pressing humanitarian crisis. The following is a brief summary of five of these organizations, each providing an informative lens on the topic of displaced and stateless people, refugees, education, and many other issues. These summaries are shared from their Internet websites.





MENU



SPOTLIGHT

AMERICAN REFUGEE COMMITTEE (ARC):

With a staff of over 2,000 people, ARC reached over 3.5 million people in 11 countries during 2017 (ARC, 2017). The following is from their website:

“CO-CREATING WITH AMAZING PEOPLE: American Refugee Committee is and always has been about amazing global citizens taking action to change our world. More than 35 years ago, Chicago businessman Neal Ball started ARC. He recruited a volunteer relief team who deployed to the Thai-Cambodian border. Even in the face of terrible tragedy, that first ARC team was characterized by their incredible energy and belief that anything was possible.

We’ve found that something incredible will result as long as we begin the journey with amazing people, agree on a destination and move together towards it transparently and open to possibility.

OUR MISSION: ARC works with its partners and constituencies to provide opportunities and expertise to refugees, displaced people and host communities. We help people survive conflict and crisis and rebuild lives of dignity, health, security and self-sufficiency. ARC is committed to the delivery of programs that ensure measurable quality and lasting impact for the people we serve.

OUR VISION: Every person who participates in an ARC program or project will have a better chance to take control of their life and achieve self-sufficiency.” (ARC, 2018, About)

Today, we’re facing challenging global humanitarian crises that require 21st Century solutions. But we’ve found that co-creating together with impassioned, dedicated people, limited only by their own imaginations, remains the key to designing new solutions that resonate. We still believe that ARC should exist, first and foremost, as a platform for realizing the goodwill of everyday people – people from Sweden to Somalia, Minnesota to Malaysia, Uganda to the U.S.

Read more about ARC at:

 <http://www.arcrelief.org/>

Read ARC’s 2017 Annual Report here:

 http://www.arcrelief.org/annual_reports/Annual_Report_2017.pdf

Read more about ARC education efforts:

 <http://arcrelief.org/education/>





UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR):

The UNHCR headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland. The organization employs over 11,000 staff members in about 130 countries (UNHCR, 2018c). The following is from their website:



Ehab Othman/Shutterstock

“UNHCR, the U.N. Refugee Agency, is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people. We work to ensure that everybody has the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge, having fled violence, persecution, war or disaster at home. Since 1950, we have faced multiple crises on multiple continents, and provided vital assistance to refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced and stateless people, many of whom have nobody left to turn to. We help save lives and build better futures for millions forced from home.” (UNHCR, 2018a, About Us)



“The 1951 Refugee Convention is the key legal document that forms the basis of our work. Ratified by 145 State parties, it defines the term ‘refugee’ and outlines the rights of the displaced, as well as the legal obligations of States to protect them. The core principle is non-refoulement, which asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom. This is now considered a rule of customary international law. UNHCR serves as the ‘guardian’ of the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol. According to the legislation, States are expected to cooperate with us in ensuring that the rights of refugees are respected and protected.” (UNHCR, 2018b, The 1951 Refugee Convention)

Read more about UNHCR at:

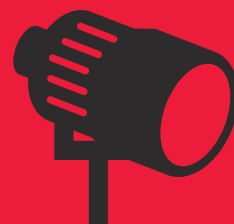
 <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/>

To see the UNHCR Statistical Yearbook for 2018:

 <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>

Read more about UNHCR education efforts:

 <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/education.html>



INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE (IRC):

The IRC worked in over 40 countries in 2017 with a large staff (IRC, 2017). The following is from their website:

“At times, we are called upon to address challenges so great that history offers little instruction in how to solve them.”

(IRC, 2017a, Message from the President).

“The International Rescue Committee responds to the world’s worst humanitarian crises and helps people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster to survive, recover, and gain control of their future.” (IRC, 2018a, Our Work)

“The beneficiaries of our programs deserve evidence-based interventions that bring real change to their lives. That is what we are determined to deliver. The IRC has grown because our teams have gone to the toughest places, done cutting-edge research, developed in-depth knowledge, and forged vital relationships with local governments. Today our 191 field offices in over 30 crisis-torn countries are helping communities to survive conflict and rebuild and recover from war and natural disaster. From health care to education to protection for women and girls, the IRC is there.

The IRC also works in 27 cities in the United States, helping newly arrived refugees adjust to life in America and make a contribution to their new country. To meet the needs and aspirations of those we serve, we will lead the reform of the humanitarian aid sector by:

- reaching more people more quickly to match the scale and urgency of today’s crises;
- setting new standards for quality and effectiveness through evidence and innovation;
- building tools and systems that enable our staff to focus on high-impact programs.” (IRC, 2018b, Overview).

For more information on IRC:

 <https://www.rescue.org>

Read IRC’s 2017 Annual Report:

 <https://www.rescue.org/resource/international-rescue-committee-annual-report-2017>

Read more about IRC education efforts:

 <https://www.rescue.org/outcome/education>

Watch this video of IRC President David Miliband speaking at TED:



Video: The Refugee Crisis is a Test of Our Character



UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO):

The following is from their website.

“UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture. UNESCO’s programmes contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in Agenda 2030, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

Political and economic arrangements of governments are not enough to secure the lasting and sincere support of the peoples. Peace must be founded upon dialogue and mutual understanding. Peace must be built upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity.

In this spirit, UNESCO develops educational tools to help people live as global citizens free of hate and intolerance. UNESCO works so that each child and citizen has access to quality education. By promoting cultural heritage and the equal dignity of all cultures, UNESCO strengthens bonds among nations. UNESCO fosters scientific programmes and policies as platforms for development and cooperation. UNESCO stands up for freedom of expression, as a fundamental right and a key condition for democracy and development. Serving as a laboratory of ideas, UNESCO helps countries adopt international standards and manages programmes that foster the free flow of ideas and knowledge sharing.

UNESCO’s founding vision was born in response to a world war that was marked by racist and anti-Semitic violence. Seventy years on and many liberation struggles later, UNESCO’s mandate is as relevant as ever. Cultural diversity is under attack and new forms of intolerance, rejection of scientific facts and threats to freedom of expression challenge peace and human rights. In response, UNESCO’s duty remains to reaffirm the humanist missions of education, science and culture.” (UNESCO, 2018)

Read more about UNESCO:

 <https://en.unesco.org/about-us/introducing-unesco>

Read their transparency portal here:

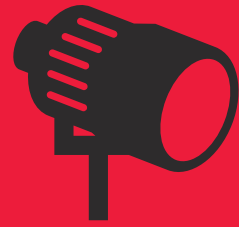
 <https://opendata.unesco.org/financial-flows/country-breakdown>

Read UNESCO information on refugees:

 <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/refugee>

Read UNESCO’s stance on education:

 <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education>



U.S. COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS (USCRI):

This organization, while having an international lens on an international issue, seems to conduct most of its effort domestically in the United States. From their website:

ABOUT: We advance the rights and lives of those who have been forcibly or voluntarily uprooted. For over 100 years, the unwavering commitment of our leadership, team, network of service providers, and advocates has helped redirect the destiny of countless vulnerable lives.

OUR VISION: Immigrants, refugees, and uprooted people will live dignified lives with their rights respected and protected in communities of opportunity.

OUR MISSION: To protect the rights and address the needs of persons in forced or voluntary migration worldwide and support their transition to a dignified life.” (USCRI, 2018, About)

USCRI works to unite families and protect children, guide resilient people to rebuild their livelihoods, empower survivors, and to restore freedom, dignity, and independence for all as global advocates for universal dignity (USCRI, 2017). The organization works to serve refugees as they resettle in the United States, with immigrant issues, and with an emphasis on unaccompanied immigrant children and ending modern-day slavery and human trafficking.

Read more about USCRI:

 <http://refugees.org>

See USCRI 2016 Annual Report:

 <http://refugees.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/USCRI-2016-Annual-Report-Print.pdf>



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Chapter 5

You Share, I Listen: Crossing Boundaries, Merging Hope One Linguistic Transaction at a Time

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Introduction

“I believe you can say to the founders of this great nation, ‘Here I am, a youth, a young tree, whose roots were plucked from the hills of Lebanon, yet I am deeply rooted here, and I would be fruitful.’”

(Gibran, 1926)

These words spoken by Khalil Gibran, a famous Lebanese poet, to the American men of Syrian origin in the inaugural issue of the publication *The Syrian World*, echo the sentiments of many families and individuals coming to United States with a refugee status. Refugees encompass a group of individuals whose lives have been altered by political circumstances of which they have no control. Almost a century later, many families and young men and women who come to the shores of the United States bring the exact same spirit of wanting to do better and rooting themselves in a new country. Each family is confronted with many challenges that are uniquely their own, yet in the face of adversity they make this country their home and carve out successful opportunities for themselves. This chapter is intended to provide the reader with a framework for moving outside the limited parameters on culture, language, and potential as typically defined within the boundaries of the place we call school. Guided by current research, it provides practitioners and policymakers with insights into promising educational practices for refugees, reminding the reader of the power that their unique cultural and linguistic experiences have for advancing learning.

Historically, the United States has led the world in terms of refugee settlement. However, educators have yet to be provided with the professional development needed to attend to the socioemotional, cultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic needs of the refugee learner. The sociopolitical context of our society can lead to assumptions that often drive the decision making of policymakers, educators, and support staff, both inside and outside the classroom. Programmatic decisions are made that frequently do not account for the varied experiences that each family and the individual learner bring to the classroom. Although the hardships of the family and the child should be acknowledged, defining the family and student through a limited lens based on the journey tells only half the tale. An awareness of the challenges and strife they have



“Effective teachers gather information about their students’ biographies to inform their development of the instructional plan as it relates to language. There is an increased need, especially with refugee populations, for us to create a cumulative picture of a students’ skills and capacities, beyond what has been learned from a standardized test.”



encountered is only a beginning point to understanding — and to planning with and for — the learner and the family within an educational context.

Throughout this chapter, you will find practical strategies, words of advice, and teaching tips aimed at providing meaningful considerations for providing instructional support to culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) refugee learners. The academic success of refugee students hinges on our ability to move forward based on an asset perspective of the learner and his or her potential. A holistic understanding of the student is grounded in his or her biography and the dynamics of the family, who are counting on us educators to support and guide their entry into a new community and educational system.

Current research has provided a promising method for framing the pedagogy of diverse populations. Biography-Driven Instruction (Herrera, 2016) guides practice on understanding the learner through exploration and documentation within four key dimensions (i.e., the biography) of the learner. These dimensions include the sociocultural dimension, the linguistic dimension, the cognitive dimension, and the academic dimension. This chapter will highlight how educators might best understand each dimension of the CLD student biography and its implications for promising pedagogical practices.

Life, Identity, and Soul

The life stories of refugee learners are as unique and varied as the paths taken to get to the United States. The hardships and joys are defined for each along the journey and help to create the dreams and aspirations that lead an individual and/or the family to make the decision to come to the United States. Hardships create factors of resilience that provide the foundation for setting goals and working hard to attain them upon arrival to the new country and community. Along the way, refugees' cultural identity is shaped by the countries they pass

through and the people they come in contact with, both good and bad. Every day of the journey is a new learning experience.

The refugee student does not arrive as a blank slate; rather, every learner comes with experiences from which every educator can expand his or her own knowledge for reaching and teaching not only the refugee student, but the community of learners in the classroom and school. This can only happen by creating communities where it becomes the responsibility of all to engage and support the refugee learner in becoming academically successful. Melding the academic content with the cultural experiences the refugee learner brings, expands the opportunities for success. Envisioning the refugee learner as more than the sum of the harsh experiences often experienced during the journey, sets the stage for helping students to reach their full potential.

As educators, one of our first steps is to recognize that a laundry list of “how to” ideas for addressing the needs of refugee learners and families provides only some initial conceptualizations to keep in the back of our mind as a point of departure for learning more. Upon a student's arrival, the educator who intentionally plans for and systematically provides opportunities for the refugee learner to share his or her journey not only creates a context of respect but also opens the door to checking initial assumptions that may be held about the student, by both the teacher and the community of learners. Learning from the student and family helps dispel and/or affirm messages that are received from society, professional development, or our own thoughts about educating refugee learners.

The process of acculturating to a new way of viewing and interacting in the world can be overwhelming, yet it is experienced differently by each refugee student and family, oftentimes depending on the support systems they have within their new community. To gain a better understanding



of where a student might be in this process, and the kinds of socioemotional influences that might positively or negatively affect classroom performance, we need to take time to learn about the life journey of each family and student. This information can be gathered through both formal and informal activities in and out of the classroom. Following are a few suggestions for building a relationship with your students and families:

1. Visit or volunteer with the sponsoring organization.
2. Learn where the student shops and the type of activities the learner is involved in during the weekend.
3. Learn about and visit the family's house of worship – step out of your comfort zone.
4. Learn about the student's hopes and aspirations and guide him or her toward accomplishing personal goals.

Our research and work in the schools has found the biography card to be a useful tool to informally learn about and enter into conversation with refugee student and their families. Figure 1 provides an example of a completed biography card. Biography cards are simple tools that help teachers learn about their students, both over time and in the moment. The biography card provides a simple, flexible, and intentional way to remind us of both the needs and assets of the learner as he or she progresses through the acculturation process. It also serves to remind the teacher of assets that can be maximized when planning and delivering instruction.

Figure 2 provides an example of how a standard biography card, which captures all four dimensions of the learner previously mentioned, can be adapted for enhanced focus on the student-specific process of acculturation. Engaging in conversations or home visits with parents or caregivers (with the aid of an interpreter, if needed) can support completion of such tools. It is important to remember that the nuances of the

acculturation process are dynamic and influenced by context. Keeping anecdotal notes about the sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic assets and shifts that happen during the acculturation process will inform the best paths to take and ensure that educational efforts are driven by the refugee learner and his or her needs.

Figure 1.
Sample CLD Student Biography Card

Name: Hugo Chavez Nunez
Age: 8
Grade: 2nd
Country of Origin: Mexico
Time in USA: ~1 year
L1: Spanish
R: hesitant to try
W: can sound out & write simple words in English & Spanish
L2 Proficiency (LAS/IPT/Other): LAS: Links
O: 0 Beginning
R: 1 Beginning
W: NA early intermediate
SLA: 1 1
Student Processing:
Learning Style: visual & auditory
Prior Academic Experiences:
Preferred Grouping: small group with students who help translate
He's very hard to try to speak English but does better with a small group

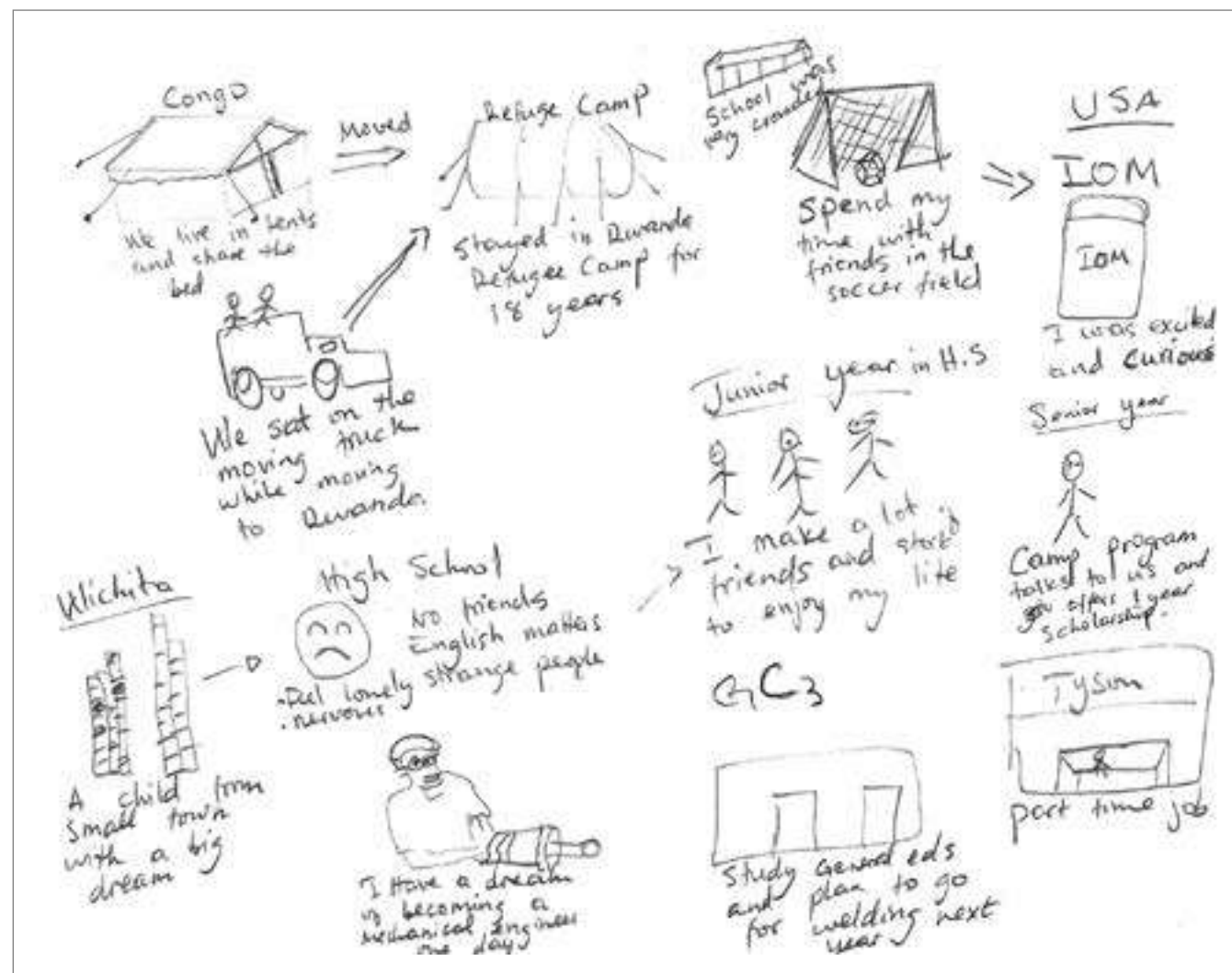
Figure 2.
Sample Acculturation Biography Card

Name: _____
Country of Origin _____
Particulars of Travel to United States _____
Challenges Family Might Be Facing _____
Level of Schooling _____
Specific Religious or Cultural Beliefs _____
Things That Are Important to the Family _____



The Sociocultural Mind Map also serves to inform practice, but it is more connected to the student's psychological and social circumstances and experiences. It provides a canvas for refugee learners to share their stories through visual representation and using the language of their choice. Figure 3 depicts an example of a sociocultural mind map completed by a refugee student. The mind map can be revisited throughout the course of the year to add new experiences as the student progresses on his or her journey in the new community and school.

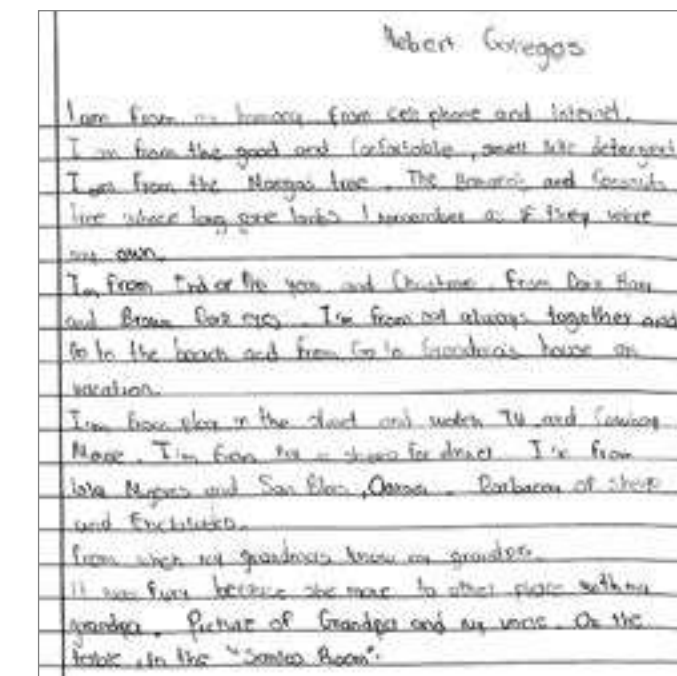
Figure 3. Sociocultural Mind Map



"I Am From" poems are another way of gathering information about a student's life beyond the classroom. These types of poems elicit information about a student's background, contextualized in the specific places, sensory experiences, and memories of the past. There are numerous templates available online to inform teachers' development of a template that best meets the needs of their own community of learners. Figure 4

illustrates a sample poem from a Kansas high school student with an early intermediate level of English proficiency.

Figure 4.
"I Am From" Poem



Stop, Ponder, and Practice

We often hear from teachers and paraprofessionals that students who come under refugee status are resilient human beings. The American Psychological Association (2018) defines resilience, a strengths-based construct, as "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress." Dr. Sofia Khan, founder of KC for Refugees, attests to the stress-ridden difficulties that refugees face:

Overall, they go through a very challenging time for a few years. They not only go through the mental anguish of leaving their home countries, their families, and everything they know and owned but also of coming to a completely foreign land. We should not forget the possibility of posttraumatic stress disorder, that a large majority of refugees often go through. They come to a new country with no resources of their own.



Reflecting upon Dr. Khan's words, consider the following regarding your own classroom practice:

- How might you create a safe community in your classroom that goes beyond the physical layout and physical décor of the classroom?
- How will you support students to see their accumulated knowledge and lived experiences as resources for learning?
- In what ways can you use students' knowledge and experiences as avenues for providing ongoing language support?
- In what ways can the biography card, sociocultural mind map, and "I Am From" poem be used to begin conversations with students and families about their cultures, languages, and lives? In what ways do these activities have the potential to inform practice?

Keeping in mind the socioemotional needs our students bring, we urge readers to maximize the time they have with each learner. It is during this time, in the safe school and classroom environments that we create, that refugee students have a chance to focus on and work toward achieving their life aspirations. The resiliency that they have developed as a result of their life journeys often fuels their academic persistence as well as their commitment to developing their linguistic skills.

My Language: The Window to My Soul

There are many challenges surrounding educational processes for refugee populations, and language development remains one of the biggest stressors in the classroom as well as in their lives outside of school. Schorchit (2017) explains, "In all likelihood,

refugee students are not being taught English at their host schools or school-based camp." When children are finally resettled in a U.S. community, they often find themselves faced with the daunting task of learning a language that is entirely foreign. However, as educators we must never assume that there has been no exposure to the English language. Reflection upon the complex and dynamic ways in which we use language as a tool to get our needs met, communicate our experiences, and bridge into a new language sets the stage for greater success in practice. Formal language testing provides us with the baseline, and action in practice creates opportunities for our community of learners to use language to share our stories and enter into literacy development that has the potential to move the student into the sphere of academic English.

Teaching and learning actions need to stem from a well-conceived plan for instructional strategies and critical reflection regarding what has been collected on the lived experiences of refugee learners. Felix (2016) asserts, "Students from refugee backgrounds [SRBs] are distinct from other categories of students born outside the United States because of the factors that led them to relocate. The forced migration of SRBs is an experience that fundamentally distinguishes them from other categories of students born outside the U.S." (p. 2). Voluntary vs. involuntary migration impacts language learning, this coupled with the process of acculturation requires the teacher to first consider how the new space will address the cultural dimensions of the learner in order to set conditions for a safe learning environment where a new language can be learned.

The way language is used to communicate, express oneself, and comprehend the world is highly related to the language(s) the learner has come in contact with throughout his or her lifetime. Familial discourse patterns along with the student's experiences prior to arrival in the classroom will greatly impact patterns of interaction within the classroom context. Teachers' ability to use their best judgement when responding to students'



individual instructional needs is critical to promoting their linguistic and academic achievement. However, the task is often more complicated than it initially sounds. So where do we begin?

Language Acquisition: A Shifted Paradigm or a Paradigm Shift?

Borrowing from the school practices that are used with other CLD students, we generally begin the language development process for refugee learners with a focus on the linguistic needs and gaps that are identified through the results of standardized language assessments. Most teachers would agree that language assessments of this kind come with a cautionary tale, as students' linguistic needs often differ across contexts and evolve based on the environments, or classroom ecologies (Herrera, 2016), in which they are placed. Many refugee learners fall under the umbrella of *newly arrived students*, also referred to as *newcomer students*. Let's consider together the typical experience of a newcomer student entering the school system.

When a new student enters a school, an intake process typically focuses on the language assessments that are implemented to gain an understanding of his or her language skills. If we were to capture this moment with a picture, we would see a child seated inside a room, taking an isolated skills test. If we were able to zoom in on this scene and read the student's responses, we would probably see that the students' performance reflects a very low level of English proficiency, which is amusing since we generally already know this without the assessment. Now if we were to pause and take a moment to reflect, we would realize that this particular instance of the child's language production — set in a strange room in a foreign school with unknown expectations — provides a miniscule amount of information about the entire linguistic repertoire of this student. Moreover, when we next received the paper providing the screener test results with very specific indications of the isolated skills the

child is capable of, we would be reminded that language is something that develops over time, with consistent practice, through caring interactions, and with opportunities for meaningful applications within the classroom.

The assessment scenario described above is a consistent practice with refugee students in public schools across the nation. Because of the limited information provided by such assessments, it is key that we shift our thinking to understand the important role that students' accumulated language abilities play. Finding out the answers to the following questions is imperative:

1. What do I know about the native language the child speaks?
2. How many languages are spoken in the home?
3. What transfers from the learner's first language to the second language (English)?
4. How will I document what I learn about the student's language to authentically assess growth?

Beyond what you can do informally, research on best practices to support second language acquisition among English learners encourages all educators to understand the following terms in relation to practice. Each plays an important role to support decision making related to programming, curriculum, and instruction.

- BICS and CALP
- CUP and SUP
- Stages of second language acquisition
- Affective filter / states of mind
- Krashen and the input hypothesis



Table 1 defines each of these concepts and explains how educators can enhance their pedagogical practices by considering these same terms within the context of their refugee populations.

Table 1. Key Language Acquisition Concepts and Applications to Refugee Populations

Concept	Definition of concept for traditional English learner settings	How concept applies to refugee populations
BICS/CALP Cummins (1981)	BICS: Basic interpersonal communication skills. The language ability required for casual conversation, which usually applies to students' interpersonal conversation skills (i.e., playground language). CALP: Cognitive academic language proficiency. The language ability required for learning academic skills and concepts in context-reduced situations that require an abstract use of language.	Build on refugee students' linguistic output, utilizing their BICS as building blocks of CALP. An increased emphasis on vocabulary at the initial stages of language development is acceptable; however, avoid viewing vocabulary as an intervention skill. Vocabulary development needs to be embedded within overall language development, and it should be used as a means to advancing students' comprehension skills.

Table 1 continued

Stages of Second Language Acquisition Krashen & Terrell (1983) For more information, see Herrera and Murry (2016), pp. 75-80.	The predictable progression of linguistic stages that one encounters when acquiring a language (i.e., preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, advanced fluency). Stages of second language acquisition often are used by classroom teachers as a guide to provide specific linguistic and academic support to students.	Although it is important to consider the role that stages of language acquisition can play in the linguistic development of refugee students, remember to use these as <i>fluid, flexible</i> guidelines and not as a rigid means of inordinately focusing on students' linguistic skills. Language acquisition comes as a result of listening, speaking, reading, and writing for authentic communicative purposes, integrated in the process of classroom learning.
Affective Filter/States of Mind Krashen (1982)/ Herrera (2016)	Much like a defense mechanism, the affective dimension of the student serves to reduce, or filter, the amount of input reaching the learner during stressful, anxiety-provoking situations; when the affective filter is "raised," the result is a negative state of mind that decreases student engagement, motivation, and language production.	Refugee populations endure hardships in their journeys to the United States, and during their time here. We may find students' affective filters raised before they even step foot in our classrooms. Consider the implications of this concept and provide students with positive experiences that will help them build their self-concept as learners and overcome linguistic and academic challenges.



Table 1 continued

Input Hypothesis (i+1) Krashen (1984/2005)	According to this hypothesis, language acquisition is best promoted when the input is one step beyond the learner’s current abilities. The “i” represents the student’s existing language skills and the “+1” signifies that the new material is one step beyond what the learner is individually capable of at a given point in time.	Understanding of this concept energizes our efforts to focus on meaningful ways of providing comprehensible input that is within students’ reach but also challenges them to stretch their developing language skills. • Create purposeful opportunities for interactions and conversations among heterogeneously grouped peers. • Use instructional conversations to bridge between learners’ lives and language and the academic language of the curriculum.

An understanding of these foundational concepts and their applications for professional practice with refugee students is contextualized within the holistic biography of the individual learner. Each dimension informs the educator’s ability to interpret what students produce linguistically. Considerations related to the four dimensions that can have implications for language development as well as teachers’ efforts to support the process include:

Sociocultural

- How long has the student been in the United States? This community? This school?
- Who provides the primary care for this student?
- Has the child recently been separated from a family member?
- Does the student have siblings? If so, do they attend the same school?
- To what degree do caregivers understand the U.S. educational system?
- To what degree does the family have access to housing, health, and community services?
- What kinds of roles does the child play in his or her family?

Linguistic

- What is the native language of the student?
- What is the native language of the child’s primary caregiver(s)?
- How similar/dissimilar to English is the native language? Are there cognates in the two languages?
- Which language(s) previously have been used to deliver instruction?

Cognitive

- What knowledge and skills does the student already possess about the target content?
- How is the student making sense of the content “in the moment” during the lesson?
- How does the student prefer to apply and demonstrate learning?



Academic

- What types of educational programming has the learner received?
- To what degree has the child's learning been interrupted (e.g., time spent at a migrant camp prior to arrival at current community and school)?
- With which types of classroom interaction is the student most comfortable?
- Which aspects of school (e.g., particular classroom strategies/activities, subject areas, extracurricular activities) are sources of motivation and hope for this student?

All of these dimensions are at play in the lives of our students. Our understanding of these dimensions of a learner's life is fundamental to our ability to appropriately interpret the results we receive from different language assessment measures.

Effective teachers gather information about their students' biographies to inform their development of the instructional plan as it relates to language. There is an increased need, especially with refugee populations, for us to create a cumulative picture of a students' skills and capacities, beyond what has been learned from a standardized test. Isolated assessments simply cannot provide the kinds of information that allow us to develop effective plans of action on a day-to-day basis. This reality serves as a call to action for teachers. We need to use classroom activities and strategies to inform our view of students' strengths. All learning requires us to build from where the student currently is. What do our students already know? What scaffold might help this learner take a more active role in classroom conversations and learning activities?

Acquiring English is key to a refugee student's integration within the new U.S. culture and community as well as his

or her academic success. We increase the likelihood that our instruction will be effective if we first remember that language acquisition is inherently social (Tarone, 2015). Creating conditions that provide students with access to language models, and where an ecology of respect, trust, and risk-taking is present, ensures that every learner is able to learn the new language for both social and academic purposes.

Stop, Ponder, and Practice

As you focus on the language acquisition processes of your refugee students, consider the following tips for making your instruction more culturally responsive:

- Ensure that your classroom ecology encourages both structured and unstructured conversations with peers. Setting a purpose and outcome for small team conversations encourages students to utilize their BICS skills as stepping stones toward developing their CALP skills.
- Create a classroom ecology that helps bolster social cohesion, where students can overcome the pervasive societal stigma of being a refugee. Structure groups so that refugee students and other English learners are heterogeneously grouped with students who are native to the language, community, and dominant culture.
- Provide academically inclined language opportunities, in which students have an authentic experience with language as they try to further their learning. Remember, language develops organically, rather than through the scripted structure of multiple, disconnected interventions.
- Remember that language and culture are interrelated. As you include activities for fostering students' language development, consider home/family practices that might



be rooted in students' cultural orientation. For instance, in some cultures, home-based literacy development happens primarily through storytelling rather than through reading books at night. Find ways to draw on the benefits that result from these home/family practices. For example, consider asking parents to share a family story at home and then have the student retell the story to one or more peers at school.

Look at ME: I Think, Know, and Apply **Differently than Most**

One of the primary challenges that all teachers face is being able to step outside of ourselves to imagine other ways of thinking about the world. Our understandings about topics, our ways of solving problems, and our very perceptions of the sounds, sights, smells, and other input around us are filtered through our socialized ways of making sense and meaning of life. These patterns and seemingly commonsense expectations in thought and action serve to structure our interactions with others and influence our assumptions about how students will learn best. It can be easy for us to fall into the trap of planning lessons (in ways that make sense to us) and then plowing straight ahead as we deliver instruction. Oftentimes our goal tends to be one of helping students come around to our way of seeing things. When we teach with cognitive “blinders” on, we shortchange the very process of learning.

Each learner brings unique ways of thinking and knowing that have been fashioned through a lifetime of experiences. The cognitive dimension of the student holds the key to our understanding how he or she is making sense of information. Even visuals that we might select for their ability to explain a particular vocabulary word might be interpreted by the learner in a completely different way. This is why we must

build opportunities for students to share with us, and with each other, their response to the curriculum. It is the resulting wealth of ideas and experiences that make diversity such an asset. We each have much to gain and learn from others. Harvesting this knowledge, however, is more an art than it is a science.

The first step is for us is to simply be willing to listen and observe. What students produce orally, in writing, or through drawings opens the door to our understanding. Similarly, individual students (as well as the rest of us) have preferences for demonstrating what they have learned. Beyond the typical urging for educators to consider student choice in post-instructional assessment, is the need for teachers to appreciate and celebrate the range of responses that oftentimes are produced. It's not uncommon for teachers to be baffled by the meaning or intent behind some students' responses. However, we oftentimes fail to fully build upon these moments of disjuncture.

When working with CLD and refugee learners, or any other student that brings a worldview different from our own, it's essential to dig deeper. We need to be willing to:

- Ask the student to explain his or her thought process
- Question what made the learner think of a particular experience
- Have the student explain how a sample of drawing or writing connects to the topic, concept, vocabulary word, or idea

In short, we teachers must be willing to value different ways of perceiving, constructing meaning, and applying learning. It's not about how we would do things, it's about supporting students to forge their own paths as they learn from us and from one another, moving ever closer toward attaining our shared learning goals.



The Power Is YOURS: Teachers as Academic Brokers

Ultimately, the key to success for refugee learners are the expectations held by the teacher regarding what is possible for the learner. We educators hold the key to providing access and engaging the learner within the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Recently, growth mindset is what is driving much of our professional development on English learners, yet the language we choose to use about refugee learners' potential can often send a different message. Current views on what learning matters keep our discourse focused on the limitations of what is possible. The discourse surrounding refugees (e.g., they have no English — or sometimes language — to be successful in school, they haven't attended school, refugees can't...) limits what we do to accelerate academic learning. A true growth mindset sounds like:

- Our refugee learners are at early levels of English language development.
- I can bridge experiences and academic content by...
- I can help students develop by...
- I can communicate better with my students by...
- I can engage students' academically by...

True teaching and learning begin with the learner and the teacher engaging in a creation of a new narrative that is aligned with the standard and guided by what the student has available to him or her to make connections to the new vocabulary, concepts, and skills. On the part of the teacher, it takes envisioning new academic routines that will support the learner along the path to greater levels of achievement. Biography-Driven Instruction provides a framework for a new way of thinking about the possibilities, while at the same time finding solutions for the challenges.

Point of Departure: Biography-Driven Instruction

In response to a growing need to help teachers discover and connect the lived experiences of their CLD learners to the standards-driven curricula employed in today's schools, Herrera developed *Biography-Driven Instruction* (BDI) (2010, 2016). BDI is communicative/cognitive method of orchestrating teaching and learning to foster language and content development. Through its emphasis on such critical facets as building relationships and connecting to the heart of a child (sociocultural dimension), BDI provides educators with a philosophical orientation that values the culture and language of the student throughout the learning process. BDI also supports teachers by offering a framework for lesson delivery that makes attainment of our linguistic and academic objectives possible. It allows teachers to utilize their own knowledge and creativity, while simultaneously maximizing each learner's potential for language acquisition and content learning.

BDI emphasizes the three phases of lesson delivery: Activation, Connection, and Affirmation. This framework supports students to develop their language proficiencies in a meaningful way that evolves from the knowledge, experiences, and ways of understanding that they already possess. The three phases (explained below) support teachers to create powerful, culturally responsive learning situations that increase the likelihood of student engagement and success in the classroom.

Culturally responsive or relevant pedagogy is a term that permeates today's literature in the field of education. So, what exactly is it? Geneva Gay, one of the recognized experts on the topic, describes such teaching in the following way:

Culturally responsive teaching is defined as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively. It is based on the assumption



that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly (Gay, 2000). As a result, the academic achievement of ethnically diverse students will improve when they are taught through their own cultural and experiential filters. (Gay, 2002, p. 106)

What Gay advocates for resonates with what scholars know from research about how the brain learns. We are more likely to attend to new sensory information and process it if we sense its relevance to our lives and are able to connect it to our existing frames reference and schemas (Sousa, 2011). This pattern holds true for all learners – those who reflect the dominant culture as well as those who do not.

Each and every learner has unique knowledge and experiences that serves as his or her frame of reference for school-based interactions and learning. Curriculum developers have no way of knowing the memories, experiences, knowledge, and skills of our students, especially those that they hold most dear in the very core of their being. Finding ways to connect the lives of our refugee students and other learners to the curriculum has been a confounding challenge for many teachers, despite wide recognition that doing so is an educational imperative (CREDE, 2018).

Activation

BDI makes culturally responsive pedagogy possible, even in classrooms with student populations that reflect multiple countries and multiple native languages. The first phase of the lesson cycle, the Activation phase, is the lynchpin for all subsequent learning. It is based on the premise that when students have safe opportunities to share or make public what they know about the curricular concepts, language, and skills of the lesson, they are more apt to divulge foundational

background knowledge that the teacher then can use to increase the relevance of his or her instruction. Students are encouraged to make connections to their experiences from home (funds of knowledge), community (prior knowledge), and school (academic knowledge). By allowing students to document connections to these three knowledge systems — using words (in the native language or in English) and images — teachers create a powerful ecology in which everyone is an equal participant in the learning process.

Activation at the opening of the lesson is critical for providing teachers with baseline information about each student's language development, as it relates to the current topic, key vocabulary words, or lesson focus. What students record serves as the catalyst for talk among peers (partners or small group members) about their background knowledge. This opportunity and sharing of ideas further serve to build the accumulated “bank” of language, experiences, and conceptual knowledge that reflects a given classroom community. The insights that teachers glean from careful observation and listening become the means by which they facilitate the bridge-building process, between students' lives/language and the standards-based curriculum/academic English.

Listening, speaking, reading, writing in the context of authentic communication are natural processes of the Activation lesson phase. They help students share what they know and what they bring with themselves. They also help students comprehend what their peers might have in common, or understand novel experiences, ideas, and perspectives. When implementing BDI lessons, teachers come to realize that they are not merely helping their students develop basic rudimentary language skills; rather, they are helping students utilize these basic skills to develop higher-order linguistic and cognitive skills that are essential for their becoming proficient speakers, readers, and writers. In the process, teachers are developing the foundation for trust, learning more about what is important to their



learners, and demonstrating to students that they value the knowledge that each student brings.

Where knowledge systems meet linguistic outcomes.

As we dig a little deeper into the idea of background knowledge, let us consider the multitude of student experiences that might fall under each knowledge system, especially considering the fact that refugee students are more likely to come with experiences rooted in war, civil unrest, and a lack of life balance that often accompanies such hardships. Figure 5 provides a starting point as we focus on how the specifics within students’ knowledge systems might impact the way they individually view language development and education in the new classroom.

Figure 5. Background Knowledge Systems

Funds of Knowledge	Prior Knowledge	Academic Knowledge
• Traditions • Native Language • Home Literacy Practices • Family Dynamics	Language Brokering • Community Environment • Family Employment • Community Support Systems	Previous Content Knowledge • School Literacy Practices • School-Based Cooperation and Collaboration Skills • Formal School Dynamics

Source: Adapted from Herrera (2016), p. 82

Teachers can identify and utilize differences in background knowledge among learners to highlight the diverse assets that each student brings. Such actions create a classroom ecology that is open, inviting, and above all encompassing of the stories that students share.

Teachers can start by asking simple, open-ended questions such as: *Have you ever seen or heard of (lesson topic/concept)?* Then they prompt students to think more deeply with specific, targeted questions that allow learners to share and document what they know and bring with themselves. Sample questions might include:

- Did you ever experience this? What did it look like, sound like, feel like?
- In your small groups, talk about the way your family does this.
- How do you find this different in United States, when compared to your home country?

When using targeted questions with students, keep in mind the need for sensitivity regarding variations in family units, differences in opinions, and the overall political nature of today’s society. The Activation phase provides a perfect opportunity for teachers to capture insights into the intricacies of students’ knowledge systems, and document them so that they can be used to foster a more meaningful dialogue during the lesson.

Remember that the essence behind utilizing students’ knowledge systems is not to just focus on tangible aspects of their background or culture that students might share, but to actually look for ways to connect this background knowledge and language to our day-to-day curriculum and instructional practices. The purpose of having students reflect on and document their conceptual and linguistic links to the lesson is so to provide them and the teacher with a point of reference for ongoing learning throughout the remainder of the lesson. Rather than simply relying on oral sharing or oral discussion during the Activation phase, students use written tools/ strategies (discussion to come later in this chapter) to document their ideas.



Connection

The Connection phase of the lesson cycle provides teachers with the continued opportunity to help students develop language in a holistic way. The emphasis of this phase is on helping students make connections to the content of the lesson. Teachers guide students as they explore academic concepts and vocabulary words in context. They utilize students' words and ideas that were surfaced during the Activation phase to help learners make sense of the new material. Teachers facilitate interaction among students, using pairs and small groups to provide opportunities to check for understanding, hear alternative perspectives, and come to consensus. Students confirm and disconfirm their original predictions about the lesson topic, concepts, and vocabulary. They continue to use the same learning tools to document their evolving understanding of the content and language.

The Connection phase supports the integrated development of all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Purposeful opportunities for academic interaction provide English learners with authentic exposure to i+1 (Krashen, 1984/2005) academic language structures, vocabulary, and syntax. After having had opportunities for conversation in the safety of smaller settings (e.g., through interaction techniques such as Think-Pair-Share, Turn-and-Talk, or small group discussions), students are more comfortable with speaking in the context of whole-group discussions.

This phase of the lesson delivery cycle is based on the premise that students need multiple meaningful exposures to the content in order to gain ownership and mastery over concepts and skills. For continued language development of students, it is critical for us to consider the role that repeated practice and consistent academic routines might play in language development. For refugee and other CLD students, it is

important to not consider routines solely within the confines of management routines (e.g., the mannerly retrieval of pencil or paper to complete the task). Rather, academically rooted classroom routines (e.g., providing tools for students to document knowledge and learning; using student ideas to bridge into the curriculum; having learners talk with partners and small groups) are planned and enacted with students' language development in mind, so that linguistic growth is a consistent by-product of all actions taken in the classroom. Student language outcomes are highly dependent upon the processes that teachers follow in their classrooms. Opportunities and interactions in the classroom should allow students to practice their language skills in ways that simultaneously develop skills required for success in today's society, such as being able to infer, analyze, summarize, synthesize, and deduce conclusions, to name a few.

Affirmation

The Affirmation phase of the lesson cycle rests on the premise that every individual needs the opportunity to internalize progress made and to reflect on the growth that has occurred. In terms of language development, we transition from oral language usage to written language production throughout the lesson; however, this last phase provides teachers with dedicated time for students to share through writing how they have taken ownership of the lesson's content and language. It is important to remember that not every student will be ready right away to share their learning via a written English format. This is where meaningful differentiation and scaffolding again comes into play.

To complete the post-instructional assessment tasks at the end of the lesson, many students will need scaffolding of the process and/or the final outcome. Some students might need to share their ideas orally with a more English proficient partner, who can then document the thoughts in writing. Others will



need to rely heavily on their learning tools from the lesson, taking words and ideas from the tools to complete the task. Still others might initially need to document their learning by using the native language. Ideally, teachers have someone available from the school or community who can help translate. If not, encouraging learners to include drawings along with their writing can go a long way in helping communicate key takeaways.

To gauge success and overall learning, many teachers ask students to summarize the content or the topic by creating a short narrative or an expository essay. Through this written piece, teachers are able to gauge how much progress has occurred related to the students' grasp of content knowledge and skills as well as their progress with academic language. If students are not yet able to create a paragraph, the following differentiated outcomes might be useful in moving learning forward:

- Provide students with sentence stems that help structure their responses, and prompt them to use the vocabulary words or concepts learned throughout the lesson.
- Provide students with a cloze paragraph and word bank from which they can select words to add.
- Ask students to visually depict what they have learned and narrate their visual to a friend, who writes the summary for them.

To add variety and student choice, teachers also can ask students to think of a creative way they would like to share their learnings (e.g., role play, songs, rap, poems).

When approaching assessment with refugee students, remember that language acquisition is a process that takes time and patience on the part of the learner and the teacher. One or two words today become three or four words tomorrow. As students develop trust that the classroom is a place where

they will be *nurtured* in their learning — and confidence in themselves as capable language users and members of the classroom community — they will gain momentum in their language use and production.

BDI Strategies for Teaching and Learning

To support teachers as they strive to make their teaching responsive to the needs of their learners, BDI provides more than 20 strategies (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011; Herrera, Kavimandan, Perez, & Wessels, 2017). Each strategy is implemented across the entire lesson cycle to support development within each dimension of the learner's biography (sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic). BDI strategies serve the two-fold purpose of (1) supporting *teachers'* organization of activities, assessment, and orchestration of teaching and learning dynamics and (2) scaffolding *students'* engagement in the lesson, documentation of learning, and holistic growth.

Teachers use BDI strategies to structure the teaching and learning across a single lesson, or alternatively across a week of connected lessons. The strategies are flexible and intended to be modified by teachers to meet their own curricular needs. Many of the strategies provide a built-in tool on which students document their individual learning. BDI strategies have proven effective for increasing teachers' incorporation of promising practices for CLD students that reflect research-based standards of effective instruction (Herrera, Holmes, & Kavimandan, 2012; Pérez, Holmes, Miller, & Fanning, 2012). Figure 6 provides a brief description of one BDI strategy and its learning tool.

Figure 6. Close-up on BDI Strategy

Linking Language Strategy is a visuals-based strategy that can be utilized in classrooms to help accelerate vocabulary development, help learners connect to



text, and comprehend the larger meaning of the text. Consistent use of the strategy promotes students' ability to use visuals effectively to support their learning in all content areas, thereby allowing them a space to use visuals as a means of accelerating their language and academic development. Following description provides a glimpse into how the strategy evolves and ways students can utilize the in-built support of visuals to help with vocabulary retention and comprehension development at multiple levels of language proficiencies.

Activation:

- Depending upon your essential question, planned outcomes, objectives, and identified skills, select 3-4 pictures that illustrate key concepts or ideas from the lesson. Pictures can be taken from the Internet, clipart, or magazines, or the actual textbook pictures can be used.
- Tape each picture on the center of a large piece of chart paper, allowing enough room for students to write what they see, feel, and think about the picture. If using a textbook, place the textbook in the center of the chart paper.
- Place the students in groups of 3-5 students, and station one group at each of the posters. Make sure to group students strategically so that, if needed, students can brainstorm ideas with each other or ask each other for help.
- Instruct the students to individually write or draw everything they think of, see, or feel when they look at the picture. Encourage English learners to write in the native language if they prefer.
- Allow only 1-2 minutes for students to write. (Depending upon the make-up of your class, you may decide to provide more time.)
- Then have the whole group rotate to the next chart/picture.
- Continue until all groups have been to each picture.

- As students are writing or drawing their ideas, rotate around the room so you can guide students through the process. This also is your time to document some of the students' initial connections, which can be utilized during the lesson.

Instructional Tips for Activation:

- The strategy provides an in-built tool for students as they connect to the visuals at their own linguistic and academic levels.
- It starts by giving students a space for their initial connection to the topic from the very onset.
- As we take notice of the kinds of things students are writing, these initial words/phrases can become a springboard for teachers to help connect their students' ideas with each other, connect ideas to the larger content, and reroute the conversations as needed.

Connection:

- Once all groups have returned to their original posters, have them review all the information that was placed on the poster and identify common ideas/vocabulary by circling them and linking them together with a line. This step of the strategy is critical in helping students identify any specific themes that might help them relate to the content of the lesson.
- Share with students the target vocabulary for the lesson. As you say each word, tape its strip of paper to the chalkboard/wall for all to see.
- Have students discuss in their group which of the target vocabulary words best matches the picture on their poster.
- As a class, discuss ideas about the best match for each poster. Upon reaching consensus, have a student representative from each group come up and remove the appropriate word's strip and tape it to his or her group's poster.



- Have students to look for connections between the target vocabulary and the common ideas/words they recorded on the poster. Ask them if they see a theme related to the connections they have made.
- Have each group share out these connections, as well as other links they made, to the rest of the class.

Instructional Tips for Connection:

- By posting the posters at the front of the room, students can have access to all the words as they proceed through the lesson.
- Stop at regular intervals to have students discuss and think critically about how their own initial words, drawings, and connections on the posters relate to the text they are reading, thereby promoting comprehension.
- Encourage students to add to the Linking Language posters throughout the lesson by using sticky notes to add new information (e.g., specific vocabulary words, new concepts) they learn.

Affirmation:

- Have students write a paragraph showing their understanding of the topic and key concepts. Remind them that the posters provide a compilation of ideas, vocabulary, and words that are their own and have been accumulated throughout the lesson.
- Depending upon the age and language level of students, you can have them create paragraphs that explicitly answer the essential question or connect to the objectives, or you can have them create writing pieces that connect to outside-the-classroom situations that require them to apply their ideas to the real world.
- Encourage students to use words from the Linking Language posters as they write their paragraphs.

Instructional Tips for Affirmation:

- As students write their paragraphs, remember that the transfer may not be automatic for all students. You might need to carefully attend to students who need additional modeling and support. Sometimes allowing students to first verbalize aloud what they want to say can support their ability to record their ideas on paper.
- Encourage students to share their final summaries with a partner to celebrate all that they have learned!

Bringing It All Together

Beyond adjusting to a new language, refugee students must begin to understand a new educational system, develop new friendships, become accustomed to different cultural norms, learn new parameters and expectations regarding school work, and become familiar with different pedagogical approaches (Schorchit, 2017). Parents' struggle with the English language and lack of understanding of the U.S. educational system often further impedes a child's smooth transfer to the U.S. classroom. At a psychological level, the trauma these students frequently have experienced pervades their waking and sleeping hours.

Bowie (2015) describes the tragedies that have been survived by the refugee students who comprise one third of the population at a Baltimore high school:

These are not teens whose families immigrated mainly for better economic prospects, as in past generations. Instead, they came to escape war, gang violence and starvation. They had seen their villages burned, their parents kidnapped and tortured, their friends shot. They had floated across the Rio Grande in darkness and been driven out of Baghdad in the middle of the night. They had run from exploding Syrian cities and walked from African villages overrun by ethnic fighting.



Students who have lived through such shortcomings in humanity have scars that no simple bandage can heal. As psychologist Amy Rakusin shares, “The impact of trauma, it stays alive in you for a very long time – in your dreams, in your thoughts, in your memories” (as cited in Bowie, 2015).

A balanced educational effort for refugee populations, therefore, involves case workers, social workers, counsellors, teachers, and parents collaborating to address the desire and need for refugee students to become productive members of society, ready for 21st century skills, and prepared to use English as a tool for their success. Teachers who want to honor and respect the cultural and socioemotional differences among their learners must, at the same time, focus on students’ linguistic and academic outcomes and measures of achievement. BDI provides a promising method for reaching academic rigor and language growth through intentional, caring responsiveness to each learner’s biography.

At the End of Each Day, We Are One

Each day brings new opportunities to advance. No matter where the learner starts, the classroom is the space where all aspirations of academic success are either moved forward or stifled. As educators, the challenge is sometime overwhelming. The resources are limited, the demands are high, and prescriptive curricula often limit the range of possibilities. At these crossroads, only the educator can choose the path to take — as facilitator, community builder, social worker, friend, and teacher. The refugee learner stands waiting. The stakes are high and the decision is daunting. Yet, we know that anything is possible when the teacher believes, builds relationships, and advances learning by starting with the biography of the learner. Educators of refugee students have awe-inspiring stories to tell of the resistance of the human spirit and the power of hope. It’s up to us to become part of our nation’s collective story of education that builds, enriches, and unites.

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Questions for Further Discussion

Use the following questions as helpful inputs into your own meaning making and reflection on the content of this chapter.

1. What is an asset based perspective in education?
2. How are newcomer students effected in the educational setting if their biography and culture are left out of the learning process?
3. What are the four key dimensions of Biography-Driven Instruction (BDI) and how would you explain each dimension?
4. How might an educator create a safe community in their classroom that goes beyond the physical layout and physical décor of the classroom?
5. How can an educator support students to see their accumulated knowledge and lived experiences as resources for learning?
6. In what ways can teachers use students’ knowledge and experiences as avenues for providing ongoing language support?
7. In what ways can the biography card, sociocultural mind map, and “I Am From” poem be used to begin conversations with students and families about their cultures, languages, and lives? In what ways do these activities have the potential to inform practice?



8. Describe the activation lesson delivery phase of BDI.
9. Describe the connection lesson delivery phase of BDI.
10. Describe the affirmation lesson delivery phase of BDI.

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Spotlight 5

Language Classes for Mom & Dad

Trina Harlow



As schools welcome newcomer students, it is also important that they welcome students' parents and extended families. One way school districts are doing this is by hosting adult literacy classes. Curtis Middle School in Wichita, Kansas is one school that is successfully doing this, as are others in the Wichita school district. According to the Wichita, Kansas Unified School District Superintendent, Dr. Alicia Thompson, the school district's needs have grown substantially with the arrival of friends from other countries. As Thompson speaks about the relevance of adult literacy classes, she states, "We also want to make sure that we have opportunities for our families to continue to learn more about the environment in which their children are going to be in and also to help them to be able to connect to other outside agencies for employment purposes and to help to them learn a little bit of English so they can engage further with us" (Mercer, Earl & Harlow, 2018).





Stephanie Wasko has been the principal of Curtis Middle School for ten years. This visionary school leader realized that with significant numbers of newcomer students enrolling at the school each week and speaking many different languages, her school was going to have to address how to get parents more involved in their child's education for the school to be more successful. Wasko secured a large grant for the school and one of the programs she started with the grant money was an adult literacy program for parents. It is, indeed, unique to walk the halls of CMS during the school day, shoulder to shoulder with parents that are going to school at the same time as middle school students.



Wasko knew that parents work differing hours and she knew some parents needed day classes because of night jobs and vice versa. Wasko states, "Our adult literacy program is very important to us. One of the things I saw with our parents was they weren't always advocating for their kids. They didn't know how to advocate. They wouldn't call us because they didn't feel comfortable, because someone there would not speak their language, and so part of this adult literacy class is to make sure that parents can speak for their kids. They know what they can expect at school. They know who they can call. It's just created an environment for them to know there is a safe place where they are invited to be and that they are valued" (Mercer, Earl & Harlow, 2018). Everyone benefits from the program—students, parents, teachers, administration, school district, and community. It also creates a great sense of community and family within the school environment.

I had an opportunity to sit in on an adult literacy class, observing Neil Maki, one of the adult literacy instructors. Maki's friendly, relational, calm, demeanor makes parents feel comfortable and relaxed. While Neal initially was drawn to teaching ESL classes and adult literacy classes to improve his own Spanish speaking abilities, he was quickly drawn to the emotional stories and personal struggles of his adult students. He reports a time when the curriculum topic was natural disasters and some parents became emotional, so he encouraged parents to talk about their feelings. Generally, he tries to keep class light-hearted and not focused on personal difficulties and tragedies, yet there are times when the lived stories of adult students enter the course dialogue.



MENU



SPOTLIGHT



Video: *The Journey to a New Language*

The camaraderie between teacher and adult student was obvious. Parents came early for class to ask questions about various life issues and Maki patiently explained how to call the doctor's office or bank and what question to ask. Maki also helps parents learn how to use deodorant, even toilets, as they adapt to life in American culture. He has had students come to him after class with issues that they are being swindled by someone taking advantage of their lack of experience and trying to get them to buy time share real estate.

The night I observed, students were learning about idioms and there was plenty of laughter in class. I was surprised at how much I learned. Our American culture has many phrases —idioms — that we use that just simply don't translate well. Some phrases, such as "it's hot as blazes," or "beat around the bush," or "costs an arm and a leg," just simply do not translate well into another language. One only has to be around a non-English speaker for a short while before realizing that we Americans do use a lot of idioms when we speak. Sometimes we don't even realize it and may not even know it until we are with someone who speaks another

language. We may find that we are constantly having to explain what we mean when we use idioms.



Maki reports trying to be entertaining as a teacher, and acting things out in order to be more engaging and to help convey meaning better. He also reports needing to be a good listener. Maki reports the biggest impact for him personally has been connecting one to one with other people's lived experiences. He stated that we can all tend to become numb to the news, but when you encounter individuals in person, face to face, who were impacted by these news items, it really has a profound impact. Maki has met some really wonderful people teaching adult literacy and is impressed with how hard parents work to be successful in his classes. He feels proud of how hard he works to get students from many countries, cultures, and religions to bond as a classroom community. He notices that most students tend to develop bonds that carry over outside of the classroom.

Parents in the adult literacy classes are required to attend class for the entire program which lasts multiple weeks and they are awarded a certificate at the end of the program. If parents miss class too often, they are required to start over during another semester or course time period. Attendance is expected and this expectation is part of the reason for the program's success.





According to Maki, “The goal of our program, in part, is to strengthen the local community, but also to help parents connect with their kids’ teachers and with their students. When a non-English speaker has to rely on their kid for so much linguistically, when they have to rely on their kid to help them out at parent teacher conferences, there is a weird flip between parenthood and adulthood that can be kind of embarrassing for the adults” (Mercer, Earl & Harlow, 2018). According to Dr. Faida Abu-Ghazaleh, coordinator of the York University Centre for Refugee Studies, the relationship between parents and their students is critical to success and often after families have been here for more than one generation, the second generation of the family — the teenagers — born here or who have no memory of speaking any other language besides English or French, as in Canada, can think their parents are incompetent (personal communication, 2016). This dynamic causes a variety of family problems and problems with adolescent students.



According to Silvia Smith, another adult literacy instructor at CMS and who also speaks English as her own second language, “The program teaches them [parents] how to go around in the real world. They need their language to work, to do their shopping, to go to the doctor’s office. They are learning their vocab and expressions that they need to communicate” (Mercer, Earl & Harlow, 2018).

When the school is truly a community, a community that includes students’ parents and families, the intercultural community within the school grows and strengthens. When students’ and families’ needs are met, the school community benefits. Thompson, Wasko, Maki, and Smith are a 21st century dream team. One only has to witness the smiles on parents faces, the pride they feel learning English, and the honor and respect they feel not only for themselves, but also given to them by their children for joining the community of learners within the school, to fully grasp the importance of including newcomer parents in the overall learning goals of the school.

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Section Two

Difficulty During the Journey





Chapter 6

Trauma and Refugee Children: Journey to a Better Place of Mind

Trina Harlow

Introduction

Pedagogy operates within the dimension of knowledge and social relationships (Aspelin, 2014). With the rising significance of individualization in education there seems to be a shift from older, prescribed ways of teaching and learning to exploring new 21st century approaches (Aspelin, 2014). These approaches essentially come out of constructivism and can be likened to project-based learning or choice-based learning in which students have a great deal of freedom to drive the direction of learning, yet it should also take into consideration the social and emotional learning needed by students. Metaphorically speaking, teaching is no longer reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also exists in a cognitive and emotional realm that addresses the whole child.



“When current trends in learning are complicated by the world crisis of mass numbers of displaced people, forced migrants, and refugees, educators are called to offer an educational environment that is both moral and caring.”

Trends in Education and Pedagogy

With so many changes happening around the globe — displacement, rapid technological changes, unrest, environmental issues, poverty, a variety of social issues, safety and security, cyber bullying and bullying in general, absent parents, school shootings and never-ending safety drills, and so on — school administrators are reporting a concern for students’ mental and emotional health (Wallace editorial team, 2018). Since 1928, the Wallace Foundation has surveyed Pre-K through 8th grade principals every ten years. The 2018 survey results revealed that for the first time ever, principals number one issue of concern is the mental and emotional state of their students (Wallace editorial team, 2018). Additionally, according to the Wallace Foundation, principals spend more time on this one issue than any other. Note the following survey results (Wallace editorial team, 2018):

Those surveyed selected an increase in the number of students with emotional problems (74 percent), student mental health issues (66 percent) and students not performing to their level of potential (62 percent) as issues of extreme or high concern in their schools. (n.p.)

This data must speak loudly to the educator. Regardless of whether or not students are refugees, the role of the teacher is exploring needs and growing pedagogical skills for the well-being of students.



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Moral and Caring Responsibility of the Educator

When current trends in learning are complicated by the world crisis of mass numbers of displaced people, forced migrants, and refugees, educators are called to offer an educational environment that is both moral and caring. According to



Landahl (2006), “moral education” is related to the breaking of norms, while “care” relates to suffering of students. Current trends in individualized learning where a teacher is less of an authority figure that lectures and passes on knowledge, and more of a facilitator needing a unique ability and strength to be both collegial and relational, pleasant in personality and in varying situations, also cause educators to question and explore their pedagogical choices (Landahl, 2006). Landahl, who is from Sweden, believes successful schools have become less of a public place where children are merely students and are becoming a more holistic 21st century space and place of innovation in learning. In the past, students’ private lives stayed at home, yet Landahl reports that teachers are now expected to know about, understand, and show an interest in students’ personal lives, rather than simply focusing on the collective classroom of students waiting to learn the day’s lesson. There is a new form of moral commission for the teacher (Young, Horan, & Frisby, 2013; Landahl, 2006; Tate, 2007). Landahl states that discipline and obedience being replaced by students’ rights and student participation in guiding learning are examples of this. It means that while teaching used to be strict—but fair, it is now expected to be kind and empathetic—but fair (Landahl, 2006). Teachers are expected to offer kindness to students and make



Rob Marmion/Shutterstock

great effort to ensure there is equity between students. Teachers have always been expected to uphold a moral code in the school environment. The change Landahl purports is that teachers are now being asked to be more of a relational influence in students’ lives and less of an authoritarian.

Reasons for the change. There are various reasons for the movement of education from a highly cognitive, academic atmosphere to a more social and emotional environment. Some reasons are: a) parents not parenting for various reasons (some of which are out of their control), b) geopolitics and conflict, and c) the quest for material wealth by busy parents (Landahl, 2006). Add to this that the very place a child is born can determine the safety and well-being they grow up with, and educators suddenly have a much more serious role. While teachers used to teach math, science, history, and language arts at school, with manners and respect largely being taught at home, teachers now find themselves doing both.



Globalization. Pedagogical needs are further exasperated by the 21st century effect of globalization that is causing a mass movement of people all over the globe, within borders and across borders. Trauma many children have experienced in recent, turbulent times is also affecting education. For these reasons, many schools are experiencing significant changes in both student demographics and the mental health of students (S. Bird-Hutchison, personal communication, November 10, 2017). Some school districts in the United States now have upwards of 120 languages spoken by school families (S. Bird-Hutchison, personal communication, November 10, 2017). Educators are stretched more than ever as lesson content needs grow more complicated (Valli, Croninger, & Buese, 2012). Now



there is not only a role for social-emotional teaching, schools also are finding they need to add trauma training for staff (S. Bird-Hutchison, November 10, 2017, personal communication; H. Kincaid, 2015, personal communication). It's not surprising that many educators sense they are teaching in a time period in which a moral and caring component of teaching seems more important to society and the future of mankind than the math and science of life. Additionally, technology is changing our lives in many complicated ways, yet technology cannot make us be better, more caring people. This must come from within. As Jeff Goldblum, a character in the famous book and movie *Jurassic Park*, stated, "Life breaks free. Life expands to new territories. Painfully, perhaps even dangerously. But life finds a way" (Crichton, 1990, p. 160). This chapter and section explores a raw, difficult, painful, anxious feeling that some students feel from within: Trauma. With the help of caring therapists and educators, life on this planet will hopefully find its way.

My Own Professional Experiences with Trauma in Students

While all children and adolescents experience trauma, and while children are usually fairly resilient in bouncing back from the difficulties of life (Crawley, 2019), this chapter examines the complexities of trauma. Plainly and simply, this chapter seeks to inform educators and others about what trauma is, how it looks in children, and provide a useful knowledge base to deal with it in the classroom and with students in their care. It's a complicated subject. I am not positioning myself as an expert on trauma as I am not, yet some authors in this section of the book are. I caution you to seek out qualified professionals, behavior therapists, and psychologists for help with serious student anxiety. The goal of the documentary film, *Refuge in the Heartland*, and this complimenting eBook, rather, is to help educators become more knowledgeable on this difficult topic. The social-emotional health of students has been placed in our care by the 21st century.

My Personal Experience

During my 25-years as an art teacher and educator, I have seen great emotional accomplishment and breakthrough in the art classroom. I recall a young child who had lived in five foster homes by the fourth grade and whose parents were both in the state penitentiary. The student was taken away from his parents at the age of four. I also recall a young kindergartener crying voraciously all day, every day, the first few months of school with a flood of mucous rolling down her face. I remember a second-grade student who walked into class each day withdrawn, sniffing, fighting tears, failing in all subjects in school, and who became an award-winning artist. The confidence this student gained through art transferred to all other areas of learning, generating a letter by the student's classroom teacher to the school superintendent about the value of art education. I remember a senior in high school who was well-loved, yet withdrawn, and who received news one week before the graduation that because she had not made up 26 hours of missed school, she would not be able to graduate. The student mentally "threw in the towel" and gave up, making a choice not to graduate. The student's life had been very difficult her senior year. Her family had lost everything because both parents had lost their jobs, forcing them to move, and she literally had to sleep in a dirty, hot garage because her family had moved into a very, very small old home with only one bedroom. I knew the student didn't fully understand the ramifications of this at the age of 17 and I refused to let the student give up. After some debate with the principal, I spent 26 hours at the school with the student the week before graduation, late into the evening, helping her make





up missed hours so she could graduate. She worked diligently to clean up the theatre department stage, but more importantly we bonded as human beings. I became very close to all of these students and all overcame their trauma, anxiety, and problems through activities in and through the arts classroom. These stories of healing specifically happened because of my position as a school teacher. There are many other stories like this.

In contrast, I also remember an episode when a 4th grade student drew a horribly violent and bloody drawing within minutes of entering my classroom with adrenaline filled emotion. I had called the school counselor to come to my classroom, the girl's emotions were addressed by the counselor, and some of the tragic circumstances of her life were revealed to me. In this situation, I saw no visible evidence of healing from my relationship with her, but I am hopeful that the event of working her frustrations and trauma out on paper, which gained her the attention and support of the school counselor, may have helped her in some way. There is always hope.

Resource for Newcomer Educators

My experiences as an art teacher and working with students' various emotions, anxieties, and traumas through art have led me to more fully understand the importance of art making with refugee children. Additionally, I have taught refugee children in two different countries, four different times. My experience with trauma is based on two decades of teaching, personal experiences with children, professional training, and the on-the-job training that is so often common for educators. My trauma knowledge base is limited and I am not a licensed therapist (although that might be next on the list of my academic goals). Like trauma experts, I too know the research proven value of art in healing from trauma (Kaplan, 2007; Rubin, 2005). Through creative activity children release thoughts and find solace for emotions (Blom, 2006; Brunick, 1999; Cattanaach, 1997). Teachers of newcomer or

refugee students exhibiting trauma can refer to a variety of psychotherapy and personality theories to help them acutely listen and view the narrative and stories children tell through visual and verbal representation (Rubin, 2005). Trauma sensitive strategies and best classroom practices for these kinds of settings can assist teachers in sensitive situations with students. Yet again, it is always good for teachers to have the school counselor or behavior therapist's phone number on speed dial on their cell phones when working in a sensitive content area with vulnerable children.

Trauma is a complex issue and is based in neuroscience, psychology, medical science, and social-emotional learning. Although this chapter touches upon the healing aspects of using art and other concepts and strategies with traumatized children, this chapter is not a comprehensive analysis of trauma exhibited in P-12 school students. The goal is to give educators a source of information to begin developing an understanding of this important issue (for all students), which continues to be manifested more frequently in school environments and particularly for the teacher of newcomer students.

Understanding Trauma

Definition of Trauma

The word *trauma* means having a disordered psychic or behavioral state because of severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury (Trauma, 2017). Simply said, trauma means to wound. Some refugee children have seen the worst of human behavior and society, more than their young minds can understand or process. Some of these children are tormented their entire lives by the anxiety and feelings created by threatening situations, as well as the harshness that can sometimes





be human existence. Children may have been the victim of traumatic experience or conflict, they may have even inflicted violent trauma on others, and they may have permanent physical or psychological scars from traumatic experience.

Herman (1992) reported “traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence or death. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror” (p. 33). While research shows varying meanings for trauma, depending on who is conducting the research, all definitions of trauma are alike in that they all portray a harsh, difficult experience for children and adults (Leydesdorff, Dawson, Burhardt, & Ashplant, 2004). De Thierry (2016) and Salloum (2015) offer analysis of how trauma impacts children and also provide protocols to address trauma. Nakazawa (2015) reminds us that what happens to children in life affects their development and later adulthood.

Refugee students open up about traumatic experiences. Many elementary and secondary students were interviewed during the research for this book and its companion documentary film. Some interviewed students, who guarded their traumatic experiences in the first and second interviews, opened up about the shocking brutality they had seen and experienced as they grew more familiar with the



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videographer and myself in subsequent interviews. As I heard their stories, I was as close to trauma as I had ever been in my lifetime and immediately developed a profound respect for the resiliency of these students. As living, breathing dichotomies of childhood and adolescence, the students eagerly came to the school library to be interviewed or to a makeshift recording studio set up in the hallway, sharing their lived experiences, and then in juxtaposed gait left to rejoin a physics or math class. Surprisingly, I would have thought they would have been excited to get out of such a strenuous class for a while, but they were anxious to get back because they wanted to learn.

Trauma in Children

In this section, I refer to the research of Dr. Alison Salloum of the University of South Florida, an internationally known grief and trauma researcher (Salloum, 2006; Salloum, 2008; Salloum, 2015). Dr. Salloum’s work is vast and very specifically related to children and trauma. Her research crosses over seamlessly and easily into the area of trauma experienced by refugee children. After a brief examination of trauma in children, this section will briefly explore several trauma therapies and strategies that have come from Dr. Salloum’s research. In addition to Dr. Salloum’s research, additional research has shown that: a) 68% of children and adolescents had experienced at least one traumatic event by the age of 16; b) 78% of children had multiple adversities with an average initial exposure at the age of five; c) every classroom had at least one student affected by trauma; and d) students living in homelessness, poverty, and students with other socially determined vulnerabilities were significantly more likely to experience stress and trauma (Blaustein, Cook, Spinazzolla, & Vander Kolk, 2003; Copleand, Costello, and Keeler Angold, 2007).



Not All Children with Trauma Develop Psychiatric Problems.

First of all, it is important to stress that not all children who experience grief, bereavement, or trauma will develop psychiatric problems (Crawley, 2018; Salloum, 2015). In fact, research indicates that only 5 to 20 percent of children will develop clinical symptoms of trauma from difficult experiences because a majority of children are resilient and will recover and adapt (Salloum, 2006; Salloum, 2008; Salloum, 2015). Resilience competencies can include “behavioral and emotional functioning, social competence, and academic performance” (Salloum, 2015, p. 3) and are dependent on the age of the child. Children will go through stages of grief or oscillate between stages (Salloum, 2015). Sometimes therapists need to focus on helping the child express their thoughts and feelings and to develop coping strategies. Sometimes the focus of therapy needs to be on loss or trauma (Salloum, 2015). A limited number of research studies have been conducted on the aftermath of disaster in children, but according to Salloum the studies are limited in overall findings (Taylor & Chemtob, 2004; Chemtob, Nakashima, & Hamada, 2002; Pfefferbaum, North, Doughty, Pfefferbaum, Dumont, & Pynoos, 2006; Feeny, Foa, Treadwell, & March, 2004; LaGreca, Silverman, Vernberg, & Prinstein, 1996; Shelby & Treadinnick, 1995).

Discovery of trauma within refugee children. Within the refugee population of children, it is impossible to determine how many children are actually clinically traumatized due to the vast numbers of children, differing circumstances, remote locations, and transient nature of refugees. While controlled studies might measure certain children in a random population for trauma symptoms, for the sake of education and our schools, I contend that educators should be prepared for all newcomer students to exhibit signs of trauma and schools should have a behavior plan in place to address varying levels of trauma. Many schools are currently using the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) survey and having parents complete this

assessment. Some support organizations such as 321insight Essential Training (321insight essential training, 2018) adapt ACE to use specifically as an indicator of the presence of trauma in children and young students. While it’s not a perfect assessment for refugee students, it manages to provide revealing significance about trauma. The following section explains ACE.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

Using the ACE, schools can assess individual students on their trauma ratings, thereby identifying students who need intervention (Kahn & Vezzuto, n.d.). Initially, ACE was a collaboration between Kaiser Permanente’s Health Appraisal Clinic in San Diego, California, and the Center for Disease Control. The study took place between 1995 and 1997 and over 17,000 participants were tracked for the link between childhood stressors and adult health (Kahn & Vezzuto, n.d.). An ACE Assessment tallies different types of abuse, neglect, and other aspects of difficult childhoods. The ACE Assessment asks ten pointed, and even graphic, questions. By adding up “yes” answers, a person’s ACE score is developed.

Schools can use ACE as an indicator of trauma in students, but I find the ACE Assessment more appropriate for developed societies, or at the very least for societies where living conditions use the known general descriptors words in the ACE questions. In other words, I think the ACE Survey doesn’t fully apply to children from all over the world and particularly some children from developing countries, yet some aspects of the questions can be explained to newcomer students. For example, one of the questions asks if a parent took the child to the doctor when they needed to go. Obviously, it cannot be ascertained if all newcomer children lived in an area where there was a doctor or had access to medical care. Overall, the ACE Survey can be used to assess the trauma ranking of children, including newcomers, but research reveals that



most consider the questions as inappropriate to directly ask children. Most schools implementing ACE have parents take the survey for their children. Again, whether or not this is a completely accurate indicator of trauma in children when parents or guardians are completing the survey is unknown. Honesty is a factor, as well as parents knowing all of their child's experiences. ACE was originally developed for adults to take, relating aspects of their childhood to their current health. Perhaps an ACE-like survey is needed for refugee children. At the very least, ACE gives schools a place to start in assessing trauma in refugee and newcomer students, and all students.

Shattered Trust

Trauma in children has a distinct look because children are dependent on others for their safety and well-being. Children generally do not create their own trauma (Crawley, 2018; De Thierry, 2016). There is a distinct difference between stress, crisis, and trauma. Most children will experience stress, and crisis is something that many also experience, but with support and care, long term consequences are generally not an issue. Trauma is different. The Institute of Recovery from Childhood Trauma (2015) defines trauma as “an event or series of events, such as abuse, maltreatment, neglect or tragedy that causes a profound experience of helplessness leading to terror” (n.p.). According to De Thierry (2016), trauma shatters children's trust, innocence, sense of safety, and stability. “Trauma is toxic stress” (p. 13). It can impact a child in the short-term or may not manifest itself until years later. Children, according to De Thierry, can also find it difficult to put their feelings into words, often responding subconsciously and showing up in their behaviors and emotions.

Fight, Flight, or Freeze

During times of trauma, the body often has a protectionary ability—we fight, we take flight, or we freeze (De Thierry, 2016). This is also called the “threat response” and it comes from



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the brainstem, an area at the back of the brain where basic body functions such as breathing and heart rate are based (De Thierry, 2016).



Video: A Difficult Journey Home from School

The brainstem is linked to another area in the brain called the limbic system, where emotions respond to the fight, flight, or freeze event. Essentially, the ability to think, be rational, reflect or negotiate recedes to the back of the brain, and our subconscious brain takes over. The emotional part of the brain, the amygdala, sets the whole brain into panic (De Thierry, 2015). Another way to say this is “it's as if the brainstem catches fire due to threat and the limbic brain has a smoke alarm (the amygdala) that has been set off and makes a huge disruptive noise to make sure there is an appropriate response to threat” (De Thierry, 2015, p. 25-26). While refugee children may have seen their homes on fire, metaphorically their psychological systems may also be on fire.

Symptoms of Trauma

According to Salloum (2015), children who experience grief and trauma may have a variety of risk factors and symptoms and this is compounded exponentially for refugee children



who may have experienced great atrocity: a) children may feel their own life is being threatened; b) they may be fearful and might also feel that others did not help them in their time of need; c) children may miss close relationships they once had with playmates and family members; and d) children may also have had prior exposure to trauma and loss, now compounded by a new exposure. Their self-esteem and belief system may be challenged. Financial hardships can add to the trauma. Guardians or parents may have poor health, further adding to their trauma. Refugee children may not receive the warmth and love they need from struggling or traumatized parents, may have negative thoughts, nightmares, and thoughts of death and dying. The list is lengthy (Salloum, 2015).

Seen in the refugee context, trauma may be caused by violent conflict, starvation, dehydration, displacement, disease, and persecution, among other complex issues. There is a point in time in which the human psyche needs help, just as when a physical sore needs a bandage or a cast. Sometimes the psyche needs a four-hundred-ton dump truck of bandages. Thankfully, research has given educators many protocols, therapies, practices, and strategies to use with traumatized children and adolescents. While the available research on the benefits and protocol for trauma therapy is vast, the prudent educator will read, attend trainings, and grow their intellectual and psychological ability to recognize trauma and seek assistance for students who need help. The goal is to help students be able to function academically, socially, and emotionally in both their lives and the school environment.

Learn more about childhood trauma by watching this video from Kids Matter Australia:



Video: *Childhood Trauma*
(Kids Matter)

Learn more about childhood trauma at Be You:



Be You
<https://beyou.edu.au>

Ableism

On any given day at school, a child should be able to complete lessons, interact with peers and teachers, and feel safe and comfortable in the environment. Children who experience trauma may not be able to experience the goals set for them. Trauma is, in a sense, ableism. Adams, Bell, and Griffin (2016) address traumatic stress as “ableism,” which is a form of oppression. As a disability construction, ableism addresses lived histories and current manifestations of a broad list of disabilities, with both physical and social environments constructing disability. Merriam-Webster defines *ableism* as “discrimination or prejudice against individuals with disabilities” (Ableism, 2017). Speaking in more simple terms, ableism means the person is not “able” to do something in the way that is deemed normal for the body and the mind (Adams et al., 2016). Newcomer students of refugee background who also exhibit trauma may not be able to function in the school environment in the same way as non-traumatized children.

Ableism is not only embedded in the American society, it is a global issue and refers to a wide variety of disabilities, including those experienced by refugees. About one billion people live with a disability, roughly 15% of the world’s population (World Health Organization, 2011). Being a refugee and dealing with trauma is considered a disability. Oppression, which “is a term used to embody the interlocking forces that create and sustain injustice” (Adams et al., 2016, p. 5), is a direct factor affecting the refugee. Included in the ableism category are cognitive, physical, and psychological disabilities, as well as chronic illnesses and traumatic stress; therefore, ableism, to some



extent also refers to traumatized refugees. Adams, Bell, and Griffin (2016) provide a list of some ableism categories:

Some types of disabilities include physical (such as quadriplegia, paraplegia, cerebral palsy, and any permanent mobility impairments), systemic (such as epilepsy, cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, and other chronic illnesses), sensory (such as visual impairment and hearing impairment), psychological (such as autism spectrum disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia), learning disabilities (such as attention deficit disorder, dyslexia, and auditory processing disorder), and intellectual disabilities. (p. 303)

Compounding the ableized nature of the traumatized refugee student who may have difficulty performing simple school tasks, forced oppression also leads to an investigation of social justice and the dehumanizing aspect of being a refugee. It seems as though the disabilities faced by some refugee children are a long list of factors forced upon them by others. It is up to the adults these children encounter to help them cross the bridge from one side of trauma to the other. It can be a daunting task for educators, but those children who are truly traumatized need every adult they cross paths with to assist in their journey to recovery.

Trauma in Refugee Children

Babies and children are not the typical immigrants (Volkan, 2016). Adults make decisions to leave or go elsewhere, and children generally have to go along. Having left the stable objects of their lives (people, pets, toys, and things left behind), in some cases refugee children may not understand or be able to cope with their new surroundings. In other cases, the resiliency of children may prevail and they may readily adapt to their new environments (Crawley, 2018). Either way, children are not the



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ones who decided to leave their home or country of origin, and they are not the voluntary or involuntary immigrants that their parents are (Volkan, 2016). They are exiles and are required by others to “go,” according to Volkan. Some refugee children will become pathologically preoccupied with objects that were left behind, preventing them from having energy to become more involved in their new life (Volkan, 2016). Volkan also states if they have lost family members and loved ones, young children will feel a sense of loss, have haunting experiences, and even think of death as reversible and temporary. Older children will process death much like adults, realizing the finality of the death (Volkan, 2016). Volkan states that how children handle trauma depends on a) age, b) type of loss, c) security of the home environment, d) ability of the adults to provide substitutes, and e) innate resiliency. Some children have the ability to deal with trauma better than others; some deal with the psychological scars for the rest of their life.

Watch this video from National Geographic about trauma of refugee children in the Lesbos, Greece area:



Video: *Trauma in Refugee Children in Greece*
(National Geographic)



Psychological Scars

Refugee children experience and have lived unique trauma (Bresba, 2009). McCloskey and Southwick (1996) describe psychological scars including withdrawal, aggression, regression, depression, nightmares, anxiety, defiance, hyperactivity, acting out, vulnerability, antisocial behavior, and paranoia as some of the results of the horrific trauma many refugee children face. Refugee children deal with fear and sadness, and some with overwhelming anger, in response to the trauma they have lived (Kalmanowitz & Lloyd, 2005). They have lost family members, friends, homes and possessions, and their homeland (Allen, Basilier Vaage & Hauff, 2006). A deep sense of loss, grief, demise, and forfeiture can be devastating for some refugee children. It's important for educators to understand that just because a student is smiling or maneuvering through the school day with an outward appearance that doesn't send the trauma alarm off, students are still carrying their lived experiences and difficult memories within them. Extra patience is needed by educators when newcomer students seem distracted. Boundaries are important, but teachers must know that goals need to be individualized for refugee students.



**Video: *An Afternoon in Toronto:
A Refugee's Personal Journey***

Results of Oppression and Persecution

Refugee children also deal with deeper issues involving social injustice. They may have been demoralized through oppression and persecution (Adams et al., 2006; Blackwell, 2005; Volkan, 2017). Witnessing or experiencing terrible atrocities may have confused their ability to trust (Blackwell, 2005). One refugee student I interviewed made a night light for his sister out of homemade materials so she would sleep better. Since their sense of normalcy and balance has been tragically taken

from them, some have difficulty feeling secure in their host country (Allen et al., 2006; Bresba, 2009; Callaghan, 1998). Additionally, according to Bresba, lack of self-confidence and trust are important issues, and being asked to go through a “normal” school day in their host countries can be confusing.

The reality of being a refugee. While the following statements are graphic, educators must be informed and must understand the tragic experiences of some of their refugee students. Only in this chapter will the severity of experiences of some refugee children be explicitly discussed in an effort to help teachers truly understand the complexities that accompany some children to the classroom. While some refugee children may have been spared from the worst of violence and persecution mankind can inflict, others have seen more than their young eyes should have. Some refugee students have seen their best friend's parent's arm cut off, as in the case of a refugee university student that I interviewed. I interviewed a refugee girl who had seen her sister decapitated. Other refugee children that I have either interviewed or read first person accounts from have seen blood rolling down the street, felt bombs falling around them, and even smelled and felt human flesh falling on them as they ran. Many refugee children I have interviewed remember being hungry, cold, and living in cramped tents that did not protect them from the elements of weather, but also feeling grateful for a safe, albeit temporary, place to live. Most refugee children have experienced loss of huge proportions, even if not as brutal as described here. Teachers need to understand that these newcomer students might find it difficult to sit in class and learn English or how to divide fractions (Stephanie Bird-Hutchison, personal communication, November 10, 2017). While these graphically shocking, illustrative aspects of being refugee students are difficult to broach, educators really need a deep understanding of the many, varied experiences refugee students may have lived. Students bring these invisible or visible physical and



psychological scars with them to the classroom. In my research and through other experiences I have had with refugee children, I have heard countless stories that are difficult to fathom and think about and that remain in my mind. These stories are not forgettable. It is with the hope that education can heal these wounds that all caring educators join the quest to help refugee students create a new life and a promising future.

Questioning

Trauma can also make an adult or a child question their beliefs, their understandings of themselves, and have difficulty believing they are good and deserving of safety, happiness, and justice, and that the world is a good and fair place (Bresba, 2009; Janoff-Bulman, 1999; Wilson, 2006). While trauma is a difficult topic to examine, educators need a basic understanding of it, especially if they are teaching disenfranchised, vulnerable students who have experienced life's most gut-wrenching experiences. Likewise, it is with wonder that these same educators watch children laughing and running on the school playground, exhibiting such glee, after riding the wave of resilience through the metaphoric jungles of their lives. I have heard countless first-person stories from refugee children who tell me of running through the jungle or hiding in the jungle, and then I see the same children playing on the jungle gym playground equipment at recess in their new United States school – the juxtaposition of danger and safety can be psychologically confusing to students and teachers. It can sometimes be confusing for the observant teacher to make meaning of it and know how hard to push the refugee child academically and socially, yet all students need to be pushed to grow in these two areas.

Confused Global Meaning System

How does a refugee child make sense of the confusion of their life? They do it step by step, day by day, as all other people who experience trauma must do. One problem, however, that can be

unique to the refugee child is having a confused global meaning system (Bresba, 2009). Global meaning systems examine and address a person's view of themselves and how they fit into the broader world (Park & Ai, 2006; Janoff-Bulman & Berger, 2000; Bresba, 2009; Janoff-Bulman, 1999; Wilson, 2006). Difficult experiences and discordant information can confuse the refugee child and create anxiety (Batmanghelidjh, 2006). Parents and children within the same family can also have different versions of the same story, their life stories.

Bresba (2009) conducted a study, observing children's narratives over time. The study surprisingly found that refugee children can have narratives that parallel, yet are different, than their parents. While a refugee child may respond successfully to therapy and therapeutic art making with positive accomplishments and a caring therapist, the child's parents' opinions or judgements can create an alternate story and cause confusion in the refugee child. An example given by Bresba is a refugee child's parent thought their child had gained weight because they were eating too much, but in reality, the difficulty the child was having coping with life circumstances was creating anxiety and causing them to gain weight. Regardless of these parallel narratives, refugee children's global meaning systems can improve through therapy. Visual arts activities, which are common therapeutic processes, are especially significant and offer assistance with meaning making for refugee students, allowing them to integrate their past with their present, think about the future, grow and adapt their global meaning system, and deal with parallel narratives in age-appropriate ways (Bresba, 2009; Fitzpatrick, 2002; Kalmanowitz & Lloyd, 2005; Kellogg & Volker, 1993; Wertheim-Cahen, 1998).



Age Specific Findings

Ascher (1985) studied specific age groups of children and discovered how refugee children process trauma. The following are the results of the Asher study:

1. Young people 9 to 15 years old have multiple identity issues and problems, which compound with normal adolescent emotions and issues. They experience a wide range of feelings and emotions including guilt about those friends and family that were left behind or killed.(As this relates to refugee students, according to a later study by Harris, Jamison, & Trujillo (2008), if children's parents are undocumented immigrants, children may also avoid close relationships, worrying about those in authority deporting their parents and family.)
2. Children 3 to 10 years old remember what they have survived. They can learn English and will be able to tell their stories and explain the fear they experienced and even continue to experience. (In later research, Brunnick (1999) indicates healing happens each time a child draws or speaks of their experiences, and this is also true of refugee children.)
3. Children 12 months to 3 years old, who were just acquiring their language skills when their lives were horribly interrupted by war and forced migration issues, experience language-learning problems and even neurotic behavior because of the trauma. Their developmental learning process will be disrupted.
4. Infants 6 months of age to 2 years old experience the most long-term damage. Difficulty in understanding and dealing with nightmares caused by preverbal memories will be problematic, maybe even for a lifetime.

By developing an understanding of how trauma manifests itself in children's lives, and by attempting to understand how the

continuous timeline of life can be interrupted over and over for refugee children, first by persecution, the environment, or health issues, then forced into migration, and then by trying to acculturate into a new life in a new setting with familiar or unfamiliar people, educators can begin to be a part of the healing phase of growth and development.

Trauma Interventions

Returning to Dr. Salloum's research, multiple intervention strategies have come from her dedication to the child and to trauma. These interventions are used in therapy and easily cross over into the school classroom environment when adapted for developmentally-appropriate school use and use in trauma sensitive schools.

Grief and Trauma Intervention (GTI) for Children

GTI for children is an evidence-based practice of trauma intervention and is listed on the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP). Interventions listed on NREPP are acknowledged by the United States Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (Salloum, 2015). Information about Grief and Trauma Intervention for Children (GTI) can be found here:



GTI – Children's Bureau

<http://www.childrens-bureau.com/gti>

For more information, see *Grief and Trauma in Children: An Evidence-based Treatment Manual* by Dr. Alison Salloum. This book provides easy and ready-to-use therapy materials for teachers and practitioners to use when dealing with children suffering from grief and trauma in real world settings.

GTI manual. Salloum has conducted several large research studies on children and trauma. In one study, Salloum (2015)



examined four existing studies on children, conducted in real world settings, to help develop the GTI Plan. GTI utilizes a manual for children with worksheets for activities such as storytelling and listing support people, breathing exercises, worksheets to think through thoughts and feelings, art projects and supply lists, worksheets and activities for ten sessions that cover a range of topics including anger, relaxation, goals, how to cool down, how the child's family has changed, the child's prayer or poem or song, feelings questions, dreaming of thought in an I Wish activity, exploring safe places, protective shields, and so on. Each session has planned activities involving narrative and/or art making for children. GTI also provides training slides and materials for therapists, and professional training certification. GTI receives a 3.7 on a 4.0 scale for readiness for dissemination (NREPP, 2018).

GTI Development. Salloum directed multiple studies to develop GTI. These studies were conducted with the following groups of children and also by comparing the coping skills of the three groups:

1. Trauma in children who had experienced homicide.
2. African-American children who had experienced someone close to them dying from homicide or who had experienced violence.
3. Children who had experienced Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Developmental, Ecological, and Cultural (DEC)

GTI is based on DEC, an acronym for *Developmentally Specific Interventions, Ecological Perspectives, and Culturally Relevant Methods* (Salloum, 2015). Simply said, GTI gives educators tools to use with traumatized students based on their developmental abilities, and their ecological and biography-driven stories.

First category of DEC. The first category of DEC is Developmentally Specific Interventions. This category often incorporates art (Salloum, 2015):

The intervention is designed to be developmentally specific with an activity-based approach utilizing art, drama, and play. Topics that are common to elementary-school-age children who are experiencing grief and trauma are included, such as dreams (nightmares), questioning, anger, and guilt. Clinicians should try to tailor the intervention to be as developmentally specific as possible. For example, younger children may require more one-to-one time and may need to have more calming activities included such as coloring and use of puppets or storytelling; older children may want to write more or have more discussion. (p. 10)

Having students depict, draw, and write about their thoughts and emotions will generally come across as developmentally specific. Through mark making theory (Simpson, 1998), cognitive theory (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969), and the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 2006), it can be assumed that students typically operate within the realm of their developmental abilities. With refugee children, however, educators may notice a delayed development, in part to disrupted education or trauma. Helping the child uncover the personal crisis they experienced, gradually and in a safe and trusting environment, is the most effective way to facilitate healing (St. Thomas & Johnson, 2007). An important strategy for continuity and healing from trauma in our P-12 schools is, therefore, giving students an opportunity to share their story through school projects and in social settings within the school. Telling and sharing their story with at least one person who will listen is an important part of healing from trauma (Rubin, 2005; Salloum, 2015).

Second category of DEC. The *Ecological Perspective* takes into account both strengths and weaknesses in the child's life, including bi-directional forces (Salloum, 2015). Bi-directional forces are, for example, when the child and his parent(s) or guardians may see situations differently causing



a conflict of thought, suppressed feelings, or low self-esteem. This can happen during meetings with parents or caregivers, meetings with teachers, or case management to address needs of the child's family. Educators can identify student strengths through a variety of assessments available both for free on the Internet and for school purchase for group use. Teaching to students' strengths while helping them have growth in their area of weaknesses is a normal part of teaching. The *Ecological Perspective* is easily adaptable to the school classroom.

Third category of DEC. When examining the *Culturally Relevant Characteristics* of working with the child, it is important for therapists to understand the death and spiritual beliefs of the child's family (Salloum, 2015). Therapists should also, of course, understand the religious and cultural beliefs of the child and their family. In school, Herrera (2016) reports using a document such as a biography card to gather important information. This document can be sent home to parents for completion in order to gather family information. Information provided will assist the teacher in better understanding the family and their culture, beliefs, and values. According to Salloum, it is also important for the therapist to speak the same language as the child if at all possible. While not all newcomer students and their teachers speak the same language, acquiring the language of their welcoming country is of vital importance upon arrival so the essential teacher-student communication can unfold for student learning.

Draw, Discuss, Write, Witness

The GTI Manual uses a strategy called Draw Discuss Write Witness or DDWW to get children to open up, share their feelings through visual and narrative story, examine their feelings, and begin the process of healing from grief and trauma (Salloum, 2015).

Storytelling. GTI places emphasis on story telling as a therapeutic tool for children with stories having a beginning, middle and an end, and explaining the event or story the child is depicting or sharing (Salloum, 2015, p. 12). A therapist or teacher can ask a child what happened in the beginning, what happened next, and how their story ends as an effective way of getting children to draw and explore their thoughts. In therapy settings, children are also encouraged to discuss the worst moment that happened as part of psychological therapy (Salloum, 2015). In the school environment, it is my recommendation to let children share what they feel led to share without leading them to the worst-most horrible-no good day, as Winnie the Pooh might call it. Educators can still plan intelligently and effectively for social-emotional learning, without pushing children to extremes, yet if extremes in students' memories do surface, the school counselor is, of course, an immediate and important resource.

Art, which is commonly used in trauma therapy (Calisch & Hiscox, 1998; Howie, Prasad, Kristel, 2013; Levine & Levine, 1999; Rubin, 2005), is used in GTI in many various ways. In Draw, Discuss, Write, Witness (DDWW) children draw from the prompt, talk about what they drew, write about their visual imagery, and then share their drawing and narrative with someone (Salloum, 2015). This is a more formal list of the methodology of DDWW (Salloum, 2015):

1. **Draw:** Child uses drawing to portray imagery of the identified topic.
2. **Discuss:** Child and clinician discuss the drawing through a clinician-guided exploration including the child's thoughts and feelings about the topic.
3. **Write:** Child, with clinician assistance, writes the story about the topic. The written word provides the adult insight into the child.



4. **Witness:** A caring “outside witness” person and/ or group of people listen to the child’s story while paying attention to and empathetically responding to the child’s emotions. (p. 12-13)

Using GTI research methodology when working with traumatized children can help children develop a sense of safety, manage overwhelming emotions, and make new meaning of their trauma experience (Salloum, 2015). GTI can also impact the child’s behaviors and development. By, including other people from the child’s environment, GTI will work to identify symptoms and address plans for treatment (Salloum, 2015). A lengthy review and investigation of GTI methodology will provide more important strategies for its implementation and give educators a vehicle to begin understanding trauma and the stress it causes in students. The GTI manual contains many worksheets, forms, and drawing exercises for children that directly address trauma.

Project LAST

Continuing to follow the research of Salloum (2008), Project LAST (Loss and Survival Team) was a study conducted on children who were affected by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. Project LAST provided an effective intervention for working with traumatized children. The project lasted ten weeks and was developed for children 7-12 years of age who were experiencing grief because of violence, death, or disaster. Project LAST used DEC as an intervention by utilizing developmentally specific methods, an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1989), and approaches that were culturally relevant.

Three main phases were organized for the ten weeks. The first phase encouraged resilience and safety. The second phase focused on restorative retelling. The third phase facilitated reconnecting (Herman, 1987; Salloum & Overstreet, 2008; Rynearson, 2001). Cognitive behavioral therapy and narrative

therapy were united to address trauma and loss. Change mechanisms were exposure to the trauma through narrative either through drawing, discussing, or writing; encouraging children to express their thoughts and feelings through development of a detailed, coherent narrative; and developing positive coping strategies and attempting to make meaning of loss (Salloum & Overstreet, 2008).

The goals of the study were to inform and educate children about their reactions to grief and trauma, help children express their thought and feelings about their difficult experiences, and to reduce the symptoms of traumatic stress (Salloum & Overstreet, 2008). Through the activities associated with the counseling treatment using art therapy and narrative storytelling, the child participants rated their true expression of what happened through their thoughts and feelings as a 9.1, they rated counseling as helpful with 9.31, and a 9.20 on learning more about grief and trauma. Children were also able to freely comment. Salloum and Overstreet reported various responses from children including (a) one child said the therapeutic intervention helped them get the grief and trauma out of their body, (b) another said it helped them to share their thoughts about who had died and how they had gotten hurt, (c) another child said it helped them stop thinking about the hurricane, (d) and another said they learned they could talk to someone about their problems. Out of the mouths of children, researchers learned once again that sharing and telling their stories through non-threatening, developmentally appropriate, artistic and narrative means, and storytelling helped children heal.

Professional Attributes of Working with Traumatized Children

With an understanding of the developmental abilities, characteristics, and biographies or cultures of students, Salloum (2015) states that the most important aspect of working



with traumatized children is being informed and then being relational. According to Salloum, three main attributes must be present in the clinicians who work with traumatized children:

1. They must enjoy working with children.
2. They must easily develop rapport with children.
3. All intervention must be conducted in a caring, compassionate manner.

When this list of attributes is examined, a parallel can be seen with the description of the modern-day educator, the moral and caring teacher that Landahl (2006) described.

Looking to the Future

By understanding as much as possible about grief and trauma, educators and other volunteers can help the refugee child (and their family) transition from living in the possible darkness of the past to looking forward to the brightness of the future. There are a variety of ways that schools can help with this transition. Community and faith-based organizations are a large part of the resettlement process, as are government agencies. Without hesitation, the refugee families I have interviewed have all said the school became the center of establishing their new life. The welcome and assistance their children received also benefitted the whole family and was of huge benefit. One example is as children learn how to read English, they then can help their non-English speaking parents understand important documents and directions.

No Hesitation in Setting Boundaries

While the caring educator may feel inclined to shower refugee students with extra privileges and sympathy, it's actually best for the child if the teacher sets boundaries as all children need boundaries. Alon and Levine Bar-Yoseph (1994) highlight that the intentional process of tending to children's continuity of understanding needs to happen in a variety of ways. Alon and

Levine Bar-Joseph remind that it is important to get children to develop an understanding of what led to the conflict or crisis imposed upon them and to begin planning for their future. In other words, it is important to talk about their experiences. It is also important to get children to describe experiences until a very clear picture is provided so that these experiences are understood by safe adults who can then help the children process the events. Reframing the situational narrative by the adult helps the child process their understandings—in other words, it helps the student for the safe adult to repeat what the child said and then reframe it in the context of a new, safer life in a safer location. Also, it is important for adults to accept the child's emotional responses to their past or aspects of their new life and school as part of the normal transition towards adaptation and continuity. Finally, all children need guidelines and even boundaries, so clearly presenting positive expectations is also helpful (Johnson & St. Thomas, 2007). Though empathetic to refugee students lived experiences, educators cannot be hesitant to establish norms and boundaries for the students.

The Continuity Principle

For those who survive the in-between and the journey from their place of origin to their place of refuge, a transformation happens, even though orchestrated by the adults in care of children. Omer and Alon (1994) developed *The Continuity Principle*, which basically states that “intervention should be aimed at preserving and restoring continuity that has been disrupted as a result of war” (St. Thomas & Johnson, 2007, p. 59). By creating community in schools with newcomer students and their families, educators can help foster a local continuity principle. Hosting newcomer dinners, parties, or festivals in which newcomers and welcoming students and families share their culture with each other is an example of furthering continuity in the school environment (personal communication, May 8, 2018). Furthermore, *The Continuity Principle* states



that interventions should be built on the child's "existing individual, familial, organizational, and communal (e.g. schools, neighborhood support services) strengths and resources" (St. Thomas & Johnson, 2007, p. 60). This building of community and continuity will ensure more success when working with traumatized children. Alon and Levine Bar-Yoseph (1994) also contend that "every available material, every person, and every event can become therapeutic if used to help a child advance in the direction of bridging some breach in continuity" (p. 59). Research indicates intervention efforts need to be quick and simple by schools that are prepared and ready to offer opportunity for continuity to start immediately, in various ways, for refugee students and their families (Alon & Levine Bar-Yoseph, 1994).

Building Community

By focusing on building community with the student and their family, within the classroom, and from student to student, and from the student to the school, educators can play a significant role in the continuity of life for refugee students. Refugee children I have interviewed have commented repeatedly on family nights and family dinners hosted by their schools and how much these events have meant to their families as they adjust to life in a new place of asylum. "Restoring interpersonal continuity involves establishing or enhancing interpersonal support with significant others" (St. Thomas & Johnson, 2007, p. 60). Social bonds provide the strongest assistance with despair throughout the healing process (St. Thomas & Johnson, 2007). Helping the child rebuild their sense of order and continuity in their new communities and schools will expedite the healing process (St. Thomas & Johnson, 2007).

Conclusion

Running all night through the jungle to safety after seeing your father and sister killed before your own eyes, seeing dead people everywhere you look, being abused and threatened with

knives when you walked home after going to school in a country where you sought asylum, losing your home and friends and all of life's familiarity, facing starvation, being cold and wet from the rain and needing shelter, and burning in the hot sun in need of water are some of the experiences shared with me by refugee children. Some of these children may have experienced horrific violence one week ago, but today they get off a plane in shorts and flip flops on snowy winter days, arriving at their new schools in new and unfamiliar countries, in need of the dedicated attention of caring schools and communities. Refugee children walk the halls of welcoming schools, sit in school cafeterias, and become the friends of welcoming students, and they become important to their teachers, but their stories haunt them and need to be shared and told for healing to happen.

It is imperative that schools examine ways in which educators can receive important trauma sensitive professional development training needed to help these students find freedom from flight within the walls of our schools, starting a hopefully new and happier life, the kind of life that all children have a right to have. This is of vital importance in the school with a large refugee demographic, yet all students will benefit from trauma trained educators and the trauma-sensitive school. Trauma is complicated, scary, messy, and fussy, but it is important for educators to have an understanding of its complexities. As an art educator, I know that the slimy, slurpy, messy art supplies we get all over our hands and move all over the paper, canvas, and other media can be used as a useful tool and step in giving trauma affected students a step in beginning the healing process. The trauma section of this book explores this tenacious journey. As you read about the difficult topic of trauma, keep the innocent and happy vision of the refugee child playing soccer at recess or climbing on the jungle gym at recess in your mind. Healing can happen and educators play an important role in the process to heal. These children have a strength I wish we all had.



About the Author

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Discussion Questions

Use the following questions as helpful inputs into your own meaning making and reflection on the content of this chapter.

1. Do teachers and others have a moral responsibility to help refugee children with trauma?
2. What is trauma?
3. What are the characteristics or symptoms of trauma in children?
4. Are trauma and anxiety the same thing?
5. Have you had any personal experiences with trauma? Describe the situation as you can, how it made you feel, and what steps, if any, you were able to take to overcome the trauma.
6. Do refugee children experience a different kind of trauma than other children?
7. How can interventions like Draw-Discuss-Write-Witness assist in recovery from trauma?
8. Do refugee children in school settings need boundaries? Why or why not? In what situations? What are some examples?
9. Why is continuity important for refugee children?
10. What are some practical practices that you, as an educator or volunteer, could implement during a moment when a refugee or newcomer student was exhibiting symptoms of trauma in your classroom or other setting?

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Spotlight 6

Artolution

Max Frieder and Joel Bergner

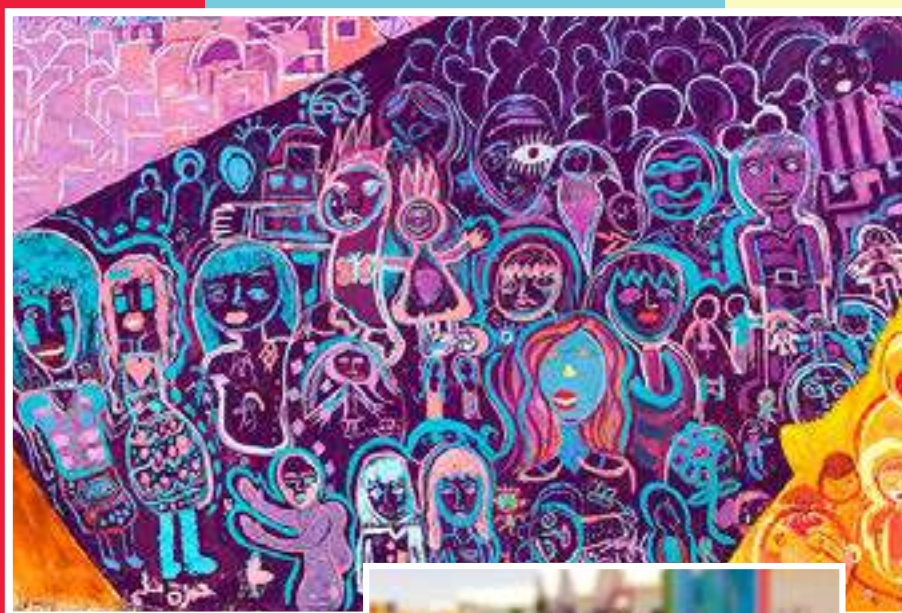


Artolution is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in the state of New York in 2016. Co-Founders/Co-Executive Directors: Max Frieder and Joel Bergner



Artolution is an international, community-based, public art, non-profit organization based in New York City. We believe that the process of creating collaborative art is a powerful tool to bring diverse communities

together in the face of conflict and social exclusion in order to address the trauma and challenges that they face. Artolution has worked in communities across 30 countries globally, implementing over 400 programs since 2009.



Artolution seeks to ignite positive social change through creative, participatory and collaborative art making. Our main objective is to address critical issues related to armed conflict, trauma and social marginalization. We achieve this by cultivating sustainable global initiatives that promote reconciliation, healing, and community empowerment. Some of our partners include:



UNICEF, International Rescue Committee, European Union, Meridian International Center, Park Inn by Radisson Hotels, Norwegian Refugee Council, German Development Cooperation, UNHCR, and the Open Society Foundation.

Additionally, we are continuing to train local artists and educators in our methodology, launching year-round sustainable initiatives in some of the hardest-hit communities across the world, including refugee camps, slum communities, schools and hospitals. By collaborating with local artists, we are able to help even more youth on a regular basis.

See the brilliant and meaningful work that Artolution is doing around the world at the following sites:

Website: www.artolution.org

Instagram: @Artolution

Facebook: Artolution

Twitter: @ArtolutionOrg

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzzOabSCGdtzs1jja9GdGpw>





Chapter 7

The Globalization of Trauma and the Impact on Education: Trauma, Brain Development, and Strategies

Dr. Judy Hughey

Introduction

Given the current prevalence of trauma in our United States society, it is estimated over half of all youth in America will experience one or more traumatic events during their life (Nader & Fletcher, 2014), making trauma a significant public health issue in the United States. Although not all youth who experience traumatic events will be diagnosed with a mental illness or experience long-term trauma symptoms, all could benefit from counseling to help the healing process (Kress,

Paylo, & Stargell, 2019; Kress, Moorhead, & Zoldan, 2015). It is estimated that one in five students sitting in P-12 classrooms today, both welcoming students and newcomers, may struggle with a mental illness and twenty percent of children and adolescents between ages of 13 and 18 live with a mental health condition (NAMI, 2017).

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC, 2017):

- In 2016, more than 1,750 children died in the United States from abuse and neglect.
- According to child protective service agencies, about 676,000 children were victims of child abuse or neglect in 2016, although this number likely underestimates the true occurrence.
- One in four children have experienced abuse or neglect at some point in their lives and one in seven experienced abuse or neglect in the past year.
- The total lifetime cost associated with just one year of confirmed cases of child abuse or neglect is \$124 billion.
- In addition, millions of youth are affected by natural or human-made disasters varying in time from seconds to years (Masten & Narayan, 2012).

Trauma impacts the human brain, especially a developing brain, in cognitive and affective functioning. The exposure to traumatic events can affect the brain's ability to emotionally regulate and engage in self-control, perceive and evaluate self-concept and self-efficacy, and effectively problem solve. Mood and emotions could be compared to a ride on a rollercoaster. Poor impulse and behavior control present multiple challenges to youth forming and maintaining peer relationships and friendships. Educators a better understanding of the brain's complexity will find it easier to meet the needs of newcomer students. The next section summarizes the basics of brain development.



“The exposure to traumatic events can affect the brain’s ability to emotionally regulate and engage in self-control, perceive and evaluate self-concept and self-efficacy, and effectively problem solve.”



Brain Development

The human brain is perhaps considered to be the most amazing organ in the body, the most studied, and yet least understood (Luke, 2016). It could be considered the first organic and most advanced computer responsible for cognitive, affective and behavioral functioning. Brain imaging has allowed detailed access and pictures to the never before seen components and functions of the brain. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) allows physicians and researchers to see blood flow within the brain as individuals complete cognitive tasks (Woolfolk, 2019). Although much of the brain develops before birth, brain organization and neural systems continue to grow and become more functional until approximately the age of 25. The prefrontal lobe is the last to completely develop. The brain “prunes” the neural connections as exposed by external stimuli emphasizing the importance of positive interactions and bonding experiences (Child Mind Institute, 2018).

Regions of the Brain

The lower regions of the brain, hindbrain and midbrain, closest to the spinal cord are the first to develop. The most primitive of the brain, hindbrain, includes the pons, cerebellum, medulla, and reticular structures responsible for sleep, arousal, motor movements, respiration, heart rate, blood pressure, and all vital life functions. The midbrain includes colliculus for visual and auditory processing, which assimilates movements, and glands that control emotions, rewarding effects and seasonal rhythms. The upper region of the brain, forebrain, includes the cerebral cortex, home of the higher-order, abstract critical thinking and decision-making mental processing. It is in the cerebral cortex where goal setting and problem-solving processes occur (Garrett, 2011; Luke, 2016; Woolfolk, 2019).



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Lobes of the Brain

There are also four lobes in the human brain, each with independent functions. The lobe in the cerebral cortex of specific concern related to traumatic events during development is the prefrontal lobe found in the front of the brain. The prefrontal lobe, as noted earlier, is the last part of the brain to full develop and is responsible for reasoning, decision-making, thinking, judgment, and abstract cognitive processes (Woolfolk, 2019). This part of the brain shares controls with the limbic system for emotions, motivation, novelty, risk-taking, sensation-seeking, self-regulation, and impulse control. The limbic system becomes more active during adolescence. Increased activity of the limbic system is correlated to the concept of “imaginary audience” (Elkind, 1981); the feeling that everyone is watching or staring at the adolescent. The “imaginary audience” increases the sensitivity to the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors related to self-esteem and self-efficacy. During adolescence, there is sometimes a conflict between an individual’s chronological age and cognitive or developmental age. This is particularly true when an individual has experienced trauma impacting



development. An adolescent might have the physical appearance and/or chronological age of a young adult, however, with a much less developed prefrontal lobe. Considering refugee children who perhaps have had limbic cell communication disrupted, in extreme cases behaviors could appear as aggressive or self-destructive. Brain activity influenced by trauma and that impacts cognitive functioning and emotional control creates fearful and challenging times for youth and their families.

Activation According to Stimuli

Perry (2017) reports that the brain is most receptive to environmental stimuli and input in early childhood stages. Brain development is sequential beginning with the bottom sections and moves up to the more complex regions. The brain and the electrical impulses generated by neurons and neural connections, or synapses are user-influenced and stimulated by individual experiences. The body continues to produce new neurons, neurogenesis, into adulthood (Koehl & Abrous, 2011; Woolfolk, 2019). The brain is activated and develops according to the experiences to which it is exposed. Stimulating environments are key to experience-dependent processes involved in engaging the brain in new activities for enhanced development. Extreme deprivation of stimulating environments appears to have significant impact on human brain development (Woolfolk, 2019). “It’s estimated that in the first few years of life, your brain forms from 700 to 1,000 neural connections every second. And these connections form the foundation for further brain development” (Harley, 2018, p.1). If a child experiences trauma or stress, the neural pathways may not form in the most-healthy manner and may actually be damaged.

The human brain has plasticity or adaptability and develops as it receives outside stimuli. The brain of a young child is more receptive to outside stimuli or plastic. Evidence of this

neuroplasticity is the ability of a young child to compensate or learn a new approach versus an older student or adult (Woolfolk, 2019). Educators can be thankful for the brain’s ability to form new neural connections, perhaps not completely undoing the effects of trauma; and, creating a safe and healthy climate conducive for growing minds. Adaptive thinking is a cognitive process conducive to a positive growth mindset and development of resiliency skills (Dweck, 2017).

The Brain and Trauma

The biology of the brain produces energy for a reaction in the face of trauma. Trauma sends the brain to a survival center state and prepares for the responses from the automatic nervous system (ANS). The ANS is comprised of the primary systems of sympathetic and parasympathetic that are connected to the brain with the neural patterns of activity pivotal to the body’s response to trauma. The sympathetic system is responsible for the fight, flight, or freeze response and the body’s release of cortisol. The parasympathetic system supports relaxation and digestion. (Schwartz, 2016). These two systems work in tandem in a rhythmic alternation that helps to support the body’s ability to sleep, digest, and immune system functioning. Trauma disrupts the rhythmic balance of the nervous system and the body responds by allowing the neurobiology (biological) protection mechanism including scales of dissociation. Perry (2016) reported individuals in the midst of trauma and feeling threatened, engage in the freeze-fight responses, sending cortisol to the frontal cortex, the executive center, of the brain signaling it to shut down. The executive center of the brain is responsible for the cognitive functioning skills classified by Piaget as formal operations which includes logic, empathy, compassion, creativity, self-regulation, and self-awareness, sequential thought, attention, and problem-solving skills (Woolfolk, 2019).



The middle brain or limbic brain is the next brain section to stop functioning. The middle brain serves as the emotional center processing the capacity for nurturing, caring, memory, fear, rage, social bonding, separation anxiety, and hormone control (Downing, nd). Because individuals with attachment trauma often feel threatened and find it difficult to trust others, relationships are seen and felt as menacing.

Trauma

The CDC (2017) reported that the greater the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) score and toxic stress can disrupt early brain development, harm the nervous and immune systems, and place youth at risk for future violence, unhealthy physical and emotional behaviors, and limited academic and career success throughout a lifetime. The American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed., (DSM-5, 2013) reported the three most common diagnoses of traumatic events as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), acute stress disorder, and adjustment disorder (Cavaiola & Colford, 2018). Recognizing that traumatic crisis definitions vary slightly among groups, a summary definition for this chapter is the perception of a challenging event that



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exceeds the individual's capacity and resources for successfully addressing in a positive manner (James & Gilliland, 2017). Traumatic events are the exposure to a trauma and can be inclusive of natural disasters, mass violence, transportation/vehicle accidents, fires, assault, rape, partner violence, torture, war, animal attacks, and child abuse (Briere & Scott, 2015). The variability of the traumatic event or level of the crisis depends on the cognitive interpretation or appraisal of situation by the individual (Caplan, 1964). Caplan (1964) believed in assessing ego functioning and teaching clients crisis coping and resilience strategies. Because seeing events through his/her own lens, it is the perception of the event that results in a personalized interpretation and leads to decisions for actions. A traumatic event is associated with a time for making critical decisions. The confusion or chaos felt in the midst of a crisis creates a challenging environment for effective problem-solving and positive decision-making.

Feelings of anger, anxiety, stress, guilt, complicate coping and resiliency strategies during times of trauma and crisis. During times of strong emotions, depression, and anxiety, individuals are sometimes unable to function at the same high caliber of success (Kleepies, 2009; Poland & McCormick, 1999). Trauma and a feeling of crisis can also be stirred within a person when an event brings feelings of shock and distress about the disruption of one's life cycle and not to the disruption itself (James & Gilliland, 2017). The results of traumatic events for youth may generally include lack of food, safety, sense of belonging, self-esteem, and self-efficacy; grief and loss from parental/spouse/partner death or divorce; personal or parental physical or mental illness; family member or friend death-by-suicide; drug, alcohol, or other addiction; sexual violence/other assault and abuse; PTSD; all types of bullying; natural disasters; and other factors on the ACE scale.



Refugee Children and Trauma

Refugee children have often been exposed to a variety of global disaster situations.

These situations can include observation of mass violence or terror unlike their peers and most adults can imagine. The images imprinted in the minds of the children have been shown to contribute to a significantly greater susceptibility to mental illness and developmental delays (Kress, et al., 2019; Felix, You, & Canino, 2013). Refugee children, while possibly masking on the outside, carry disturbing images in their brains.



For refugee children experiencing complex type 2 trauma, which can involve separation from a home and community environment and often separation from family or siblings, the emotional response can often be more serious. Common youth reactions in type 2 traumas include anxiety, terror, guilt, shock, irritability, hostility, disbelief, sadness, grief, and depression (American Psychological Association, 2008; Nader & Fletcher, 2014). Educators may also observe students experiencing memory impairments, confusion, difficulty concentrating, struggling with low self-efficacy and self-esteem, and a lack of self-regulation. Reactions associated with complex type 2 trauma, and, specifically the environments of some refugee children are as follows:

Cognitive

- Disbelief
- Inability to concentrate
- Impaired decision-making process
- Memory impairments

Nightmares and intrusive thoughts or memories

Self-blame

Confusion and uncertainty

Dissociation

Physical

Insomnia or difficulty with sleep

Bedwetting

Change in appetite

Hyperarousal

Increased response to loud or unexpected noises

Unexplained pain, fatigue, headaches

Interpersonal

Social isolation or desire to socially withdraw

Increased relational conflict

Impaired academic performance

Distrust of others including peers and adults

Feeling of abandonment

Emotional

Shock

Anger

Sadness and grief

Guilt

Negative outlook

Loss of pleasure

(Kress, et al., 2019; National Center for PTSD, 2010)

Implications of emotional distress. As the emotional distress is disrupting the neuron synapses and normal experience levels, a child's brain is also forming irrational beliefs regarding identity, community, world, and relationships. Reactions to grief and loss complicate these matters further, obstructing positive progress toward development of healthy



resiliency and coping skills, hope and self-efficacy, cognitive development and intelligence, and self-esteem (Kress, et al., 2019; Masten & Narayan, 2012).

The extent to which development is affected by the trauma is impacted by a number of factors. These include:

- The child's age and developmental status
- Type of trauma
- Frequency, duration, and severity
- Relationships involved in the trauma
- Resiliency and other protective factors
- Positive relationship with significant adult role model outside of the family
- Access to educational opportunities
- Identification of skills and strengths (Cavaiola & Colford, 2018; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2014; Mash & Dosois, 2003; Shaffer, 2012; Weis, 2008).

As a result of the youth trauma and associated lack of brain development, the magnitude on society is seen in physical, psychological, behavioral, cognitive, and social effects (Cavaiola & Colford, 2018). Childhood trauma including the crisis events of displaced children anywhere in our world is tragic and consequences are the development of critical public health challenges (Fang, Brown, Florence, & Mercy, 2012; James & Gilliland, 2017). The traumas experienced by children when separated from their homes or families are made worse when the child perceives a threat to the parent(s) or caregiver (James & Gilliland, 2017). Normal brain development involves one learning from mistakes, becoming skilled at problem solving, developing a decision-making model, having emotional awareness, and mastering distress and self-regulatory processes (Underwood & Dailey, 2017). Youth involved in trauma, as with

refugee children, often experience roadblocks to their normal developmental transitions through puberty, adolescence, and early adulthood increasing the incidences of physical and mental health issues.

Consequences of Traumatic Events

The consequences of traumatic events are multiple lifelong outcomes impacting physical and mental development (Shonkoff & Garner, 2012). Because these events prevent the brain from the experience necessary for neurons and neuronal synapses to occur, the brain does not develop and grow in a normal developmental manner. The brain of a child during trauma is in a state of fear-related activation. Consequences of brain-related trauma in refugee children include experiencing cognitive delays, learning challenges, expressive language issues, mental health concerns, lack of development of satisfactory social relationships, multiple health issues, lack of successful academic completion, and limited productive career functioning (Felliti & Anda, 2009; Tarullo, 2012; Widom, Czaja, Bentley, & Johnson, 2012).

Complex Trauma

Complex trauma is distinguished from other types of trauma often considered developmental and occurring over a period of time. Complex trauma is described as cumulative, prolonged, and generally occurs within a child's birth family during developmental years (Kress, et al., 2019). Because this is the time the brain is activated by experiences to grow and develop, the child's learning and self-discovery are impaired. Due to the trauma on the brain, a child may develop deficiency gaps in academic, social-emotional, and behavioral skills including the ability to regulate resulting in engagement of unhealthy coping skills, difficulty with processing information accurately, low self-concept and feelings of shame and guilt, lacking filters and impulse control, and difficulty forming peer friendships



and functioning successfully in team problem-based projects (Margolin & Vickerman, 2007; van der Kolk, 2005).

Complex trauma can lead to homelessness, deprivation, severe poverty; physical, sexual, or emotional neglect and abuse; domestic violence; isolation due to race, religion, culture, or sexual/gender identity (Terrasi & Crain De Galarce, 2017). Several, although certainly not all, of the sources of complex trauma are consistent with environments of refugee children. More than half of children in public schools have faced traumatic events and one in six has struggled with a complex traumatic event (Felitti & Anda, 2009). Natural responses to sudden threat or fear manifest themselves as *flight, fear, or freeze*.

Flight: The “flight” response describes the students who try to escape anxiety and the uncomfortable or problem situation. Students in “flight” might be viewed as disruptive or avoidant attempting strategies to avoid feelings including leaving class, hiding in closets, under stairs, or desks; or running from the building. Characteristics of students in the “flight” response mode include restless legs, shallow breathing, darting eyes, nervous mannerisms, and possibly excessive exercise (Downing, nd).

Fight: The fight response is demonstrated by students who struggle to maintain power. Behaviors are associated with homicidal or suicidal thoughts; nausea and burning stomach; and, use of explosive language and metaphors. The behaviors tend to be visible and may include stomping, kicking, crying, clutching fists, glaring eyes, flexed jaw, and grinding teeth. These students are often labeled as non-compliant, angry, or aggressive (Downing, nd).

Freezing: The freezing response is a defensive state of no movement and total silence. Feelings associated with the

freezing stage include a sense of anxiety of the anticipated negative event, decreased heart rate, holding breath, feeling cold, and too heavy to move.

Perry (2016) describes the importance of rhythm in understanding brain stem networks and cortical responses. Chronic stress and fear creates a neurobiological reaction resulting in long-term harm to one’s physical and cognitive health (Terrasi & Crain de Galarce, 2017). Lacoë (2013) reported the significant negative impact of stress on children and adolescents impeding cognitive development and, thus, academic success. In addition, Lacoë (2013) shared the detrimental impact on social relationships with these students having difficulty trusting peers enough to develop and maintain healthy relationships. Most realize the connection between physical health and cognitive functioning. Behaviors alerting educators to complex trauma issues include cognitive distortions, engaging in extreme behaviors, being hypervigilant, perceiving everyone as a potential threat, and presenting an appearance of being obstinate, defiant, or disinterested.

Educators Perspective and Best Practice

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN, 2008) reported that children are influenced by their birth parents and the environment in which they are nurtured. If that environment is perceived to be traumatic and/or toxic, physical, mental, behavioral, and cognitive development can be impaired (Underwood & Dailey, 2017). According to Erikson’s (1980) Psychosocial Theory of Development individuals progress through life cycles searching for self-identity, competence, and meaning in relationships and career by passing through eight stages of psychosocial development. Each stage has an emphasis on individual needs and their connection to the culture, relationships with others, and goals for the future. Should an event occur that disrupts development during one



of the eight stages, it continues to be an issue until a resolution occurs and the lasting impact is felt and their view of society and self are influenced (Woolfolk, 2019). If a trauma is not resolved, the issue becomes integrated into the identity of the individual and recovery becomes a more complex and lengthier process. Trauma can impact development and create behavioral and cognitive issues, and has a major influence on academic achievement and success in school and life (Figley, 1988). Research documented the influence of past experiences on expectations and perceptions of current and future experiences (Woolfolk, 2019). The development of positive relationships between teachers and students is significantly related to academic motivation and academic achievement (Allen, 2013; Chapman, 2013; Murdock & Miller, 2003). Reconciling, processing, and sharing past experiences may be difficult or complicated for certain youth involved in traumatic events. Refugee children are an example of a group that could find it challenging to rely on memories and lessons learned from previous educational experiences due to both the manifestations of trauma and disrupted education.

The disruptions to education and gaps in one's knowledge base and skillset are caused by frequent moves, inconsistent access to school, and wide variance in the quality of the instructional content, and can negatively impact school success and peer relationships (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). The gaps in one's self-knowledge and understanding of personal history can result in a lack of a sense of belonging and difficulty with an ability to develop connected relationships (both identified by Maslow as deficiency needs) with teachers and peers (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). The refugee child is no stranger to gaps.

Acculturation

Acculturation into an environment drastically different than one is accustomed presents an array of challenges for students

and teachers. Language barriers are an additional hindering factor in acculturation. If students have not been exposed to the language of instruction and the spoken language of their peers, mastery of content and friendships can be more difficult and require more time to achieve. Interruptions in schooling opportunities that have occurred due to or influenced by conflict or socio-economic status impact students' self-concept and self-efficacy, thus, also affecting acculturation. The caliber, delivery, and format of the previous instruction impacts cognitive and social interactions in school. As refugee students acclimate to their new schools and communities, the educational pedagogy from any previous classrooms may influence how they engage in the new environment (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). When introduced to a mainstream constructivism classroom where students are expected to express their voice, problem solve, and actively participate, students may resist or be fearful to share their thoughts. This is the reason quality newcomer programs and the ESOL home-base are highly important for the refugee student. The perspective or lens of each individual learner is different due to one's own experience and development.

Educational Acquisition

The lenses of refugee youth are often unique, and consequently can result in unexpected and atypical responses and behaviors than teachers might expect. Refugee children and other youth of similar circumstances often do not have the instruction nor do they have the advantage of previous observational learning in student-centered pedagogy, such as project-based or problem-based learning activities, teaming and shared group responsibility assignments, and perhaps most importantly, the permission and expectation of students to ask questions and be self-directed (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). Student responses and behaviors or lack thereof, the resistance to engage and interact in class activities and discussions, can be misunderstood



by teachers and peers. However, most refugee students will acclimate well into loving, sensitive school classrooms and environments prepared for their needs. The resiliency of children is evident in the joy refugee children often feel in being able to safely and peacefully learn to read, write, and work to improve their futures (Crawley, 2018).

The fear of misunderstandings and the ramifications from misunderstandings are two reasons youth are resistant to participate in class discussions and engage in social interactions (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). A child or adolescent who has experienced a traumatic event or lived in a trauma environment could possess the resiliency and coping skills to function at a level not fully meeting the DSM 5 criteria for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), but still exhibit concerning and problematic behaviors in the classroom and school environment. Educators may observe students with emotional and behavioral dysregulation, evidence of impairment in the regulation of systemic processes including conduct disorders, aggressive tendencies, and anger management (Underwood & Dailey, 2017). These academic and social challenges are not exclusive to refugee students. Other youth who may also experience these challenges include children of migrant workers, those without a permanent home identified as homeless, and others who experience a major or frequent change in locations due to violence or job requirements.

Potential Misinterpretation of Behaviors

Teachers unaware or unprepared to address the refugee experience, and the experience of other trauma affected students, could understandably misinterpret these behaviors for classroom disruptions to learning. The relationships between emotional, social-emotional, cognitive development, and traumatic crisis events appear to be challenging for 21st century educators and society. Becoming trauma informed is a key component to developing trusting relationships and creating

a positive learning environment and climate for this diverse group of learners. Creating a climate of acceptance and safety helps to provide a foundation for learning and platform for experiencing new connections and opportunities. It is through this safe environment that a student can begin to heal, develop new self-regulation processes, address problematic transition symptoms, and feel prepared and ready to progress into future chapters in life.

Trust

Children who are victims of persistent loss or disruptions in relationships, may find it challenging to develop trust and if severe enough are at risk for Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) based on Bowlby's (1980) Attachment Theory. Underwood and Dailey (2017) explained Bowlby's theory as the earliest primary relationship that forms the basis for emotional and cognitive processes, "organizes brain structure, and ultimately is critical for optimal development" (p. 53). Because attachment is critical to optimal development and some refugee children and others in this select group may have been deprived of the opportunity to emotionally bond with a birth parent or caregiver responsible for creating a feeling of safety, protection, and attention to basic human needs, and patterns of attachment are impacted. Children form attachment styles with cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses based on the parenting style. Children in this group attempt to protect themselves by refusing to initiate or respond physically or emotionally to a caregiver, adopted parent, teacher, or counselor. They present manifestations of being emotionally withdrawn, lack of empathy, and flat affect with occasional episodes of anger and sadness.

Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1982) is specifically relevant to refugee children because the foundational premise is that humans develop deep emotional attachment bonds with parent(s) from birth due to an evolutionary adaptation that



protects infants and provides an environment of safety and security. This environment of a close physical bonding contact with parent(s) creates a nurturing and caring climate and enhances physical, emotional, and cognitive development (Bowlby, 1969, 1980, 1982, 1988; James & Gilliland, 2017). A further implication to the development of refugee children, is the making meaning component of Attachment Theory. Making meaning is related to the stories children hear from their parents about their lives, families, and experiences. The affect and emotion shared in these stories are powerful tools to help children attach to their parents. For children who have experienced traumatic crisis events, such as leaving a homeland, the impact of listening to parents' stories may help children make sense of events, providing children with an adaptive framework for thinking about the event.

Educator support. Caring educators help and support students, families, and staff who face potentially traumatic events every day. These events include a lack of deficiency and being needs on Maslow's Hierarchy. Although based on individual traits, generally the higher an ACE score, the greater the likelihood a teacher will see disorganization, dysfunction, and obstacles to successful problem solving, described by Caplan (1964) as one of the first to define a crisis theory. A crisis begins with a traumatic event for which an individual often feels unprepared and lack of control. The mental state during traumatic crisis is often identified as disequilibrium, a "lack or destruction of emotional stability, balance, or poise in the organism" (James & Gilliland, 2017, p. 48). The individual demonstrates disequilibrium panic, catastrophic, and a defeated attitude. Educators who understand this will be able to better serve their students in a trauma-sensitive environment. Children experiencing type II trauma may intentionally avoid discussing their past to the point they "forget" major components of their childhood (Terr, 1995). These identity gaps often lead to a lack of empathy, inability to identify feelings

and emotions, and avoidance of trust and intimacy which can pose problems in the P-12 classroom. As a result, educators should strive to implement strategies and interventions in a caring, non-judgmental, and empathic manner designed to give students a sense of empowerment and control, specifically to address the shame, guilt, and fear (James & Gilliland, 2017). A healthy, happy, and stable individual functions with an equilibrium, a "state of mental or emotional stability, balance, or poise in the organism" (James & Gilliland, 2017, p. 48). Educators who work to help students be healthy, optimistic problem-solvers by providing a safe climate of trauma-informed practices will see greater academic success in their students.

Conclusion

School climate, encompassing educator attitude, strategies, and family outreach, serve as protective factors for students who have experienced traumatic events. Learning can then be enhanced in the school environment with a climate perceived to be safe, accepting, and encouraging. To support all students reaching their maximum academic, career, and social-emotional potential, teachers and students must work together to create a positive climate within their classrooms where the focus is on strength-based practices, clear communication of expectations, and consistent setting and enforcement of rules and boundaries.

About the Author

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See the following links for more information:

<https://changingmindsnow.org/healing>

<http://childtrauma.org/>



<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/early-childhood-trauma>

https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture/>

<https://www.steampoweredfamily.com/category/brains/>

Questions for Further Discussion

Use the following questions as helpful inputs into your own meaning making and reflection on the content of this chapter.

1. How does the content regarding the prevalence of trauma among students inform your classroom practice?
2. What situations during the school day have the potential to activate your stress response system?
3. What situations are more likely to activate the stress response in your students?
4. How might students demonstrate the “fight, flight, or freeze” response?
5. What behavioral policies and protocols might you implement in your classroom to address the “fight, flight, or freeze” responses?
6. What academic strategies or modifications could you implement in your classroom to address the “fight, flight, or freeze” responses?
7. How might the content regarding stress response inform your classroom practice and interactions with students and parents?

8. How does teaching with a trauma informed lens change your perception for all students and families?
9. Does teaching with a trauma informed lens change your interactions and advocacy for students and families? If so, how?
10. What strategies designed to empower and communicate high expectations within a physically and emotionally safe environment could be integrated into your classroom curriculum and pedagogy?

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Spotlight 7

Partnerships for Trauma Recovery

Leah Spelman

Partnerships for Trauma Recovery (PTR) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to healing trauma among international survivors of human rights abuses, offering psychological and psychosocial care for refugees and asylum seekers from a broad diversity of countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Our Mosaic Healing Center is based in Berkeley, California, and our organization was launched in 2015 to address the tremendous need for mental health care among those who were forcibly displaced from their homes, communities and countries as a consequence of war, torture, interpersonal violence, and persecution due to identity and beliefs. In just a few years, PTR has

provided globally trauma informed, culturally responsive and linguistically accessible psychological care and case management for nearly 300 survivors in the San Francisco Bay Area coming from over 35 countries around the world.



International survivors of human rights abuses experience significant stressors associated with forced displacement, exile and resettlement, immigration status, post-traumatic anxiety and depression, traumatic loss and grief, poverty, and extensive cultural and linguistic barriers. With a multidisciplinary approach to trauma healing, PTR provides individual, family, group and community support to help survivors rebuild their lives. We strive to work holistically to address the emotional, social, medical and legal needs of survivors who have endured extensive trauma, along with a myriad of losses involving identity, relationships and community. Our approach integrates psychological and psychosocial care, and emphasizes the flexibility of interventions and the adaptation of services to effectively counter stigma, build trust, and support overall safety.



We strive to adjust our approaches to most effectively meet the needs of highly diverse international survivors. This includes close attention to cultural diversity, and contextual differences among our clients, and between our clients and ourselves. Our program continuously addresses the critical importance of cultural awareness, sensitivity and humility among providers. PTR offers a specialized yearlong clinical training program for doctoral students in clinical psychology, helping build capacity to effectively serve global populations both in the immediate and longer-term.



An essential component of PTR's mission is to provide access to care for survivors who are not able to communicate in English. Along with our multilingual staff and clinical interns, we work closely with mental health interpreters, our Refugee Voices team. Thanks to this linguistic diversity, the organization has had the capacity to offer services in over 25 languages.

PTR primarily serves adults, but up to a third of our clients are children and youth. PTR provides group-based support at Oakland International High School (OIHS) where we have facilitated three support groups in Arabic for Yemeni and Syrian youth, and a skill-building group for Ethiopian and Eritrean boys in Amharic and Tigrinya. We are planning the launch of a Spanish-speaking support group for Central American youth.



Read more about PTR here:

 www.traumapartners.org





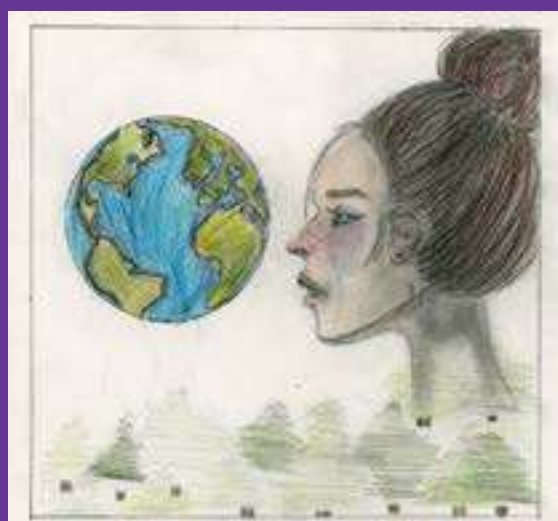
Chapter 8

Defining Trauma in the Classroom: Insight for Educators

Dr. Sally Adnams Jones

Introduction

One of the many skills educators need today is the compassionate inclusion of students from around the world into their learning communities. As our culture becomes more global, diversity becomes a fact of contemporary classrooms. With this shift, comes a need for educators to be better informed about the journey students have taken to arrive at our classroom door. For many students in our care, this journey may include a variety of traumas, and refugee students in particular may have experienced flight, loss, grief, deprivation, dislocation, dispossession, and abuse (physical, emotional, and sexual). Educators need to understand the nature of both change and trauma, and how to help students resolve these



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difficult experiences, which, if not processed, may impact and impede their future learning.

These sometimes-hidden aspects of our students’ identities need to be acknowledged in order for students to fully integrate. Both the student and the educator needs to honour the complete history of the student in order for the student to heal, move forward, become more resilient, and be open to new learning.



If the students’ story remains silenced, trauma may remain unprocessed, resulting in invisibility and shame. Parts of who they are will remain hidden or denied, in a community that cannot fully see them, due to their own privileged protection from trauma. In compassionate, inclusive classrooms, educators can role model presence within these difficult stories, and refugee students can then have opportunities to express their full identities if they so wish. Once the educator is comfortable with understanding trauma, the students’ full experience is no longer dissociated from the learning community. In time, they can be fully seen and heard for their unique and profound histories to the extent that they wish this. It is my belief that creative self-expression is the antidote to trauma in the classroom, and that both trauma and creativity are innate to us all, and work together for healing. What is sustained internally through suffering is cured through self-expression and compassionate witnessing.



For those who have survived hotspots of intense social emergency, time spent in refugee camps often means formal education has been temporarily stalled, so it is understandable that educators might, at first, place priority on catching up academic content. However, opportunities for self-expression should run alongside the process of learning content. Because a stressed mind cannot absorb any new information it is imperative that the trauma is acknowledged and released, so that new learning can occur.

This chapter focuses on defining trauma, and then includes some suggestions on how to best accommodate and resolve trauma.

Defining Trauma

Simply put, trauma usually includes difficult changes in one's circumstances that cannot be immediately integrated into the psyche. The human body deals with danger in a particular order. During times of stress, it prioritizes the external world — where immediate danger might exist — over the internal world, of processing that dangerous event. This is a helpful, adaptive mechanism that has evolved for us to survive immediate threat or overwhelm, but what this also means is that processing the painful change gets delayed until such time as the external world once again becomes safe and there are some emotional resources to deal with the trauma. If danger is long term and chronic, however, our brain can get into the habit of focusing only on the external world, or hyper-vigilance, and if we cannot relax deeply enough to process the painful experience, it gets stuck in a holding pattern. In this way, avoiding our internal world of feelings, or having a delayed emotional response, temporarily protects us, but can become habitual, resulting in trauma. Simply put, it is the stuck processing of feelings, not the pain itself, that results in trauma. Healing trauma requires unsticking the pain and engaging in empowering activities.

Most People Experience Difficulty

Most of us will experience powerlessness and changes in our lives at some point, such as the loss of a loved family member, or a friend. Many of us too, will experience the loss of other significant support structures in our lives, such as the loss of a marriage, our health, possessions, home, safety, country, employment, language or status. Change, and the resulting losses, can result in disorientation, dislocation, dispossession and disconnection — some of the more common side effects of the challenges in our world today. These are pervasive experiences of vulnerability for many people, and not only for those who might be defined as living on the front lines of global disaster. We are, in fact, all survivors of some change-loss or another, with varying degrees of severity and complexity. However, many of us will never experience the overwhelming intensity of the sudden and simultaneous loss of everything that we once understood to be ours, including our identity, meaning, relationships and possessions — all at once. This intense level of complex change that refugees experience — the loss of all intersecting support structures, often all at the same time — is not an everyday occurrence for most of us. Our privilege generally insulates us from this depth of suffering and vulnerability. So, educators need to be aware that some of our students may have experienced way more than we have in their young lives. Normally, as educational leaders, we imagine the reverse to usually be true.

The world crisis. As our planet flirts with existential crises, people find themselves more frequently on the move — escaping war, genocide, fundamentalism, pandemic, tsunami, earthquake or climate change. These survivors may face layer upon layer of loss, including the disappearance of everything with which they once identified — their home and their possessions, their family, their role in their community, their country. Who they are, who they love, what they own, and where they live and belong are sometimes all lost overnight.



This is unimaginable for most of us. Luckily, there are some methods and practices available to help teachers better understand the lives of their students, and which can also help students better integrate their own experiences through creative actions.

Shock, numbness, and powerlessness. The simultaneous loss of identity, meaning, relationships and possessions, can at first be experienced as a deep shock, numbness and feelings of powerlessness. Over time this can be followed by pain, grief, anger, anxiety or chronic depression. To complicate matters, those who experience such depth of loss can also sometimes lose their articulation around the experience — the words to describe such a shattering experience can be hard to find. How does one process such layered trauma, so deep and wide that it includes the loss of everything once held familiar, understood and loved by us, including our words? Disconnection may occur as a response to this overwhelm, and even gaps in memory. It may be surprising to know, though, that by accessing our creativity, words can be found, feelings of agency can return, and trauma can be alleviated. Survivors of this level of trauma can in fact come back from such intense events through self-expression, and in some cases, can even go on to flourish, with the support and understanding of informed educators.

Refugees and Trauma

Although educators of refugees are never expected to be students' counselors or the students' parent (who may also be overwhelmed by their own trauma and depression as they grieve their own losses, find shelter and work, try to feed their children, and learn a new language), educators do need to understand the nature of trauma in order to become vital, stable, and consistent adult figures within the refugee child's sphere of influence. As the student transitions into a new life, his or her progress can be greatly enhanced by the

teacher's own comfort level with pain, deep feelings, and the acknowledgement of profound stories. To the extent that the educator is uncomfortable with his or her own feelings around pain and vulnerability, or with trauma in general, this can either impede or hasten the students own healing, and integration into the new learning community. If the teacher dissociates from his own feelings, so might the students in the classroom.

Distinction Between Migrants and Refugees

First of all, let's distinguish here between migrants and refugees. Without reducing people and their trauma to cold statistics and theories, refugees are a specific subset of migrants. The World Health Organization further defines a refugee as "a person who, owing to the well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (WHO, 2018). This is a different experience from someone wishing to immigrate legally with a visa and a container of household possessions to another country as a legal immigrant. Without denying that this kind of migration also involves intense loss and complex trauma, refugees experience these things at a much more overwhelming level.

My Own Immigrant Experience

I first became interested in healing trauma through noninvasive, creative interventions after my own immigrant experience. Although I was fleeing violence and civil disruption, I did arrive in a new country as a migrant, not as a refugee, which implies a certain amount of legal privilege, compared with other designations. However, like many migrants, I was impacted by grief, depression, a certain amount of deprivation, and the loss of my own culture and loved ones. Although I had



avoided living in the no-man's-land limbo of a refugee camp, I was suddenly a status-less-stranger in a new land, without any relevant past, unable to vote, or find work. For a while, I suffered from a loss of belonging, meaning and identity, and for many years I experienced a sense of cultural isolation and a loss of *voice*. Chronic long-term loss can change a person's brain chemistry (Rosenthal, 2015; Van der Kolk, 2014) and so, as a result, like many immigrants, I experienced a period of major depression — my body's response to my own trauma. Kirmayer et al. (2011) suggest “the task of preventing, recognizing and appropriately treating common mental health problems in primary care is complicated for immigrants and refugees because of differences in language, culture, patterns of seeking help and ways of coping” (p. 959). However, as I slowly adjusted to my new country, and rebuilt a new identity I found ways to heal my own trauma, including through the expressive arts.

Activation of creativity awakened me. I observed that as my creativity was activated, I began to come alive, and began to feel the joy of self-expression return with new insights and connections. My capacity to relate to others and the world improved. As I wrote and painted my own story, I felt *seen and heard* again. I became more vocal and therefore more self-determining and self-advocating. As I accessed my imagination, I felt myself relax out of stress, and begin to build new meanings for myself, which Frankl (2006), as a survivor of the Nazi death camps, suggests is the basic skill necessary for survival of any deep trauma. As I began to read more widely on the topic of the expressive arts as a healing mechanism, I discovered that other artists, activists, educators and therapists were also beginning to discover the capacity of the arts to be a kind of medicine for trauma (London, 1989, 1992; Malchiodi, 2007, 2012; McNiff, 1992, 1998, 2004). I then took formal PhD studies in how creativity can transform deep traumas (Adnams Jones, 2016, 2018).

Trauma and Our Bodies and Minds

Simply put, we experience trauma because we are sentient beings — we can *feel*. Let's begin by exploring how trauma arises in all of our bodies and minds. All multicellular organisms, including mammals, have developed an intricate nervous system. Our own human body has nerve endings that send chemical signals to our brains, which allows us to constantly *read* our environment for safety. In this way our bodies and brains *talk* to each other through biofeedback, guiding us to move toward that which is pleasurable and good for us, and away from that which is painful or bad for us. Pleasure and pain are therefore important neurological messaging systems, conditioning us to either repeat, or change, our actions and circumstances.

The Emergence of Pain

Let's focus now on pain, as it is pain that can become stuck or traumatic. Pain can be felt on a sliding scale of intensity, from a slight disturbance, to discomfort, to pain, to agony. This intensification, either emotional or physical, usually peaks, and then passes, for example during childbirth, and few are traumatized by this passing wave of pain with a relatively short duration. When the wave of pain is long and chronic, or we resist feeling the pain due to its overwhelming nature, our processing of it can get *stuck*, and it can become trauma. We will look at how this happens in more depth. First, let's take a brief look at the history of our understanding and definition of trauma, which has deepened and broadened over time.

The involvement of stress. In the early 1900's Pierre Janet (1907) first explored stress and how people could dissociate from it. He called it an illness where people were not fully alive or present. Freud explored hysteria and repression caused by stress. Funded studies of stress, however, only really began in depth with the survivors of the Holocaust and the Vietnam



War. Studies also began when it was first understood that those who had experienced stress were no longer thought of as morally weak or sick, as they once were, but rather as injured, traumatized, and in need of healing (Adnams Jones, 2018). In other words, we first learned about trauma, resilience, and adaptability from the experience of survivors, such as those from the Holocaust and Vietnam War, and we continue in this tradition today.

When Stress Transitions into Trauma

In 1994 the American Psychiatric Association first defined posttraumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, as resulting from “an event that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others, and which involved fear, helplessness, or horror” (Joseph, 2012, np). However, this definition framed trauma as occurring only in helpless people, which is now thought to be a very limited view of PTSD. Therapists now understand that ALL life events have the potential to be perceived as traumatic (or not), and the extent of the trauma is influenced by two things: a) people’s support systems, and b) their levels of vulnerability (Joseph, 2012). Events can affect us all differently and can be viewed as potentially traumatic for some and not for others. It is important to note that our resilience, perception and support determines the amount of trauma we experience, not the pain itself, or the event. In other words, educators who help reframe perceptions and help empower students can be of great support in building resilience to trauma. The American Psychological Society defines trauma as

... an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape or natural disaster. Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships and even physical symptoms like



headaches or nausea. While these feelings are normal, some people have difficulty moving on with their lives. (APA, 2017, np)

Refugees are survivors of events such as war, violent assault, abuse (emotional, physical or sexual), loss, grief, dislocation, deprivation, famine, health issues, and the environment. An inventory of losses can include language, culture, community, family, freedom, rights, home, job, agency, and belongings. Most people would struggle with just one of these losses at any one time. This level of multilayered loss, coupled with circumstances that require external focus on survival rather than on the internal processing of any grief, can result in deep trauma. However, educators should note that trauma can be subtler than these obvious losses or abuses. The Center for Nonviolence and Social Justice (CNSJ) suggests that trauma also refers to experiences that are distressing, including separation and discrimination, and that for some groups of people, trauma can occur frequently, becoming part of the common human experience of some students in our classrooms:

In addition to terrifying events such as violence and assault, we suggest that relatively more subtle and insidious forms of trauma – such as discrimination,



racism, oppression and poverty—are pervasive, and when experienced chronically have a cumulative impact that can be fundamentally life altering. Particular forms of trauma ...are directly related to chronic fear and anxiety with serious long-term effects on health and other life outcomes. (CNSJ, 2014, p. 1)

Trauma is real. Trauma is not imagined, nor is it a sign of weakness. Trauma is ubiquitously possible to experience and can be emotional, physiological and biological. Trauma occurs when our bodies get stuck in hyper-arousal (vigilance, over-reactivity, or nightmares) or in hypo-arousal (numbing out, isolation, or depression) so that an appropriate level of emotional response is inaccessible. Bessel van der Kolk (2015) suggests trauma can disturb hormones, circuits, sensorimotor systems, what we think about, and how we think it. van der Kolk states, “all traumatized people get stuck in the past. They are attached to an unsurmountable obstacle” (2017, np). Minds are hijacked by the only significant thing — the past incident. The present seems bleak. They feel disconnected and are afraid to feel their feelings. They cannot pay attention, they do not feel fully alive, and have little sense of meaning. They experience a failure of interpersonal safety and reciprocity. They also feel ashamed for what has happened to them, or for their lack of power over their circumstances. Most critically for educators, because survivors can be stuck in certain maladapted patterns of thought and physiology, they cannot accumulate new experiences from which to learn more adaptive responses to life.

Childhood Trauma

Children are particularly vulnerable to trauma as their brains are so impressionable. Some refugee children have never known life outside of a camp. Some were born there, and waited many years for successful asylum in a new host country. Some doctors

(Anda et al, 2005) now believe accumulated adverse childhood experiences (known as ACEs) can be considered traumatic, as they affect the developing brain quite significantly. ACEs are linked to social and health outcomes later in adulthood.

Early childhood trauma. A study conducted by Anda et al. (2005) developed an inventory of early childhood traumas, including: a) early separation from parental figures; b) physical, sexual, or emotional abuse; c) physical or emotional neglect; d) whether a mother was treated violently; e) whether there was household substance abuse; f) illness; g) parental divorce; and h) and the incarceration of a household member. This study concluded that childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on future attachment, violence, victimization, perpetration, lifelong health, and opportunity. Early developmental experiences are now understood to be an important public health and educational issue. As such, the younger the child, the more impact the trauma can have on future learning and outcomes.

Whether a single acute incident or a chronic background, trauma is a pattern of response that becomes fixed in our implicit memory, especially in the early, preverbal years, due to the combination of the intensity of the painful moment(s) and the arousal of the nervous system, whereby the event becomes part of our later responses to life. Responses to perceived danger can become wired into our nervous systems through a hyper-reactive amygdala, which tends to keep our nervous systems in the fight-and-flight response longer than necessary, or arouses the fight-and-flight (sympathetic) nervous response more quickly than it ought. Arousal becomes chronic and easily triggered and the wear and tear upon human bodies through the perpetual activation of cortisol and adrenalin becomes detrimental. Stress hormones, when chronically released over the long-term due to perceived dangers and hard-wired responses, are detrimental to thoughts, internal organs, and



learning capacities. As survivors of trauma re-enact these subconscious patterns, their neuronal pathways wire together over time and trauma can therefore also be enacted forward into the classroom, into families, into adulthood, and into the next generation, through memory, physiology and subconscious patterning.

Students with trauma can lose self-awareness. The critical thing for educators to know about trauma is that when students are stuck in a subjective experience, they can lose their ability to be self-aware or find language around the event. They can have a delayed emotional response. This means they might dissociate, lose focus, regress, be inappropriate or become inarticulate, a kind of freeze response, instead of fight or flight. They cannot create the narrative that might help them get distance between the original event and the present circumstances. They cannot become the observer of the present moment, or the witness of themselves and their responses. When someone has been scared speechless and can't find the words to describe what happened, they cannot organise their experiences or find a sense of linear history — the before, during and after of the traumatic event. They can lose their sense of a self-in-time, and the past can dominate their consciousness. But Levine (2010) suggests, "Trauma is a fact of life, but it doesn't have to be a life sentence" (p. xiii). Tedeschi and Calhoun (2016) have extensively pioneered the idea that transformation can and does occur post-traumatically. They call this post traumatic growth. That trauma survivors can grow is a very positive understanding for educators who are in a position to help. Original trauma can be reframed into a new story with more adaptive responses and perceptions. Compassionate witnessing of the old story, and reframing it into a new story that emphasises survival, resilience, and a better future, while holding and honouring the very real victimhood and suffering of the past, can aid in resolving the trauma.

The Educator and the Refugee Child

When fleeing a violent global situation refugees lose a sense of belonging to their previous communities. As people are usually considered to be members of a family, an ethnic group, a gender, a race, a religion, a political system, etc., forced diasporas often result in loss of memberships, which can be viewed as both personal and political trauma. Our group memberships impact our lives and our destinies, and are part of our psychic structures, which shore up our identities, meanings, and beliefs. Change-events that deeply affect refugee students can be considered to be both micro traumas (personal suffering) and macro traumas (socio-political fall-out) that affect *belonging*.

Change Can be Difficult

It is also important for educators to understand how refugees have had to live with dramatic change not of their own choice. Change itself is a neutral process, intrinsic to the universe, that can be sudden or slow, large or small, intense or gentle, detrimental or helpful, but which is often beyond our control. Change can affect our physiologies and psyches. The three questions are: a) can we *observe* the disruption to our habituation, b) can we *integrate* the change, and c) then can we *adapt* healthily to the new situation. Integration requires we turn the subjective experience into something we can observe, name, and tell. Observation and articulation are key to the distancing needed for healing, which, said another way, is to include the traumatic experience into one's awareness, but then transcend it. From years of research in how people heal from trauma, I have observed that self-expression as a key mechanism for reaching a level of objectification of any change-event and the healthy integration of a full spectrum of emotions.



Change can be used for good. Change can also be positive when it is delivered in structured, manageable, integratable doses. This kind of change, offered in carefully titrated doses, we call learning. People can then learn to manage the intensity we call pain, and the resulting hyper- or hypo-arousal and self soothe back to balance. Students can learn to create new, more adaptive memories, beliefs, and brain wiring. In this way, classrooms can deliver post-traumatic growth and transformation. Normal everyday challenges, such as a job loss, failing an exam, losing a tooth, or being sued helps us grow in resilience, and most people learn how to cope with these events. But there are also more intense events, such as rape, witnessing a murder, being in a war, or immigrating, and being displaced, which can be overwhelming to the nervous system, and from which it takes time to recover. Processing these events can be so painful that integration can sometimes stall, but we cannot heal without allowing ourselves to feel.

Forced into dislocation. Many migrants, and particularly refugees, are dislocated not by choice, but by force of circumstance well beyond their control and it is often this loss of control that forms part of the trauma. It seems that vulnerability is inversely related to the amount of control one has over one's life and is one of the causal factors as to whether pain becomes trauma. It is the lack of control that rocks our entire world and results in chronic feelings of disease, danger, impotence or shame. Educators can help recovery from such devastating events by restoring a measure of agency and control – by offering daily small tasks in the classroom that are guaranteed to have successful outcomes for the survivor.

Adaptation to Change and Temporary Pain

Just as temporary pain does not, in and of itself, cause trauma, neither does temporary change or temporary lack of control. Change is actually an essential aspect of our evolution. It is

more the rate of change or the feelings of chronic impotence that can be problematic, including the lack of support we might feel during the change. Historically, if change has been too rapid, aggressive, or complex, species have become extinct, as their physical biology and mental conditioning are unable to adapt rapidly enough in order to evolve and survive. When change is too rapid, or too slow, species can become vulnerable. Grizzly bears, for example, are presently struggling to adapt to the rapid rate of change in their territories, with newly built highways cutting through customary breeding grounds and resources. Coral reefs are struggling to survive in water temperatures that have changed too rapidly for them to adapt, leading to bleaching, and death. Adaptation to change is an essential skill for survival of any traumatic change-event, but adaptation takes both time and learning, both critical aspects of survival that implicate the educator.

The Origin of our Learning

To sum up, it is the nervous systems *overwhelm* at the rate of change in an environment that can be traumatizing and because it is *learning* that helps the brain adapt, our roles as educators become critical. Our foremost learning is generally from our mothers, about what nourishes us. Our second most learning is usually from our fathers about how to defend ourselves and face up to competition. Then comes learning from our teachers, who play a vital role in helping us learn about the world beyond our family and beyond our limited ethnic, gendered and religious group memberships. Our teachers help us understand that we belong to a planet as a whole, not just our small communities of self-interest.

Complexity of Being Human

As social, pack animals, we need supportive psychic structures to survive and thrive through our ongoing micro and macro traumas. Humans are complex, social creatures who need



more than physical resources to thrive. Like the old adage says ‘man cannot live by bread alone’ — we also require identity, meaning, membership, and purpose in order to flourish. We are also perhaps the only animal prepared to fight not only for our resources and territory, but also for our beliefs — such as ethnic ideologies or religious fundamentalisms. Educators can role model for survivors of this particular kind of violence how multiple perspectives can be held respectfully, that diverse opinions count, that all ethnicities are appreciated, and that all genders are deeply and equally valued. Educators can help student survivors understand that it is possible to move beyond a pattern of *survival of the fittest*, or survival of just *my group*, to survival of *our whole planet*. In the contemporary classroom, educators can stretch students into bigger pictures, into more inclusive paradigms, and into holding multiple perspectives. Educators can role model compassionate emotional intelligence, whereby we appreciate diversity, take care of our weak and vulnerable, and support others to learn how to become more resilient to change.

Despite new understandings that healthy identities are fluid (Gee, 2000), humans seem to get stuck in ever-more entrenched identities, beliefs, and meanings. We build fixed identities that we believe need to be stable, singular and defended. When rigid ideas of who we are suddenly break down, we can experience intense disorientation. To avoid this, we develop our capacity to protect ourselves from inevitable change. We defend our outmoded identities in ever more habitual and sophisticated ways. When these support structures fall precipitously away due to war, climate change, pandemic, tsunami, earthquake or famine, the big question is, how do people adapt and find new identities?

Finding new meanings. Frankl (2006) suggested that beyond the search for pleasure, and the avoidance of pain, man survives by finding meaning, in an apparently meaningless



universe. The ability to create new meaning is considered the number one skill for resilience and survival. Luckily, we humans are remarkably adaptable, a quality that has greatly contributed to our success and the explosion of our species. Educators can help students recover from trauma by finding new meanings in a richly resourced and secure classroom, and by building a sense of belonging to the learning community.

Using Creativity to Build Meaning and Belonging

Let’s look now at how creativity in particular can help with building meaning, identity, belonging and resilience. Best practices for this include the expressive arts. Unlike the rhino or tiger that are becoming extinct, humans are essentially creative and have multiple forms of intelligence. We have developed a kind of multi-literate capacity for expressing ourselves that no other animal has. We have devised various symbolic languages, including text, numbers, and images, as ways to transmit, learn and replicate meanings. Because of our talent for literacy, we can learn to process information, as well as change, faster than any other creature.



The Benefits of Transformation

Our capacity for literacy and self-expression can be viewed as an adaptive evolutionary asset, within a geo-political context of continual change. We are traumatized when our interior world cannot keep up with the rate of change in our outside world, so let's take a closer look now at the nature of how trauma can be transformed through the expressive arts. I use the word *transform* deliberately, as it includes more than the adaptive processes of *learning* (the central focus of education). Transformation also includes *healing* (the central focus of psychology); and *evolving* (one of the central foci of consciousness studies, science, and biology). In this way the past, present and future integrate fluidly into a more adapted identity – a process called transformation.

The Expressive Arts as a Tool for Intervention

The expressive arts are one of the practices I advocate as a helpful non-invasive transformative intervention for trauma (Adnams Jones, 2016, 2018) that can assist people to move from *being stuck in the past* into post-traumatic growth, including a more adapted identity. This occurs when we bring our implicit memories into the explicit, when we bring the unconscious into our consciousness and release it, creating psychic space for something new. The expressive arts help survivors find words around traumatic events that can otherwise remain inarticulate and stuck. *Moving traumatic subjective experiences into a more objective view, by expressing them out of the body into the world, is how trauma is released and psychic space freed up.* This is the number one healing mechanism — as old identities, meanings,



and purposes fall away, it is critical to articulate new ones into existence. This is an expressive process known as *transformation*. Through creative self expression we clean off the old hard-drive, making room for more data.

The expressive arts can transform students on many levels:

- a) Help sooth arousal;
- b) process emotions;
- c) develop opportunities for witnessing the self and its responses;
- d) change neuronal patterning;
- e) develop more adaptive perspectives;
- f) liberate private interior worlds into the shared communal.

Together these things break cycles of personal, social or intergenerational trauma. The expressive arts help students develop emotional intelligence and hold multiple perspectives. They help vulnerable people empower themselves. Through autobiographical storying, students can release grief, hurt, anger, shame, and let go of limiting perspectives and habits so that *managed change* can happen slowly and safely. The arts, which include writing, visual art, performance, dance, and music, can help to integrate the trauma that has occurred in our brains and bodies, either from early arousal, chronic, long-term exposure, or from an



overwhelming sudden event that has resulted in psychic freeze-up. Healing is simply unblocking — psychic movement of painful stories that are held in the body and mind, and shared with a compassionate other.

Move, Make, and Meditate

Simply put, to heal deeply embodied trauma and reinvigorate flattened, depressed energy, I find a curriculum that includes these three things really helps: *Move, Make, Meditate*. In other words, through movement, you allow the trauma to release from where it is held within your beliefs or within your muscle memory; by regularly making something new and self expressing, you get in touch with your innate creativity and agency; through mindfulness and breathing practices, you learn to come into the present moment and become more self regulated and aware. By feeling and grieving that which is stuck, you release it. These are the skills that, over time, can rewire a traumatized brain and release old pain stored in the memory of mind and muscle. Self-expression heals, and together, these three skills of *Move, Make and Meditate* can empower survivors on the road towards recovery and self-actualization.

Happy chemicals rewire depleted brains. In this way, educators can arouse positive responses (such as awareness and creativity) and soothe negative responses (caused by a hyper-vigilant amygdala). This restoration of balance through mindful play and joy is essential. Repetitive gestures, such as the arm and hand movements required for ball games, yoga, tai chi, dance, painting, carving, needlework, etc., induce slower brainwaves, thus helping us come *down* from the hyper-arousal of beta brainwaves into alpha or theta, where students can think more coherently and there is pleasure felt in the body. Happy chemicals rewire depleted brains. By inspiring students, educators can help them come *up* from hypo-arousal and into a more open, energetic frame of mind, able to feel new

responses to life. Careful programming that looks like play to the untrained eye, but which would include a compassionately witnessed biographical narrative that is paced and dosed is an optimal curriculum for student health and integration. Children, who have had to become adults way too early in order to survive life, can once again be children, and heal through creative playful, imaginative, and expressive tasks.

Conclusion

Human beings are complex creatures who experience pain, change, and trauma, but we can also be transformed through learning and finding new meaning. By moving, making, meditating, and other interventions, the human brain can recover from trauma.

Read more about Dr. Sally Adnams Jones at:

 <http://sallyadnamsjones.com>

About the Author

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Discussion Questions

Use the following questions as helpful inputs into your own meaning making and reflection on the content of this chapter.

1. What happens if a student's trauma remains silenced?
2. What happens to the body and soul if trauma is long term, chronic, and *stuck processing* occurs?



3. In order to heal trauma, what are some processes of *unsticking* the pain and engaging in empowering activities?
4. Physiologically and psychologically, how do our bodies and brains talk to each other?
5. Explain hyper-arousal and hypo-arousal.
6. What is the overwhelm rate of change and how does the rate of change affect trauma?
7. The ability to create new meaning is considered the number one skill for resilience and survival. How can educators help students with trauma find new meaning?
8. The term *transform* includes the adaptive processes of *learning* (the central focus of education), *healing* (the central focus of psychology); and *evolving* (one of the central foci of consciousness studies, science, and biology). How can teachers and other educators help refugee children and other traumatized children transform?
9. We create psychic space for something else when we bring our implicit memories into the explicit, when we bring the unconscious into our consciousness and release it. The expressive arts help survivors find words around traumatic events that can otherwise remain inarticulate and stuck. Moving traumatic subjective experiences into a more objective view, by expressing them out of the body into the world, is how trauma is released and psychic space is freed up. List three specific activities that a teacher or educator could implement in class or other setting with children to give all children a way to “create a space for something” other than that which is causing them anxiety.
10. How does body movement, such as through dance and exercise, affect the brain?

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**Spotlight 8****Poetry of Refugees and Immigrants****Trina Harlow**

School curriculum can and should include the study and writing of poetry. Poetry can be taught during language arts lessons or any subject where there is focus on reading and writing. Poetry also can find a place in non-traditional content areas such as science or math. The fine arts content areas also lend a productive and meaningful environment for students to write and use poetry.

Poetry can be used to teach content, add to themes and celebrations, and add to the depth of project development. Poetry can be an important tool for incorporating social emotional learning, which includes focus on goal setting, learning to feel and show empathy for others, establishing positive and healthy relationships, and making good and responsible decisions (Options for Youth, 2016).

There are a variety of deeper reasons to teach poetry. “Research has shown that poetry motivates children to read, builds phonemic awareness and builds essential skills like vocabulary, fluency, expression, and writing” (Olsen, 2017). Poetry helps students build fluency in reading by hearing rhythms and rhyme, seeing words, hearing words, and saying words, by using repetition, by practicing phonics and letter sounds, by learning and using various grammar skills, by focusing on writing structure, by building listening skills, and by expanding the kinds of texts and materials that students read. Students also make meaning and connections by visualizing what they read and by discussing the meaning of poems.

The literacy aspect of incorporating poems into learning gives students a way to say what is inside of them, what they want or need to get outside of themselves, and what they feel the need to express. Poetry can also help students build vocabulary, and this is especially helpful with English language learners or students learning the language most used in their school environment. By learning that poems have sections or components, students also learn to build their writing skills, as they think about and choose the right words to use.

Supporters of using poetry contend that the use of poetry should begin at the same time students are learning to write. By using simple poetry structures first, the teacher can help build writing skills through the use of rhyme and prose. Another highly useful benefit of using poetry in the classroom is building students’ creative thinking. As we learned from Dr. Elliot Eisner, through the incorporation of the arts, children are given an environment to say things that may be difficult for them to say. In essence, art making gives students words. Poetry functions in this same way. Whereby traditional writing may focus on structure, grammar, and content, poetry can be a dance of words that portray thoughts and feelings in more lyrical types of ways, sharing emotion and thoughts almost effortlessly on the paper. Through the use of poetry, we can also build a love of reading in children.

Poetry is especially helpful when working with refugee and newcomer students as a platform to help them write their thoughts, feelings, and emotions, to share their stories, remember the past, and think about the future. Through the writing of poetry, refugee students tell their stories. An internet search of “refugee poetry” or “refugee poetry for students” will reveal many websites and thousands of poems, with many of these poems written by refugees themselves.





MENU



SPOTLIGHT



There is a now famous poem written by Somali-British poet, Warsan Shire. Shire grew up in London and was chosen as London's 2014 first Young Poet Laureate. In the poem, the poet writes of leaving home when home is like a shark's mouth, only running from home with all the other members of your community are also running, and that crawling under fences and getting in boats is only done when the land you have been living in is no longer safe. The poem, which reflects the trauma, heartbreak, and horror of being a refugee, can be read in its entirety at the link below. The web link also has an audio link with Canadian actress Yanna McIntosh reciting the poem. Teachers should use caution and should decide if the entire poem is appropriate for the age of students in the classroom. The poem is most likely more suitable for high school teachers, yet all teachers should preview the poem before sharing. Elementary and middle school teachers may find passages from the poem they would like to use, rather than using the whole poem.

This is the link to the poem and audiocast:

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thesundayedition/let-them-in-where-s-the-poetry-in-politics-what-is-the-middle-class-trump-and-the-know-nothings-1.3223214/no-one-puts-their-children-in-a-boat-unless-1.3224831>

This is a link to more information about poet, Warsan Shire:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/warsan-shire>

Another important work of poetry is a book called, *England-Poems From a School*, edited by Kate Clanchy (2018). Clanchy is a teacher at Oxford Spires Academy, a small comprehensive school in London where students speak over 30 languages, and where there is a special emphasis — poetry. Students at the school and Clanchy have won many awards, been the subject of

documentary by BBC Radio 3, and have appeared in the Guardian. All of the student poets in the book are from immigrant families, some of whom are refugees. Despite the name Oxford attached to the school, the school is a poverty stricken school in an industrial part of the city, far away from the famous spires of Oxford University.



Clanchy believes that the main reason the students' poems are so good is that collectively the small school believes their poems will be good. Clanchy and her work with students writing award-winning, expressive, meaningful poetry reveals that when educators have elevated and motivational expectations, students often rise to meet those expectations. Many of the students write of difficult experiences in their lives and Clanchy states:

That locked-down period may be painful, but it feeds the inner voice. I think it may also account for the musicality of so many of these poems: unlike adults, children can learn another language without an accent, because their ears and brains are still open to all the sounds and rhythms of another speech... (p. xv-xvi).



Children write of hiding under beds and breathing the dusty air of war, of not remembering the view from the hills by their house or the taste of dates and jackfruit, of being homesick for the smell of spices in the market but noticing the sky is also blue where they now live, of not inheriting their mother's language or her childhood chores, and of once being part of a community but now feeling like a number. The poems in the book by the students at Oxford Spires Academy will inform educators and students about life as an immigrant and refugee.

The poems will inspire, possibly hurt, and evoke meaning. Within the selection of nearly 70 pages of poetry, poems can be found for use with all ages of students. In the following video, Shukria Rezaei, an eighteen-year-old refugee and immigrant from Afghanistan and a student at OSA, shares her experiences at the school, about the Forward Arts Foundation Studentship award she received for her poetry, and reads her poem about her nest falling apart. She also explains what poetry has done for her and how it can change students' lives:



Video: *Shukria Rezaei*
(Forward Arts Foundation)

The publisher will give a small portion of the sales of this book of poetry to First Story and Forward Arts Foundation, both of which support the work of Clanchy at OSA.



Finally, *What They Took With Them* is a unique resource of rhythmic poetry, produced by UNHCR, in which actors Cate Blanchett, Keira Knightley, Juliet Stevenson, Peter Capaldi, Stanley Tucci, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Kit Harington, Douglas Booth, Jesse Eisenberg and Neil Gaiman do a dramatic poetry presentation of the one thing that people took with them when they had to flee in the moment they became displaced, when they became refugees. The video can be seen here and is a good classroom resource for older students:



Video: *What They Took With Them*
(UNHCR)

The poem transitions from tangible items that real people took with them when they fled to a grateful expression of those intangible items they were able to escape with — their children, sister, brother, wife, husband, with their smile, with their life.

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Chapter 9

Transforming Trauma in the Classroom: Creative Practices for Educators

Dr. Sally Adnams Jones

Introduction

The refugee student has taken a profound journey, leaving the familiar to join an unknown classroom in an unfamiliar place. One of the most critical factors for an educator to keep in mind is the possible culture shock for a refugee who may have fled a more traditional culture or culture much different than their welcoming country. Western educators, who are habituated to certain freedoms, risk not being aware of how sudden freedom can cause re-traumatization for a refugee student. For example, this may be the first time the student may have experienced the possibility of individualism, or being treated as an equal — if they come from a culture where there are entrenched hierarchies or community is valued over the individual. This



“To enter the highly competitive fray of discourse jockeying in such a loud world, silence needs to be overcome and emerging voices need to be nurtured out of silence. Voices are developed in safe spaces through learning expressive skills.”

may be the first time they have encountered freedom of speech or gender equity. For example, asserting the ‘I’ pronoun can be intimidating for some students and can take time to get used to. It is important for the educator to remember to use the teaching strategies of dosing and pacing, giving students small tasks that they can be successful with and building to larger tasks. The expressive arts are critical for building a sense of self and an ability to articulate interior worlds, uniqueness, individualism, asserting personal preferences and values, or intrinsic responses. This chapter examines the use of the arts as a pedagogical tool when working with refugee students and other traumatized children.



The Value of the Expressive Arts

Feige (2010) suggests the arts are a practical, reflexive practice that can “change our understandings, our ways of seeing, hearing and behaving, our ways of narrating aspects of our lives” (p. 139). The arts have been and continue to be central to our documentation processes as human beings, as well as a tool for more complex social messaging. Fleming (2010) lists other functions of the arts as providing “cultural heritage, personal growth, training in functional skills, development of creativity and imagination, understanding of the human condition, problem solving, and the development of empathy” (p. 59). Pure embellishment has rarely been the only purpose of the arts. Significantly in the past fifty years or so, the



arts have begun to serve growth, learning, and therapeutic purposes for the deliberate evolution of our consciousness. Carl Jung was one of the first therapists in the West to recognize art's healing capacity (Jung, 1970, 1971), although many now recognize this (Malchiodi, 2006, 2012; McNiff, 1992, 2004). The arts are also understood to be one of the final stages in the self-actualizing process as the creative capacity separates us from animals (Maslow, 1954; May, 1978, 1994). The arts can now be seen as a practice for change (Naidus, 2009), social engagement, (Goldbard, 2006), public health (White, 2009), and empowerment (Adnams Jones, 2016, 2018). I prefer to integrate all these meanings and simply refer to *transformation* through creativity (Adnams Jones, 2016, 2018).

Transformation Through the Arts

So how do we as human beings transform through the arts? The arts allow us to tell our story through a visual, textual or performative medium and it is *this* that heals us. Arnheim (1966) describes this process as the external manifestation of the internal — the “physical manifestation of psychical processes” (p. 63). London (1989) asks, “how can we come before life with no intermediaries and bear witness to our own experience?... We can tell our own story if we can be candid, simple, and unflinching. This is the ground of the arts” (p. 54). We can *art-iculate* our experiences by the making of creative metaphors. Stories told in words, images, gestures, or rhythms are powerful ways to communicate directly from the subconscious, making conscious the unconscious material held in our implicit memory that holds the patterns of our thinking, our trauma, and our responses. The arts are especially helpful forms of self-expression for those whose stories have been silenced — where voices may have once been repressed by those in power or during the shock or freeze phase immediately following deep trauma and when there can sometimes be no mental access to words. Images, dance, gestures, and rhythms

are a kind of universal language beyond words, understood by all ages, genders and ethnicities, a gentle way to thaw out our frozen and tightly held stories.

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

In this view, we learn as we heal, and we heal as we learn, and by doing creative activities consciously, we evolve into deeper expressive capacities, self-advocacy and a new resilience. Provencal and Gabora (2007) suggest that there is “convincing evidence of the relationship between the creation of art and the therapeutic transformation of the self.” They refer to the film, *Art Has Many Faces*, which states there is a “magic power of the image” for example, that serves to reaffirm the age-old saying that “a picture is worth a thousand words” (quoted in Provencal & Gabora, 2007, p. 255). The power of images lies in their ability to “access places that talk cannot reach” (p. 255).

Power of the Metaphor

We now understand that the creation of metaphors is a safe way to process stories of all kinds that can heal. As we represent reality in ways that otherwise cannot be grasped, we body-forth our experiences and move the trauma out of our bodies into culture, where the stories can be seen, shared, witnessed, honoured, reframed, and released. Creations of metaphors help move us towards deeper understandings and wider, more inclusive perspectives, and more organized and complex thinking (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The arts move us into deeper articulations of our realities.

Telling Our Biographies Through Identity Work

So how do we use this understanding of creative knowledge production to practice and facilitate transformations, and to build curricula in the classroom? There is no one way to employ innate human creativity for transformation. In fact, there are several approaches (Adnams Jones, 2018), but the



central component is the healing narrative — telling our biography — metaphoric representations of the student and his or her history, context, identity, and challenges. Identity work is the core healing mechanism for building strong, adaptable selves. Other core practices focus on learning to advocate for oneself — communicating ideas, making a political comment, or taking a stand, in order to clarify one's meaning, or position in life — and to make social change, spread new awareness, and create new memes. This is particularly empowering for those who have felt the lack of agency during trauma.



Meditational Approach to Teaching

Some educators use the arts as *memory work*. Provencal and Gabora (2007) note that the arts “can help painful memories surface to a place where they can be faced and released” (p. 256). Other more meditational approaches to the arts tend to use patterning — the creation of geometric shapes (such as mandalas), or repetitive, mindful, soothing gestures such as brush strokes or carving gestures, or tapestry stitching or rhythmic movement, all which can help bring practitioners out of a state of hyper-vigilance and can lead to more meditative states with students, an ecstatic mental emptiness, beyond any thought with symbols all together. With this approach, we experience ourselves in a formless, expanded sense of self, that is very relaxing. The recent trend of adult colouring books for example serves this purpose of soothing anxiety through rhythmic activity, much like Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing therapy (EMDR), tapping, or hemispheric balancing.

Creating a Field of Resonance

There is no one, right way to facilitate transformation through expressive identity work. But when defended boundaries between the self and the *other* are breached, the arts can be viewed as *heart-work* and *bridge-building*, which are *cross-border* practices. McNiff (1998) notes “When we make analogies between artistic experiences and our lives, the images help us see patterns and themes ...it elicits stories from us... the perceptual form evokes a corresponding sense of structure within otherwise undifferentiated life experiences” (p. 102). In all these approaches, by externalizing our internal world through the arts, there are some central mechanisms for transformation — including unblocking our self-expression, sharing our different and unique perspectives, finding a voice, creating meanings, and reaching out to community. The metaphor has the potential to create intimacy with others. Private interior lives and identities are, in this way, translated into art forms, which create a field of resonance. The *others* that witness or resonate with the art-form then belong to a field of resonance, or a circle of meaning. In this way, the artist is seen and heard by those who receive, empathize with, or even resist the new meaning and provoke debate. We can paint, stitch, carve, dance, drum, and write ourselves into *being*, then into our *communities* and then into action. The arts build agency and empowerment in a widening field of resonance. We bridge our interior world into the social world and into political change through the arts. This is how we evolve our culture into a deeper, more intimate, more inclusive way of *being* with each other.

New World of Meaning

In this transformative process of creating something out of nothing, we learn to exert a new control over our lives, to build new meaning, which is particularly important for refugees. Dissanayake (1992) believes that the reason



the arts are transformative is because they allow us to “order, shape, and control at least a piece of the world” (p. 83). We can even learn to take control of our meaning-making, which is the skill Frankl (2006) suggested is critical to any resilience. London (1989) suggests “by shifting our concerns from trying to make the beautiful thing, to seeking the honest and the meaningful thing, ...the paralyzing self-consciousness ...is diminished, ...and we nurture our ...uniquely human quest for establishing new meaning in a possibly meaningful universe” (p. 20).



Honesty and Vulnerability to Dig Deep

In a world that can sometimes seem rather bleak, Rollo May (1994) suggests it is our job to “struggle with the meaninglessness and silence of the world” (p. 89). This takes enormous courage as it requires honesty and vulnerability to dig deep, reveal our nakedness, and our possible traumas, which might appear at first glance to be individual to the artist, but which are often shared communally. In this way, we realize we are not alone. Our boundaries become porous. The personal and intimate is then revealed to be both social and political, and even universal. By touching below the individual story, we tap into the shared human, storied experience.

The articulation of meaning is not easy for humans, and in fact is impossible without symbols or metaphors – words, images or gestures of some kind. Without these, we are trapped and isolated. London (1989) suggests that, “Having created a metaphor within which your meaning resides, you have made that thing called art. You did what you had to do to bear witness to the things you know. That’s all” (pp. 18–19).

In this deceptively simple act of continually bearing witness to what we know, the transformative process is activated. *The human body-mind becomes not only the site of trauma but also the site of healing, learning, and evolution.* Transformation of trauma through the arts is therefore both somatic (in the body and mind complex) and semantic (has meaning in language and logic). Through the deceptively simple and childlike act of being creative, psychological traumas, ruptures, overwhelms or freeze-overs can be repaired in the psyche and in society, and discernment and empathy can be developed. “The task is accomplished largely by ...the capacity for feeling” (Arnheim, 1966, p. 314) and imagination.

Emptying the Psychic Containers of our Bodies

Transformation occurs through catharsis, as well as through beauty and community. The arts are a safe and healthy acting out of energy into an aesthetic form. As students externalize their pain, pleasure, meanings, and identities, it relieves tension and isolation, but the reverse is also true. Not expressing ourselves is repressive of our tension, identity, and meanings. This repression creates blockages, and so we accumulate layers of trauma and patterned stress. Cutting off the normal human impulse to express can re-traumatize. *It is important for educators to understand that our bodies and minds are psychic containers that need to be emptied regularly of our accumulations.* If we do not express outwards, trauma becomes a stuck pattern of behaviour, which can be acted out in compulsive, destructive, harmful ways rather than in constructive, creative, aesthetic ways.

Distanciation from subjective experiences. The arts therefore help students develop a level of objectivity, or *distanciation* from their subjective experiences, enabling clarity, social cohesion and evolution. Creativity becomes an act of evolution — bringing the new into existence, and knowing it for the first time — the new life, the new outlook, the new



horizon, the new idea. The arts are therefore a generous show-and-tell behavior that is mutually beneficial both healing of the individual and for the world, and creating new shared truths. Chalmers (1984) mentions that art “maintains and improves collective existence. Art, directly and indirectly, bolsters the morale of groups to create unity and social solidarity... art creates awareness of social issues ...for social change” (p. 104).

Expressive Arts as a Social Justice Tool

The arts can be helpful for the socio-political exploration of pressing issues and concerns — as a community development tool — especially for those recovering from political emergency and personal trauma. Our pain can be understood as contextual — our unique bodily response to political injustice and the failures of our social systems. In this view, our deliberate and conscious personal transformation can be understood as a political act of empowerment, in order to build community and evolve further social justice in our world.

Schools interested in diversity understand social justice. Schools interested in well-being understand that health and happiness are valuable criteria in classrooms. White (2009) suggests it is time to stop arguing for the role of the arts as a useful adjunct to education or health services and “declare that the arts sector, by the very nature of what it does, is in the business of health” (p. 5). He explains that the factors that make for good health include a sense of personal and social identity, human worth, communication, participation in the making of political decisions, celebration, and responsibility. White (2009) says, “the language of science alone is not enough to describe health; the languages of story, myth and poetry also disclose truth” (p. 17). The health of the refugee student and the whole learning community involves the centralization of self-expression.

The Role of the Expressive Arts Towards Good Health

Good health is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2006) as a “state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (p. 1). White (2009, p. 42) cites a World Health Organization report that identifies health assets in any community as including wisdom, creativity, talent, and enthusiasm. Creative programs in the classroom co-operate in this integrated social health model, in a kind of bio-psycho-educative model, where nervous systems are soothed, trauma is released, communicative skills are learned, self-expression is encouraged, and creative arousal or inspiration is valued as transformative of individuals and their communities. Goodman (2002) says, “drama, art, dance, music and storytelling are used all over the world for peace-building, reconciliation, and trauma healing” (p. 193).

Voicing as Transformation

The arts are transformative of trauma in so many ways, but it is the gaining of a *voice* that is key — especially for those who have been disempowered through silencing. Most dispossessed, vulnerable people — especially women, children and refugees — have experienced varying measures of *de-voicing* — of being unable to speak up and have their needs met due to repressive cultures that value only one perspective — usually that of the patriarchy in its many forms, including colonialism, misogyny, fundamentalism or heteronormative values. Hierarchies are built in order to maintain power and the status quo by a select interest group, through intimidation, and by silencing the voices and experiences of certain groups from public discourse. Those who control which story can be told, and by whom, control the discourse, and therefore control the power. By facilitating the arts with previously marginalized refugees, peripheral voices can be developed and brought into the center through an ecology of safe relationships. In my view, it is voicing that is one

of the most transformative elements of the creative arts, as it ultimately relieves us of the burden of loneliness and carrying a painful experience alone.

Social Healing Through the Individual

In this view, that both the trauma and the healing from it are social, the individual is always understood to be part of intersecting power structures and hierarchies — a member of a class, race, gender and classroom — at all times. Within this view, questions of who speaks for whom, and about what, are raised, as well as many important questions about control, ethics, subjectivity, epistemology, and agency. In this view, self-expression becomes resistance to invisibility and silencing, a way of speaking up, and showing up — of empowerment. Lacan’s idea is that “the entry into language’ — whether it be verbal, visual or gestural language — is the pre-condition for becoming aware of oneself as a distinct entity (Ryan, 2001, p. 51). This sense of being an individual in one’s own right may be a new concept for a refugee fleeing from a less democratic country. The arts can be understood as acts of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction as students gradually tell and retell their stories in ever more empowering ways. The arts can be understood as a compelling vehicle for self-declaration. By disclosing personal stories and more marginal narratives,



stereotypes are challenged (Merryfeather, 2014). Adichie (2009) warns us of the danger of a single story. By bringing diverse stories into reality, cultures can be moved from a single discourse, or a cultural monologue, towards a dialogue, and at best, even a polylogue of multiple dialogues.

Cross-Cultural Interpretation

Interpreting stories produced by and about others is not a simple read, cross-culturally. Educators of refugee students need cultural understandings of the literacies and stories of their students. Literacy means understanding that meanings and symbols are contextual and often conditioned. Stories (whether visual or textual) are culturally determined, interpreted and significant. London (1989) says much evidence is required to tease out meaning. “Biographical, or better still, autobiographical information is a minimum prerequisite for any real analysis” (p. 63). Scholars such as Chalmers (1984) suggest that all the arts are essentially tribal — e.g. heavily local and contextual — and he advocates a multicultural or ethnological practice when looking at or interpreting another’s metaphors. The difficulty of interpreting cross-culturally, however, should not prevent the facilitation of cross-cultural work. In fact, “culture is a peculiarly successful means of promoting social cohesion, inclusion, or regeneration” (Belfiore, 2002, p. 104). However, it is critical that any facilitation across diversity should be handled with the greatest sensitivity to the practices, concerns, and traumas that are present, in order to prevent further inadvertent exclusion, power abuse, colonization, or re-traumatization.

Making meaning is not finding truth. It may be important for educators to remember that, as their students make new meanings through creative activities, meaning making is in fact not the same as finding truth. With the arts, we are not dealing with facts. Subjective experiences are expressed through memory, value filters, and conditioning. Meaning



making is therefore subjective and always relative and so truth is acknowledged to be a difficult issue. Ryan (2001) cites Foucault, who states that truth is often politically produced. However, this does not discount relative personal truth, which can sometimes be more truthful than factual statistics. Ryan (2001) draws on Derrida, who claimed that truth, as a stable, coherent reality, is in fact, a “fiction” (p. 36). Even in the sciences we are constantly updating our knowledge, as previous paradigms become untrue. In this view, all voicing of stories and perspectives through the creative arts becomes a kind of subjectively located story telling — relative and fictional — but at the same time more true than true. Brodkey, as cited in Ryan (2001) explains:

One studies stories not because they are true or even because they are false, but for the same reason that people tell and listen to them, in order to learn about the terms on which others make sense of their lives; what they take into account and what they do not; what they consider worth contemplating and what they do not; what they are and are not willing to raise as problematic and unresolved in life. (p. 118)

It is therefore important for educators to remember that we work with metaphors and perspectives that are open to various distortions, due to a) interpretation, b) artistic license, c) the filter of culture and values, d) and perhaps the translation problems of using a symbolic metaphor or a second language. However, transformation can occur anyway, without requiring truth with a capital T. There is never only one *truth*. Adichie (2009) suggests that if we do not reject the notion of a single truthful story, we rob people of their diversity and dignity. For example, in the movie *The Help*, based on the novel by Kathryn Stockett (2009), the personal stories of marginalized black women from Mississippi during the 1960s are recounted, and one of the women, Aibileen, states in the movie, “No one asked me before what it be like to be me. Once I told it, I be free.”

We always need to bear in mind *who* tells the story, *how* it is told, and *when* or *where* it is told, as these are all questions of contextual power. Stories exist at the personal level, but they also exist at the political level as group “discourses” (Foucault, 1980) and at the intellectual level as “memes” (Dawkins, 1989) that spread like epidemics via host brains. All discourses can be understood as memes jostling for more or less power. Memes compete on an open market, but we can also use them consciously to envision a new collective story, a new future, and new possibilities.

Positioning Stories with Agency

To enter the highly competitive fray of discourse jockeying in such a loud world, silence needs to be overcome and emerging voices need to be nurtured out of silence. Voices are developed in safe spaces through learning expressive skills. Ryan (2001) suggests that we build up personal authority through the telling of and listening to stories. Refugee students need to be encouraged to enter western discourses, but must also be presented with discourses that “position them with agency, rather than with discourses that simply map their previous oppressions” (p. 119). It is important to move all members of the learning community from victim, to survivor, to a unique authentic self, to an evolutionary capable of creating change, and moving towards full agency. New possibilities can be authored in this way. By healing, finding a voice, and envisioning, we consciously evolve new worlds.

However, it is important to note that under certain circumstances, the disclosure of a story can also be disempowering. It is critical for an educator to know the difference. The ability to speak our truths (or not) reflects our level of safety, agency and empowerment (Gilligan, 1982; Olsen, 1978, 2003). Silence has been understood to be a “symbol of passivity or powerlessness” (Gal, 1991, p. 175). But due to the occurrence of silencing in intersecting ways across all strata of



society, especially for the vulnerable, such as women, children and refugees, Ahmed (2010) discusses issues around safety, the constraints and limits to some voicing, and the possible invasiveness of storying within some marginalized lives, especially those from violent hotspots. “The desire to know the truth about the other can participate in, and reproduce violence, as if ‘they’ could provide us with what ‘we’ are missing” (Ahmed, 2010, p. xix). Building on Ahmed, educators need “a commitment to not causing harm ...[and] promoting good” (2010, p. xx). Ahmed mentions a goal is “what to do with what we are entrusted — whether we speak or keep silent — [this] remains an important question” too (2010, p. xx).

Silence and safety. This sensitivity to revelation, declaration, intimacy and security means that not every story will be told, and natural reservation needs to be respected. Issues of voicing can sometimes include actual danger to some participants. Parpart (2010) acknowledges that “openly voicing dissent and opposition is often dangerous and even suicidal, particularly for some women. Clearly, new ways of thinking about agency and voice are needed, ones that take into account the many subtle forms of agency required to cope in an increasingly dangerous world” (p. 17). Silence itself can also be viewed as a choice for a private space to deal with trauma, regain self-esteem and a sense of empowerment in an often unpredictable world (El-Bushra, 2000; Kelly, 2000; Majob, 2004; Silber, 2005). Silence can equal safety, but it can also point to experiences that are simply so horrific they cannot be articulated.

Some things may be too terrible to say. Voice and silence will co-exist in any group as a reflection of power, agency, repression and safety, reflecting gender, ethnicity, class, education, religion, and age. Ward and Winstanley (2003), for example, have identified five forms of silencing including a) reactive silence, b) the absence of response as a form of repression, c) self-censorship, d) self-protection, and

e) resistance. More consciously employed silence, however, can include the smooth maintenance of interaction, politeness, and the management of shame. Phoenix (2004) says that secrecy can also “signal that there are things too terrible to be said” (pp. 162–163). I mention these subtleties as a possible dynamic in any cross-cultural classroom where students may have experienced trauma and may choose to remain quiet.

Transitioning from Trauma to Creative Thought

Trauma is healed through feeling, and allowing pain to become unstuck, through self-expression. Storytelling, voicing, externalizing, catharsis, witnessing, bridging, distancing, multiple perspective holding, breaking silence, and disrupting old habits, patterns and power inequities all help to move the trauma into healing. These can be best accomplished in the classroom through the creative arts, because the trauma happens inside us and needs to be expressed. Emotional trauma is held neurologically. When pain and fear overwhelm us, our subcortex holds that memory (Badenoch, 2017). In order for healing to take place, reawakening the memory of the original experience must take place. With this reawakening of experience witnessed by another person, we can remember or focus on the experience so that our thoughts and rationale that was missing at the time of the original experience can become reknown and available for integration. In short, healing through telling our story is both a personal, internal event and an external, communal event and is facilitated by social support and compassionate witnessing.

Creativity can transform trauma by:

- revealing the subconscious to the conscious,
- slowing brainwaves and balancing the brain hemispheres,
- memory work,
- integrating the interior experience,



- bridging the individual into community,
- breaking silence and stigmatization,
- distancing and externalizing the experience into an objective echo object,
- finding a voice and therefore agency,
- storying into more democratic polylogical discourses,
- adaptation through meaning making,
- strengthening marginalized identities,
- envisioning new futures,
- and agentic empowerment and activism.

These are transformations on a trajectory of self-actualizations that are possible through creative practices (Adnams Jones, 2018). Creative practices help us transition, transform and transcend safely from one level of consciousness to another, whether we live in the concrete jungle or the Calais Jungle. In some ways, we are all refugees, moving out of our past, from the known into the unknown, and creativity moves us all forward through cultural evolution.

With transformational work, it is about the healing *process* rather than the *product*, and so assessment should not be a part of this kind of storying. The outcomes of these kinds of creative projects are more about the telling of a healing narrative, authenticity, joy, resilience, and social intelligence. It is not the creation of a masterpiece that counts here — although fine art product does have an important place in our culture and can certainly be produced under this model.

Carrying Creativity Through Life and in the Classroom

It is increasingly evident that those carrying the brunt of the actual trauma, the vulnerable individuals that have been caught up on the front lines of violence and sudden change, share inherent transformative capacities with us all — an innate, creative, healing mechanism within us that can be tapped into like a well. All humans in fact share this creative mechanism, which can transform us into a measure of self-actualization (Adnams Jones 2016, 2018). Creativity is carried within all people wherever they go, into prisons, into deserts and into war zones, and this force cannot be dispossessed or dislocated. Illness, loss, dislocation or dispossession cannot take it from us, as long as we are still able to tell stories, use our hands, and make things. Creativity can only be repressed by our own self-doubt, or beliefs that we need special education, talent, credentials, or recognition in order to do it. Creativity is not susceptible to a tsunami, an earthquake, genocide, or a virus, as my research has extensively shown (Adnams Jones, 2018). Creativity is only susceptible to destructive beliefs about it. Wherever we go, creativity will be there also, simply waiting for us to activate it from within.

Creativity in the Classroom

When we use creativity in the classroom, we can affect changes in student's physiology, focus, mood, voice, aesthetic, outreach, activism, health, learning, community, problem solving, and organization (Adnams Jones, 2016). Levels of creative engagement can help refugee students relax, focus, and come into the present moment instead of focusing on the past. Bessel van der Kolk (2017), who has researched trauma for over forty years, says that being traumatized is a failure of the imagination. When your imagination dies, you are stuck with what you have. Opening up the imagination is critical to



healing. He suggests that healing from trauma includes finding new responses, interpretations and possibilities.

In short, to heal trauma, we need to learn 10 things (all apply to the classroom). A way to:

1. become calm and focused,
2. self-sooth through noticing one's autonomic nervous system, breath and heart rate variability,
3. notice one's internal world, feelings, thoughts, images, sensations,
4. find a way to become fully alive again,
5. synch and connect with people around us,
6. notice other people's distress-while remaining calm oneself,
7. release shame and secrets about one's life,
8. build self-esteem,
9. find joy and creativity,
10. and reconstruct new identities and meanings.

van der Kolk (2017) emphasizes that to heal one must be seen, heard, met, and known in our stories. One must attune to others, be interactive, and play. One must learn to feel the body and also calm the mind. Acts of creativity do all these things for people.

Tools and Healing Practices for Educators

To heal trauma, we need to decondition (past memories), recondition (our hyper-vigilant nervous systems), and condition (learn new skills and practice brain plasticity). Educators can provide refugee students with specific tools to recondition their brains. Graham (2017) suggests we incorporate these tools into our curricula:

- somatic tools, such as relaxation, breathwork, and mindful movement;
- emotional tools, such as cultivating different responses, compassion and wished for outcomes;
- intrapersonal tools, such as listening to various internal voices;
- interpersonal tools, such as reaching out to community, engagement;
- reflection tools such as an internal check list of strengths, competencies; and
- positive reinforcement, such as being seen, heard, and held through possible collapse, negativity, and the revisioning of narrow perspectives and old patterns.

Graham also suggests that relationships both grow and foster capacity, and that creating a *safe psychic container* is vital for self-awareness, self-acceptance, mindfulness, and compassion, so that bodies and minds can be stabilized while tools and multiple intelligences are practiced. Graham indicates that *space* heals — pause, notice, accept the moment as it is—and then choose a response. Agency is built through successful decision making and creating things is nothing but a series of choices by the student — which tool, which color, which surface, which shape, which gesture, which sound, which word, etc., When we slow down, we can also recalibrate and discover what really matters. These things are the beginning of growth.

Switching channels and skillful distraction. Graham (2017) suggests that switching channels through skillful distraction gives us a reprieve from the past and brings us into a space to regroup, relax and regulate. Through a conscious choice of healthy distraction (such as making things) we can ground ourselves, shift out of contraction, reactivity and rumination. Telling our stories and hearing the stories of



others — without having to explain, justify, or defend — can be very regulating and normalizing. The experience of a common humanity becomes healing. Through the narration of a more adaptive identity, we can shift out of uncertainty and rejoin the world with new agency. Through reframing our stories, we include a more coherent narrative, that includes the trauma, but which is much larger than the trauma. The trauma is finally seen in perspective: it is not the whole story. Through *restorying* we notice that it is not the issue that is the issue, but rather it is our response to the issue that is the issue. When we find a redemptive moment in our stories, our healing begins.

Sensitive and Empathetic Educators Needed

Central to this healing practice is the need for a sensitive and empathetic educator, who values respect, story, creativity, diversity, inclusion and voice, and who is prepared to witness and *hold* people emotionally as they transition from one country, one identity, one meaning, to another. This requires becoming fully humane and open to others, with an appreciation for humanity's diversity, with the concept of innate healing, imagination and creativity. It means being comfortable with feeling feelings, helping people shift their awareness from the external world into their internal worlds, where the healing intrinsically begins. This is the process of helping people *rebuild*, by accepting that bad things happen to good people. Richard Tedeschi states that:

Because there is no returning to baseline for people whose worlds have been upended by trauma, a traumatic event is not simply a hardship to overcome. The trauma becomes a dividing line in people's lives. It can catalyze deep transformation. People can do more than survive. They can become wise. (Adnam Jones, 2018, p. 294)

Trauma changes people. Rachel Yehuda, as Director for Traumatic Stress Studies at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, stated:

Trauma causes changes... You don't stay the same. That is a really radical idea. You do recover in some ways but that recovery does not involve returning to base line. It involves recalibrating towards something new... bouncing forwards into a new sense of fulfillment and thriving. That's the growth. (Adnam Jones, 2018, p. 294).

Holding this kind of transformative growth space for others is privileged work, often transforming the educator at the same time. We ourselves are never the same after we have done this work. We are never separate, better than, or above survivors of trauma who have experienced things we will never experience, and who are both courageous and resilient. van der Kolk (2017) suggests that there are several important factors for educators to bear in mind. Most important is to remember that pathologizing students is damaging to those already traumatized. It is not a matter of fixing anyone else but rather activating already-present, self-arising, healing mechanisms, such as an innate creativity and agency. Pacing and dosing the story projects will be important, as will tracking participant's progress and their responses. Learn about their edges, their range of tolerance, while paying attention to their physiological shifts. Allow for breaks and mistakes. Balance safety with some risk-taking, so that newcomers can learn new things. In this way, facilitating is a matter of creating community engagement and belonging. Refugee stress is released naturally as support is felt, allowing vitality and aliveness to slowly return. Joy and playfulness are essential ingredients in the healing classroom.

Trajectory from trauma to healing using role modeling of vulnerability. In summary, when inviting people to allow their



defenses to come down in order to heal, facilitators need to role model and facilitate becoming vulnerable. The following are essential for transformation of trauma to occur:

- creative experiences in safe places,
- respectful consideration for the diversity of all involved,
- a focus on both local (personal) and global (political) narratives to widen context,
- simple activities that have some logical task structure and are easy to accomplish,
- clear parameters given,
- the use of easily accessible and appealing materials, and
- democratic participation, voicing and ideation by all that is witnessed with authentic reflection and due consideration.

If these criteria are met, then it is possible that the following can occur for participants:

- The self and its predicament can be temporarily forgotten, even as its biography is being narrated — a paradox.
- Curiosity can be ignited,
- A sense of playfulness can be stimulated even after a very adult world of violence, hypervigilance and pain, with a possible return to the innocence of childhood, which is a state of being rather than one of surviving.
- A return to a pre-traumatic, pre-vigilant state of physiology can occur.
- A gentle focus can be encouraged to help restore scattered or shattered minds.
- The imagination can be released, which can revitalize a repressed system that may have been temporarily shut down due to traumatic experiences.

- Joy can return, however temporarily, through colorful acts of celebration, thereby rebalancing neurochemistry that might be depleted.
- Purpose can be restored, with the immediate emphasis on a project that can be mastered, organized, and completed with a sense of accomplishment.
- The full brain can thus come back into play with balanced hemispheric activity through both the logic of problem solving, and the creativity of imagination
- Community, collaboration, and social bonding can be engendered, and so necessary for our social species that often feels alone.
- Old memories, as well as new futures, identities, and meanings can be explored;
- Needs, issues and perspectives can be voiced, debated, and constructed.
- And a sense of dignity, agency, and self-esteem, can be restored, with some immediate sense of control experienced over a proximal environment.

This describes the trajectory from trauma to healing. As trauma can be, by nature, an event that is unspeakable and untranslatable (van der Kolk, 2017) as it lies outside of our recognition of any previous experience, the finding of images, words and voice become central to healing. Healing trauma is the undoing of aloneness and she suggests that co-created security puts transformation in motion (Fosha, 2017). Titrating emotional arousal and reframing our story is key. Transformation is both a process and an outcome and is an innate drive that humans have towards growth, expansion, liberation, and the dismantling of the false self (Fosha, 2017). Fosha points out, however, that transformation and resistance exist side by side, so change may not be a neat, progressive, linear unfolding. Change can be messy, unpredictable, and



uneven, with spiral re-visitations of stuck places. The expressive arts allow us to do this — to time travel — a movement from past to present to future and back again, for example, by revisiting and reframing the old story from a safer place, and then imagining an entirely new story through futurizing and visualization. By doing this, we bridge fluidly into past and future aspects of ourselves, thus integrating several of our scattered and fragmented identities, left by the roadside along our journey.

Harnessing natural healing mechanisms. Our brain's natural healing mechanisms can be harnessed quite simply — as we tell our story we practice authorship of our own lives. Even if we cannot control the circumstances or trauma that life hands us, we can control our response to these things. Our response to life is in fact the only thing we can control. We can practice response-based resilience through the expressive arts. We restore through re-storying. We liberate each other through community and intimacy, as we build more adaptive psychic structures and perspectives. We learn how to reconcile difference and similarity. By mixing with those who are different from us, and those whom we discover are actually the same as us, we grow our tolerance and build mutuality. By joining together, learning together and co-creating together, we transform together — loneliness, anxiety, depression and stress can be relieved, factors that can be damaging, not only to our own bodies, but to our economies, due to an overload on our health care systems. The arts can be used to help build empathy and compassion, so desperately needed in our pressured and dominated world.

Through acts of creativity we realize a powerful agency hidden within us, which we can release into what might at first appear to be a chaotic world full of entropy, but which is being organized by intelligent energy well beyond our understanding. The emergence of the universe was neither random or

determined, it was creative. When we align with this creativity in and through the arts, we can experience healing (Adnams Jones, 2018).

Conclusion

By practicing creativity rather than destructivity, we confirm that we are alive, potent, and part of an eco-system of energy and intelligence. By opening ourselves up to something larger than ourselves, something that wishes to express itself through us, we realize we are part of a much larger fractal pattern of emergence, not just emergency. Creative acts align us with the larger impulses of the universe, reminding us that we are in fact never separated from the rest of life, however dislocated and dispossessed we may sometimes appear to be. This force of creativity, which is emergent evolution in action, cannot be destroyed, however traumatic our circumstances become (Adnams Jones, 2016).

Notwithstanding our geographic location, language, ethnicity, level of education, skill or talent, the act of creativity only requires us to do it in order to experience multiple, empowering post-traumatic transformations. This is pleasurable and there is a biofeedback mechanism built into the human body itself that rewards the creative release of trauma. Just as the pleasurable acts of eating and procreating guide activities that help the human race to survive, so too healing is rewarded by deepening pleasure. This inspires us to create yet again and as we are rewarded with further joy, we are healed at deeper levels.

I would like to emphasize that creativity is an innate universal principle of joining energy, intelligence and openness to the present moment, in play. All we need to do is allow it to happen. Creativity is the bridge into new mindsets, new thinking, and new futures for all of us, even those who have suffered things beyond the imagination. As Einstein stated,



“...a new type of thinking is essential if mankind is to survive and move to higher levels” (Amrine, 1946, p. 7). As we learn how to be creative, we can manifest change in our lives that comes from within, and we regain control. This is our power. May we move forward into ever-new thinking and problem solving through creativity. This is how the transformation of our world will occur — not just through the healing of our own limited, individual experiences of trauma, but by deliberately stepping into our own expansion through creating, re-creating, and co-creating ever more adaptive selves in a universe that is fundamentally driven by change and emergence. May our internal world always keep up with changes in our external world, for this is the way, not only to resilience, but to adaptive flourishing.

Read more about Dr. Sally Adnams Jones at:

 <http://sallyadnamsjones.com>

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Discussion Questions

Use the following questions as helpful inputs into your own meaning making and reflection on the content of this chapter.

1. What is transformation? Why is it important for traumatized students and others?
2. What is memory work? In what ways can this be used with students of varying ages?

3. What is a field of resonance and how is it implemented and used?
4. Who was Rollo May and what were and are his contributions to the field of psychology?
5. What does this mean? “The human body-mind becomes not only the site of trauma but also the site of healing, learning, and evolution.”
6. According to the World Health Organization, what is the definition of good health? Is it comprehensive enough for the 21st century?
7. Why is it important for teachers and educators to have cross-cultural understanding when working with traumatized students and others?
8. What does it mean to say “position stories with agency?”
9. What are some ways that trauma can be transformed by creativity?
10. What are some ways that students can have frozen and tightly-held stories unfrozen?

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Spotlight 9

Review: Resources to Learn More About Trauma

Trina Harlow

The more informed educators and volunteers working with refugee or newcomer children become, the more informed their practice will be, thereby benefitting students. While art therapy exists in the healthcare domain, educators can grow their knowledge base regarding working with traumatized students in their classrooms by utilizing a variety of resources that are available through the art therapy profession. Two good resources for becoming a more informed educator on the topic of trauma are listed in this spotlight.



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SPOTLIGHT



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Trauma-Informed Practices and Expressive Arts Therapy Institute

In reviewing the efforts and practices of the Trauma-Informed Practices and Expressive Arts Therapy Institute, the Institute uses an integrative approach to combine multiple arts, rather than just one mode of expression, into the practice of expressive arts therapy. The Institute offers distance learning courses, live events, continuing education, and workshops for mental health and healthcare professionals, master's and doctoral students, and learners from around the world.

While the Institute may focus on the healthcare profession, their website provides an informative view of trauma informed practice, expressive arts therapy, mindfulness, art therapy, and creative arts in counseling. Certificate and educational programs, two of which are Trauma-Informed Art Therapy® and Trauma-Informed Expressive Art Therapy®, are offered, as well as live and online courses held around the United States and internationally. See their website here:

 <https://www.trauma-informedpractice.com>

Psychology Today: Online Arts and Health

Psychology Today offers an online Arts and Health column, featuring information about a variety of topics including arts and trauma. The column provides resources on learning more about current research, events regarding art and trauma, current practices in a variety of therapies—visual arts, music, dance/movement, and expressive arts—arts in healthcare, and creativity as a wellness practice. Articles featured in the column emphasize a connection between the creative process for health and well-being and neurobiology and mind-body approaches. Some posts provide research on visual arts such as clay, coloring, doodling, and drawing, as well as visual journaling, music, movement, play and imagination, and emotions such as fear, stress, or the arts and illness. The *Psychology Today* Arts and Health online column can be accessed here:

 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/arts-and-health>

“The transformation and reparation of trauma through relationship is not a singular event; it involves multiple moments that support the unfolding of trust, safety, and co-regulation.”

Malchiodi, C. Nov. 21, 2018. Expressive Arts Relationship. *Psychology Today – Arts and Health*. Retrieved from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/arts-and-health/201811/the-transformation-is-in-the-expressive-arts-relationship>





Chapter 10

Facilitating Learning Through a Social Justice Education Lens

Dr. Susan M. Yelich Biniecki and Nicole Palasz

This chapter focuses on trauma and the refugee learner through the lens of social justice education. Refugees, or individuals forced to leave their home country (UNCHR, n.d.), and many other groups of students, have very different lived experiences than those of their teachers, and may have experienced trauma — an experience through which a person goes through deep emotional stress (Kohli, 2009). We offer no quick fixes or recipes for success for facilitating learning about and for social justice education. Facilitating



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“We have seen many powerful learning experiences take place, for example, when learners are not talking at all about a refugee experience or trauma, but engaging in reciprocity with each other such as in drama performances, helping each other solve math problems, or inviting someone to sit with them at lunch.”

learning through a social justice education lens is incredibly hard work mentally, emotionally, and physically. The educator is the person who holds the space and makes a learning environment a safe one in which every learner can thrive and grow. The teacher cannot understand or facilitate learning as a co-learner with the learner, without first understanding the lens through which one has lived and viewed the world and, therefore, a socio-emotional connection with the student is a critical element of facilitating social justice education. Social justice education, or facilitating learning for “equitable, sustainable and transformative change in various formal and non-formal educational settings” (Kansas State University, 2018) is a process, rather than an end game product and involves continual self-directed learning and professional development (McCall & Vang, 2012). Therefore, as you read this chapter, we ask that you frequently ask yourself questions about why it is you believe the way that you do, which is a cornerstone for building empathy.

First our own positionality with this topic will be addressed. Next, we will unpack some terms connected with the refugee learner as well as examining educator privilege, which has



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been an essential piece of our work with educators. Lastly, we will explore themes essential to unpacking privilege, fostering empathy, and creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment. We conclude with questions for reflection as well as resources you may wish to explore to learn more.

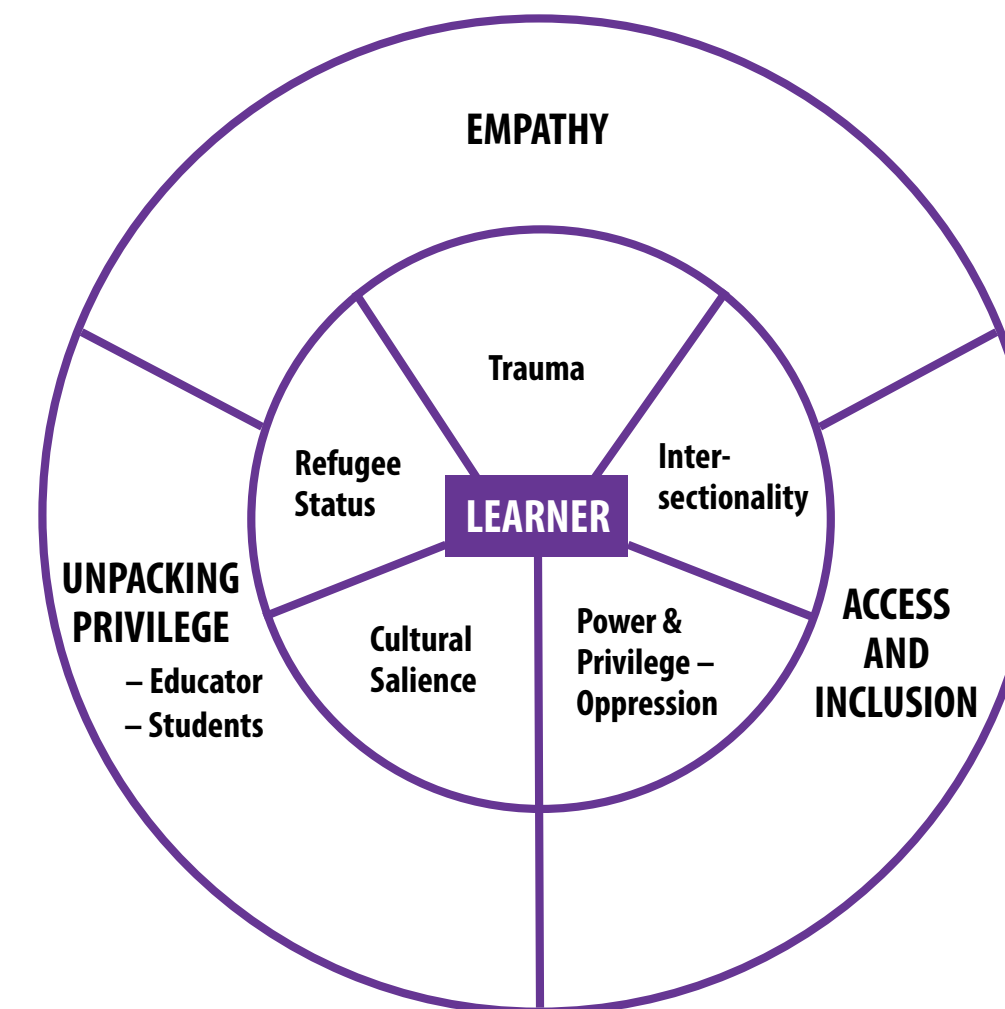
Our Positionality

As the authors of this chapter, we thought it important to start out with our positionality or what we know and do not know about social justice education and refugee learners having experienced trauma, which is a similar process we ask of our learners looking into this topic. We have facilitated learning related to social justice education in K-12 and higher education formal and non-formal environments, particularly connecting local and global issues. We are not psychologists, so we are not able to explore the clinical aspect of trauma. We have backgrounds in national and international development organizations, K-12 environments, higher education environments, and a realm of interconnected systems involving learners having experienced trauma. We have not experienced the forced displacement of a refugee or related trauma, and this is an imperative aspect to denote. We are writing from the understanding of those having facilitated learning experiences with refugee and non-refugee learners, such as classrooms, workshops, meetings, and community development settings.

Conceptual Framework

Providing a visual of a conceptual understanding of the links between trauma, social justice education, and the refugee learner situates the next discussions. We view facilitating social justice education with refugee learner populations within a layered visual, in which the learner is always at the center; however, the education that surrounds and supports learning is interconnected through unpacking privilege, fostering empathy, and facilitating access and inclusion. Social justice education,

Figure 1: *The refugee learner and social justice education*



therefore, within this conceptual framework is not specifically addressing the trauma of refugee learners, but provides an understanding that trauma is part of the lived experience of the refugee learners. Figure 1 depicts our understanding of social justice education related to refugee learners who have experienced trauma.

As you continue reading, think about refugee learners in your own school and how would you describe each student within that inner circle. In addition, reflect upon how you view your own practice with regard to the outer circle. Unpacking terms surrounding a social justice education conceptual framework for refugee learners will be explored next.

Unpacking Terms

Social justice education involves a “language for social justice” (Tharp, 2012, p. 21) in our own work. This section will discuss



important terms related to the center core of the conceptual framework, the learner, as well as how social justice education is grounded.

Social Justice Education

Social justice education is situated within many constructs. We view facilitating teaching and learning for social justice education as social justice education. At times, educators may view that they are only facilitating learning about social justice education as social justice education. We have seen many powerful learning experiences take place, for example, when learners are not talking at all about a refugee experience or trauma, but engaging in reciprocity with each other such as in drama performances, helping each other solve math problems, or inviting someone to sit with them at lunch. “The goal of social justice education is to enable individuals to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand the structural features of oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems” (Bell, 2016, p. 4). Therefore, within social justice education in school settings, educators and students are situated within systems. It is of critical importance, therefore, for educators to recognize and name the visible and invisible systems of which they are a part in order to enact change personally and professionally.

Each educator within every subject needs to identify an authentic teacher self as that self relates to facilitating learning. We argue that social justice education should be grounded in every subject. “A social justice pedagogy (education) is a pedagogy aware of its positionality within the power structures of academic institutions and makes this positionality transparent and thus is open to inquiry and change” (Skubikowski, Wright, & Graf, 2009, p. ix). Therefore, social justice education pedagogy involves the educator developing a critically reflective practice and self-awareness in order to best facilitate learning for others, including with and for refugee

students. Educators have a profound impact on directing children to choices and resources, and therefore, impacting life paths such as who is “college material”, for example.

Power, privilege, and oppression. Our mental schema regarding social justice education and related concepts of *power, privilege, and oppression* in our own learning environments impact teaching choices we make and how we facilitate learning with and for refugee learners. For example, with regard to power, each society has identities that the society prefers and privilege, or unearned power, comes with those identities. Within any country, one can identify the preferred (privileged) and less preferred (oppressed) identities. For example, if you identify who receives free or reduced lunch, you should be able to identify patterns. How do you explain those patterns in your school? How do you explain those patterns within the wider society? Within a construct of social justice education, it is acknowledged that hard work exists within social systems, including those of school systems. Lived experiences you may have taken for granted can be interrogated through self-questioning by answering yes or no to statements such as:

- I have gone without a meal because of a lack of access to food.
- I have gone through a day not knowing where I was going to sleep.
- I have had to go without medication because I could not afford it or did not have access.
- I am or have been afraid to self-identify my religion or ethnicity.
- I have been afraid for the safety of my family when I am away from home.
- I feel safe walking through my neighborhood.
- I have heat in my home.



- I know people who have disappeared or have been killed.
- I can communicate my needs in my own language when I move through daily life.

All of these statements, of course, involve a context, but are either yes or no in our minds. Things we may not think about on a daily basis may plague our students because of current and past experiences of both refugee and non-refugee backgrounds.

Informal, nonformal, and formal settings. As in all realms of education, social justice education involves informal, nonformal, and formal settings. As you think about your school, there are diverse settings on this spectrum of learning in which to engage refugee students. Informal learning may involve playground settings, cafeterias, or field trips to exhibits (Yelich Biniecki & Donley, 2016). Nonformal settings may involve after school clubs such as choir, dance, chess, track, drama, or soccer. The formal setting involves in-classroom activities, which usually receive emphasis, but the entire realm of education is important to every child's ability to thrive and the informal and nonformal provide connectors for the refugee child who has experienced trauma.



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Trauma

Trauma may be a divorce, a death, experiencing violence, witnessing violence, and other events. Trauma can be situated in the lived experiences of racism within U.S. culture that teachers and students of color, which may include refugees, are forced to interact with and process daily (Kohli, 2009). Although some learners may have experienced a stressful life event and the inability to cope, others may have experienced trauma as an extremely stressful life event with which one copes in a multitude of ways. However, what is important to recognize is that within any learning environment, the educator may not be able to relate to the trauma experienced by the refugee learner.

Although the shared experience of some types of trauma can create a connection in shared humanity, the recognition that each of us experiences that trauma and copes in different ways is important. The concept of trauma, as in any aspect of our identities, needs to be situated within an individual and socio-cultural context and social justice education can help provide an input to an ethical and philosophical teaching approach for all learners, including refugees.



Refugee

Each person may have a mental picture of refugees. What does “refugee” mean? What images come to mind? There are many reasons why a person becomes a refugee; however, a shared understanding is:

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence.



A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries. (UNCHR: <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>)

The forced displacement of a person from their home is the key concept in the definition. However, this forced displacement may happen for reasons outside of war, such as natural disasters or other humanitarian crises.

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, 51% of refugees are school-aged children under the age of 18. In its report *Left Behind: Refugee Education in Crisis* (2017), the UN Refugee Agency estimates 3.5 million of these children lack access to education. The report suggests 61% percent of refugees have access to elementary education compared to 91% around the globe. A mere 23% of refugee youth are in secondary school, compared to 84% globally. This lack of access has significant implications for educators in host communities as they serve young people who may have had their education severely interrupted as a result of their displacement.

The refugee identity within the broad area of our own individual diversity involves multiple cultural identities: gender, race, national origin, ethnicity, religion, and many others. The *intersectionality*, or the “unique constellation” (Tharp, 2012, p. 21) of identities, is important to acknowledge within refugee learners. Therefore, the learner may see *cultural salience* or importance, of various identities in shifting importance as that learner moves through daily life.

Diversity in the refugee experience. Like any classroom of students, it is critical to recognize that each refugee child has a unique personality and brings his or her own set of talents and experiences. Although refugees share the stress of forced displacement, there are wide variations in their lived experiences of trauma and direct exposure to violence. Some students have witnessed violence first-hand and have lived through terrifying journeys to reach safety in a neighboring country. Others were born into refugee status and may have never set foot in the country their parents fled.

Refugee students may come from families who have fled widespread violence and conflict in their countries and communities. Other students may have family members who were individually targeted by their government because of their political activism or opposition to the regime. Many students have lived their entire lives in a refugee camp before arriving in the United States or their families may have found safety and opportunities in the urban centers of neighboring countries. Some may have come directly from their homes to seek asylum in the United States. There are also significant differences in the socioeconomic background of refugee families. Refugees include doctors, engineers, farmers, artists, shopkeepers, and every other profession. Refugee students may have had little to no formal education prior to arrival in the United States or they may be highly literate.

Placing all refugees into one category will necessarily lead to errors in assessing the needs of individual refugee students. We encourage you to think about your own mental models of these terms and your own culture comprised of intersecting identities prior to moving to the next topic: examining educator privilege.



Unpacking Educator Privilege in Relation to Trauma

When thinking about how we began our work in international education outreach, we realized the critical place we usually begin is by asking educators to think about themselves, which may sound counter-intuitive. Critical self-reflection on the part of the educator is an integral part of facilitating learning for others (Brookfield, 2017; Skubikowski, 2009). Trauma has multiple sources and impacts; however, the main one that is distinguished within the life a refugee is forced mobility or displacement.

Privilege

Privilege is unearned access to resources. For example, as authors, we do not perceive ourselves as earning our national origin. We were born in the United States of America.

Most teachers in the U.S. possess privilege in mobility and citizenship. Nation state citizenship and “non-citizen” are identities that each person can possess and, therefore, a power differential may exist between teachers with nation state citizenship and refugee students, who may be in the U.S. legally, but may be non-citizens. Being stateless may position adults and children for exploitation. Arnot, Pinson, and Candappa (2009) describe a “national hostility to the non-citizen” (p. 249), which is something for the teacher to counter.

Because of forced displacement, refugees often have experienced significant health challenges and deprivation that most educators have never experienced within the U.S., for example, food insecurity and access to emergency medical care related to physical health. If a refugee has experienced war or torture, mental health also is impacted. While it is difficult to assess how many refugees have such experiences, some estimates suggest over 40% of refugees in the United States may have experienced torture (The Center for the Victims of Torture, 2015).

Most educators in the U.S. also have been privileged in their lack of exposure to major human rights violations and state sponsored violence. Many refugees have experienced or witnessed gross human rights violations: arbitrary detention, rape, torture, killings, state-sanctioned discrimination and other abuses. It is important for teachers to consider that their refugee learners have been directly targeted by their governments in countries where there may not be rule of law and little access to justice. This experience can foster distrust of authorities and carry over into new lives in the United States. For teachers who have lived their entire lives in a democracy who trust that “the system” works, it is critical to reflect on their own attitudes towards state authorities and what it might mean for refugees for whom the system has been the perpetrator of abuses against them.

No Before and After Conclusive Refugee Scenario

Many Americans have embraced the notion that refugees starting over in the U.S. have left the violence and fear behind them and are lucky to be able to pursue the American dream. In this common narrative, refugees are offered a new beginning to build a life of safety and prosperity in the United States. While many refugees will agree that they are grateful for the freedoms and opportunities that life in the U.S. provides, the experience rarely fits a neat “before and after” scenario. Refugees often leave family and friends behind in on-going conflict zones. News from their home countries can lead to a continuing sense of fear and helplessness. For example, the United States is host to thousands of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar (also known as Burma). Rohingya refugees from Myanmar/Burma have had to watch from afar in 2017 as villages are burned in what the United Nations has called a campaign of ethnic cleansing. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya families have fled to Bangladesh, creating a massive humanitarian and human rights crisis.



At the time of this writing in 2018, there are also on-going conflicts and/or serious human rights abuses in many of the countries of origin of resettled refugees, including Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria and elsewhere. Refugees may be out of the direct line of fire, but refugees cannot fully leave the violence and suffering behind and focus all their attention on a new life in a different country.

It is also important to note that refugees may not be living in secure conditions in the United States. They may be exposed to new forms of violence in their new communities and neighborhoods. Some may live in neighborhoods with significant challenges around gun violence or gangs. In addition, while refugees may experience discrimination on the basis of their immigrant and newcomer status, they may also experience forms of discrimination that are specific to the countries that host them. For example, refugees from Sub Saharan Africa may experience forms of racial discrimination in the United States that may not have been a part of their reality in their countries of origin. In a comparative study of the experiences of discrimination among Eastern European and African refugees, Hadley and Patil (2009) found that “individuals and families that enter into the USA with similar sets of resources may experience very different levels of health and wellbeing (including stress) following resettlement because of the interaction between skin color and existing cultural norms in the receiving country” (p. 510). Refugees from Sub Saharan Africa also may confront negative stereotypes about Africa that impact their opportunities in the United States. In addition, official state rhetoric about refugees can create exacerbate trauma and the othering of individuals (Arnot, Pinson, & Candappa, 2009). When there are declines in democratic norms in the host country, refugees who have experienced trauma can relive fears of state sponsored violence. The goal of such critical reflection on these issues is to help

the educator unpack privilege to be better able to help other U.S. born students understand the privilege they may possess as well. Furthermore, there may be shared social challenges U.S.-born and refugee children share that can create areas of collaborative inquiry and bridges to empathy.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability for one to understand the feelings and lived experiences of another person. The development of empathy is essential in order to understand how a refugee having experienced trauma may behave within learning environments (National Association of School Psychologists, 2015). Assumptions and stigma regarding trauma is prevalent in many areas of society. The challenge for a teacher is that the kind of trauma that was experienced by a child or family may be unclear, which is the prerogative of the child and caregivers. However, it is essential to train your mind to ask the right questions in order to challenge assumptions about what indeed is happening the classroom. It is important to acknowledge that the trauma exists and yet recognize all of the other facets of a child's life that also may facilitate learning and create barriers. For example, students may have had school interrupted and, therefore, they may encounter a stigma of not being able to participate within the age group of their peers (Hoss, 2016). Other students may be able to relate to that experience of disruption as well.

Empathy is a bridge to fostering access and inclusion and asking questions often is not verbally directing those to refugee learners. We refer to asking questions as those internal voices we train to interrogate the world around us. This type of questioning asking begins within unpacking privilege, but goes to a deeper affective domain to build bridges of empathy with our learners. An examination of privilege is only the first step. The next step to empathy is building your own understanding of someone else's lived experience to the extent that you can.



Fostering empathy within oneself incorporates self-directed learning to really understand the systems that impact power and privilege within the lives of learners. Internal questions we may ask ourselves include: What are the experiences of refugees? What does trauma look like? How does it manifest itself in different cultures? Even though you cannot know what that experience feels like, getting closer to another person's understanding is essential in order to be able to facilitate learning.

That empathetic understanding means moving beyond colonial attitudes of learning and sharing. We have found that refugee learners share stories because they would like empathy, not pity. How you engage in reciprocity in your own learning at this phase will set a mindset for fostering access and inclusion with students and on other systems levels. Reciprocity with learners involves engagement with students about their own self-identified needs and sense of self. Service learning experiences, for example, should move beyond feel good exercises to meet needs identified by students and for students (Hawkins & Kaplan, 2016). If the right questions are asked and approaches are grounded empathetically, educators can begin to see paths for access and inclusion for refugee learners.

Access and Inclusion for Refugee Learners

Unpacking privilege and fostering empathy, ideally should lead to individual and organizational behaviors and systems that foster access and inclusion for refugee learners. It is necessary to move past a helping framework in order to address concrete theory to practice application to support practitioners as allies and facilitate learning in an integrated model for refugee trauma survivors (Wilkin & Hillock, 2014). Through an analysis of U.K. schools, Arnot, Pinson, and Candappa (2009) found that schools employing what was identified as a holistic practice were positively contributing to the development of theory

to practice approaches for the inclusion of refugee children. Parental involvement, community links, and a multi-agency approach were found to be indicators of this holistic approach. Specific positive practices included:

- Existing experience with minority ethnic and English as an Additional Language pupils (referred to as English as a Second Language often in the United States).
- Promoting positive images of asylum seeker and refugee students
- Establishing clear indicators of successful integration
- An ethos of inclusion and the celebration of diversity
- A holistic approach to provision and support
- A caring ethos and the giving of hope. (Arnot & Pinson, 2005, pp. 6-7)

Arnot, Pinson, and Candappa's (2009) work provides a foundation to think about how educators might view themselves and their relationship to refugee learners within the school and community systems.

Organizational Culture and Needs Assessment

As the first point of entry into a school, a child is often assessed for needs. The organizational culture around how assessments are conducted are worth examining. There is a danger of immediately assessing any refugee child and putting the student in a deficit box, or because of "cultural misrecognition" (Keddie, 2012, p. 1295). Students' positive contributors, such as speaking many languages or different cultural knowledge, may be assessed as complete deficits or lacking certain knowledge, skills, and abilities. Examining school systems for these potential areas of inequity, which can exacerbate current structural barriers, is a critical step.



The empathy involved in understanding what a child may have experienced involves support and recognition of systems as well as questioning current systems that have been put in place. Some of the systems that may have been put in place with good intent may have first, second, and third order effects that the child will carry throughout the school system. Parents may be better able to articulate the context of their refugee experiences. It should be acknowledged that the trauma of a refugee experience has most likely been experienced by the parent or guardian, although this is not always the case in situations of adoption or if a U.S. guardian is serving in a parental role.

Some children may have had English language instruction within the country of origin and some may not. Some may have experienced a high level of trauma and each will process that trauma in different ways. Some may have learning disabilities, but the danger is placing those children automatically in classrooms for disabilities without fully understanding the socio-cultural environment of the child and the child as an individual. Schools may not have much experience with certain regions of the world, and therefore, it is important to know what we don't know.

As with the refugee child, parents also have multiple and intersecting identities. Parents may have a high level of education and speak English well. Other parents may not have had a formal education within their own country of origin. Communicating with the parents and integrating parents into the lives of their children within a classroom environment may involve adapting structures in which parents can participate within a classroom environment and learn with their children in certain sections of daily lessons. The entire school community should play a role in creating an environment that fosters successful outcomes for refugee learners rather than delegating all of the support work to ELL teachers.

There are existing frameworks that provide tools to assess student needs in a culturally responsive manner. The WIDA Consortium adapted the Response to Intervention (RtI) framework to assess the needs of English Language Learners (WIDA, 2013). The framework identifies seven factors that could impact the success of an individual student:

- Learning Environment Factors
- Academic Achievement and Instructional Factors
- Oral Language and Literacy Factors
- Personal and Family Factors
- Physical and Psychological Factors
- Previous Schooling Factors
- Cross-Cultural Factors (WIDA, 2013, p. 12)

The range of factors demonstrate the need for teachers and staff in many different roles within the school to be participants in the process of assessing and intervening on behalf of refugee learners.

The teacher as advocate and partner is incredibly important within these organizational systems, which may be on a spectrum of supportive to resistant. Stakeholder ambivalence or lack of knowledge is not the equivalent of maliciousness, yet such feelings can be situated in an atmosphere of budget cuts and increasing demands of time on administrators, teachers, and support staff. On the spectrum of allies in developing refugee inclusive initiatives, a teacher may encounter active supporters, passive supporters, neutral individuals, passive resisters, and active resisters (Oppenheimer & Lackey, 1965). Depending on the environment, the teacher may be in a greater position to educate the school community on children's needs. Initiatives directing services to newcomer students may neglect the role U.S. born students can play in transforming schools into inclusive, multicultural settings; however, effective social



justice education can support refugee students in the classroom in ways that benefit all students.

Culturally Responsive Practices

Culturally responsive teaching places equity, empathy and relationship-building at the center of the learning environment. As this chapter articulates, an important first step in this process is educator examination of privileges and biases. Culturally responsive educators also practice on-going learning about the diverse backgrounds and experiences of students and the larger systems that impact them. Through regular self-examination and engagement of students as active participants in the learning process, educators can identify learning materials and approaches that respect the diverse cultural experiences and backgrounds of refugee and other learners.

There are many rich literary and video resources that can be used in the classroom to explore the refugee experience in ways that emphasize resiliency and shared humanity. In educator workshops at the Institute of World Affairs, we have often introduced global refugee migration with films that tell the story of an individual or family. For example, the Frontline PBS documentary *Children of Syria* or one of the stories in Al Jazeera's series *Life on Hold* of which feature perspectives of young Syrian refugees. These personal stories provoke an emotional response and provide an entry point to discuss broad human experiences of violence, loss, family and resilience. While educators need to be sensitive to the trauma experiences that may be triggered by this content, human stories are a powerful tool for creating community within the classroom. If the educator creates an atmosphere of trust and support, some refugee learners also may welcome an opportunity to share their story with their peers or the broader community. Invitations to share, rather than calling out students to share, may be prompted through literature and the arts to combat stereotypes of lives experiences students may see on the news.

One important way educators can support refugee students is to increase global education inside and outside the classroom (Institute of World Affairs, n.d.). Global education can help U.S. born students understand contexts that lead to refugee migration, recognize shared challenges of poverty, violence and insecurity that also face many young people in the U.S., and overcome stereotypes of countries where refugees may be from. Global education can provide skills to all students in recognizing diverse perspectives, building cross-cultural skills and fostering active citizenship. In our own work at the Institute of World Affairs, we have organized workshops and programs for youth on a wide range of global issues related to refugee migration, including human rights, human trafficking, conflict and violence, and xenophobia. The Institute has also invited refugees and global practitioners with personal experiences addressing violence and human rights abuses in their home countries to connect with local youth in person or via Skype. By supplementing classroom learning with interactions with individuals who embody resilience and have worked for positive change despite tremendous difficulties and risks, students are inspired to learn more and take action on issues in their own communities. We have regularly witnessed young people making connections between injustices around the world and in their own lives. In addition to the significant benefits to U.S. born students, an exploration of global issues can engage refugee learners as co-educators with relevant knowledge and experiences to contribute to the classroom. It can also combat stereotypes that leave refugee students vulnerable to discrimination and bullying.

With its focus on rights, dignity and equality for all human beings, some educators have found human rights education to be a useful framework for student learning about the factors that lead to refugee migration. Using the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a guiding framework, educators can guide discussions of injustice in ways that can draw upon the lived



experiences of students of all backgrounds. The human rights framework also offers a way to engage both refugee and U.S. born students in discussing ways to create a human rights respecting environment in their school and community.

Working together on a meaningful project can build bridges between students and can reinforce to all students that they all have a role to play in addressing problems globally and locally. Some educators have used the instructional practice of service-learning to engage both U.S. born students and refugee students in joint projects to address community needs. Service-learning involves applying classroom content to take action on global or local problems. By tackling issues of mutual concern together students of all backgrounds can experience a sense of shared accomplishment. Involving refugee youth in addressing local issues also sends a message that they have an important role to play in their new community.

The relationship between local youth and youth who come from international contexts have been important connectors in our work within K-12 classrooms and public programs in the community (Yelich Biniecki, 2017). Sometimes local youth have also experienced significant trauma. Therefore, that trauma can become a shared connector with refugee and non-refugee learners. That trauma then is not viewed as a shared deficit between learners, but a shared resilience through having experienced trauma involving forced displacement, food insecurity, and other issues.

Raising Awareness for Engagement in the Broader Community

Educators can raise awareness among students, staff and the broader community by identifying meaningful and sensitive ways to invite their refugee students to share their stories. Popular education has a role within social justice education (Roberts, 2011) and can be a powerful tool to foster inclusion

for citizenship (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Popular culture, however, may stigmatize refugees. A colleague reported that her students began using the term “refugee” as slang for someone who was stupid or unwanted. Raising awareness of humanitarian causes, whether forced displacement or other, can provide connectors among students and teachers. Positive and diverse images of refugee seekers can counter negative images that can stigmatize and cause ripple effects in other areas within the school.

Educators also may consider whether there are community members who could be invited into the classroom to serve as co-educators on issues impacting refugee learners. Educators can play an important role in social justice education in informal settings, whether those contexts are community meetings in faith based organizations or government. The formal school setting is a microcosm of the larger society; therefore, engaging with issues that impact our learners on policy levels at multiple stages can have profound impacts on the community. For example, a greater awareness may impact how parents talk about refugees at home, which then impacts discussions at school. Faith based leaders demonstrating empathy and willing to engage constructively in discussions about refugee needs create models for citizens to emulate.

Conclusion

Although social justice education is not an approach for addressing trauma, the process is more about the approach an educator can use to serve the refugee learners, U.S. born students, school systems, and society at large for fostering equity and inclusion. It is important to focus on process rather than product often. If teachers set small milestones and accomplish small goals, those can set in motion waves of positive change for individual students and communities.



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Questions for Further Discussion

Use the following questions as helpful inputs into your own meaning making and reflection on the content of this chapter.

1. Does your school have a comprehensive plan or whole school approach to your refugee student population? How can you learn or know from your school which students are refugees?
2. How do you view your role as an educator within your school? In the broader community?
3. How are you fostering community between refugee and other youth within your school and community?
4. After reading this chapter and thinking about your own privilege, what do you recognize now that you didn't before?
5. How do you currently foster empathy and how do you plan on fostering empathy within your own learning process about refugee learners?
6. As you reflect on systems of power and privilege, is there a role that you can plan in addressing systems that create barriers for refugee learners?
7. What are the current ways that you and your school foster access and inclusion for refugee learners?
8. As you reflect on the curricular resources that you are using, how might you make changes that could further

foster social justice education surrounding refugee learners and trauma?

9. How could you learn more about the home countries and backgrounds of your students?
10. If you had to create a visual of the relationship between social justice education, refugee learners, and trauma, what would it look like?

Resources to Learn More

Refugee Stories

UNHCR Stories: <https://www.unhcr.org/stories.html>

Service-Learning

Youth Service America: <https://ysa.org>

National Youth Leadership Council: <https://nylc.org>

Human Rights Education

Human Rights Educators USA: <https://hreusa.org>

University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center:
<http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/edumat/hreduseries/default.shtm>

The World As it Could Be:
<http://www.theworldasitcouldbe.org>

Global Education

Asia Society: <https://asiasociety.org>

UNESCO Clearinghouse on Global Citizenship Education:
<https://www.gcetclearinghouse.org>

Global Oneness Project:
<https://www.globalonenessproject.org>

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Spotlight 10

Artist and Book Review: Lily Yeh

Lily Yeh and Trina Harlow



Lily Yeh is a global creative genius and powerhouse visionary in using art to develop better communities, promote social justice, better economics for communities, equality, and environmental justice. As Yeh's (2011) book begins, *Awakening Creativity: The Dandelion School Blossoms*, Yeh writes of a chance meeting in 2003 with the founder of the Dandelion School in Beijing, China, a school for migrant worker's children. This chance meeting led to one of Yeh's largest contributions to community based art. The project created a sense of pride and community with the students that transferred to the overall pride and success of the school.

Yeh had previously co-founded the Village of Arts and Humanities in North Philadelphia in 1989. She spent 18 years transforming “a broken neighborhood into a vital, joyful community” (Yeh, 2011, p. 8). All told, Yeh worked with community volunteers of all ages to transform over 200 abandoned city blocks into a vibrant new community that people were proud of, creating more than 15 parks, and regenerating the extended neighborhood. In 2002, she founded Barefoot Artists whose focus is similar, yet has a lens on international projects. The Barefoot Artists trains local residents, empowering them to organize their communities and incorporate social justice for a more compassionate and sustainable future (Barefoot Artists, n.p.).





Yeh has spent her life using the empowerment that children and adults feel through art to transform environments. According to Yeh, “we only have to compare the before and after pictures of the place” (Yeh, 2011, p. 8) to see the profound, transformative impact of art when used to improve the quality and settings of lives. Yeh hopes that students and others who participate in her projects will use the skills they learned through creative thought and project participation to “inspire them to dream and take action to shape their own future” (p. 8).

Yeh was born in 1941 in Guizhou, China, but grew up in Taiwan in a supportive family. Her parents helped her begin the study of traditional Chinese landscape painting when she was fifteen years old, learning this ancient art from master painters. She graduated from the National Taiwan University in 1963 and attended graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania School of Fine Arts. This abrupt change in the style of art that was predominant in her own life, from traditional,

subtle, serene, and restrained Chinese landscape painting to the wild, experimental, and even explosive art of the 1960’s in the United States made an impact she remembers to this day. Yeh made a drastic change in her art. While her Chinese training emphasized the strength and beauty of art, she began to splash thick colors with brushes and sponges on canvas, making various shapes and colors

as a new way of expressing herself. Modern art in America shook her core as an artist.



She began traveling and doing art installations all over the world in the past three decades. Through Barefoot Artists, she travels the world using her artistic talent to tell people’s stories through pigment. She traveled to “Ecuador, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Italy, Republic of Georgia, Syria, Rwanda, Palestine, and China” (Yeh, 2011, p. 21) offering her methodology of healing and building community through the use of art. Yeh says, “I have come to realize that broken places are my creative canvases, people’s stories my pigments. The art that we create together is actually alive. It continues to evolve and is a part of our lives” (p. 21).

Social Media

Facebook:

The Barefoot Artists

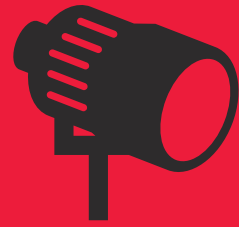
Twitter:

@Barefoot_Artist

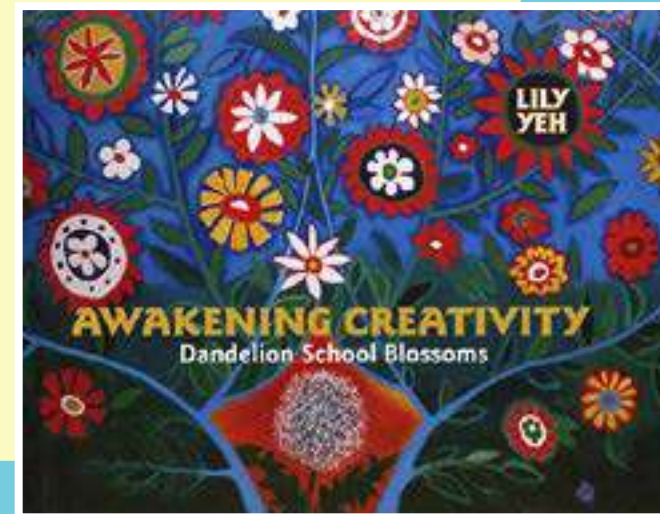
Instagram:

Barefoot Artists

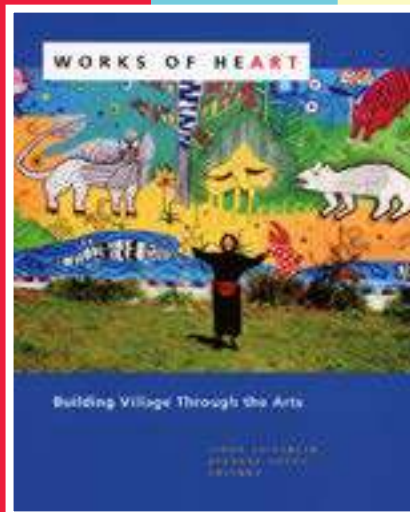




Yeh's book, *Awakening Creativity: Dandelion School Blossoms*, tells her story as an artist, the story of the Dandelion School Transformation Project, and the creativity, teamwork, and leadership it took to create the school's artistic elements and how plans were made to sustain and preserve the art installations. A chapter in the book explains Yeh's methodology for public and community-based art installations and provides assistance for others wanting to be change makers in their own environments and those environments they travel to or participate in.



Another book, *Building Village Through the Arts*, edited by Lynne Elizabeth and Suzanne Young (2006), describes Yeh's work in Philadelphia's Village of Arts and Humanities in the first chapter. The chapter is appropriately titled, *Songs of the Wounded Earth: To remember, to mourn, to heal, to celebrate*. Other chapters in Elizabeth and Young's book describe various works of art and heart in other places and spaces.



From prisons to art museums, and from American cities to villages and environments all over the world, Lily Yeh has provided a model for how to transform community through art. Her legacy is not just the aesthetics of the final product that transforms communities; it's also the fact that the act of making public art changes people.

Read more about Barefoot Artists and Lily Yeh here:

<http://barefootartists.org>

Watch the following videos:



Video: *From Broken to Whole: Lily Yeh at TEDxCornellU*



Video: *Beauty in Broken Places – The Healing Arts of Lily Yeh*



Video: *The Legend of Lily Yeh*



Video: *The Barefoot Artist Documentary Trailer*

To learn how you can watch *The Barefoot Artist* documentary (small fee necessary):

<http://barefootartists.org/the-barefoot-artist-documentary/>

OR



Video: *The Barefoot Artist*
It is also on Netflix.

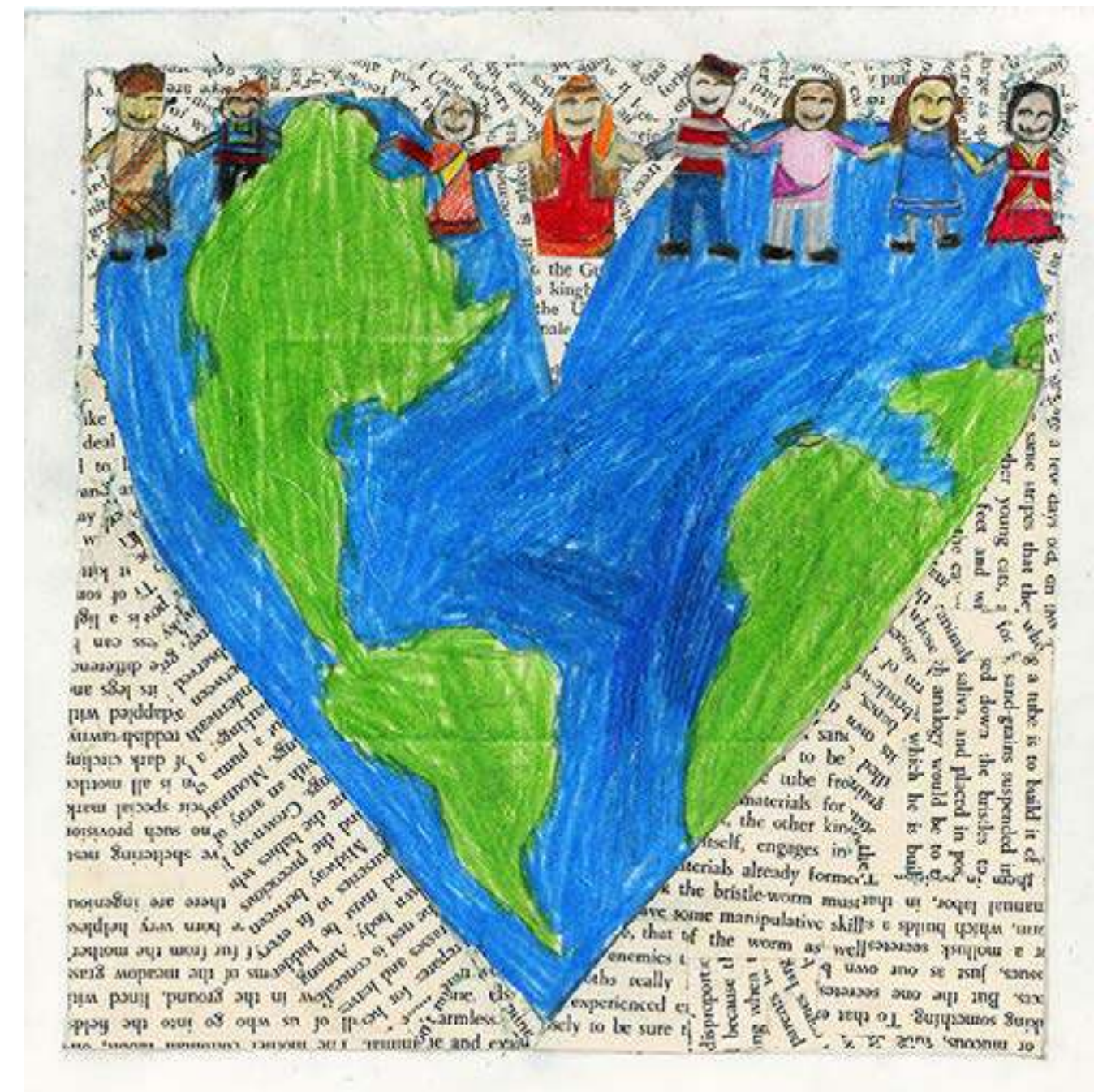
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Section Three

Journey of the Newcomer



Chapter 11

Best Practices in Art Education: Journey Through Creativity

Trina Harlow and Holly Kincaid

Introduction

Working with refugee students imparts either hope or frustration in both the teacher and the student. The goal is for a meaningful relationship to develop between the teacher and pupil in the school classroom, which facilitates academic and social growth in the refugee student. The purpose of the Best Practices section of this eBook is to provide field tested strategies, curriculum, and projects for educators to use or adapt in their own classrooms. A variety of educators from around the United States have been invited to contribute in an effort to help those who use this eBook inform their practice with hands-on activities, ready to implement in their own classrooms. As long-time art educators and authors of this



“As educators, we need to greet each child with a compassionate heart and be open to allowing students the opportunity to experiment with materials, express their own ideas, share their lives, stories, hopes and dreams, and we also need to set learning goals appropriate for their level and needed interventions.”

chapter, we hope to provide practitioners in the field with meaningful, usable practices and strategies. Art as a school subject experiences almost continual change because of societal changes (Keuchal, 2015). Art, additionally, is a powerful school resource in times of change and uncertainty, as with the global crisis of displaced children.



Video: *Shebani's Artistic Journey*

A Visual Language

Art educators and their students develop unique relationships through the magnificence of art and creative activity. Educators teach students to know, students teach educators to see, and in the process both learn to listen. In various ways, all students find and experience freedom through art education, yet when working with the serious experiences of refugee children, it is imperative that educators see, know, and listen intuitively, not just to what their students say, but also to their stories, fears, and concerns (Rubin, 2005). As a boat can lift refugee children and their families, buoyantly to a new and hopefully a better life, art education can support that buoyancy. Art educators must acutely “listen” to the drawings, paintings, and sculptures their students make because children reveal their thoughts, fears, and anxiety in the art they make (Bresba, 2009). The former Dr. Elliot Eisner, respected Stanford University Professor of Art Education and considered to be the founder of modern day art education, stated that the arts let children say what cannot be said (NAEA, 2016). Children often speak through the art they make. Through art, children create a tangible product that they can see and feel or hear (Davis, 2008). This elevates the importance of art in education. Students gain new skills, figure out problems, and discover new information in a learning environment, and all of this is possible through art education (Davis, 2008). Yet, unlike other



subjects, art allows students to make something brand new, something that did not exist before their art making (Davis, 2008). This places art in a powerful position of invention and innovation in the school, whether with the tangible creation of a thing, or the intangible creation of an idea.

Visual Clues

The goal of the busy art teacher in the school classroom should be to watch for visual clues in refugee children's art making and use these clues as a dialogue with the ultimate goal of first healing, and then acculturation (Banks, 2009; Jones, 2018). In after-school art clubs, the goal should be the same, but there may be more opportunity to devote meaningful and lengthier periods of time to refugee children in this setting, rather than during the active, busy art class of the school day. Both settings assist in healing because art making will assist refugee children in making transitions from the past to the present, and dealing with painful loss and trauma (Howie, Kristel, & Prasad, 2013; Jardine & Seidel, 2016; Johnson & St. Thomas, 2007; Jones, 2018; Kaplan, 2007; Rubin, 2005).

Coping Mechanisms

Through art and the art classroom, refugee children can begin to develop coping mechanisms. Some refugee children will cope and communicate better than others, depending on what



Artwork made by Syrian children in an Iraqi refugee camp.

happened to their parents or how supportive their parents were during the experienced crisis that caused them to seek refuge (Johnson & St. Thomas, 2007). Coping, however, involves being able to communicate. Refugee children come to their new schools with language barriers

and are not able to communicate what they want to say, what they ought to do, or what healing is to them (Brunick, 1999). Additionally, and possibly due to language barriers but also because of a variety of reasons, some children will distance themselves and withdraw while others will show remarkable willingness to share their deeply troubling experiences, and even welcome an opportunity to do so (Johnson & St. Thomas, 2007). Since art is a visual language, not just a verbal language, refugee children can therapeutically begin to communicate their stories through art making. Sometimes their story may be kept to themselves, while other times the story may be shared.

Art as Therapy

Art production is commonly known as a place of therapy, whether in school art classrooms, community art gatherings, or in traditional therapy sessions (Bresba, 2009; Rubin, 2005). Therefore, P-12 art educators are in a distinctive position within the school setting to develop a bond with refugee children through creative instruction and use of art materials to help refugee children explore their deepest, most inner thoughts. It is our opinion that art classes may be underutilized with the newcomer student demographic in some schools, and has great potential to contribute to healing and acculturation, providing a calming and peaceful content area to explore thoughts and feelings. When art educators work with refugee students there is potential for healing according to Bresba (2009). Self-confidence and self-esteem can be regenerated through art. As co-contributors of this chapter, we have both seen powerful healing of newcomer students in our art classes.

In order for art to reach its maximum potential with students, it's important to provide an environment that is open, free in thought, and where creativity is encouraged. The physical environment can encourage and nurture students' art making. It's important to pay attention to how you use the



classroom space, how you use time, chose age appropriate materials and art supplies, and offer supplies that have a variety of use and purpose (Crawford, 2004). The experienced art teacher organizes supplies and space to maximize student usage. It's important that teachers do not rush students; creativity needs time to cultivate. Plan supplies well, order or purchase what is needed, and make an exemplar project before teaching it so you can work out any kinks in production that your students might experience, and so all students understand the overall goal. Make the necessary flash cards to visually show non-English speaking students the main steps of the project. And finally, make an effort to have some art media and tools that students can be inventive with. Some examples of expressive and out-of-the-norm art supplies are sponge rollers, stamps, and stamp pads for creating texture. Teachers who take the extra time to plan creative endeavor in the classroom, and who put out a few extra tools or supplies, will often be enormously surprised by the creative expression of children.



Refugee art example, The Terrible Swing by Mona Moradveisi.

Art-Based Refugee Student Research

There is a wealth of outstanding research and literature regarding child trauma and art making, more than can be addressed in this text. Art therapists have known for many years that art provides a release for trauma, and in many cases healing. Brunick (1999), Ascher (1985), Philpot and Rose (2004), Philpot and Rymaszewska (2005), Virshup (1993), Henley

(2002), and Lambert (1994) provide research that posits the benefits of art making in the school curriculum or community setting for traumatized or refugee children. D'Amico's (2016) research lists 101 activities to use with traumatized children to assist them in being present and mindful in art making. Malchiodi's (2015) research provides creative interventions to use in the art classroom. Peterson (2014) discusses how to help children heal and mentions how classrooms can be arranged and that physical safety in the room is important. Bey and Wellman (2015) conducted research during an 8-week after school art program. Bresba (2009) conducted research on one refugee child using art therapy for seven weeks. Carey (2006) explored creative and expressive art methods with traumatized children. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of studies that provide a basis for understanding how to use art as a healing tool for trauma and a growing number of studies on using art with newcomer students in the school setting. While it will take time to read about the studies cited here, educators will have a more informed practice after reading some of the above studies. One study we found particularly helpful was conducted at a refugee resettlement camp and we write about this in the next section. Another study we will discuss focused on the process an art therapist went through with one refugee child.

8-Week Art Program

Through an 8-week art program at a refugee resettlement camp's newly established refugee art program, Bey and Wellman (2015) reported that art was used in substantial ways regarding healing, coping skills, developing self-esteem, pride, and positivity. They also reported that the pre-service teachers who were teaching the art program spent five weeks developing lesson plans that were geared towards refugee children's healing and coping, but once teaching had commenced they almost immediately reverted to prescriptive school art lessons and the normal art media technique that is often taught in art classrooms. Bey and Wellman (2015) report, however, "through



reflection, critical dialogue, and revisions, together with the pre-service art teachers, we initiated curriculum designed to foster community through the promotion of language/ literacy, self-advocacy, self-esteem, and cultural preservation” (p. 38). Bey and Wellman reminded the pre-service teachers to refocus on the original curriculum they had planned and offered guidance on how to implement it. From this we learn that it takes a concentrated effort to plan and implement curriculum that is consistently effective when targeted towards refugee children and adolescents.

Unfamiliarity with media, trauma, and cultural elements. One problem the pre-service teachers encountered in this research study was that in an effort to plan exciting art projects for the students, refugee students were highly unfamiliar with how to use many of the art media offered them. Children who had lived most of their lives in rural areas in developing countries had never seen watercolor paint and had no idea what to do with it. The pre-service teachers reported being surprised at how much of the students’ artwork had to do with their experienced traumas and mentioned that as educators they felt unprepared to be therapists. They did notice growth in the students’ confidence, self-esteem, and advocacy skills (Bey and Wellman, 2015). They also reported being unfamiliar with some of the cultural bias and norms of children from the many countries in the program.

One experience in our classroom with refugee students was a student with objectionable body odor. This newcomer student had come from an area where water baths were not an option and instead took occasional sand baths. They continued the same practice here in the United States or at least attempted to. Other students did not like the odor and it caused issues in class and socialization problems for the student. In other cases, we saw student artwork revealing the trauma they experienced from life experiences. In our work with newcomer students,

personal communication with other art teachers, and research we have conducted, we learned that an art show held at the end of a unit, semester, or school year can be a huge and meaningful success as refugee children find meaning and even seem to enjoy sharing their story and art journey.

Art Therapy Case Study

In one study, Paola Bresba (2009) followed one refugee student for seven months. Bresba’s study through her role as a therapist and researcher is very useful in terms of the stages the refugee child went through in art therapy. Bresba (2009) divided her research into four chronological sessions:

- a) Early sessions; b) the hero project; c) middle sessions, subdivided into identity, being different, the place for mistakes and alternative responses to conflict; and d) closing sessions, which includes the a) final session and b) summary meeting with staff and family. (p. 28)

The early sessions. Bresba (2009) reported the same themes were seen in the first four therapy sessions. The child stayed focused on the art materials and doing artistic renderings of his name and largely ignored the art therapist. One of his first noted efforts was a self-portrait he spent a good deal of time on. The therapist noted that there were several messages in his art making. Bresba reported that the child resisted therapy at first. Secondly, the child declared his own presence. The third message present was an expression of himself as beautiful. He did this through adding rainbows to his name, drawing himself more handsome than he was, and interestingly, with a lighter skin tone than his own even though a variety of skin toned coloring supplies were available (Bresba, 2009). The parallel narrative that Bresba noticed was that while the refugee child conveyed messages that he was beautiful through his art making, his parents verbally expressed their concern that he was not attractive anymore, that he had gained weight,



and he wasn't doing as well as they wanted him to in school. The refugee child's art making conflicted with his parents' thoughts. Bresba also ironically noticed the child was generally a perfectionist with this art making during the early sessions.

The middle sessions. Bresba (2009) calls sessions five-nine the hero project. In session five she suggested the child draw and create a hero that would represent himself. He seemed to enjoy this exercise and became fixated on the various art supplies and materials available. His superhero was quite detailed and highly developed. Through the hero project, the child worked spontaneously and loosely and seemed to incorporate the troubles he was having in life and school into his hero's activities in each drawing session. The therapist noticed the images drawn by the child seemed to reflect real aspects of his life with metaphorical representation (Bresba, 2009). In session seven the therapist decided to acknowledge the mess the child was making, splattering paint on the walls, and so on. Bresba (2009) described it as a "situation, at the end of the session, making an effort not to describe it as a problem" (p. 39). She used the experience to discuss that "mistakes and mending were acceptable parts of life" (Bresba, 2009, p. 39).

The next ten middle sessions then moved onto the topic of mistakes through exploring identity, being different, the actual act of making mistakes, and alternative ways to respond to conflict (Bresba, 2009). During this phase, the child was fascinated with animals that had meaning to him and also developed a very complex and creative handmade book. One particular drawing was a lion, the winner of wars (Bresba, 2009). His drawings and narratives during these middle sessions generally represented not fitting in and gave him an outlet to creatively express problems at school. During these middle sessions, he opened up to the thought that it was ok to make mistakes in his artwork.

During the end of the middle sessions he depicted some turbulent weather and weather creatures on one art-making day. He noted the weather creature wanted to save people from being hurt. On another day, he depicted a bird as large as a tree. He said he wished his bird would have flown away from the conflict and flown home to relax and refocus so that he could return feeling stronger (Bresba, 2009). These middle session art renderings depicted turbulent situations and gravitated more toward peaceful situations.

The final session. In the final session, he gave his therapist a card with a drawing that had a celebratory feel. There were three stars on the front. "He explained that the three stars represented joy, the pink flower was memories and the butterflies were symbols of hope rising out of a volcano" (p. 51). The therapist said the volcano reminded her of the battling figures in some of his earlier super hero's drawings depicting death and destruction, but now hope was coming out of the volcano (Bresba, 2009). The art therapist reported that perhaps one of the most significant sessions with her was the last one when he had to speak about his art to his parents. His descriptions involved tolerating vulnerability, accepting mistakes, his identity in relation to his world, and also the aftermath of conflict (Bresba, 2009). Bresba also reported that as the sessions progressed she observed movement from his weaknesses to his strengths. By accepting himself, he was also beginning to process and accept what had happened to him.

The Refugee and Art

A quick Internet search will reveal many organizations leading art making with refugees, both children and adults. To be more informed about the success educators and volunteers have with art making, we highlight some these efforts.



Greece Refugee Camp Art Classes

Lighthouse Relief Organization works with children and art. Through various artistic games and tasks, staff and volunteers encourage children. At its refugee camp in central Greece, they provide a safe environment for children aged 3-5. Lighthouse volunteers and staff meet the unique needs of children “through play, informal education, and other psychosocial support activities for children to socialize, learn, and express themselves” (Lighthouse Relief, 2017).



Video: Lighthouse Relief's Child Friendly Space

The goal of this program is to help children continue to learn and grow in the midst of difficulty and trauma. They also run Youth Ritsona, a youth engagement center, for young people 16-25 years of age, that uses arts based activities to socialize people of all genders, religions, and ethnicities. Their purpose is to give young people a sense of purpose in a cultivating, participatory atmosphere; strengthening their competency and helping them acquire tools they need to become active community members and to get jobs (Lighthouse Relief, 2017). Through a collective effort of volunteers from all over the world, they work to assist refugees coming to Greece from Syria and elsewhere. Creativity abounds at the camp through public space murals, art classes, and a variety of creative endeavor.

Muse Arts

An ambitious woman named Paola Gomez lives in Canada as a refugee and leads art events with children and adults, but she was a physician in her former country of Columbia. She is a co-author of another chapter in this eBook. She co-founded an organization in Toronto, Canada called Muse Arts. When she couldn't practice as a physician in Canada because she was a refugee, she accidentally found herself making art with children and has turned this experience into a large social justice

organization (Paola Gomez, personal communication, May 10, 2016). The mission of Muse Arts is:

Working with community partners, we create spaces for emerging Artists from equity seeking groups to showcase their work, to access opportunities for professional development and to engage communities meaningfully and actively in hands-on, high quality arts education integrated to issues of Social Justice. (Muse Arts Project, 2017a)

While their focus is not specifically refugees, the organization does a huge amount of work with refugee adults and children in resettlement areas in Toronto (Paola Gomez, personal communication, May 10, 2016). They offer many programs, but one highly successful program is a 12-week art workshop for children called *Our World of a Thousand Colors* (Muse Arts Projects, 2017b). Participants use various art materials while having discussions and conversations about inclusion, community, and diversity. Muse Arts volunteers and staff recently conducted a workshop to help welcome a large group of Syrian refugees to Toronto (Muse Arts Project, 2017b). Their *Draw Your Dream* workshop also is highly beneficial to refugees.



Video: Muse Arts

The Refugee Art Project

Another organization doing extensive work with refugees is The Refugee Art Project, using art for social change. Academics and art professionals who are concerned about refugees living in Australian camps started this project in 2010, and since then over 500 pieces of art created by refugees have been displayed in Australia's public places. The Refugee Art Project is “passionate about showcasing the enormous talent, locked away,

beyond the razor wire” (Refugee Art Project, 2013). It is not a political organization, but gives viewers an opportunity to learn more about the political issues that turned people’s lives upside down.

We also recommend investigating Lily Beh’s work and the Barefoot Arts Organization, Carol Hofmeyr and the Keiskamma Trust Arts Project, Max Frieder and the Artsolutions Project, and Paul Hogan and the Butterfly Peace Garden. Spending some thoughtful, investigative time on the Internet researching accomplishments with refugee children through art will strengthen P-12 teacher efforts working with newcomer students.

Best Practices: Art Projects Invite Healing

We also offer some best practices and tips from our classrooms. The following four art projects or activities can be easily implemented in art classrooms, ESL classes, or the generalist classroom. These projects illustrate ways to give newcomer students opportunity to free their emotions, tell stories, and begin to work through trauma, even if they really do not even know that is what is happening as they make art.

Best Practice #1:

Soar to New Heights, The Kite Project, from Holly Kincaid’s Classroom

Combining a childhood fascination with flying kites, students were invited to take goal setting to new heights! Students first were introduced to the history of kites. Many students had never seen or flown a kite and the thought of making their own engaged students immediately. Along with the history of kites, students were shown images of different types of kites. (Kite Presentation: goo.gl/KgR8AA)

Students were then guided in discussion about planning for their futures. This included setting personal goals for college, careers or personal goals, and the steps they would need to meet their goals. Once students had their list of goals, a mind map was used to brainstorm symbolism that would help others to read their kite’s imagery. It is important for English language

learners to understand how to read visual imagery and how to communicate with symbols. A kite shaped worksheet helped students to develop preliminary sketches of their design.



Students created their design on a “Frustrationless Flyer Kit” to create their own kite. (The kits can be ordered from <http://www.cobrakites.com/>.) The kite kit is made of a strong fabric that easily accepts marker or paints. Once completed, students were given the chance to learn to fly a kite and see their art soar, outside in the freedom of the open air! The kites allowed these students to be children, running in the fields, and finding joy through an experience that will memorably stay in the hearts and minds of students. See a blog post regarding this project at this link: <http://capitolofcreativity.weebly.com/art-lair--blog/soaring-to-new-heights>

Best Practice #2:

The Visual Voice Project, from Holly Kincaid’s Classroom

Students can be inspired to be creative and artistic based on their own memories and life experiences. My eighth-grade students were challenged to use their visual voice to express



memories they had from their diverse life perspectives. Our school is filled with students who come from many different places around the world and speak 47 different languages at home. With many unique perspectives and stories to tell, I wanted to challenge our student-artists to dig deep within their memories to find images and moments they wanted to preserve with paint, pastels, clay or other materials of choice. There was a great deal of freedom in this project.

Our class used the strategy of a classroom-seating circle to create a safe space to talk about students' themes and share responses to questions that might help inspire their creative thinking even further. When contemplating our projects, I posed a few questions:

1. What moment changed or helped shape who you are today?
2. What is your favorite place or location that you have been? Why?
3. Who are the important people in your life and what impression did they make in your life?

Watching video clips from the Art 21 episode, *Memory*, inspired these students. This is a link to the video:



Video: Art 21 – Memory

Using their own visual voice, I encouraged students to sketch at least three different ideas for creative responses to the theme. Students could choose from a variety of mediums that they felt would best express their idea. Paint, clay, and drawing materials were some of the media chosen by students. Giving students freedom of choice in media also allowed them to individualize their stories even further.

Throughout the artistic process students had open discussions about their artwork, the stories behind the imagery, and shared

their feelings. Creating a safe classroom environment where students felt comfortable to depict powerful moments from their lives gave strength to the power of their art and allowed students to make connections with each other that were supportive and filled with compassion.

***Best Practice #3:
The Classroom Circle,
from Holly Kincaid's Classroom***

Creating an atmosphere that is supportive for students who come from backgrounds of trauma is imperative. The classroom environment and setting needs to be well organized and labeled with bilingual signage and with visual imagery when appropriate. Giving students ownership of the space and access to materials helps students feel like they are part of the classroom community with a sense of control in their education. Beyond the intended academic learning, the educator needs to be knowledgeable about techniques to create an atmosphere of respect, empathy and global understanding. My classroom uses the Classroom Circle for dialogue, sharing, and creating a sense of community. When students are guided to the Classroom Circle, there are norms agreed upon by the group that set the tone for listening, sharing, and the safety of what is shared. Students may react differently based on triggers from past trauma and the safe space created by the Classroom Circle allows for reflection or calming down that is helpful in creating a safety zone. A comfortable chair, fidgets, clay, kinetic sand, drawing paper, a timer, or a reflective response worksheet can help students calm down, reflect and return to learning.

When students are reacting in negative ways educators need to realize that students who have had traumatic experiences or high ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) scores may need help learning better ways to problem solve and process their responses. Our school district brought in guest speaker Dr. Allison Jackson to help us better understand the reactions of

our students. Parts of her presentation were shared with our students to help them understand how they might react to triggers in a variety of ways. By holding up her fist as a visual representation of our brain, we learned that some people face fear by hiding, fleeing, or perhaps barking back. Our brain reacts quickly to fear and it takes training to retrain our brain to respond differently over time. We must be aware as educators and understand that negative outbursts from students may stem from fear or triggers that need to be acknowledged and assisted through intervention strategies. More about Dr. Allison Jackson's work can be found through the Integration Solutions website and her TED Talk video:



Video: *Dr. Allison Jackson's TED Talk*

Through the assistance of trained professionals, school counselors, therapists, and staff mentors, my school strives to create a safe and supportive environment for our students.

Best Practice #4:

My Storyboard Project, by Trina Harlow

Through my research working with refugee children and art, I continually find evidence proving that children need to be able to tell their stories in order for healing to happen and to feel validated and important in their new home (Keuchel, 2015). In an effort to assist all students, but particularly newcomer students, with telling their story, I devised the *My Storyboard Project*, which can be adapted to any age group of students. It's a simple project, but gives great opportunity to students to share exactly what they want, how they want to share it, and to the degree they want to share. According to one study, 70 to 90 percent of attitude and affect are communicated non-verbally (Stone, 1998). Art can tap into feelings, thoughts, memories, dreams, hopes, and aspirations. Through art and a project like this storytelling project, students can investigate who they are

to the degree they want. The final product is typically extremely creative because it is personalized. It's important to note that when multiple languages are spoken in your classroom this project will probably take longer to do because of the amount of writing and directions needed (McMichael, 2003). The completed student project will be a collage.

Students used 11"x17" canvas covered boards for this project. This kind of canvas is typically cheaper than canvas stretched on wood frames. Teachers can also do this project on pieces of scrap, corrugated cardboard but may need to weight the finished collages to flatten them once completed. According to Douglas and Jaquith (2009) some children are three-dimensional thinkers caught up in the flat, two-dimensional, paper world of the school environment. Collage gives students the ability to construct and build while still working with the ease, and potentially lower cost, of a two-dimensional project.

The first step is to prepare the canvas 11"x17" background. The canvas background can be done in a variety of ways. Use some of the following suggestions or adapt the canvas in other ways:

- 1) A monochromatic scheme tends to work well and the original color will remain identifiable and visible. The monochromatic canvas background will prevent students from over-mixing





paint on the canvas until all the colors muddle together and become brown. Painting the midground (middle third) with the pure color, a shade of the chosen color as the foreground (bottom), and a tint of the chosen color as the background (top) section tends to work well and produce a colorful and clear background effect.

2) Another possibility would be to paint the foreground in greens and browns like the ground, the midground as a color of student's choice, and the background section (top third) as light blues representing sky colors.

3) Another option would be to divide the canvas into thirds and paint the three sections representing the work of an international artist, such as fiber artist Gasali Adeyemo from Nigeria. Additionally, the three sections of the canvas background could be used to represent the past, present, and future.

The next step involves giving students a worksheet to write ten words of their choice for the past, present, and future (see Appendix A). Students are not led into sadness over the past. Rather, students are given total and complete freedom to write the words they want. Of course, the entire project is set up by explaining storytelling and by showing students many ways in which people all over the world tell stories. For example, photo albums, movies, newspapers, books, magazines, and social media are contemporary methods of storytelling. Going back through history, people told stories through making of Arpilleras in Chile, Retablos in Peru, Molas in Panama, or through batik or mask motifs in Nigeria and Kenya. Additionally, the teacher can prepare by watching a storytelling video such as the TED Talk video listed below. This will inform the teacher about the uniqueness of cultural storytelling, giving the educator a more informed lens to teach storytelling. Depending on the age of students, educators may be able to show all or part of this video:



Video: *Storytelling TED Talk*

Students are also given a second worksheet (see Appendix B) in which they are to list 15 words that describe themselves. Students are told the words are characteristics they want to share about themselves and can be positive or not so positive. Teachers of linguistically diverse classrooms need to think ahead about ways to convey past, present, future, and top, middle, bottom, as well as how to help students understand what personality or personal characteristics means.

For the final step, the teacher takes a photograph of each student, a close up of their face and the tops of their shoulders, and prints it as large as possible, so it fills an 8"x10" paper when printed in black and white ink. Black and white ink makes a nice contrast to the painted background and words. Students cut the image out and Modge Podge™ it to the canvas. Initially I wanted all students to center their image across the bottom of the canvas, but immediately I learned students would ask if they could center it to the left or right. Of course, in art the answer is yes; students are the artists. Give them as much choice as you can. This is how they express their individuality.

Students then use permanent markers to write past words in the background space (the blue sky), present words in the middleground space (the middle space where they chose their own color), and to write future words in the foreground (the green and brown space of the ground). Students are then asked to write their 15 characteristic words closely around the image of their face and shoulders, and they are encouraged to use word art and different sizes and types of fonts for their words. Teachers may want to practice writing words with younger students and it is essential to spell check students words for them before they write them on their storyboard. Students



are also encouraged to add random motif and design to the canvas once this part was all finished. Finally, the canvases are then coated with Modge Podge™ to seal them and give them a cohesive collage look.

What was intriguing to me as I have led this project many times is the variety of emotion and expression children show while making their art project. Some students are happy and excited, and cannot wait to tell their story. Some are hesitant and reserved, even reluctant, to do the project, yet all children eventually warm to the idea and focus on telling their stories. In particular, one girl appeared to have obvious anxiety about the art camp, everything we were doing, and interacting with other students. She often blurted out expressions of emotion or frustration. She chose dark colors for her ground and sky, almost as if the ground was mud and the sky was storming. She chose a dark color for her middleground. Her colors matched her mood and were much darker than the other students. The words she wrote revealed her story: divorce, fire, mean stepmother, etc. All of us working at the art camp immediately noticed a heaviness lift from her when her canvas was done. The girl who “hated” her project now suddenly loved it and held it as if hugging a person, smiling hugely. Another boy worked out his frustration at being made to play sports. A girl from

another country shared things she loved about her former home and things that were awkward for her in her new home. And, another boy had revealed on the first day of camp that he was having a bad day. While he wouldn't reveal why, his artwork appeared to lift his spirits and we noticed the heaviness about him changed to smiles.

We usually end with a Classroom Circle where students can show their artwork and tell us about it. I call this a Drag and Brag session; students drag it up to the front of the class and brag about it. What happens in these circles is magical. Students want time to share stories about their past, present, and future, and explain their artistic choices. Some students reveal much more than I expect, yet there is usually a huge sense of pride in these circles. Also, there is usually a great deal of support for fellow classmates as others share their stories.

I am often surprised by the symbolism that some students share, and it is so important when working with newcomer students to give them time to share about their art, not just make art.



The project works in any setting with any group of students; however, students need to have a firm grasp of writing in order to do the project, so I would recommend third grade and up. The project lends itself well to older elementary students, and also middle and high school students. Secondary students are developmentally in a time period of transition, compounded with the difficulties of being in a new country, and speaking a new language (Johnson, 1990). Davis (2012) reports that high school students should be encouraged to encounter, celebrate, interpret, and address attitudes through art making. Furthermore, by combining digital photography with art, this

project is elevated to a solid, 21st century, tradigital project (meaning both traditional art and digital art are combined in the same project), yet students could also spend time drawing and coloring their self-portraits if time allows.

Other Ideas

In order to be able to share the artwork with a broader population of the school and community, I recommend coding students names on the back and having them write their story as a language arts and art integration assignment, all done within the art classroom. Curriculum integration creates exponential depth to this project, merging the intellectual with the sensory (de Cosson, Grauer, Kind, & Irwin, 2005). The arts foster imagination, creativity, and critical thinking skills, while also providing methods for gaining literacy skills (Goldberg, 2001). The arts easily complement reading and writing. You can also team up with the classroom teachers for the students to write their stories in the generalist classroom or language arts/English/ESOL classrooms as a collaborative project. It is a good idea to get students' permission to share their artwork and stories (or parental permission) before doing so. Don't have students sign their name on the front until you are ready to send them home with students. For public display, it is best that this project has some anonymity about it, even though most likely others will know who the student is when viewing the artwork. Having the students stand by their artwork at a school art show is an even better idea. You will be amazed at the pride students feel in sharing about themselves, not just their art.

Conclusion

Creating an environment for students to learn, express and create can be both overwhelming and rewarding. A diverse learning community comes with a variety of issues that must be addressed including language barriers, cultural differences, traumatic experiences and different levels of learning. As

educators, we need to greet each child with a compassionate heart and be open to allowing students the opportunity to experiment with materials, express their own ideas, share their lives, stories, hopes and dreams, and we also need to set learning goals appropriate for their level and needed interventions. By teaming with the generalist teacher and school counselors or behavior therapists, the art teacher can play an integral role in the holistic education of the refugee child. Finally, all teachers can implement art making and healing through the arts into any classroom.

About the Authors

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Questions for Further Discussion

Use the following questions as helpful inputs into your own meaning making and reflection on the content of this chapter.

1. What are some ways educators can “listen” to students artwork?
2. What does Eisner mean when he says art gives children a way to say what cannot be said?
3. What is a coping mechanism and why do students need them? Do all students need them? Do teachers need them?
4. What is trauma?
5. Think about a time when you experienced some anxiety, stress, or trauma caused by no action of your own, but imposed upon you by others. How did you feel? How did that affect you?



6. Should school art teachers receive training in trauma? Why or why not? Should all teachers receive training in trauma? Why or Why not?
7. How can art help a child who is experiencing trauma?
8. In what specific ways art be used to help a child get from one side of trauma to the other side of trauma, helping to facilitate healing?
9. How do we experience joy in art making?
10. Why is art important in our schools? Should art be used in more obvious ways to help with the holistic learning and experiences of students? Why or why not?

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Photo Credits

Image 1: Syrian Child's Art. Retrieved from: <http://endgenocide.org/restorehappy-syrian-art-exhibit-seeks-restore-humanity/>

Image 2: An example of refugee art, *The Terrible Swing* by Mona Moradveisi. Retrieved from: <http://www.nancen.org/m/1268>

Image 3: Photo provided by Holly Kincaid, student and her kite.

Images 4 and 5: Photo provided by Trina Harlow, storyboard backgrounds.

Image 6: Photo provided by Trina Harlow, immigrant girl's completed storyboard.

Image 7: Photo provided by Trina Harlow, anxious girl's completed storyboard.

Figure 8: Photo provided by Trina Harlow, Circle Up sharing of storyboard.

Appendix A: My Story

Buoyant Thoughts

MY STORY

Tell your story in 15-30 words. You are special and your story is special. As the artist, you get to choose your thoughts and the words for this project. This isn't math and there is not a right and wrong answer. You are the artist! So, write 5-10 words that describe your past, present, and future. Then, you will place these words on your artist canvas in the background, middleground, and foreground as we learn about artistic composition.

See examples at the bottom of page 2 and 3.

Past (Background)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

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Page 1



MY STORY, continued.

Present (Middleground)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Examples of past words are names of pets, a food you liked that your grandmother made, a story you liked when you were little, where you were born, or where you ate lunch yesterday! Examples of present words are names of pets, your school name, your grade, names of friends, your favorite food, a book you like, a video game you like to play. There are many more examples, but these are a few!

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MY STORY, continued.

Future (Foreground)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Examples of future words are what you want to do when you grow up, places you would like to visit, things you would like to do, where and how you hope to live. Maybe you want to be a sustainable farmer and be able to raise all your own food with crops and livestock. You can also write words about how you hope you will feel in the future because 10 future words might be hard to think of. Maybe you want to be happy and healthy. Maybe you want to learn to fly a plane! There are many more examples, but these are a few!

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Appendix B: Characteristic Words

Buoyant Thoughts

CHARACTERISTIC WORDS

Write 10 words that describe YOU. Who are you? What are you like? Not, who you want to be, but who are you NOW. None of us are perfect, so write those great and wonderful qualities you have, and write those things that you struggle with.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

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Spotlight 11

An Art Project: *I Am Me Storyboard*

Trina Harlow

One way that teachers can provide meaningful learning with newcomer students is by giving them an opportunity to share their individual stories. By sharing stories, students tell what they want others to know. Additionally, when giving students an educational setting in which to decide what parts of their story they want to freely share, teachers also give students a way to share what they may need to say. Through sharing stories, students share their identities — they tell people who they are and what aspects of their personality and life are important to them; students share their joys in life — they tell people what makes them happy and gives joyful meaning to their lives; and they share their sorrows they tell people what they worry about and what causes them anxiety or difficulties.

Students can tell their stories through the verbal language of writing and speaking, or they can tell their stories through the visual language of art making or other fine arts such as music, dance, or drama. In some cases, as in the case of the *I Am Me Storyboard*, the viewer cannot know the artist's whole story without some knowledge of the verbal and visual story. In order to provide a verbal story, teachers can have students write an artist's statement describing certain aspects of their visual story — the art project.



SPOTLIGHT



These are the steps of the *I Am Me Storyboard* art project, which I designed for my doctoral degree arts-based research case study and have taught to hundreds of students:

1. BACKGROUND:

Ask students to choose one color of acrylic paint for the background. While multiple colors can be used for the background, especially with secondary students, some elementary students can over paint their canvas when using multiple colors, and many students who both enjoy painting and only have a short amount of time to paint the canvas will over paint it producing varying shades of browns instead of bright, vibrant colors. Students will then position the canvas covered board (available at craft and discount stores) vertically and use a pencil to lightly divide it horizontally into thirds. Next, students will use the pure color to paint the middle section (in art this is called the middle ground). Then, students will use the

pure color to which they have added a small amount of white (making a tint) to paint the top section (in art this is called the background). Finally, students will add a very small amount of black to the chosen color (making a shade) and paint the bottom third of the canvas (in art this is called the foreground). Let dry, generally for a couple of hours or until the next day. The teacher can have students complete an artist's statement about their color choice.



2. GEOMETRIC DESIGN:

Have students design three geometric designs — simple line drawings — that represent their past, present, and future. This phase uses symbolism and the visual or outward representation of inner thoughts. Then, have students use white paint and a fine liner brush and paint their geometric designs on the canvas, from the top down. The students will paint their future design on the top section, their present design on the middle section, and their past design on the bottom section. Let dry, generally for a couple of hours or longer since even tiny puddles of white paint or thicker brush strokes may take longer to dry. The teacher can have students complete an artist's statement about their geometric design choices.

3. DIGITAL PHOTO:

Take a digital photo of students. Position the camera or cell phone very close to their face, photographing only the top of their shoulders and face. The background does not matter as students will cut out only their face and shoulders. Import the photos into a Word document, changing the page margin size to be 1/2 inch, and drag the photos out to fill the page. Print the photos in black and white. Teachers can also edit photos on their cell phone to be black and white. There are so many ways to do this portion of the project and teachers can use the software, applications, and devices they are the most familiar with to prepare students' images. Students will then cut their image out and brush a thin coat of Modge Podge™ on entire back side of the image all the way to the edges of the paper with a sponge brush. The students turn the image over and rub it from the middle to the outside edges, adhering it to the story board. Do not Modge Podge™ the top of the image yet. The teacher can have students complete an artist's statement about their photo pose choice.



**4. LOVE, LIFE, & HAPPINESS WORDS:**

Students will then write five words that represent love, five that represent life, and five that represent laughter. Using a high-quality art paper (do not use printer paper) — such as multi-media paper, which is a basic and inexpensive standard art paper (sometimes called white sulphite paper) — and permanent markers, have students write their words on varying sizes of paper rectangles, using varying sizes and types of font. It is very important to only use permanent markers because the top coat of Modge Podge™ will most likely make other markers run or smear due to the water content of the sealer. Students can also paint some of their words directly on the canvas for even more variety. Use black markers or black paint to write the words, whether on paper scraps or directly on the canvas. Then have students position the words, using good composition and balance, around their storyboard. Have students brush the bottom of each word with Modge Podge™ and adhere to the board. Students could position words that represent their past in the bottom section, present words in the middle ground, and future in the top section if they would like. If students painted some words directly onto the canvas using paint, let the canvas dry before going on to step 5. The teacher can have students complete an artist's statement about their word choice.

**5. FINAL SEALING:**

The final step is using a sponge brush to spread a light coat of Modge Podge™ over the entire canvas board, taking care to make sure edges of all adhered papers are sealed well and that the entire board is well covered with the sealer. Modge Podge™ dries clear. Students should complete a final artist's statement, describing their storyboard and the story they have chosen to tell about their life through color, patterns and designs, words, and their portrait image.

6. GALLERY:

An important aspect of this project is having students share their storyboards either within the class or in a more public setting within the school. This project gives the opportunity to grow the intercultural community within the classroom and school.

Homemade Modge Podge™ can be made by mixing a mixture of half water and half white school glue.





Teachers can personalize the storyboard project for their own needs, meeting varying themes of focus, or addressing essential questions.

Students can also do more advanced versions of the storyboard project such as the triptych panel in the above images. The storyboards at left were done by the editor, Trina Harlow, and represent her childhood, young womanhood, and middle age.



Chapter 12

Muse Arts Projects: Pampering Kids' Creativity While Living in Transition

Paola Gomez and Johanna Reynolds

What is Muse Arts Projects?

Founded in 2012, *Muse Arts Art Projects* is a response to the artistic dreams and vision of Paola Gomez, a writer, social justice advocate and a refugee, and Alex Usquiano, a Colombian-born artist and newcomer to Canada.

Alex Usquiano is a visual artist with more than fifteen years of experience integrating different techniques in his exploration of new and contemporary arts. As both a practicing artist and an artist educator, Alex uses his talent painting, drawing, and in performance and photography, to promote love for the arts and to encourage children to find ways of exploring their creativity and self-expression. Alex is also a freelance photographer



“Our World of a Thousand Colours is also innovative because it seeks to give a voice to the realities and experiences of refugee children and adolescents who do not have a say in their current circumstances and yet suffer the impact of the relocation.”

and graphic designer. Co-founder Paola Gomez is a trained human rights lawyer, community organizer, public speaker, artist facilitator, writer and a dreamer. She is a member of PEN Canada's Writers-in-Exile and is involved in a number of community engagement programs. Paola writes poetry, essays and short stories. As a researcher and emerging curator, Paola has contributed in many aspects to the access and visibility of other Latin American artists in Toronto, Canada's artistic scene. She has co-curated the *Art of Non-Violence Collective Art Exhibit*, *For Love to Frida* and *Mientras Las Hojas Caen*, among others. As companions to many newcomer artists in Canada, Paola and Alex lead the Artists Collaboration Program which seeks to showcase the work of visual artists living in Latin America, in different cities in Canada, and the USA.



Muse Arts Projects is thus multi-faceted and brings together a number of artists, facilitators and community arts projects. We support, develop and promote visual, contemporary art and literature of emerging or new-comer artists as well as artists from equality seeking groups. As well as the love for arts and literature among all children, the practice of arts in all its forms as a way to give voice to an individual's experiences, dreams

and hopes; supporting a person's healing journey and as a pathway to seeking justice and a common well-being.

One of the goals of *Muse Arts Projects* is to connect more Latin-American artists and artists from equity-seeking groups with whom we have in common the love for art with finding ways of materializing our artistic impulses and continuing our artistic careers in the new country that welcomed us. It is extremely difficult for a newcomer or emerging artist to be able to produce new artwork as well to present it and become visible, in particular when we have to struggle with having to learn Canadian experience and culture, gain proper housing and on many occasions, survive on underpaid jobs.

What Does *Muse Arts Projects* Do?

Muse Arts Projects has worked in collaboration with other organizations and has developed a number of community arts programs that integrate tenants of arts and social justice; that provide an opportunity for artists to give back to the community they live in; and for community members to



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engage in artistic projects that explore issues of social justice and community development. A number of these community programs are briefly outlined below, to provide a better sense of our multi-faceted commitment engaging in the arts as well as our overall vision.

1. Every year, *Muse Arts Projects* organizes ***The Art of Non-Violence***, a collective, week-long art exhibit that promotes the artwork of newcomer artists and artists from equity seeking groups.
2. ***The Stories We Share*** is a series of creative writing workshops for refugee and/or newcomer women (persons who self-identify as women). Women from different backgrounds share their stories of migration to Canada. In a safe space, women work together to produce individual and collective works, many of which are represented in a final zine publication.
3. ***Ready Made*** is a youth photography project and visual conversation about identity in a multicultural society. This workshop encourages participants (youth, ages 15-19) to use photography as a way of self-expression and the opportunity to explore societal power imbalances in relations to identity. Youth receive an intense 10-hour, hands-on photography class using digital cameras and participate in a four-hour field trip which is intended to integrate the elements of power imbalances and identify in their photographic compositions.
4. ***Colours of Hope*** is a series of visual art workshops exploring drawing, painting and photography with children ages 5-10.
5. ***Colours of Peace*** is a two-part program: a series of community art actions happening in different cities across Colombia, where members of *Muse Arts Projects* join local arts organization and non-arts organizations in

leading artistic actions promoting cooperation, integration, acceptance and non-violent alternatives to conflict.

6. **Colours of Peace Micro-Grant Program** is a fund created by Paola Gomez and Alex Usquiano (Co-founders of *Muse Arts Projects*) to support artistic community initiatives in their native Colombia. This program supports initiatives intended to engage communities through arts and culture in conversations of peace and reconciliation.
7. **Our World of a Thousand Colours** is a twelve-week art-workshop for children, ages 4-11 that focuses on visual arts and conversations about diversity, inclusion and community. The program has been presented at different schools and community centres in Toronto, as well as shelters, refugee reception centres and transitional houses.



Programming with Children in Temporary Refugee Reception Centres

Canadian Resettlement

Refugees can be resettled to Canada in two ways: as government assisted refugees (GARs) and privately sponsored refugees (PSRs). These refugees come pre-selected by UNHCR and the government of Canada and therefore are on a track to permanent residency. Under the 1951 Convention and international law, anyone who arrives at the Canadian border also has the right to claim asylum or refugee protection from inside Canada — in Canada, they are called refugee claimants; in the US these would be asylum seekers. In 2014, the Safe Third Country Agreement between the United States and Canada complicated this possibility, making it very difficult to come to Canada via the US, minus a few exceptions. The number of refugees accepted into Canada each year varies and is often influenced by political persuasions and interests. Prompted mostly by the image of a little boy washed up on the shores of Greece whose family was on their way to Canada, the Canadian government (led by then Liberal prime minister candidate Justin Trudeau on his electoral campaign) responded with a humanitarian drive and public campaign. In 2015, the Government of Canada pledged to resettle 25,000 Syrian government-assisted refugees due to the ongoing war and instability in Syria and the surrounding region. This was partially a campaign strategy of the newly elected Liberal government, but it was also followed by a wave of Canadian citizens becoming involved through the private sponsorship program. Eventually more than 40,000 Syrian refugees would be resettled across Canada.

Challenges of Resettlement

The circumstances were challenging: within a very short time span, 1,845 government assisted refugees needed to be



resettled in Toronto alone, a city with limited affordable housing (Keung, 2016). Logistics were organized by COSTI, the organization responsible for managing the operations (Akman, 2016). While arrangements were being sorted out, including finding suitable housing, refugees would need to be housed temporarily until permanent accommodations were found. Beginning in December 2016, temporary spaces including hotels acted as emergency housing (Ngabo, 2017).

Muse Arts Projects has offered programming in refugee shelters and temporary housing units for more than 5 years and continues to do so today. The impetus for expanding the program into hotels was based on a deep commitment:

During times of social disconnect, when anti-immigrant and anti-refugee discourses take up space, allowing racist and xenophobic behaviour to be displayed, fully, with not repercussions for those acting in such a disgraceful manner, the arts need to take space, take a revolutionary stand and be there to challenge societies about how they/we see them/ourselves and one's role in making the world a better place. Also, the arts need to be there for those whose rights to seek protection and whose existences are

being questioned. We, the artists, the creators, the doers, the dreamers, we need to be at the front row, making sure those arriving, those seeking protection know and feel that they are welcome, that they too deserve safety and peace. (Gomez, 2018)

Our World of a Thousand Colors

By February 2016, *Muse Arts Projects* started offering arts-based programming with children in one of these hotels. *Our World of a Thousand Colours* is a twelve-week art-workshop for children, ages 4-11. This section will reveal some of the challenges and key elements to consider when implementing such a program.

During the twelve week workshop, participants are guided to explore various art forms including painting, sculpture, print making and photography. Participants play with different materials while having conversations about diversity, inclusion and community. *Muse Arts Projects* works with professional artists, emerging artists, youth completing their community hours, and other community members in delivering a curriculum that is respectful of each participant's individualities and talents. A key foundation of the program is the belief in the power of the arts to initiate conversations about diversity and inclusion, and to celebrate the unique gifts of each member of society.

The program is based on the following elements:

1. **Welcoming:** We do this work not from the perspective of helping the 'other' but rather from a pace of treating others as equals. We use our talents and skills to create space where participants feel welcome and respected.
2. **Consistency:** We understand that kids in transition have to deal with a lot of instability, we need to create programs

where kids know what to expect and to set up a consistent routine.

3. **Cultural competency:** We promote the awareness of cultural aspects while respecting participants individuality therefore we are willing to self-reflect and challenge assumptions.

Our World of a Thousand Colours is innovative because it uses the arts as an exploring mechanism, supporting kids in allowing them to play and be removed from some of their day-to-day stressors, while also exploring what those stressors look like when facing transition and instability. *Our World of a Thousand Colours* is also innovative because it seeks to give a voice to the realities and experiences of refugee children and adolescents who do not have a say in their current circumstances and yet suffer the impact of the relocation. Exploring these elements at the early stage of their settlement allows the creation of programs that are friendly, welcoming to children and adolescents, and understanding of their behaviour. This is not a therapeutic approach, but the use of arts as a way to let kids express their own experiences. The arts have proven not to be confronting and at the same time they become an effective tool to better understand individual's experiences. Children and adolescents also experience the settlement and refugee experience in unique ways for young people and they need to be able to have an outlet for their emotions and anxieties.

Self-Reflection for Educators

Muse Art Projects is **not art therapy** and is deeply grounded in an anti-oppressive framework, providing high quality art workshops to children in transitional spaces. It is important to distinguish this work from art therapy. Art therapists are typically trained to use art with clients as a form of healing. Just as with music or play therapy, art therapy in that context is



seen as therapeutic and as a form of psychotherapy to move through the stages of trauma. While members of *Muse Art Projects* are trained as educators, social workers, community activists and artists, our approach is strictly non-therapy. Why? We focus on the creation of space for participants to pamper their creativity, we place special attention on the creative process and the ways in which participants, especially kids, use art as a way of achieving a sense of stability, connection to others and to explore ideas of diversity and integration. We recognize the time and space that healing trauma requires in addition to the participant's own emotional investment in a therapeutic process, we assist participants in our role as artists.

In refugee resettlement contexts in the 'west', especially working with children, it is very common to adopt a paternalistic approach of *saving the refugee*. Refugee children enter a system that already labels them as different and as requiring additional supports. In this sense, they are often viewed from a place of *lack*. While we acknowledge that refugee children have experienced more in their short lifetime than they should have to (feelings of loss – of home, of friends,



of family; feelings of displacement; of fear; of an unknown future), their experiences are but one aspect of their complex, human identities. By nurturing creativity and focusing on artistic practice rather than a psychological diagnosis, the focus becomes centered on fostering development and a creative process. Indeed, there may be times where traumatic stories or experiences surface and it is important to understand what may trigger these moments and how to deal with them when they do. A child may share horrific details related to their experience or their family's migration journey. They may exhibit learning or behavioural difficulties related to the anxiety that comes with adjusting to a new place. A child might refuse to speak, for example, or others may act out by refusing to share the art supplies or by seeking extra attention. But by centering the work on creativity rather than individual experiences of difference, pain and loss, art can help promote a routine and stability in what is otherwise an unstable or unpredictable environment. The most meaningful way of connecting with refugee children is through programming that develops these new skills (e.g. creativity, language skills) in order to provide tools for a better integration experience.

Positionality

Muse Arts Projects works from an anti-oppressive framework. As an educator working with refugee children, whether in a classroom or elsewhere, it is important to understand your own positionality in relation to your students. While this is the case in any line of work, it is especially important to apply this awareness in situations where there is a tendency to apply a saviour complex. A good starting point is to think about how one's own life has been shaped by race, gender, class and other forms of privilege. Consider how these have influenced your way of teaching, your assumptions about others, your approach to learning and knowledge production. It is also important to recognize that facilitators are in a position of privilege, even when they share experience or

elements of identity with their students. This is an important start in the process of self-awareness and in the creation of spaces that are safe and more importantly, free of assumptions.

Cultural Competence

There is no such thing as an “expert” in cultural competence. What a facilitator and educator needs to explore and adopt, prior to interacting with the participant, is a self-reflective practice; one that recognizes and challenges one's biases. In order to understand our role in the creation of culturally safe spaces, we need to recognize that the mere intention of doing good is not enough, we need, in fact, to explore the impact that our work and process will have on the participants. When you are able to do the work, looking at that impact of this on others, then you are in your way adopting an anti-oppressive practice, which also includes the recognition of the humanity of each and every single one of your participants and the diversity of experiences, context and privileges they bring to the space where they now gather. In order to become more aware of cultural differences, the following is important:

- a. **Do not make assumptions.** For example, an individual from a particular culture or background, may not fit the idea you have about such a culture.
- b. **Ask questions.** In order to learn and know about the reality of your participants, you need to be curious, and interested in the experience of those you are working with. When asking questions, try to be general, and non-intrusive, you will need time to build a connection with the participant. Let them take the lead on what they want to disclose to you.
- c. **Create a safe environment.** Your main responsibility is to create a space that is safe, and in order to do that, you need to give the participant options, without making them feel that they are “put on the spot”.



Working with a Language Barrier

While working with interpreters is helpful, if you don't have access to them, it is important to create a space that is open, non-intimidating and mindful of the participants and their needs. Perhaps one of the most beautiful aspects of art and creative practice is that it allows for communication and connection without words.

At times, even when interpreters are employed, other challenges exist. For example, after we made an agreement with the Toronto city to work in the hotel, it quickly became apparent that we would need to work with interpreters. The children in the hotel were government assisted refugees, meaning they were selected overseas by the Canadian government. Most had been living temporarily in Turkey and yet they came from different ethno-cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds. We had children of all ages (mostly 4-11 years old) in one classroom, so there were already different levels and abilities, but we also had very small children (2 or 3 years old) and children who spoke no English and no other common language with the other children.

Given that most of the children were Syrian, we employed Arabic interpreters. However, not all children were Syrian and not all children spoke Arabic. The complexity of resettlement also means that refugee populations are not homogenous, even if they are coming from the same area or even the same refugee camp.

Working with interpreters brings the ability to communicate using common language but it also brings additional challenges. We were a team of approximately 10 people including art facilitators and interpreters for a group of 40 kids. Even at the best of times, this seemed like it was not enough. While language barriers may make the work seem impossible, you will do your best to communicate with words but ultimately you may find that guiding by example is enough to get kids engaged in the process.

Reflecting on Your Own Practice

Muse Arts Projects is fundamentally about art and social justice. Given this approach, the process, the methodology used and the pedagogical underpinnings of each program are incredibly important. Educators should reflect on each step of the program and consider whether it was inclusive, whether it provided the desired outcome, if there were any challenges and how those challenges might be addressed in the future. Working with refugees and people without status is a very rewarding experience, but it can also be draining due to secondary trauma. Working with refugees is also incredibly difficult because of coming up against institutional barriers and systemic racism that keep people in a place of underservice. Working within this system can bring new challenges and can heighten awareness of lack of access to services, equity, housing issues, difficulty finding work, credentials being unrecognized, and so on. As educators, you should be aware of why you are doing this work, how you feel throughout the process and

how you can make the desired change. Think of this reflexive practice as both an inward and outward process.

Muse Arts Projects

Sample Program Tips and Guiding Thoughts

Running a successful arts program requires planning ahead of time, clearly assigned tasks and individual roles and responsibilities during the program, and appropriate wrap up afterwards. Here are some aspects to consider while preparing your program:

BEFORE

1. Determine the **concept** you wish to explore.
2. What **art form** will best serve the development of that concept?

If you want to introduce kids to the concept of diversity, what art form would be appropriate? You may choose to work on self-portraits. When you envision self-portraits, you will imagine different skin tones, shapes, etc. How can these differences be represented?



3. Consider appropriate **materials**, given the **space** and the amount of **time** required to deliver the program. With kids in transition, you may notice that they have a shorter attention span and/or may be unfamiliar with a structured learning environment. You may also be working with a group that varies in ability, language skills, and age.

Depending on the space, you will have to consider appropriate materials to use for the activity. For example, you may choose oil pastels over acrylics because they are less messy. Similarly, you may choose oil pastels over crayons because you wish to introduce bright colours, and materials that are new, exciting and promote curiosity.

Will you have access to facilitators that can help with the roll out of the program? Choose your medium base on the skills of the facilitators but also the ability to store the materials and the time required to set up.

Choose activities that are self-contained (e.g. have a beginning and end) even though you may be delivering a program that spans several weeks. Due to the nature of transition, you may not have the same children participating each week.

Consider what will be done with the artwork created by the children. For example, will the kids be allowed to keep the art work? If using a canvas or more expensive materials, are they able to keep it? If not, are you able to store it? Would paper be more appropriate? Ensure consent for any work that you are going to keep for any purpose.

4. Prior to the artistic activity, meet with all facilitators, volunteers, interpreters, or anyone who will be involved with the facilitation. While it is difficult to organize a group meeting ahead of time, this can be a valuable time for sharing the steps of the activity and to determine the role and responsibility of each team member. Finally, this is also a good time to do a full run-through of the artistic activity in order to determine the length of time needed to complete it.

DURING

1. Give yourself enough time to **set up the space and the materials** prior to the kids' arrival. This can reduce potential chaos, but it is also important for creating a mental picture of the space and to work on what you want it to look like.

For example, how can I make the space more inviting? Where are the spaces for movement? Does the activity require chairs? Is there a larger, open space where you can greet the kids when they arrive? What about a space where kids can be invited to be part of a circle for an ice breaker activity? A facilitator should be in each of these spaces, ready to welcome the kids.

2. **Create a welcome circle.** A welcome circle has several benefits at the start of a program including a) bringing everyone together and capturing their attention, and b) providing an important marker for the official start of the

program and creating a space for talking about the rules of the classroom. Rules might include, for example, a list of principles such as being respectful, being creative, and sharing. If there are children with appropriate language skills, you can ask them to help read the rules. A reminder that given the age range of the kids, you may wish to integrate the older ones as helpers. This will prevent them from getting too bored or becoming uninterested in the activity. Finally, this is a good time to implement an **ice breaker activity** which involves movement and is interactive. For example, a song like *Shake Your Sillies Out* is a hit!

3. **Introduce the activity.** While one facilitator sits in the circle, another can guide the kids to the tables or the area where the activity will take place. Other volunteers can assist with distributing materials, if necessary.
4. **Roll out of the activity.** Ideally, there should be one facilitator for every six kids. Facilitators should be sitting with the group and doing the activity with them, explaining the different steps, giving examples or aiding with the materials when necessary. Once the activity is finished, the facilitator can bring everyone back to the circle.



5. **Closing circle.** A closing circle is an important way to complete or end the program. It is an opportunity to ask what they liked about the activity, what they didn't like and also to receive feedback. Asking kids to give you feedback is very important because it allows them to be part of the process, to feel appreciated and their input respected.

AFTER

1. After children leave the room, clean up any spills or mess, rearrange furniture if necessary and put away all materials.
2. Debrief the activity with all facilitators. Consider what worked well and what could be improved. Assign roles and responsibilities for the facilitators for the next session, if applicable – this may be your only time together as a group.

About the Authors

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Paola Gomez, co-founder of Muse Arts Projects, is a social justice advocate, writer, and refugee who works with children and adults in the Toronto, Canada area, and also globally, in and through the visual arts.

Questions for Further Discussion

1. How do you think families feel the day they arrive in a country of resettlement or asylum?
2. How do you think families feel after two weeks in a country of resettlement or asylum?
3. How do you think families feel after six months, one year, five years?
4. How can the arts and arts based activities help refugee children and adolescents feel less stress?
5. As an educator, what signs should you look for that indicate stress in a student?
6. Why are choosing the right art supplies important from both a practical standpoint and a refugee child's specific point of view and usability?
7. Why is room arrangement important and what specific purpose does this play in educating children and adolescent refugees?
8. Why should a teacher use a circle up type of strategy and how does circling students assist with various phases of an art class — beginning, middle, or end?
9. What should an educator specifically reflect on for their refugee students? How is the same or different that reflection done on educating other students?
10. Why should the lead educator prepare and train their staff, volunteers or helpers? What specifically should the lead educator do to provide this training?

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Note: Muse Arts was formerly known as Sick Muse Art Projects.

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Project: *Our World of a Thousand Colors*

Spotlight 12

The Video Producer Behind the Film: *Refuge in the Heartland*

Trina Harlow and Rusty Earl

From 2017 to 2018, Rusty Earl led an effort to make the documentary film, *Refuge in the Heartland*. This book is a partner publication for the film. While working as a video producer for the College of Education at Kansas State University, Rusty teamed up with colleague Trina Harlow, a faculty member, and also with Dean Debbie Mercer to produce the film. It serves as a resource for educators and volunteers working with refugee populations, or for those curious to learn more about the lives and experiences of refugees. Images from filming can be seen in this Spotlight. Rusty's greatest hope is that the film will find its way into classrooms and training session across the country where it can help to open minds and hearts and inspire others to contribute their talents into helping refugees, both near and far. Rusty brings both a creative eye as a storyteller about human and educational issues, as well as seasoned skill as a videographer, to the production of the college's videos.



SPOTLIGHT



Video: *Refuge in the Heartland*
(Kansas State University College of Education)

Rusty has produced and directed more than a dozen documentaries for educational institutions and nonprofits on topics such as African American history, the Holocaust, military life, first-generation college students, and faith-based issues of interest. His films have aired on local and regional PBS affiliate stations across the country, with one nominated for a regional Emmy. In 2013, Rusty collaborated on the short film *My Brother Hyrum* that has been seen worldwide on BYUtv. Of all the projects he has worked on, *Refuge in*

the Heartland is the one he hopes will have the longest lasting impact.



Prior to working on films, Rusty was a junior high/ high school teacher in

southern Idaho. For seven years, he taught a number of subjects including theater, speech, and video production. As a young missionary for his church, Rusty spent four months in Stockton, California, a city of 300,000 people that included a large population of first- and second-generation refugees from post-Vietnam. The Hmong, Cambodians, Laotian and Vietnamese refugees came to the Bay area around 1975 and found refuge in the cities and suburbs of northwestern California. Little did he know at the time how crossing paths with these refugees, their lives, and stories would affect him.

You can see more of the Kansas State University College of Education's documentaries here:

 **College of Education Documentaries**
<https://coe.k-state.edu/documentaries>

 **College of Education You Tube Channel**
<https://www.youtube.com/user/kansasvideopro>

Chapter 13

A Need for Teachers of Color: Students Benefit from Teachers Who Look Like Them

Dr. Be Stoney

Editors Preface: At first reading, this chapter may seem to be of a different topic than the rest of this book, yet this chapter presents very important information, opinion, and research on the topic of teachers of color in the American school classroom. While many or most newcomer students most likely came from countries where they did have teachers that looked like them, in the United States the teaching base is lacking in teachers of color and this is a concern for many university teacher preparation programs, school administrators, students, and parents. It is a topic we must explore. I first crossed paths with Dr. Stoney on the faculty at Kansas State University, and then later, took one of her graduate level courses. One important



“Newcomer Programs meet specific needs of immigrant students, over and beyond their linguistic needs.”

realization I learned from Dr. Stoney, an energetic, involved, and concerned black associate professor, is that we must have difficult conversations in 2019 – we must talk to each other about race, ethnicity, diversity, and our varying cultural norms and differences, so that we can truly be a country that everyone calls home. While this chapter focuses mainly on the American history of teachers of color in the classroom, all can learn and grow from historical examination and use it to improve their own pedagogical futures and that of all students.

Introduction

When I was asked to write about a topic which I am passionate about, teachers of color in the classroom, I was excited and saddened at the same time. I thought about my past experiences in school as a student. I pondered how Black teachers provided me unique learning in the classroom and for life experiences. How many students in today’s classrooms have encountered African American educators? How would immigrant students benefit from having a teacher that looked like them? Not in a



Dr. Be Stoney is the girl on front row with pigtails at Skinner Elementary School in South Texas.



support staff position, or someone who oversees in-school detention centers, or an African American individual who manages the school grounds, but a certified or licensed classroom teacher? To the point, in general I asked, “How do students benefit when their teacher looks like them?”

I present here a timeline to explain the ethnic identities in referencing Blacks, African Americans, persons or teachers of color. I grew up in an era identifying as a Black individual during the *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347, U.S. 483 landmark court case. Post the Brown case, other identities have been used to describe Blacks (e.g., Negroes, Afro Americans, Black Americans, and African Americans). Today, many Blacks prefer to identify themselves as African Americans. For the purpose of this chapter, I will use Blacks and African Americans interchangeably based on historical context, and when referencing persons and teachers of color, these identities are inclusive of all racial and ethnic group identities.

As a young Black girl growing up and educated in South Texas in the early thru the late 1970s, I recall having three prominent Black classroom teachers. I can remember the names of my second grade teacher, seventh-grade history teacher, ninth grade science teacher, and my ninth grade math teacher, who was Chinese. Oddly enough, I can remember *their* names, but not the names of my White teachers through those years. Honestly, being educated by the teachers I remember helped shape me to be a better version of myself. The kind of teacher I want to emulate to students who look like me were the teachers of color who taught me to be confident, strong, courageous, competent, and honest. Marian Wright Edelman coined the phrase, “you can’t be what you can’t see,” and as a classroom teacher I want my students of color to understand when they see me, they see success, someone who achieved both as a person and educator of color. I wanted to be a model for these students of how a person of color can achieve success.

My own childhood experience of having a few African American teachers is, in my opinion, a direct result of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka*, which was a landmark United States Supreme Court Case where the Court declared that it was unconstitutional to have separate public schools for Black and White students. The justices ruled the segregations of Black and White students violated the *equal protection clause* of the 14th Amendment, which holds that no state can “prohibit any discriminatory state action based on race, including segregation in public schools” (The Constitution of the U.S., 14th Amendment). Black people were denied public educational resources and strengthened their own schools and communities. They fought for the resources that had been unjustly denied to their children. Parents’ demands for better schools became a crucial part of the larger struggle for civil rights (Smithsonian National Museum of American History, n.d.). Segregated education was designed to confine these children to a subservient role in society and second-class citizenship. Even though the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* forced the integration of Black and White children in the classroom, researchers discuss at great length the impact the *Brown* decision had for teachers, administrators, and principals of color (Fultz, 2004; Hudson & Holmes, 1994; Karpinski, 2004; Miller & Endo, 2005).

While most African Americans were pleased with the court ruling and outcomes in *Brown vs Board of Education*, there is another school of thought, so to speak. So I ask, what did the outcome of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* take away from me? My position is that it took away the opportunity to be educated by someone who looked like me. Despite the fact that I had three African American teachers and one Chinese teacher who all wanted me to succeed and not fail, that was not always true of my White teachers. I was often placed in class groups at lower learning levels that were not as challenging to me. How did this important case impact me as a student



of color in the classroom? How has the outcome of integrated classes or the lack of teachers of color 64 years later impacted students of color in 2019? Where are the teachers of color and why have they disappeared from the classrooms? This chapter explores these questions through the historical context for diverse teachers, the impact and results of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the current diversity situation in the classroom, benefits of having a teacher of color in the classroom, the need for teachers of color in the classrooms, the recruitment and retention for teachers of color, and looking towards the future of teacher education programs. With the diverse demographics of students increasing rapidly, this is an issue that education must address, and one that will affect immigrant and newcomer students.

The Historical Context of Diverse Teachers

Does the context and the intent of the *Brown v. Board of Education* in today's classrooms succeed its mission? The answer to the question varies among researchers and authors. Not only did this important case put an end to separate education and classrooms, it also dismantled and displaced many African American teachers, principals, and superintendents. Important works cited by the likes of DuBois (1935), Rosenthal, (1957), King (1993), Tillman (2004), and other scholars discussed the impact of the *Brown* case regarding desegregation, separate but equal, lower achievement gaps, and disciplinary issues of Black students. Researchers such as Hudson and Holmes (1994), Ramsey (2005), Hrabowski and Sanders (2015), Lutz (2017), and Amber (2018), have researched the impact of this historic case concerning African American teachers in U.S. public schools. A significant body of research shows, children who encounter African American teachers are more likely to be recognized as bright students and are more likely capable of success and graduate from high school and aim for college (Staples, 2017). Amber (2018) reviewed, “what



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happened to this population [African American teachers] after the implementation of the 1954 court ruling” (p. 1)? What was the hidden cost and backlash Black American schools did not anticipate as Black teachers and principals were no longer employed in the educational system? “Black students lost role models who not only knew them on a personal level, but had a unique understanding of their communities, cultural identities, and individual situations” (Lutz, 2017, p. 1).

The Impact of Brown v Board of Education

It has been 64 years since the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. What exactly did *Brown v. Board of Education* do for Black teachers and students? The integration provided Black students better access to quality educational opportunities, while displacing more than 39,000 Black teachers (Ethridge, 1979; Holmes, 1990; Hudson & Holmes, 1994). The historical impact of the case still haunts African American teachers and Black students in classrooms today. Justice Earl Warren delivered the unanimous decision on May 17th, 1954, (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954) the results changed how American schools would no longer be segregated by race and made equal



opportunities in education the law of the land (Smithsonian National Museum of American History, n.d.). However, when the 1966 Desegregation Guidelines were drafted, the widespread firing of Black teachers was not an issue that had been considered (Orfield, 1969, p. 106).

Was the loss of employment for Black educators one of the (un)intended and (un)anticipated consequences of desegregation after *Brown* (Tillman, 2004)? Dempsey and Noblit (1996), in their discussion of school desegregation, noted that “we acted as if we were ignorant of the fact that desegregation was disproportionately burdening the African Americans with the bulk of busing, with the closure of African American schools, and with the demotions and firing of African American educators” (p. 115). According to the authors, the harsh reality was the loss of employment for Black educators; the years between 1954 thru 1965 were the most damaging and devastating years for Black teachers and principals.

Current Situations Regarding Teacher Diversity

The Center for American Progress (Boser, 2011) published a brief that focused on teacher diversity in the classroom. The author found the demographics of the teacher workforce had not kept up with the demographic changes of the students (Boser, 2011). The study noted that students of color made up more than 40 percent of the school-age population; in contrast, 17 percent of the teaching workforce were teachers of color. A year after this study was completed, school-aged students of color increased by 50 percent and teachers of color increased by one percent (Boser, 2014).

Benefits of Having a Teacher of Color in the Classroom

The elementary and secondary teaching workforce has changed in a number of important ways. Class sizes are larger and more diverse (NCES, 2017). Teachers are younger and far

less experienced and are far less diverse by gender (Ingersoll, Merrill & Stuckey, 2014). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016):

The lack of racial diversity among teachers at public elementary and secondary schools across the nation, less than one in five U.S. public school teachers (18%) are individuals of color and approximately half (49%) of public elementary and secondary school are individuals of color. (p. 2)

The teaching workforce is overwhelmingly homogenous and underrepresented teachers are becoming far less visible in the classroom. Across the country, according to government estimates, as the U.S. population – and therefore students – is growing more diverse, and the teaching force is not keeping pace (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012. Some scholars believe students of color a) often lack positive adult role models also of color IN the classrooms, b) experience the absence of teachers who personally understand their racial and cultural background, and c) lack access to qualified teachers of any color (Irvine, 1988; Ladson-Billings, 2010; Speckhard-Pasque, 2017).

The race gap for underrepresented teachers will not likely change anytime soon, however, having at least one African American teacher in elementary school significantly increases the chances that Black students will graduate from high school and also will consider attending college (Gershenson, Hart, Hyman, Lindsay, & Papageorge, 2018). This diversity gap suggests that the U.S. public school system is not reaping the known benefits students could experience if they had greater diversity in the teacher workforce (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). During my 12 years of schooling, I can attest, having at least one Black teacher in my elementary, middle and high school years, I am grateful I experienced life that coincided with learning about others who are different from



me, others who did not have preconceived notions about Black and Brown people, and teachers who were positive role models for all students. I am a teacher who connects with all students. I have followed the formula that was instilled in me at an early age – connecting with students from different racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, skin color, languages, and intellect.

Students of Color Need Teachers of Color in the Classroom

I speak from personal experiences, as I noted earlier that I could only recall three African American and one Chinese teacher's names. I remember my teachers because what I learned through their styles of teaching allowed me to explore and be inquisitive about the information I was taught. My second grade teacher, Mrs. Herndon, taught me how to engage with others in the classroom who did not look like me and spoke a different language. I learned why my peer's skin was different and their hair was not like mine. Understand, there were mostly Hispanic students in the class, but she made all students feel comfortable and accept one another without judgements.



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My second grade experiences were different from my first and third through sixth grade experiences because my White teachers did not allow the Black students to co-mingle or ask questions about others who looked different. I distinctly remember how we were segregated into our reading, math, science, and language groups – by race. I guess this is why I did not remember much about the other teachers during my elementary and middle school years. I recall asking my eighth-grade homemaking teacher, “Why are all your Blacks students in the lower group and not integrated in the other classes with the *smart* students?” I cannot remember her response to my question, but I remember how her words left me feeling *less than, not deserving, and worthless* - painful emotion I remember today. As an eighth grader, I was not only at a loss for words, I lost a sense of myself—the strong, confident, and personable person I was known to be for the rest of the year. She was not like my seventh-grade history teacher, Mr. King, who made history come to life and treated all students and students of color with respect. We were all comfortable in his classroom. Your skin color did not matter. He said, “your race is your identity, but your young minds belong to me. I am your mentor, role model, supporter, and *king*. Should you have a problem, please come to me so I can build you up and get you ready for the next day.” Mr. King's role, an African American teacher in a predominately White setting, was more than that of a role model for Black students, he was a role model for *all* students.

White Students Need to Experience Teachers of Color

The majority of students who are enrolled in my university courses are White. Most have openly stated to me, “you are the first Black/African American teacher I have had in all my years in school.” My goal as an African American teacher who teaches White students is to expose my White students to a *new education of learning*, the potential gains of learning through the lens of a Black teacher. I strongly believe that



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White students need to encounter Black teachers who are knowledgeable, challenging, and competent individuals in the classroom. Teachers of color can help disrupt what are often one-sided portrayals of the world and offer invaluable insight to students from different backgrounds (Anderson, 2015). As a teacher of color, I feel a sense of responsibility to humanize subjects like the plight of Black young men and law officers, or immigration and its impact on young children. I want White students to understand the cultural complexities of issues and expose them to different cultural realities than they would otherwise never encounter.

Teachers of color can seek to challenge misguided perceptions and dismantle preconceived notions about people of color. Offering a safe space for students to have intellectual discussions and challenge their own notions about people of color is important in the school setting, where White students can reflect, investigate and ask questions without feeling guilty or deficient for being White. This same scenario may also be evident between immigrant students and non-immigrant students, regardless of racial/ethnic identities. Understand, I am not purporting that White teachers cannot provide the same type of classroom structure for discussions. However, it has been my experience that most White teachers usually avoid

sensitive topics of discussion because they are not comfortable or they likely avoid the discussion and divert the conversations. The immediate long-term payoff of paring teachers of color with White students is evident.

Where are the Teachers of Color?

According to Summerhill's (2016) research on the recruitment and retention of African American teachers, "the push to recruit and hire more Black teachers was not primarily about opportunity and access for the teachers. It was about the idea that all students should have the opportunity to learn from educators of many diverse backgrounds" (p. 5). Teachers of color serve as role models to students of color as well as to other students. However, the role model role extends far beyond its title. When students of color are taught by someone who shares their racial or ethnic background they tend to perform better – especially if they view their schools as unwelcoming environments. Teachers of color tend to have more positive perceptions of student of color (academically and behaviorally) than their White counterparts. For example, teachers of color have a high expectation of the student's academic abilities (Gershenson, Hold, & Papageorge, 2015) and do not perceive African American students' behavior as disruptive (Wright, 2015). Several studies conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Neason, 2014) found that teachers of color boost the self-worth for Black students by exposing them to professionals who look like them.

Returning to *Brown*, desegregation in the United States marked the beginning of Black teachers departing the profession. Black teachers were not hired in desegregated schools, and since as other professional opportunities arose and were hiring, fewer Blacks returned to the teaching profession (Madkins, 2011). Black educators who sought to educate their Black students were successful in providing students with the tools to advance



themselves and their people (Perry, 1975; Siddle-Walker, 1996, 2000).

By 1950, approximately half of all Black professionals working in the U.S. were employed as teachers (Foster, 1995; Siddle-Walker, 2000). Prior to the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, nearly 82,000 Black teachers taught nearly two million Black students in U.S. public schools (Hawkins, 1994). Post the landmark court decision and ensuing of desegregation schools, the teaching workforce of Black teachers began to decline (Foster, 1997). Between 1954 to 1965, nearly 39,000 Black teachers in 17 states lost their jobs as a result of this landmark court decision (Ethridge, 1979; Holmes, 1990; Hudson & Holmes, 1994). Subsequently, Black teachers who maintained their employment in the districts experienced internal resegregation. Black teachers were given the task of educating only Black students while their White counterparts taught White students at the new segregated schools (Torres et al., 2004). The percentage of Black teachers began to decline by 1978, Blacks comprised only 12% of the national workforce and it has steadily declined over time to only 8% (Madkins, 2011; NCES, 2010).



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By 1970, I began to see a shift in my peers and my teachers. I began to lose my sense of belonging – those Black voices who encouraged me to succeed in the classroom, my culture, my strength, my sense of pride, and connections to educators who looked like me. I can recall when the *color* of my peers began to change, and my teachers' skin color changed to no longer match my skin color. I did not understand why I was losing me. Opportunities of sharing my similar cultural experiences and conversations with my peers and teachers were becoming a thing of the past. I lost cultural connections to Black professionals who taught me about other successful Black professionals who were contributing citizens in society, and their support that one day I too would be like them, advancing in a society and sharing those lessons with others who would come behind me.

Today, I continually inquire as to why Blacks are not selecting the teaching profession? What were the contributing factors for Black teachers disappearing in American schools and in a profession that I believe is the greatest and most rewarding job? I became a teacher because the foundations and pillars of my past taught me the importance of being a teacher – teaching and molding young minds. My vocation as a teacher is one that imparts knowledge to my students of color *and* White students, and provides them an opportunity to be taught by someone who looks like them *and* does not like them. I want to disrupt the one-sided portrayals students have about others (Anderson, 2015) to offer invaluable insight to students from different backgrounds, life styles, learning, customs, and cultural beings.

Recruiting Diverse Teachers – Specifically Future African American Teachers

Diversity has been a *key shift* in the rebuilding and recruiting of African American teachers post the *Brown v. Board of Education* era. The real problem is not the recruitment of teachers of color, rather the problem is the unaddressed and



unacknowledged issue of retention. We see that as teachers of color are hired in district schools because representation is lacking, and most feel isolated, withdrawn, and forced to rigidly implement countless rules that often times do not apply to their White counterparts (Cook, 2015). With the general lack of knowledge about the experiences of teachers of color, it can be assumed that their experiences are the same as their White counterparts – in reality they are not the same. As school districts begin to recruit teachers of color, there are factors that should be addressed. The first factor: Why do African American teachers leave the profession at a higher rate than White teachers (Griffin, 2015)? The second factor: How do we confront racial battle field of fatigue and microaggressions (Cobb, 2017; Pizarro & Kohli, 2018)? The third factor: How do we develop programs and initiatives that work towards supporting new, early career teachers of color (Graham, 2014)?

African American teachers tend to leave teaching due to the lack of respect they feel they receive as a professional, difficult working conditions, or lack of pay (Mulvahill, 2018; National Education Association, 2015-2016). Teachers of color are often hired in school districts that are minority-majority, are struggling with financial issues, have little support, and lack of supplies for students. As a former middle school classroom teacher, I taught at a low performing school and everyday was a new challenge. Often, when I needed to confront students about certain behaviors or lack of effort, I got the feeling some students did not want to be taught by a teacher who is African American, or felt lack of respect regarding my teaching skills or styles. At the end of most days, it took what little strength I had left to make it home and prepare myself for another day at school. What took me back every day was my love for teaching and also my principal – she was a great supporter and believed in my teaching talents. I can understand why African Americans teachers are more inclined to leave the profession, especially when they feel they are not supported. If students

are going to have success in schools, their teachers must feel supported by administration.

Looking to the Future With a Diverse Teaching Staff

Now that we have established the historical context of how *Brown v. Board of Education* affected the teaching profession and also a need for teachers of all colors, let's turn our thoughts to the future. In this section, I will briefly investigate culturally responsive teaching (CRT), benefits to newcomer students, and some basic ideas for P-12 schools to begin thinking about how they can encourage young people of color to enter the teaching profession.

Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers for P-12

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) begins with being responsive to student needs and how they learn. CRT is a “multi-pronged approach that consists of the teacher’s mindset that helps students build their capacity to grow and flex their brain power over time” (Hammond, 2018, p. 1). I teach a



Dr. Be Stoney interacts with students during her physical education and health methods class at Kansas State University.



graduate summer online course, *Multicultural Education Issues for Teachers*, and in this course I use Geneva Gay's article, *Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teachers* (2002) because I want the students to read and learn about culturally responsive teachers, even though most were not familiar with the term or multicultural education. Most students, upon reading this article, experience a steep learning curve, while others find the article difficult to read. They believe that since they may or may not teach in a predominantly White district, the article is not relevant to them. Teachers who are invested in teaching, should understand the importance of culturally responsive teaching. Most teachers continue to enter classrooms unprepared and unable to effectively teach all students (Baines, 2017; Bell, 2002; Fuller, 1992). CRT teaching recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning, enriching classroom experiences and keeping students engaged (Hammond, 2012). Ladson-Billing (1998) defines CRT as, "an approach that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skill and attitudes" (p. 3). In preparing preservice teachers to teach diverse learners and students, university college teacher education programs need to offer more hands-on training on how to be effective, non-judgmental, and inclusive of all students.

Benefits to Newcomer Students

While the experiences of American-born students of color may be vastly different from the life experiences of newcomer students who are refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, or undocumented students, one thing is certain – students of color will benefit by learning with other students of color who have different life experiences, and learning from teachers of color who can serve as role models. Using my own life as an example and knowing that teaching is highly relational, children in American schools will more likely be successful if

they have teachers of color who are role models and projecting an intellectual aura that encourages students to learn.

It is completely plausible that many or most newcomer students did have teachers of color in their countries of origin and may now be surprised to have mostly White teachers. This is not to say that White teachers are not capable of accepting, loving, and teaching P-12 newcomer students. On one hand, if faculty and staff mirror the diversity of the students, we honestly do have a multicultural, intercultural learning environment, which is beneficial to all students. On the other hand, as professionals we need to encourage young people of color to consider and understand the history of *Brown* and to consider tracing the steps before the *Brown* decision and before their entry into the American educational field. If we make understanding the *Brown* history a priority as we prepare high schools students for higher education after graduation, we can begin the process of undoing what *Brown vs. Board of Education* started. We can have both desegregated schools and have diversity in our educational leadership, which benefits all students and all people.

While the effort to encourage more students of color to enter the teaching profession is complicated and may take a comprehensive plan and committed focus, here are some suggestions that can be implemented at the P-12 level:

- Schools need to purposefully hire staff that are people of color so that young children see teachers, aides, office staff, and others working in the educational environment, and to reflect society's diversity into the whole school and whole child's experience.
- At all levels of education, teaching staff can have discussions with students about the fact that it is important for us to have a diverse teaching staff combined with discussions about the value and benefits of being a teacher and affecting humanity.



- At the middle school, curriculum and extracurricular activities are opportunities to introduce students to educators of color in a variety of ways, planting the seed of thought that teachers, coaches, and advisors are not just White.
- At the high school level, much more can be done to encourage students of color to enter the teaching profession. Informational meetings held at high schools by teaching staff or university representatives can directly address the need for teachers of colors. We must specifically talk about both the need for teachers of color and we must teach them the history of Brown and how it has affected the number of teachers of color.
- If high schools offer career and technical classes devoted to education, supervising teachers could work to recruit high school students of color to take the courses. It seems that if we create educational settings where we discuss both the need for teachers of color and the satisfaction of being a teacher, we will create interest in students of color majoring in education. It is through the establishment of goals that we achieve.

Conclusion

I am elated that in my early years of school I had the opportunity to be educated by African American teachers. They built my foundation of knowledge, developed my intellectual confidence, and provided a unique and rare opportunity to be educated by someone who looked like me. As a teacher in 2019, I want to instill the same for all of my students, be a role model who looks like them and one who does not look like them. I want all students to succeed in school and have ample opportunity to gain confidence and experience a sense of pride in their work and effort. I am a product of post-*Brown v. Board of Education*. I was a student who benefitted from being educated by teachers of color, and continue to learn today and pay this educational investment forward.



As a society, we must encourage students of color to enter the teaching profession because there are children of color who need to see educators, scholars, and academicians that look like them.

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Questions for Further Discussion

Use the following questions as helpful inputs into your own meaning making and reflection on the content of this chapter.

1. As you examine your own understanding of *Brown v. Board of Education*, what do you realize you know about the court case or do not know?
2. As an educator, do you have any personal biases you bring to the classroom? If so, what are they and how do they manifest themselves in your words and actions?
3. What do you do to encourage all students to become teachers or go into the education profession? Do you, as an educator, feel you equally encourage students of all ethnicities and cultures to become teachers?
4. Are there any teachers of color on your school or organization's staff? Do they feel included and accepted by their fellow staff? Do you interact with those different than you?
5. What was the main ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education*?



6. Why did teachers of color disappear from the school staff because of *Brown v. Board of Education*?
7. Examine the national statistics on P-12 teachers of color in an Internet search. What do you find?
8. Do you think newcomer students notice the color of their teachers? What are your thoughts on this? Do you think newcomer students are used to having teachers of color prior to coming to the U.S. or resettlement areas?
9. How will newcomer students benefit from having a teacher that looks like the in the classroom?
10. What can you do, aside from suggestions mentioned in this chapter, to encourage students of color to become degreed teachers?

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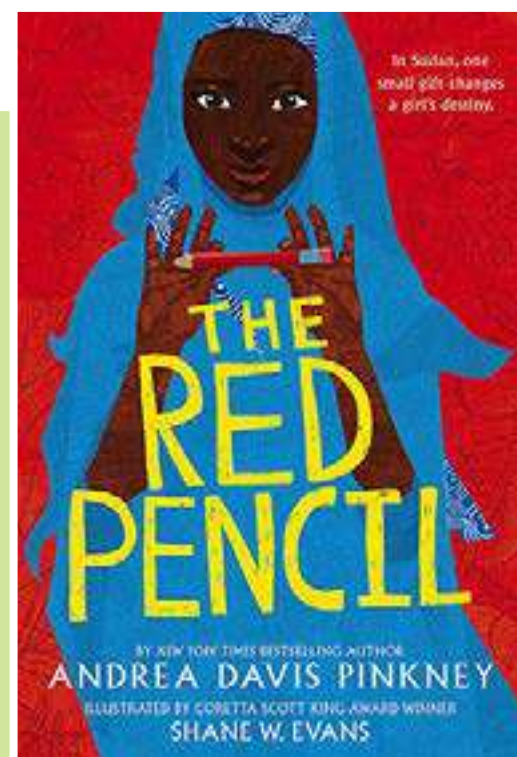
Spotlight 13

How a Pencil Can Change a Life: Andrea Davis Pinkney and *The Red Pencil*

Trina Harlow

BOOK REVIEW

The Red Pencil, written by Andrea Davis Pinkney and illustrated by Shane W. Evans, is an informative fictional story about a twelve-year-old girl's life, beginning with her happy life in a Sudanese village where she lived with her parents and grandparents, to an uncertain new life in a refugee camp. While Amira's family is working in the garden and going throughout their day in their peaceful village, life suddenly changes as Janjaweed attackers arrive. These terrifying rebels horrifically ravage her village, she loses family and friends, and finds herself making a long journey on foot to the safety of a refugee camp. Life in the camp is full of unusual experiences and strangeness, yet her remaining family members attempt to rebuild life with the meager rations of food and limited necessities they are given.



While Amira's life and culture in her home village involved girls not being able to write, her life in the refugee camp is forever changed by a caring teacher who gives her a simple red pencil. Amira had lost her voice due to the trauma she had experienced in her village, but she found it through a red pencil in the camp. Prior to this tragedy in her life, her grandfather had secretly revealed that he wanted her to learn to read and write. It's possible that the simple pencil given to her in the refugee camp reminded her of his love and encouragement and gave her the will to go on.

This book brings both the life of an innocent child in her Sudanese village and her new life in a refugee camp to a greater level of understanding through verse and the skill of Andrea Davis Pinkney's skilled use of verbal imagery. Although fictional, Andrea Davis Pinkney captures the story of Amira's life, change, and triumph through her words. She also conveys a simple, but powerful message. Knowledge is power. Education is power. Children can triumph over difficulties, even horrors. Andrea Davis Pinkney's words are both beautiful, yet heartbreaking. The gentle, poetic writing style, using verse, creates and evokes much emotion in the reader and helps guide significant learning as the fictional story unfolds.



This book would be a valuable novel to teach acceptance, respecting each other's trials and struggles, resilience and triumph, overcoming all odds by and through education, and offers a place for educators and others to offer a place for discussing culture, diversity, interculturalism, and multiculturalism.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrea Davis Pinkney is the *New York Times* bestselling and award-winning author of more than thirty books for children and young adults, including picture books, novels, works of historical fiction and nonfiction. Her books have been awarded multiple Coretta Scott King Book Awards, Jane Addams Children's Literature Honor citations, four NAACP Image Award nominations, the Boston Globe/Horn Book Honor medal, as well as several Parenting Publication Gold Medals, and American Library Association Notable Book citations.



Andrea was named one of the "25 Most Influential Black Women in Business" by *The Network Journal*, and is among "The 25 Most Influential People in Our Children's Lives" cited by *Children's Health Magazine*. She was included in *Good Housekeeping* and *Women's Day* magazines' "50 Over 50" extraordinary women, and was named among L'Oreal's "10 Women Who Light Up the Arts Scene."

Andrea was selected to deliver the May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture. This honor recognizes her significant contributions to literature for young people provided through a body of work that brings a deeper understanding of children's books and their impact. Additionally, she is the recipient of the Regina Medal, a citation for her distinguished contribution to children's literature.

Andrea is a graduate of Syracuse University's Newhouse School of Public Communications and is a former member of the Newhouse School's Board of Trustees. She lives in New York City with her husband, award-winning illustrator Brian Pinkney, and their two children. *(Biography provided by the author.)*

To learn more about Andrea Davis Pinkney, please visit:

 **[Andrea Davis Pinkney Website](http://andreadavispinkney.com)**
<http://andreadavispinkney.com>

Twitter: @AndreaDavisPink | **<https://twitter.com/AndreaDavisPink>**

Facebook: **<https://www.facebook.com/andreadavispinkney>**

Chapter 14

Teach Your Heart Out: Strategies That Work

Jessica Mow

The experience of working with students who have fled their country of origin for freedom and safety has been three things for me: eye opening, awe-inspiring, and hysterical chaos. In this best practices chapter I will share some strategies that I use in my ESOL classroom for other teachers and educators working with newcomer students. Over 50 languages are spoken in my school and each day I teach my heart out in hopes of helping a child not only be successful in learning, but also find good footing on new soil.

Living in America and other countries that currently enjoy general peacefulness, we go about our day oblivious to what may be really happening around us and in far off places. My eyes have been opened from knowing only “the American way” to seeing pure and amazing glimpses of other cultures through



“I have found that the newcomer students I teach have this immense love for learning that is so intense and powerful it rubs off on all who are around them.”



the children I teach and their families. Through my students I have learned to appreciate those differences and then find myself wanting to know more.

Every day I go to work as a teacher and really feel inspired to give my students a new experience or teach them a new way of thinking. They have made me want to be a better teacher and person. I have found that the newcomer students I teach have this immense love for learning that is so intense and powerful it rubs off on all who are around them. It’s a very visible passion for them and they feel truly privileged to be experiencing it. They love wearing a uniform as it signifies that they are now students.



Video: The ESOL Journey

Then comes the chaos, the actual part of their journey which involves learning to be a student. I would say teaching newcomer students has been the most interesting, crazy, hair pulling, funny, beautiful experience I have ever had as a teacher. Many of my newcomer students are experiencing being a student for the first time in their entire lives, no matter their

middle school age. They don't know they need to get to class before the bell rings, how to do fire drills or what they are even for, how to line up and use inside voices, or that they need to stay in their seats. The school environment in their new country is completely new and there is a huge learning curve for them. Some days teachers want to run home, as you have taught "that rule" 100 times, and then other days teachers aren't ready for the wonderful day to end.

All of these aspects of my role as a newcomer and ESOL teacher have changed me at my core as a teacher and genuinely effected how I teach. Through trial and error, I have found some best practices and strategies that work with my students. I share these tips and tricks from the field as helpful strategies for other teachers on this same incredible journey with the most amazing students in the world.

This chapter is divided into five different sections: teaching with movements, learning centers, games, an instructional model, and scaffolding strategies. All five of these topics are strategies and best practices that I use in my classroom on a consistent basis. I truly believe they help foster learning while making the content accessible for all ESOL learners. I have done my best to credit all sources, yet I have used many of these resources for so long that in some cases the original source is not known to me.



Teaching with Movements

Teaching with movements is a huge part of my everyday teaching style when working with newcomers and refugees. I absolutely believe this style of teaching helps students make connections with the content being taught and helps them retain new information. *What is teaching with movements?* When teaching with movements, teachers design strategic hand motions that logically make sense in pairing up with the words they are teaching. This teaching strategy can be used when going over new vocabulary or any new concepts.

Let's say a teacher wants to teach students the concept of problem-solution. A non-movement strategy would be to explain this skill through words and then have students take notes on it. For newcomer students, the problem with that strategy is that only words have been used to explain this new concept. As we all know, words are what these students are lacking. It is important to provide an added element of movement to help students recall and retain information. Instead of the traditional method of talking and note taking, add meaningful movements to the new content. This will help students to both comprehend and remember the new content

What does movement look like and how can it be incorporated? To go with the example of problem solution above, follow these steps:

First, come up with a student friendly definition of problem-solution such as the problem is when something goes wrong or bad, and the solution is when you fix it. Next, create strategic movements that match up with those words and model the actions while you repeat the definition aloud to the class. It might look something like this: For the "problem" make a thumbs down gesture, for the "solution" make a thumbs up gesture. Teachers can



develop many and varied movements that relate to words in meaningful ways.

Newcomers students love when I teach with movements. It is engaging, keeps them actively involved in the learning, and helps students retain information. It also provides many opportunities for speaking practice. I have students practice the vocabulary and concepts with a partner using the words and hand movements after I have taught them. This practice time can be done immediately after teaching, anytime you want to review, or as bell-work the next day. Later, if you test students over the vocabulary or concepts, you will likely see kids making the motions as they work to remember that content for testing. You will also will be amazed at how much retention happens due to this easy adjustment to your teaching. I challenge teachers to think about their vocabulary and concepts in movements; it will make a huge difference in student learning and retention.

Learning Centers

Learning centers can be useful at all age levels and are not just for elementary-aged students. Therefore, if you teach secondary, don't shy away from this important best classroom practice. This is a fairly new teaching tool I am using with my middle school classes. My colleague, Laila Brownlee, and I have strategically worked on effective ways to run centers in our classrooms. Our planning and strategy in creating centers comes from the center guru, Kathrine McKnight. McKnight states, "Experience has shown that students actually tend to be more engaged when they work in centers. The combination of self-directed activity and short, specific tasks lends itself to the natural strengths of the developing adolescent" (2016, p. 2). When working with newcomer students, teachers need to keep in mind that most of them have very limited or even interrupted schooling. From my experience, this means that many

newcomer students have a hard time sitting in a traditional classroom: Desks in rows, quiet at all times, working alone, worksheets, and problems upon problems to complete. This is where learning centers come into play, as they allow for that movement and interaction these specific students need.

The first thing ESOL teachers need to do is have a game plan for centers ready and think through the logistics of running these different centers around the classroom. The following questions should be considered: How many centers are best? What procedures should be in place? What activities should be used and how will the different directions for each center be given? How long should centers last? Teachers are justified in thinking of these questions as these were all questions I had when starting centers in my classroom, too! Thankfully, my teaching colleague and I have found what works best with our students using McKnight's advice and teaching.

Read more about Katherine McKnight at:

 <http://www.katherinemcknight.com>

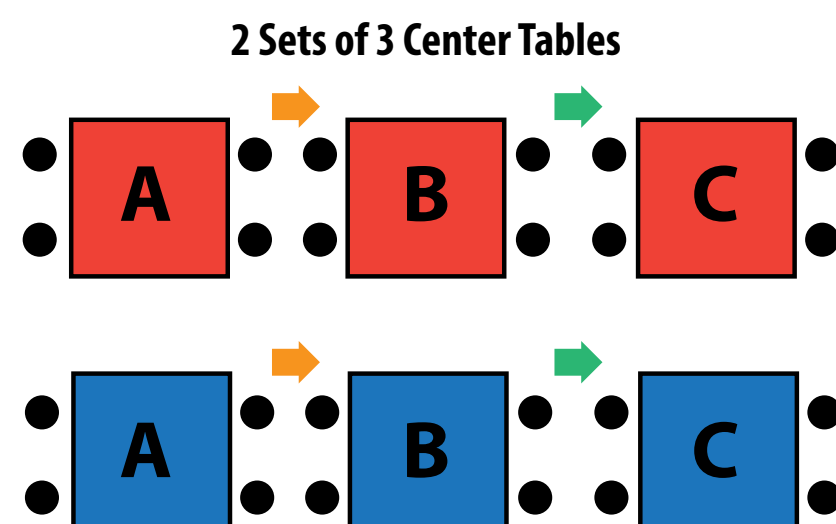
 <http://www.engageinglearners.com>

Let's address some of these questions:

Question: How many learning centers are best?

Answer: Teachers really want to have smaller numbers of students in each group, around 3-5 students. This allows for more effective collaboration, yet doesn't lend itself to off task behaviors due to large numbers. So, let's say teachers have 24 kids in a class, four students per group, and create six centers. You're thinking, wow! That's a lot of centers and activities, right? Here's the best part. Teachers can duplicate centers. This means there are two A centers completing the same activity, two B centers completing the same activity, and two

C centers completing the same activity. The great thing about duplicating centers is you have a smaller number of students in groups without having to spend the time to create six different activities. Simply said, only three centers are needed. See the diagram below on how centers might look in the classroom.



In my classroom, I would tell my three front of the class groups that they are moving through the front three centers and the back of the class group that they are moving through the bottom three centers. Remember, this is only one example of how to group students. Teachers will have varying numbers of students in their classes and will need to find a comfortable group setting for their own classrooms. That may be three students in a group and eight centers (four different activities) or it may be five students in a group and four centers (two activities).

TIP: Always have centers labeled 1, 2, 3, etc. If you duplicate, like discussed above, you will need two sets of labels, each reading as 1, 2, and 3. A good trick to help keep students from going to the wrong group is to color code the center labels. Have a red set for center 1, 2, 3 and a blue set for 1, 2, 3. This way you can tell groups of students to follow the red centers today or to follow the blue centers.

Question: What procedures do teachers need to have in place?

Answer: There are a few important procedures teachers will want to think through. The first one is to having a timing plan and get a timer set up, whether it is your cell phone or other device. After students' allotted time at center and when the timer goes off, teach or reteach the important concept. Stepping into the scenario as a teacher after each center time period is a critical piece and something I would always do, after the timer goes off. My students know that once the center is over, they have one minute to clean up, stand up, and listen to me teach or reteach the concept. I like to play a one minute song and when the song is over they know to be ready and waiting for a signal from me to move to the next center.



Jessica Mow is an enthusiastic educator at Curtis Middle School in Wichita, Kansas and motivates students to learn through a variety of engaging strategies.

Anytime a moving transition is happening in your classroom, remember to teach what you want it to look like. With ESOL students, just simply saying how you want students to move to the next center is not enough. Ask a few students to help act out what moving to the next center will look like. Once all students see and understand your expectations, then ask all students to participate in practicing the transition movement. I promise modeling how to move around the classroom from center to center will help tremendously with any classroom management issue that might arise.

Another helpful procedure is to create a center checkoff guide (see Appendix A) and give each student one on center day. The guide has the number of centers students will be going through and the name of each center. Students check off the box next to the center as they complete each one. This also alleviates confusion if centers should take more than one day to complete. I found that students came to class the next day not remembering what center they completed or who they were with. Having this guide to help them keep track of this information helps a great deal.

Teachers also need to consider what students will do if they finish the work at a particular center before the timer goes off. Working with newcomer students, teachers will have a variety of levels in their classrooms. Some students come with educational experiences and some have limited experiences or none. Some students also come knowing more English than others. Therefore, teachers need to be prepared for early finishers. A way to remedy this problem is to put an early finisher activity on the back of the center checkoff guide. I have used crosswords with our current unit vocabulary, practice pages relating to our current unit, Sudoku, etc. Anything that will keep them occupied and that is relevant to the class and enhances their current learning experience can be used.

TIP: Find a timer that plays music during the transition to the next center. There are many out there for you to choose from. Do an Internet search or check out *Teachers Pay Teachers*. My timer plays a one minute song when the time is up. This notifies students to clean up and be ready before the song is over.

Question: What kind of activities do I use?

Answer: I generally use learning centers as a way to practice content that we have already covered during class lessons. Therefore, the activities I choose allow for students to work

independently with their group. Teachers can also introduce topic content at a center by leading that particular center. This is great way to work with a small amount of students and differentiate based on their needs while the rest of the class is busy in the other centers.

Also, ESOL teachers cover a variety of modalities on a regular basis. Learning centers are a great way to accomplish that. I try to think of different reading, writing, listening and speaking activities and how I might turn them into a center. Let's say you are teaching a unit on food. One center could be practicing the vocabulary through a game (speaking and listening), another center could be reading a story about healthy foods (reading), and your last center could be writing about your favorite food with frames or stems using color, shape and size words (writing).

Technology is also another option for a center. Students can practice skills on the computer or they can go to specified sites to practice content they are currently learning about. I always have a technology center as our newcomer students desperately need practice using technology and like all students, they are genuinely interested in it. Computers are usually something completely new to their educational experience in the United States. It is such a huge part of everyday life, most likely, in their welcoming school and something they will need to master

TIP: When going over directions for the activities, stand next to the center you are specifically giving directions for. As they watch you moving from center to center while explaining, it shows them where the center is, what they are supposed to do there, and helps them remember the directions. I also use a dry erase stand at each center with very simplified directions in case they forget what they are supposed to do. Some centers need a visual demonstration, so the fishbowl method, described later in this chapter, is an excellent strategy to use.

Question: How long should centers last?

Answer: The answer to this question varies and depends on the students' attention spans and varying teachers' classrooms. It also depends on how many activities you are having, how long classes are, and how much time students need at each center. In general, the total time for centers in my ESOL classroom is about 10-15 minutes long. However, with newcomer students I have found that this usually isn't nearly enough time. Each center in my classes with newcomer students tend to last 15-20 minutes. This still gives students a sense of movement and enough time to complete my activities.

My middle school class periods are about 45 minutes long. I have my classes for two periods back to back, giving me 90 minutes with each group of students. In that 90 minutes, students get their bell work, participate in the beginning of class rituals, go over center directions, and usually complete three of my four centers. The last center is completed the next day. Some days we get all four in and some days we don't.

TIP: Look at the amount of time you can afford, plan on 10-20 minutes per center, think of how many activities you have, and then add up your total time. You will be able to estimate the amount of time it will take to complete what you have planned.

Overall, learning centers have been a consistent part of my teaching and I believe they are truly effective, maximizing the ESOL classroom to its best potential for newcomer students. Centers provide a great amount of cooperative learning, time to practice skills while using all modalities, and offers engagement through short, quick activities.

Educational Games

Using games as an instructional tool is just smart thinking. It gives students the practice they need, it produces a positive

energy, students want to play, and they are learning at the same time. I will discuss several games that I use with my newcomer students that could be modified for any level of learning based on the questions you insert into the game. Also, these are great to use as one of the activities at a learning center previously discussed.

Game 1: Jenga™

Purchase a couple of Jenga™ games at the local discount store or order from the Internet. This game is very simple and creates a great deal of excitement and anticipation about which student will make the tower crumble. So, how does one turn this game into an educational game? The answer is very simple. First you split the Jenga™ game pieces into two different sets. You do not need all the pieces for just one group so split them into two groups! Voila, you now have two games for the price of one.



After the game is split, number the wooden pieces to about 20, writing the number directly on the wood playing pieces with a marker. There will be some pieces that don't have a number, and that's okay. You now need to have a list of 20 questions typed out and printed. I generally use review questions that we have covered from our current unit. Give each student a copy of the questions.

Next, put students into groups of three to five. Stack the wooden pieces according to game rules. Let the first student pull one wooden piece from the stack. The student checks to see if his/her piece has a number on it. If there is a number, the student goes to that number on the printed list of 20 questions

provided by the teacher, reads the question to the group, answers it, and writes it on the paper. When the student finishes answering, he/she gets to place the Jenga™ piece at the top of the tower. Now the second person in group goes and follows the same routine. If a student pulls a Jenga piece without a number on it; lucky them! It's a freebie, and they get to place it on the top as if they answered correctly.

The game ends when the tower crumbles. However, it starts back up just as quickly as it fell. Students can build it right back up and continue on with the game until you call time.

Game 2: Pie Face™

This class game will have your group roaring with laughter, eager for more, and focused on learning.

Materials:

- A Pie Face™ game purchased from any retail store's game department.
- Each student needs a white board, marker, and eraser.
- A list of review questions to ask the class.
- A can of spray whipped topping.

Set up: Place a desk at the front of the class facing the students. Put the Pie Face™ game and the spinner it comes with on the desk. Arrange the remaining desks into two teams.

Directions: Split the class into two teams, Team A and Team B. One student from each team come to the front of the room and do some kind of an activity to decide which team goes first. Let's say you start with Team A. Ask the Team A member one of your prepared review questions. Have the rest of the class silently and discretely write the answer on their white boards. Students then need to turn their white boards over so the students at the front of the room cannot see any answers.

Having all the students write the answers gets everyone engaged and gives all the students practice with each question. Now, let the student on Team A answer your question. If answered correctly Team A gets a point and is allowed to choose whether they want a "pie" in the face or if they want to give it to the Team B member standing at the front with him.



Let's say he chooses to give it to Team B. Squirt a little dollop of whipped cream on the sling hand and have the Team B student sit in front of it. That student has to spin the game spinner. Whatever number it lands on is the amount of times he has to turn the wheel on the Pie Face game. So, the student sitting at the Pie Face game turns the notches on the contraption and waits to see if it will sling the pie, the whipped topping, up at their face. It's up to the teacher if the student needs to spin again if the pie doesn't hit them. After that, call two new students up and start the second round. It's great fun! Kids love it and teacher approved!

Game Boards

Think of games like Candy Land™, Chutes and Ladders™, and Trouble™. Games boards can quickly and easily be quickly turned in to educational games. Change the cards that come with the games into game cards you have made with questions relating to your topic. Yep, that's it. That's all I do. Kids love

when I put a board game out at one of the Learning Centers. See Appendix B for blank board games that can be used to create questions for any topic. Print these board game cards on card stock and then place them in a protective sleeve for safe keeping and to prolong their use.

KaBoom

Materials: Wide-sized popsicle sticks (better for writing on) and some sort of way to store the sticks after the game is over (there are a variety of ways).

Objective: Students practice skills from the content area. This game can be used to review any subject at any age level, all the way from kindergarten through high school. Some examples might be letter recognition, multiplication facts, literary devices, vocabulary, etc.

Directions: As part of my teacher preparation, I usually have students play this game in small groups. Therefore, I like several sets of the same game. I could also just make one set of the game and use it as a learning center. So, get out those popsicle sticks and begin writing questions or problems for students to solve on each stick. For each set, the teacher will want about five to six sticks with the word “KaBoom” written on the stick instead of a question.

To play, students pull out one popsicle stick at a time and answer the question/problem on the stick. If the student answers correctly, he/she gets to keep the stick. If the question is not answered correctly, the stick goes back into the container. If a student draws a stick with the word “KaBoom” written on it, the student has to put all their sticks in a discard pile. This is a big deal! They just lost all their points and they both love it and hate it at the same time. Whoever ends up with the most sticks at the end of game wins.

Castle Crumble

Materials:

Dry erase or white board, dry erase markers, list of prepared questions.

Objective:

Students play Castle Crumble to practice skills or review content posed by teacher-created questions.



Directions: Before the game, split the class into several teams, depending on the number of students you want in each group. Groups of four students each work well. Have one student from each group come to the white board and draw a castle. Be sure to give them a time limit, about 30 seconds, or drawing will take much longer than you want it to. Once the time is up, have the students who drew the castles go back to their teams. Ask the class one of your prepared questions. Have all teams discuss the answer in case their group gets called on. Pick a group at random, either by drawing numbered sticks, using a random chooser on your Smart Board™, or using whatever idea you have to pick a group. If the group called on answers correctly, they get to attack two of the other teams’ castles on the board by drawing a red “x” on it. If the group answers incorrectly, you attack their castle by placing an “x” on it. The game continues on in this manner. Once one of the castles has been hit three times, their castle crumbles. However, they are not out of the game completely. You continue asking questions. If their group gets called on, they can still attack other castles. The game is officially over when only one castle remains standing and the others have crumbled.



This game creates a great deal of excitement. Students get rather strategic about which castle they want to take down first. Opposing teams even work together to try to wipe out certain castles first. In the process of playing the game, students are reviewing key concepts while having fun.

Instructional Model

There are many methods of teaching and each teacher must find what practices, strategies, and resources work best for their class and teaching style. With ESOL learners and newcomer students especially, I try to find a balance between teacher instruction time and student work time. In working with newcomer students, you can't stand and talk and talk and talk. They simply check out mentally within a few minutes. We have to remember that their brain input time is much less than that of a native English speaker of their age. This is simply because it is a tremendous amount of mental work on their part to actually decipher what you are saying and also what you are asking them to do. Therefore, I have found an instructional method that works for my own classroom and provides that balance between instruction time and work time.

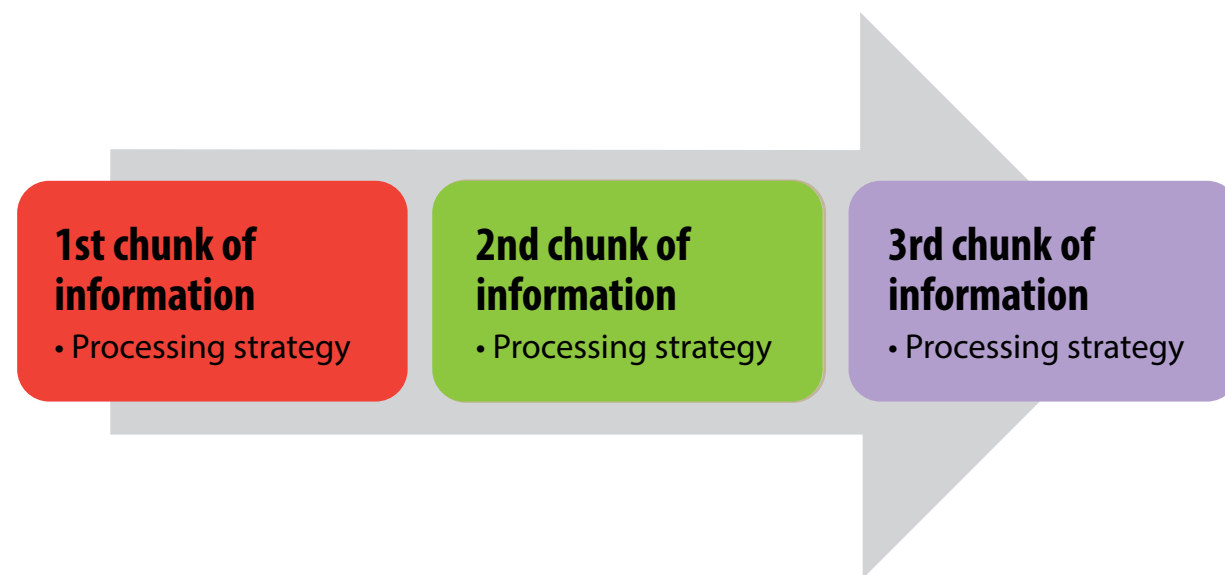
When planning lessons, generally a teacher begins with some way of introducing the new content, an opening to the lesson. This opening is often something to catch the students' attention and then leads into the actual instruction. We then gradually release students to grapple with this new information through "I do an example for you," "we do an example together," and finally "you do some on your own." The "on your own" portion is considered the work time. After students are finished working and have completed the task the planned for them, it is important to close the learning for the day with some sort of reflection or self-assessment. This instructional model works well in regular education class. It is very logical and sequential moving from opening to work time to the closing.

With newcomer students, this instructional time needs to be slightly different. The instructional model above still works well in ESOL classes, but needs a few modifications. In my 90-minute class you would see all those components in the lesson, yet the lesson happens at a different pace, using different strategies, to ultimately get the same result. ESOL teachers must make changes and alter their ways of teaching to reach diverse students. In my class openings, I strategically give a small bit, or chunk, of my lesson. Many times this new bit of information is taught through movements, as discussed in the first section of this chapter. It allows for kinesthetic learners to really make a connection to the content. Also, giving too much information, too soon, can be very overwhelming for students who learn a new language, so it's important to keep the amount of information taught short and simple.

After I give my students that small chunk, I need to let them "chew" on that new bit of information. This means that I supply some sort of processing strategy to pair up with the new content. This could be "turn and talk" to partners, think-write-share, or using whiteboards to answer comprehension questions, etc. As long as you are giving them time to process and practice with the information, that is "chewing". ESOL students need that time to make sure they understand the new content you are teaching. When they turn and talk to their partner allow them to clarify in their own language and then practice in English using the selected processing strategy. This helps cement the learning.

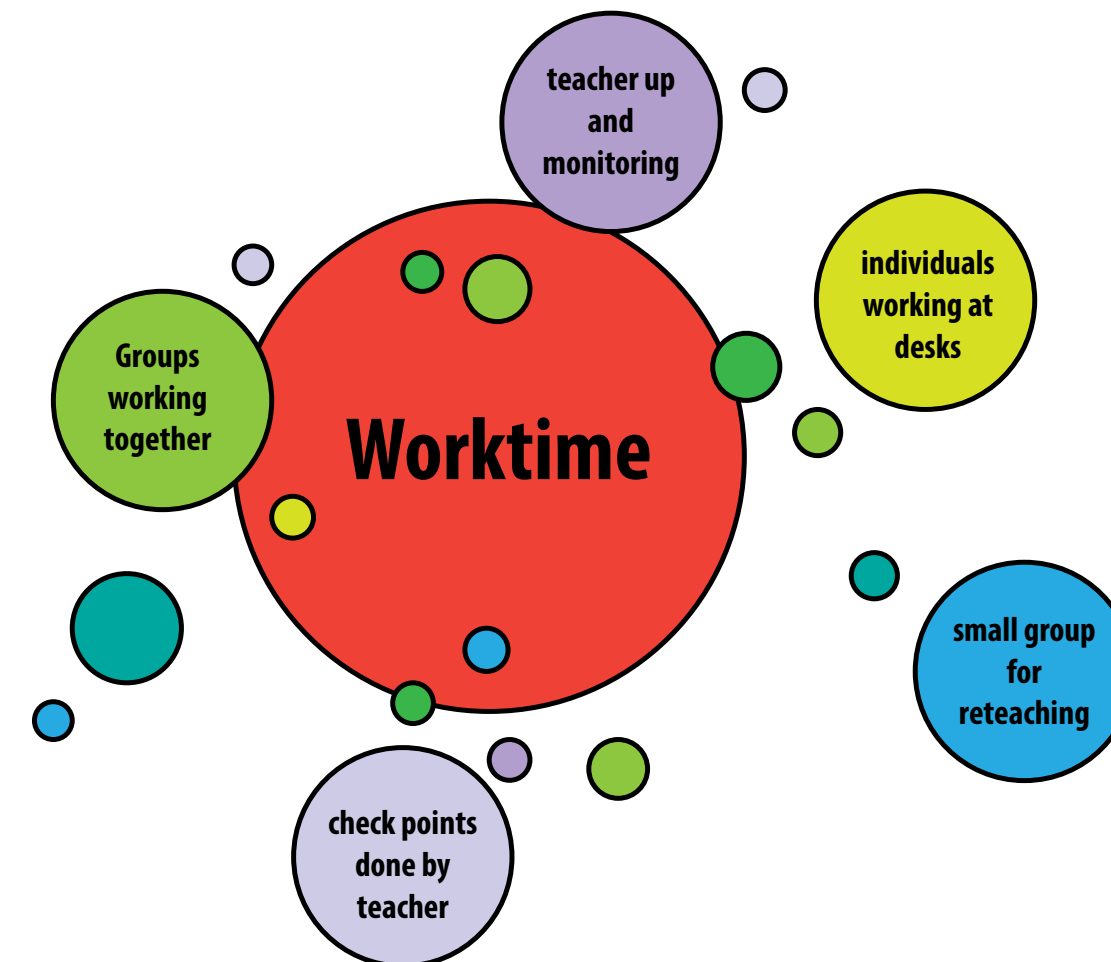
Once I feel the students understand that chunk of my lesson opening and have had time to clarify in their language and thoughts, and then practiced the same chunk in the new language, I move onto the next chunk of the opening. I give the next small chunk of information and continue with another processing strategy. I proceed in this way until the opening is

finished. I typically don't do more than two or three chunks as this is plenty of information for one day. The opening may look like this:



At this point students would have had many opportunities for practice with a partner, with the teacher monitoring their understandings as they work through the processing strategies. Students should feel comfortable and more confident with your content and prepared to move into a worktime.

The worktime is just as it sounds. Students have time to work on the new content and show their understanding through a variety of assignments and tasks given by the teacher. As students begin the teacher-prepared tasks, set a timer for a check point to see how they are doing. Call attention back to the group to gauge understanding of the whole class. The teacher can do this by having students come to the front to explain a certain part of the worktime, by using random sticks to call on students, or by asking the class guided questions. This is a good time to make sure they are on track with the worktime and to clarify any misconceptions the teacher sees students having as they monitor time. If the teacher sees that a few students do not understand they should be called together into a small group, given guidance, reteaching methods used, and then send them back to their seats to try again on their own. Your worktime may look like this:



As students finish working or as the class period is coming to an end, the teacher conducts one of the most important parts of the lesson, the closing. This is the part of the lesson that many teachers run out of time for, forget to plan into their lessons, or just don't even think about doing. However, a closing does two things: 1) Allows students to see what they have learned or need help with. 2) Lets the teacher reflect on learning and planning for the next day. Teachers cannot afford to not close the day's learning. It gives such insight on where to go learning needs to go next, what to reteach, or how to quickly review for the next day.

A closing can be done in five minutes. So, why not build a good, solid closing into your lesson? Closings can be as easy as a "3-2-1 Exit Ticket". Here are some examples:

- 3 things I learned today, 2 things I want more information about, 1 question I have.
- 3 facts I learned, 2 questions I have, 1 opinion I have now.



- 3 steps of (insert your content here), 2 things to remember, 1 emoji showing my understanding.

When working with newcomer students, it might be necessary to modify this closing to 1-1-1 instead of 3-2-1. Depending on the learning ability and levels of newcomer students and their language abilities, 3-2-1 may take too much time and they may be lacking necessary vocabulary to do this type of closing. Teachers must choose what best fits their students' needs.

Another closing that works great with newcomers is called “5 words.” Each student gets a post it note and writes five words about the lesson to stick on the door on their way out. It can be a five-word sentence about what they learned, a five word question they need answered, five single, stand-alone words representing the lesson, or five words describing their level of understanding from the day. This closing doesn't require students to have a large vocabulary, yet still gives the teacher an important glimpse into their learning for the day.

“Beach Ball Closing” is a fun, interactive way to end the learning as well. The teacher should pre-write generic reflection questions on the different colored sections of the beach ball using a permanent marker. Students stand up. The teacher starts by throwing the ball to one student. The student catches the ball and must answer the question that their thumb lands on. When the student finishes explaining their answer, the student throws the ball to the next student. This process goes on until you call time.

“Quiz Writer Closing” is another good class closing exercise. Ask students to write a question about the information they have learned. It can be a question they already know the answer to or a question they would like to know the answer to. Make sure students indicate if it is a question they need answered. Those questions can be addressed at the beginning of the opening the

next day. When looking over their questions, choose a few that would be good for a quick review the next morning. Type the questions up and pass it out as a quiz.

There are endless ways to close the class and that help students process what has been learned. Don't forget class closing in your instructional model planning as it is such an important piece of the total learning segment. While it only takes just a few minutes, it is so important to the content and accomplishing the lesson objectives.

I use this model for teaching newcomer students as each component helps them gain understanding and move forward with their learning. I found that if you give students time to process new information, allow them to work in an environment that requests practice to gain confidence, and give students a way to reflect, the teacher can make huge gains in student learning. See Appendix C for examples of topics to use with newcomer students.

Scaffolding for ESOL Students

Scaffolding means different things to different people. In this section I refer to scaffolding as what you do to your lesson in order to make the assignment manageable and not overwhelming. A newcomer teacher wouldn't walk into their class of newcomer students and tell them to write a paragraph about their families using family terms, a topic/concluding sentence, and transition words. This would seem virtually impossible to a newcomer if those were the only instructions given to them. There are many steps a teacher needs to take before reaching this point in the lesson. Those “steps” are called scaffolding strategies. And, guess what? That writing assignment isn't an impossible task for newcomers, but teachers need to be armed with many ways to scaffold their learning. Below is a list of effective ways to scaffold:



- Modeling what you want students to do.
- Using gestures to enhance your speech (teaching with movements).
- Allowing students to use their first language to explain concepts to newer students.
- Providing sentence starters or paragraph frames.
- Frontloading vocabulary.
- Using graphic organizers.
- Providing visuals and pictures.
- Using video clips.
- Breaking tasks into doable steps.

While there are many ways to scaffold and this is definitely not a complete list, I have found that when I use them on a consistent basis, students are not as confused or overwhelmed by the task once it is time to start.

So how do you apply these scaffolding strategies to your teaching? Below are a few of the strategies listed above that I feel may need a little more explaining and what they may look like in a lesson. Additionally, a teacher may sometime need to experiment and adapt strategies to work for their students and teaching styles.

Modeling: If only verbal explanations are used to explain a task, there will be many students who will have a difficult time understanding what is expected of them. A better and more effective strategy is to show them by modeling with the teacher using simplified speech (if needed). For students who have very limited English, the teacher's words will have little meaning. However, if the teacher demonstrates the goal, students can see and be able to match some of the vocabulary with the teacher's actions. I love using a fishbowl demonstration

as a way to model. A fishbowl is just what it sounds like. The teacher and possibly some student volunteers come to the center of the demonstration area (they are the fish inside the bowl). The rest of the class forms a circle as they watch the teacher and student volunteers modeling the directions. When the demonstration is over, students go back to their desks with a better understanding of what they are being asked to do. Fishbowl could be used to show how a game is played, to go over classroom rules, to explain directions before students start working, and so on . It is great to use before learning, work time, or activities to really showcase what you want students to do. It also provides students an academic speech example before they get started on their own. However, you could also pull together a fish bowl if your students are not following directions correctly and you want to reteach expectations in the middle of the activity.

Here is an example of how it works:

Let's say the teacher wants students to present a research project they have been working on in small groups. The teacher will have a listening guide for students to use, take notes on, and listen for specific learning points as each student presents. Since students have never used this listening guide, the teacher will want to model their expectations for how to complete it. A fish bowl would be a great way to show students what you want them to do.

Step 1: Pull together a few students and bring them to a center location in the classroom to help the teacher demonstrate. These few students will be the "fish" inside the fish bowl.

Step 2: The rest of the class forms a circle around the center group in order to watch the demonstration.

Step 3: The teacher explains directions in small chunks.

Step 4: The "fish" follow the teacher's directions to do the activity and the rest of the students watch to see how everything works.



Step 5: The teacher will give feedback to the “fish” as they follow instructions, affirming what they are doing correctly and giving guidance on what they need to do differently. This is also a great time to answer any questions as they watch.

Step 6: Once the teacher feels students have a clear understanding, all of the students should be sent to their desks or work areas to do the activity.

Providing Sentence Starters/Frames: Students may find it really difficult and even paralyzing to begin an assignment. They second-guess what is expected of them, stare at blank pages, and then ask the teacher for help before they even try to do the assignment. Providing students with a sentence starter points them in the direction the teacher wants them to go and gets them using the academic vocabulary they might not have used otherwise. It also gives them the structural frame for a sentence they may not have been able to produce on their own.

I like to use sentence starters when students are getting ready to practice speaking with one another. I can write a sentence starter on the board, give students think and write time, then allow students to practice speaking with their partner. This process is a great way to scaffold speaking time. It gives students multiple chances to get ready to speak before actually having to say the sentence. They get to think about it first, write it down, say it to their partner, and hear their partner’s answer, before saying their answer to the whole class. The scaffold process may take a minute or two longer than the tried and true, typical method of just calling on that one student you know always knows the answer. Instead, the teacher has the entire class engaged and everyone was participating and trying. Then, when the teacher asks the class the question again, my experience is many more students’ hands will be in the air ready to share their thinking.

Frontloading vocabulary: Frontloading or pre-teaching vocabulary is way to get students ready before reading. This scaffolding technique is one I use frequently and in two different ways, depending on the type of word and the way it needs to be taught. Some frontloading is very simple and fast. The quick frontloading version that I like to use the most is called “Picture Loading”. I can pick five to six words that I know students will need clarified while reading, place them on a word document, and add a picture to the word. The word instantly makes sense to them just by being able to see a picture for the word. Students keep this document with them while reading in order to refer back to it when needed. I also put an extra box next to the picture and word, in case they want to write down the word in their first language. Sometimes newcomer students will know the word in their head, be able to speak it to their partner, but do not know the written word or how to spell it. I have seen this regularly while working with newcomers as they may speak three of four languages but not read or write any of them. It is really beneficial to give them the time to make the connection in their own language.

A second process, and usually a little lengthier, is called *Explicit Vocabulary Instruction* developed by Dr. Anita Archer (2018). In this process of vocabulary instruction, the teacher will select fewer words that each need more in-depth instruction. Dr. Archer’s (2018) routine includes the following:

1. Introduce pronunciation of word/segmentation.
2. Introduce student-friendly meaning of word.
3. Illustrate with examples and non-examples.
4. Check for understanding.
 - cloze sentences, sentence starters, sentence frames
 - deep processing questions

You can read more about Archer (2018) here:

 <https://explicitinstruction.org>

It is important for the teacher to think about what to plan and do to ensure student understanding and accountability in the learning process. Consider and reflect on the following items taken from Archer (2018):

<i>Frequent Responses</i>	Requests frequent responses from students, allowing rehearsal of content and checking for understanding.
<i>Limited use of Volunteers</i>	Avoids calling on volunteers except when the response is based on personal experience.
<i>Inclusive Participation</i>	Uses practices that involve all students in responding, encouraging all students to formulate answers and to participate.
<i>Equity of Individual Turns</i>	Calls on a variety of students using a preplanned system to randomize students who are called on to ensure equity.
<i>Adequate Think Time</i>	Provides adequate thinking time for responses.
<i>Monitoring Responses</i>	Monitors student responses through focused listening and observing, circulating around the room when students are sharing with partners or teams, reading with partners, or completing written responses.

Archer's approach to teaching vocabulary is to scaffold the material. She doesn't just give students the words, have them look it up in the dictionary, and then test them over it. Her approach gives students multiple opportunities to interact with one another and think about the word in different ways.

For more information on this teaching approach by Dr. Archer, follow watch this video:



Video: *Vocabulary Instruction*

Conclusion

Newcomer teachers must think outside the box of traditional education methods. There are many obstacles these students face, both in and outside of school. They come to school with a language barrier, some more than others, different learning needs, trauma, food insecurities, poverty, and much more. However, they also come to us for hope, with a thankfulness for opportunity to learn, and a need to be cared for. We, as educators of newcomer students, need to step up our game and give them the best we can each day. They deserve a well-prepared education, filled with lessons that are intentionally planned with challenging content to meet their needs. They also deserve to be taught in a way that is engaging and interesting.

The best advice I can give a teacher working with newcomer students is to make the students feel safe, show them what you want accomplished, give them an opportunity to complete the task, and when they don't get it right the first time, don't get upset. Simply said, it is your job to reteach and figure out a new way to explain. Hopefully the best practices in this chapter give you some ideas where to begin when tomorrow's morning alarm clock rings.

About the Author

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Discussion Questions

1. What might be some of the benefits to using movements and gestures while teaching newcomer students?
2. Think of a vocabulary word to teach. What hand motions could you add to the explanation of this new word? Try it out with your class or a group of people and note the differences you see.
3. When considering learning centers for your class, what might be some issues you need to think through in order for you and the students to be successful?
4. What organizational strategies do you already have in place to run learning centers? What could you add?
5. How might using educational games improve your classroom management?
6. What rituals and routines should you set up before playing educational games?
7. How does the provided instructional model align with what you already do? How is it different?
8. When using the provided instructional model, it calls for the teacher to provide many processing strategies. What are some of your favorite ways to have students process information?
9. When frontloading vocabulary for newcomers using Dr. Anita Archer's approach, what would be some different ways to check for students' understanding of the words?
10. How could you ensure total participation while frontloading vocabulary?

References

Archer, A. (2018). *Effective and efficient teaching*. New York, NY: Guilford Publications.

McKnight, K. (2016). *Learning and literacy centers, not just for the primary grades*. New York, NY: William H. Sadler, Inc.

Appendix A – Center Check Off Guide

Go to each center. Make sure to read the directions. Mark off the box as you finish each center.

☐

Center 1-

☐

Center 2-

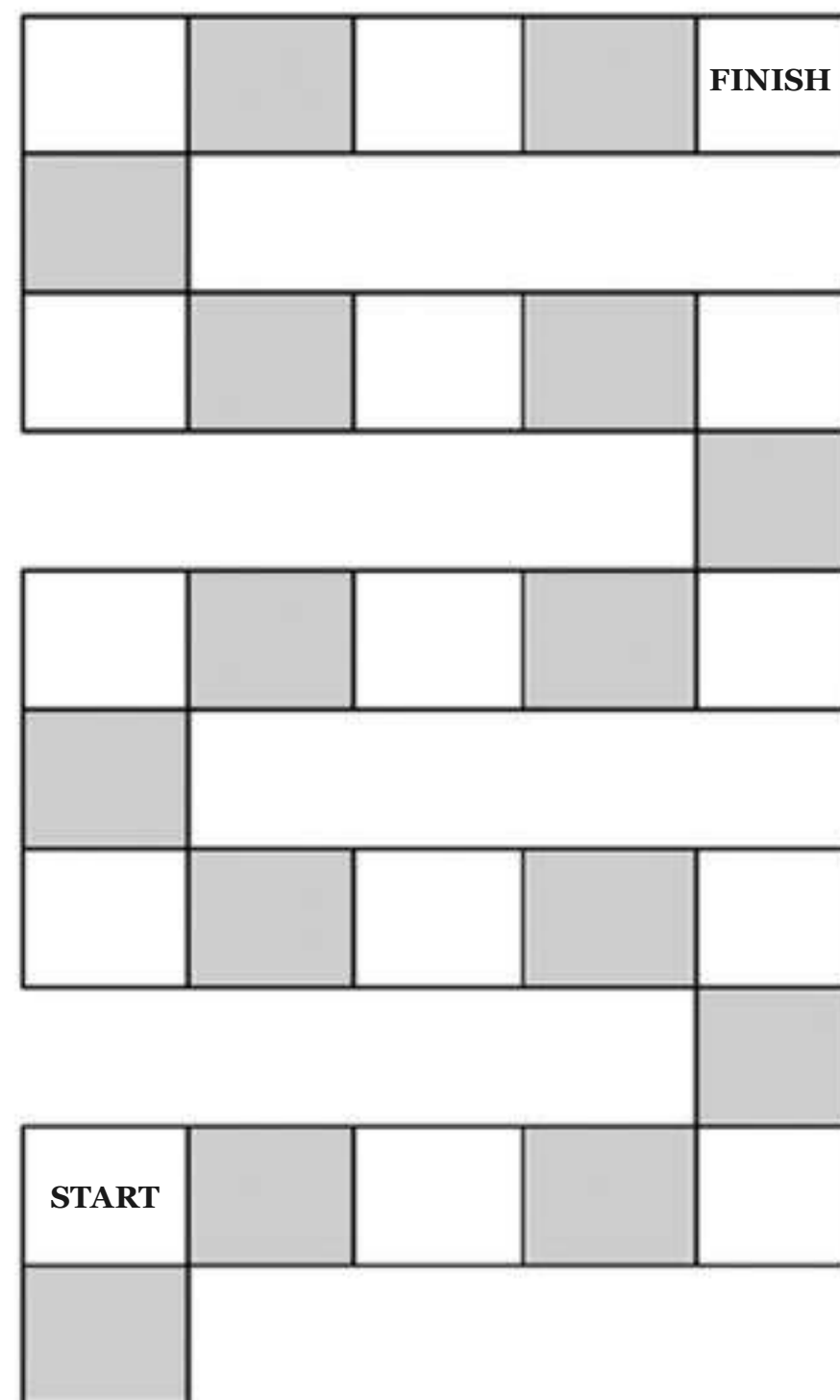
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Center 3-

☐

Center 4-

Appendix B – Blank Board Game



Do jumping
jacks while
you answer
the card.

Run in place
while
answering.

Do push-ups
while
answering

Go back to
start and do
10 jumping
jacks.

Sing your
answer.

Instructions

Roll the dice. Move the correct spaces. Draw a card. Answer the question. If answered correctly, stay where you landed. If not answered correctly, move back to your last space.

Appendix C – Newcomer Teaching Topics

Below is a list of topics I cover with newcomers during their first year in school. Throughout these different topics I include a variety of thinking skills such as compare and contrast, cause and effect, problem-solution, and fact and opinion. I use many resources to find supplemental materials to add to my curriculum. Of course, I am always checking Pinterest for ideas as well as *Teachers Pay Teachers* (<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com>). Both of these sites have a great deal of information on the topics below. I also love using *ISL Collective* (<https://en.islcollective.com>). This website is made for ESOL and has a variety of items for each topic listed below:

1. Greetings and giving information about yourself.
2. Family vocabulary and telling about your family.
3. School vocabulary and expressing needs/survival needs (bathroom, drink, nurse, etc.).
4. Telling time/parts of the day.
5. Food unit.
6. Colors, shapes, sizes, numbers.
7. Parts of the body, aches and pains, emotions.
8. Clothing and weather.
9. Community workers.
10. Thanksgiving Unit- I teach about the American Thanksgiving holiday and then we have a huge Thanksgiving lunch together where all students and newcomer teachers bring their favorite dish to share.
11. April is poetry month. We make a poetry book about their experience coming to America. Students write ten poems on topics ranging from American food, American teachers, American schools, the journey here (or whatever

hosting country they are now living in and attending school it), etc. All poems are written in different styles of poetry. It's great fun! The Poetry Passport is below.

My Poetry Passport

<i>You will need to write a poem from each box. Show it to Mrs. Mow when you are finished. Get a signature in each box before moving on to the next one.</i>	Selfie Poem Take a selfie. Write a poem about yourself. <i>Use the selfie poem template.</i>	Happy Poem Write a poem about a time you were happy in America. <i>2 couplets or 1 quatrain</i>	Confused Poem Write a poem about a time you were confused in America. <i>Cinquian</i>
Friend Poem Write a poem about a friend you made in America. <i>Acrostic</i>	1st Day of School Poem Write a poem about your first day of school in America. <i>Picture poem</i>	Food Poem Write a poem about the food in America. <i>Concrete</i>	School Poem Write a poem about what school is like in America. <i>Haiku</i>
America Poem Write a poem about what America is like for you. <i>Sensory poem</i>	* The Land Poem Write a poem comparing America to your home country. How are they the same and different? <i>Diamante</i>	* Teacher Poem Write a poem about the teachers in your school. <i>2 Quatrains</i>	* Your Choice Poem Write a poem about anything you want expressing your feelings with coming to America. <i>Your style</i>

Spotlight 14

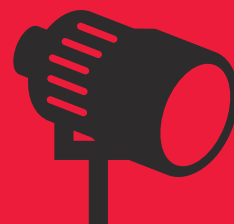
Review: Refugee, Immigrant, and Forced Displacement Journals

Trina Harlow

Global change regarding migration and displacement has brought a wide range of new issues and opportunities for immigrants and nations. Exploring and becoming informed about the issues of immigration, social policy, and social work will assist with growing the world knowledge on how to address, even solve, the myriad of issues. Thousands of people have left their homes around the world, but particularly in the global south, because of famine and ecological issues, war and conflict, terrorism, and economic difficulties, as well as other reasons including opportunities for a better life for one's family, employment, and health.

Nations across the globe must use insight and concentration to develop policies and programs to manage both the already established flow of immigrants, as well as the newer flows, and to help newcomers find new lives and integrate more fully into their new homes and communities as contributing members of the local community, as well as the extended regional or national community.





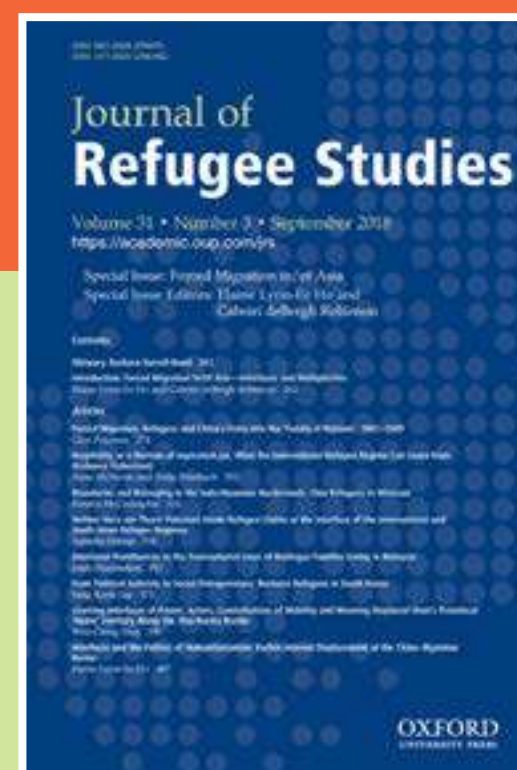
Several academic journals are available to learn more about the refugee issue, issues of forced migration, and asylum seeking people's life and experiences around the world. These journals provide articles written by the world's policy makers and scholars on these migration and displacement issues affecting the globe and all of its inhabitants. Those individuals who are curious to learn more about these issues and the people the issues they affect, or those who are involved in government and education, can read about a large range of topics from policy, politics, education and health, environmental issues, to the specific issues of social groups, genders, religions, ethnicities, cultures, communities, and countries.

JOURNAL OF REFUGEE STUDIES

One multidisciplinary peer-reviewed journal is called the *Journal of Refugee Studies*. It has been published for 30 years in association with the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford in England. This journal provides an exploration forum on the serious issues of forced migration and the responses towards these issues from academics and practitioners all over the globe. All categories of forcibly displaced people are covered. See the *Journal of Refugee Studies* website here:

 ***Journal of Refugee Studies***

<https://academic.oup.com/jrs/>



JOURNAL OF IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE STUDIES



The *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, published by Taylor & Francis, Inc., has the aim and goal of addressing international migration, migration flows, and the difficulties of migrants and refugees. It is an interdisciplinary and international double-blind, peer-reviewed journal. The journal's focus is global, crosses topics and continents, and covers both refugee studies and migration. The journal has a focus of informing of the theoretical and empirical research on migrant and refugee integration, migration governance, and varying related practices and policies. The journal is broad in scope, including both international and comparative perspectives, case studies on groups, regions, or countries, and quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches. See the *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* here

 ***Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies***

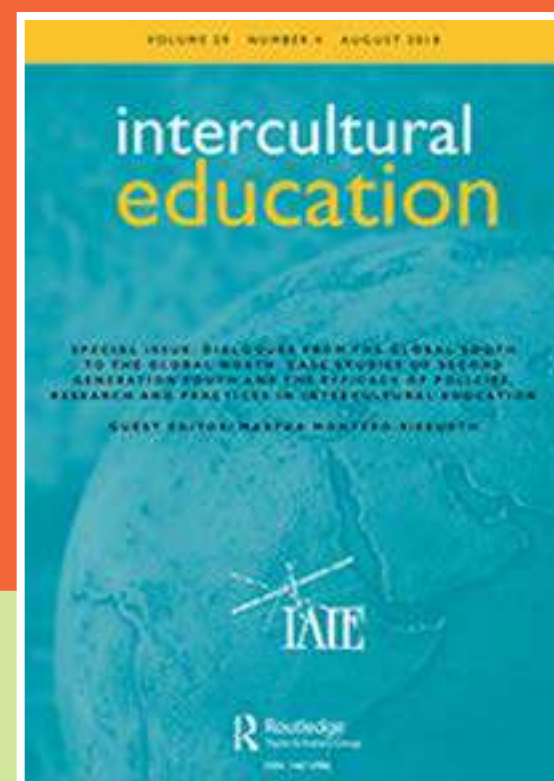
<https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=wimm20>



MENU



SPOTLIGHT



INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Another journal, *Intercultural Education*, is a good resource for educators and provides a global forum of analysis on educational issues in plural societies. Through this journal, educational professionals can gain information and knowledge that will assist in growing their knowledge base on intercultural education and its implementation. The journal covers a variety of topics including curriculum and classroom organization, school development, language and literacy issues, refugee and newcomer issues, migration, indigenous minority issues, multicultural societies, intercultural communication, human rights, anti-racist education, pluralism, diversity, and democratic frameworks. The *Intercultural Education* journal can be accessed here:



Intercultural Education

<https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=ceji20>

Chapter 15

Newcomer Intake Programs: Welcoming Immigrant Students

Trina Harlow

Introduction

Every day educators across America and the world strive, and sometimes struggle, to create quality educational settings and systems that value all students and meet the needs of all learners, all children and adolescents, their families and communities, and do so regardless of race, religion, culture, or their linguistic abilities. According to Dr. Leslie Fenwick (2018), a Senior Fellow for the McDonald Character Leadership Program at West Point Academy and Dean Emeritus of Howard University School of Education, speaking at the Kansas State University College of Education Distinguished Educational Research Lecture Series, diversity data reveals the importance of having a diversity in teaching staff, relevant curriculum,

and faculty that have opportunity for training and research to advance the notions of diversity. Fenwick shared data by demographers and thought on diversity in schools:

...You preservice teachers, and principals, and superintendents, and counselors, and psychologists are going to inherit a more diverse world than ever before, and in fact...demographers initially told us that by 2075 the U.S. would become for the first time in its history a majority minority country...what they essentially were...telling us...in 2075 the U.S. population of citizens would be majority people of color for the first time in the history of our nation. They moved that to 2055. And now they are saying 2044. And I believe it is 2024. I look at the census data almost every week, several times a week...so my point in raising that is you are likely...you preservice teachers, preservice principals, preservice superintendents, policy makers, psychologists, and counselors...are encountering a new world that we adults have not experienced. You are going to be leading in the most diverse and inclusive society, I believe, in the world. So this issue around teacher diversity and student diversity are well matched and relevant to the future that you are going to be leading us through. (September 18, 2018, lecture)



“Newcomer Programs meet specific needs of immigrant students, over and beyond their linguistic needs.”



Rawpixel.com/Shutterstock



Diversity is fluid and changing in the United States and student populations in schools reflect this. A period of change is happening in the United States and education must not simply change with *the times*, it must stay ahead of the change. Schools need to be prepared to offer diverse curricula that create intercultural community within the classroom, school, and community. In the film *Precious Knowledge* by Ari Luis Palos and Eren Isabel McGinnis, Curtis Acostas shares a part of a larger poem he wrote called *Pensamiento Serpentino* at the beginning of class. The short passage is entitled *In Lak'Ech* and is a timeless Mayan precept — the meaning of the phrase relates to the Mayan definition of the human being which translates as ‘vibrant being.’ Acostas’ intent and meaning for using this poem with his class in Tucson, Arizona is that “we are all part of the same universal vibration” (Valdez & Paredes, 2017). The small passage from the poem states, “You are my other me, if I do harm to you, I do harm to myself, if I love and respect you, I love and respect myself” (Valdez & Paredes, 2017). One way that school districts can meet the increasingly diverse needs of their schools and communities is by welcoming and accepting all students, both academically, emotionally, and socially, as well as their extended families, and establishing Newcomer Intake Programs—programs that specifically meet broad needs of immigrant students, addressing more than linguistics.



Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock

Preparing for the Future of Education

As educators prepare for the future in the United States, it is imperative that school districts, all school districts across the country, plan for their current diverse student demographics and the future of education. Gay (2000) defines culturally relevant pedagogy as teaching that addresses the needs and promotes the academic achievement of all students, and directs learning away from stereotypes and to the strengths of the individual and to the contributions each student can make to the classroom community. Teachers teach with an additive model, rather than a deficit model (Jean-Sigur, Bell, & Kim, 2016).

Ongoing Discussion Regarding High-Stakes Testing

Dedicated, committed educators plan for all their students, they teach, they reflect, and they constantly strive to engage and reach students. In my career as an educator for the last two decades, I have been privileged to work with some of the best and most inspiring educators — teachers that planned, prepared, and agonized about the success of all students. In 2018 discussion is present in educational meetings about the future of education, meeting the needs of the growing diversity of students, and often that discussion leads to how to handle students whose first language is not English be successful on standardized tests — data from tests is even broken down and categorized by ethnicity. Testing seems to be a hot topic for many reasons (Darling-Hammond, 2014). “Remember pieces of knowledge is no longer the highest priority for learning; what students can do with knowledge is what counts” (Darling Hammond, 2014, p. 3). Recently, Washington DC public schools had this very discussion regarding curriculum and one solution put forth was providing authentic communicative experiences, “moving away from verb conjugation charts, grammar rules, and vocabulary lists toward student-centered activities that provide target language input in a meaningful and authentic

way” (Williams, 2018, np). President Barack Obama said, “The future belongs to the nation that best educates its citizens” (Montopoli, 2009, n.p.). Discussion will most likely continue in educational settings and non-educational settings how to best provide this education.

21st Century Changes Needed in Education

The fast-changing pace of the 21st century — due to technology and globalization — is requiring changes in education as we have known it (Darling-Hammond, 2014). Routine skills that a person used to need to work in good jobs in factories are giving way to the need for new generations of non-routine, interactive skills, important for problem solving and collaborative invention (Darling Hammond, 2014, p. 135). President Barack Obama said:

I am calling on our nation’s Governors and state education chiefs to develop standards and assessments that don’t simply measure whether students can fill in a bubble on a test, but whether they possess 21st century skills like problem-solving and critical thinking, entrepreneurship and creativity” (Montopoli, 2009, n.p.).

As education considers the future of testing and academic emphasis, so too they consider the needs of the learner in modern times. “Students need to be able to find, evaluate, synthesize, and use knowledge in new contexts, frame and solve nonroutine problems, and produce research findings and solutions. It also requires students to acquire well-developed thinking, problem-solving, design, and communication skills” (Darling-Hammond, 2014). We now consider these foci of education within the context of an ever-growing and changing diverse demographic of student, which includes a large body of non-American born diverse students — immigrants, whom we welcome as newcomers to our country.



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The Immigrant

According to the United States Department of Education, newcomers are “any foreign-born students and their families who have recently arrived in the United States” (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, p. vi). The United States has been known for a hundred years as a melting pot — a term that Israel Zangwill, a British playwright, coined in 1908 — of many immigrants from all parts of the world, cultural groups, and religious groups. Others refer to the United States as a salad bowl, mosaic, or kaleidoscope meaning that immigrant characteristics, cultures, and customs are not melted together as in the melting pot metaphor, but rather continue to exist distinctly as pieces of a greater whole and contribute to the overall richness and character of our nation (Jacoby, 2004).

History of Immigration

The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS, 2018) maintains records of immigration for persons obtaining lawful permanent resident status, immigrant orphans adopted by U.S. citizens, refugee arrivals and individuals granted asylum, people who are naturalized, and nonimmigrant admissions, and apprehended or removed aliens. Setting the



politics aside, the DHS maintains website which provides a rich history of immigration. It can be accessed here:



U.S. Department of Homeland Security

<https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2017>

Our vast history of American immigration is large and full of complication, both the political aspects of immigration as well as the human aspects. Over 12 million immigrants came to the United States on ships through Ellis Island during the 62 years from 1892-1954 (Ellis Island, 2018). Some of our American ancestors came to America on slave ships. According to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, which is edited by professors David Eltis and David Richardson, respected estimates indicate that between 1525 and 1866 12.5 million Africans were shipped to North American, the Caribbean, and South America, with only 388,000 of these shipped directly to North America (Gates, 2013). I shudder to think that riding a ship across the Atlantic to the United States prior to modern machinery and technology was grueling and hundreds of historical accounts exist of the harshness of these journeys — and for many the harshness continued after arriving on our shores. During the last ten years, over ten million people immigrated legally to the United States (DHS, 2018). According to Roberts (2005), in 2005 “for the first time, more blacks are coming to the United States from Africa than during the slave trade” (n.p.). Roberts adds that while more Africans are arriving voluntarily than came during the horror of the slavery, less still immigrate than Latinos and Asians, but nevertheless, they are redefining what it means to be African-American. School across the United States reflect these changes and growth of immigrants.

The Refugee and the Refugee Immigrant

Our democracy, while founded on freedom, has a history that represents triumph and difficulty, excitement and horror, and freedom and shackles. History will forever debate the greatness of nations, yet one thing we can all agree on is the value and worth of the human being — all human beings ...children, women, and men, of all colors and creeds, of all cultures and religions. The Constitution of the United States boldly proclaims, “We hold these things to be self-evident, that all men are created equal with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” (*U.S. History.org*, n.p.). The Constitution reminds us of the value of our citizens.

Refugee statistics. In recent times, the entire world has seen great illness in the minds and thoughts of people. 2015 will forever be known as a year of world crisis in displacement of the human being (Edwards, 2016). A report released on June 20, 2016 stated that “on average 24 people were forced to flee each minute in 2015, four times more than a decade earlier, when six people fled every 60 seconds” (Edwards, 2016, n.p.). U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Filippo Grandi, stated in 2016, “At sea, a frightening number of refugees and migrants are dying each year. On land, people fleeing war are finding their way blocked by closed borders” (Edwards, 2016, n.p.). In June of 2018, the UNHCR reports that over 68.5 million people are displaced around the world, with 25.4 million of those being designated refugees, and with half of those refugees being children (UNHCR, 2018). UNHCR figures can be seen here:



UNHCR Figures at a Glance

<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>



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The Newcomer Student and Their Families

While the term *newcomer* refers to any recently arrived people in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), this text focuses on a specific newcomer — refugee students and their families and on those who have been given asylum in the United States. These newcomer refugees and asylum seekers are making a new home in a new place, learning a new language, laying their head down on their pillow in a new place at night — maybe having a pillow for the first time or the first time in a long time, and navigating through the cultural and social circumstances and customs of a new country.

Newcomer Intake Programs

In this section, I will discuss *Newcomer Intake Programs* in schools in an effort to provide a meta-synthesis of information, best practices, and potential program goals and ideas for school districts of some of the information that exists on this topic. Meta-synthesis in qualitative research is when multiple individual studies that relate to a certain topic are used to arrive at new or enhanced learning about a particular study, providing a visionary outcome (Paterson, 2012; Walsh, 2005). This chapter is not intended to be an official guide for

starting a Newcomer Program, but rather an amalgamation of information. For a comprehensive United States Department of Education Newcomer Tool Kit to use as a resource for beginning a school Newcomer Program use this link:



Newcomer Tool Kit

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/newcomers-toolkit/ncomertoolkit.pdf>

Newcomer students will benefit from an organized school approach, yet all students, the school, and the entire community will also benefit, and therefore our American society. The literature available on this topic is influenced by a broad vision and an informed perspective that comes from policy makers, educational institutions and leadership, educators, and many school districts dedicated to offering valuable services to newcomer students and their families. Yet, newcomer students can more revealingly explain their experiences and provide insight into the reason for Newcomer Intake Programs. Chang (1990) reports the feelings of an 8th grade Vietnamese girl, nine years old, and her experience at school:

You don't know anything. You don't even know what to eat when you go to the lunchroom. The day I started school all the kids stared at me like I was from a different planet. I wanted to go home with my Dad, but he said I had to stay. I was very shy and scared. I didn't know where to sit or eat or where the bathroom was or how to eat the food. I felt that all around me activities were going on as if I were at a dance, but no one danced with me and I was not a part of anything. I felt so out of place that I felt sick. Oh I know more, but I still sit and watch and try to understand. I want to know, what is this place and how must I Act (p. 9).



My experience with refugee newcomers. My research in this area has situated me within many conversations with refugee students and educators and also in various parts of the world. I interviewed a refugee mother in Kansas who told me a story of her son spitting out his food in the elementary school cafeteria because he found the taste to be very unusual and unknown to him; it surprised him. His classmates and surrounding students laughed hysterically at it, but didn't understand his reason for the episode. His teacher came scuttling over and the boy got in trouble for having bad manners, got a lecture from the teacher, and his mother was called to come to school to speak to the teacher about it. The mother tried to explain what had happened, that there are cultural differences in food and how it tastes, but the teacher would not lessen her son's punishment and her elementary-aged son was expelled for one day of school. The mother was heartbroken over this as she knew her son had exceptional manners and their entire family was grateful to be in the United States and for the gift of safety and freedom they had been given. Life was very difficult and dangerous for them in their home country. Her son loved his school and was so happy with his new life. While listening to this story, my heart broke for the mother. All I could think to tell her was that I was sorry this



Combining cultures, Curtis Middle School in Wichita, Kansas hosts an annual Thanksgiving dinner for newcomer families. Traditional American Thanksgiving food is provided and newcomer families bring special dishes from their own countries.



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had happened and that the teacher obviously didn't have a very wide global lens of understanding. I also told her that people are sometimes just people — they make mistakes.

Another little girl told me she was so excited about the raining room in her new house — there was a room where water fell out of the ceiling and it could be cold or warm and you could play in it and drink it and wash your hair in it. How playful and fun that must have been for her. An art teacher told me in an interview that her newcomer students quickly grab art supplies and take too many supplies and tend to hoard them at their desk—I found myself thinking they probably had never had opportunity to freely collect their own beautiful colors of paper, paint, and oil pastels. How fun that must have been for them. A Newcomer Intake Specialist told me of the many ways she helps her students' parents — she often teaches them how to use an ATM card, tells them where to get bicycles fixed, or helps them find rides to places too far to walk or ride their bikes. She also enjoys the cultural outpouring they bestow upon her, bringing their traditional food to school to her and inviting her to their homes for a meal. How fun this has been for her.

These stories reveal that while there may be difficult stories that lead to becoming a refugee, the human spirit is resilient and community can be created in other places. While being new can be scary or exciting for students, humans have a unique ability to adapt, transform, and make new meaning (Adnams Jones, 2016). Newcomer Intake Programs can assist with this transformation for school students and their families.

What Does it Mean to be New

Environmental psychology involves studying “the relationship between human behavior and the environment, from both directions — how the environment affects behavior, and how people’s behaviors and attitudes affect the environment” (Environmental Science, n.p.). Individuals develop their identity — who and what they are — from the personal and unique characteristics and conceptions of who they know themselves to be (Bonnes, 2017). This is our personal identity. Social identities develop from our membership in social categories or groups (Bonnes, 2017). Place identity is when we belong to certain territories or places (Bonnes, 2017). Though the emphasis on these differing types of identities varies across different environmental theories, according to Bonnes, “we derive much of the sense of who we are and much of our self-esteem from our personal and unique aspects as well as from our group memberships or place belongings” (2017, introduction). James (1890) and Mead (1934) provide the early origins of these identity theories. Proshansky (1978) first introduced the concept of place-identity in order to describe how our self-identity is affected with our physical environment. This later became known as environmental psychology.

A threat to identity can happen during the process of assimilating or acculturating into a new country — our place — as refugee students do. Being a new student in a new country, under the conditions of being a refugee or any conditions, affects students’ principles of continuity, distinctiveness, self-

efficacy, and their general self-esteem (Bonnes, 2017). This can create a sense of threat, according to Bonnes. The threat can originate internally through decision-making, where students may seek to alter their social position in one way, only to discover that it alters their social position in other ways (Bonnes, 2017). When newcomer students are simply getting used to a new school with new friend and teachers, it can be confusing to know who to trust and develop meaningful relationships with, especially after the lived experiences of newcomers that caused them to become refugees. Examples of this can be interacting with or speaking to a teacher in one way, only to discover another way was a more efficient manner of communicating, or simply becoming friends and confidants with one group of students, only to realize another group may have more positively influencing. Threats may also originate externally when changes in social identity and context causes identity changes that are not compatible with our known personal, social, place identities (Bonnes, 2017). Newcomer students are similar to other students in this regard. Remember your parents telling you that who you hang out with



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says a lot about you? Newcomer parents often do not approve of the American kids their children hang out with (various personal communication, 2017, 2018).

Essentially, all students go through the same feelings of adjustment when joining a new school — or place. The difference is some students bring difficult life experiences with them, interrupted education, and linguistic needs that can highly affect their transition into a new school community — academically and socially.

Who Are Our Newcomers

Immigrants to America are a “function of continuously changing international political, social, and economic conditions” (Chang, 1990). Immigrants may tend to cluster in community and live near each other in order to rebuild lost community or help each other out in their new homes here in the United States, yet they often find their children’s school enrollment is spread out across the miles to varying schools across districts. Challenges associated with integrating into a new home and country are complicated for children and adolescents who attend school because they must also learn the cultural expectations of our school system and to do so, they must learn a new language, most likely, to be successful (Jacoby, 2004; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2009). For the entire family, the challenges of navigating through a new life in a new country can be massive and even overwhelming. Familiarity often helps with the successful transformation to their new lives. These are changing times for the world and challenging times for refugees and asylum seekers, yet one only has to spend time within the refugee community and the generosity and graciousness of families is immediately evident. Most are grateful to be in a safe place where their children can go to school and learn, where they can live and move about in safety, and where life can flourish.

Newcomer Data

In 2017, the U. S. Department of Homeland Security reported that just over 1.1 million people legally immigrated to the United States (DHS, 2018). In 2016, most immigrants were from India, China, and Mexico (United States Department of Education, 2016). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), of the total immigrants in the United States in the year 2014:

...approximately 50 percent (20.9 million) of the 42.1 million immigrants ages five and older were not English proficient. Among Immigrants ages five and older, 44 percent speak Spanish (the most predominant non-English language spoken), six percent speak Chinese (including Mandarin and Cantonese), five percent speak Hindi or a related language, four percent speak Filipino or Tagalog, three percent speak Vietnamese, three percent speak French or Haitian Creole, and two percent speak Korean” (p. 2).

Some of these newcomers are fluent in English, yet some speak very little or no English. The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA) (NCELA, 2018a) recommends that school age newcomers would benefit from Newcomer Programs and mainstreaming into the school through this specific kind of program. Read the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition’s English Language Learner (ELs) Programs for Newcomer Students guidebook here (NCELA, 2018a):

 https://ncela.ed.gov/files/feature_topics/newcomers/ElevatingELs_ProgramsForNewcomerStudents.pdf

This link is for the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition’s English Learner Toolkit (NCELA, 2018b):

 <https://ncela.ed.gov/english-learner-tool-kit>



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While many school districts around the United States and elsewhere have developed outstanding Newcomer Intake Programs, others may benefit from this text and the resources in it, as well as in this chapter, as they plan credible and worthwhile programs that highly value the needs of the learner, the newcomer children and adolescents in their schools.

What Our Schools Can Do to Assist Newcomers

According to Chang (1990), Newcomer Programs in the United States were rare until about 1980 and newcomers were often instead placed in “some type of bilingual or English Language Development (ELD) program — or put ...in mainstream classrooms with pull-out English-language instruction. These interventions primarily emphasize overcoming language barriers and developing language skills” (p. 17). What makes Newcomer Programs unique “is the broad integration of academic and non-academic supports” (Chang, 1990, p. 17). Newcomer Programs meet specific needs of immigrant students, over and beyond their linguistic needs. In my interviews with refugee students, ESOL teachers, and Newcomer Intake Specialists it is apparent that elementary students generally make the transition easier than secondary students.

“Newcomer adolescents face a serious challenge in the educational system. At the same time that they are entering the U.S. schools with weak academic literacy skills, schools are emphasizing rigorous, standards-based curricula and high-stakes assessments for all students” (Short, 2002, p. 174). While

elementary students in interviews express extreme love of their classes and learning, secondary students in my interviews emphatically expressed that learning was difficult because the content it more difficult and teachers speak too fast. Essentially and fundamentally, school districts and Newcomer Programs need to provide resources for families AND educators.



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Newcomer Family’s Needs

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), newcomer families — both students and parents — have four basic needs that include:

- Needing an environment that is welcoming.
- Needing academic programs that are high quality and meet the language and academic needs of newcomer students.
- Needing a social emotional learning environment that allows students to be successful, gives them the tools to do so, and also provides benefits for their home environment.

- Needing an atmosphere of support and encouragement whereby they feel comfortable engaging in the educational process.

Resources for Educators

While a growing number of significant resources are available for educators, the Internet is a great resource for any educator and volunteer working with immigrant and newcomer students, and specifically the refugee student. This is a partial list of some outstanding resources that may be helpful:

1. U.S. Department of Education study by Chang (1990) as part of the California Tomorrow Immigrant Students Project — Newcomer Programs: Innovative Efforts to Meet the Educational Challenges of Immigrant Students: This document is the result of a USDE study regarding existing Newcomer Programs in 1990. The document is rich with informing text for educators. It can be accessed here:

 <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED368831>

2. Biography.com: This website provides interesting information about successful immigrants, now famous people in the United States. This information can be used to inspire newcomer students to set and reach goals as they read about success stories of other immigrants. The website can be accessed here:

 <http://www.biography.com/people/groups/immigration-us-immigrant>

3. Edutopia: This website provides information on creating digital immigration stories to teach empathy and would be a good resource for a classroom or Newcomer Program. Edutopia also provides other outstanding resources for educators. The website can be accessed here:

 <https://www.edutopia.org/>

The website for the digital immigration story project can be accessed here:

 <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/teach-empathy-digital-immigration-stories-sara-burnett>

4. *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*, edited by Mary C. Waters and Marisa Gerstein Pineau: This book describes the rich contributions of immigrants to American society. Information on the book published by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine can be accessed here:

 <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/21746/the-integration-of-immigrants-into-american-society>

5. The Public Broadcasting System (PBS) educational website provides a lesson plan that is full of informative content on being an immigrant. It can be accessed here:

 http://www-tc.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/pdfs/tna5_contribs.pdf

6. UNHCR Teacher's Took Kit for teaching about refugees: The UNHCR provides this informative website for provide training and guidance for teachers of refugees. The tool kit can be accessed here:

 <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/teaching-about-refugees.html>

7. Refugee Week: The British Red Cross provides a variety of classroom resources and lesson plans as refugee teaching resources. It can be accessed here:

 <http://refugeeweek.org.uk/resources/education-resources/classroom-resources/>

8. The National Education Association: This organization provides a webpage of resources for educating refugee and migrant children. It can be accessed here:

 <http://www.nea.org/home/61723.htm>

9. Amnesty.org: Amnesty International provides a list of good resources to better understand the refugee crisis. It can be accessed here:

 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/education/2015/10/8-educational-resources-to-better-understand-the-refugee-crisis/>

10. The Refugee Center: This organization's website provides many teaching resources and valuable information. It can be accessed here:

 <https://therefugeecenter.org/blog/teaching-children-refugees/>

11. PBS Learning: This lesson plan is about four teenagers that immigrated to America. It has a focus on literacy and also features a video. It can be accessed here:

 <http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/midlit11.soc.splimmig/american-stories-teens-and-immigration/>

12. Teaching Vision: This website provides information on teaching about immigration and diverse cultures. It can be accessed here:

 <https://www.teachervision.com/immigration/teacher-resources/6633.html>

13. The American Immigration Council: This website is a good teaching resource for secondary students and provides

information about being an immigrant, as well as news articles. It can be accessed here:

 <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/>

14. Scholastic Magazine: The magazine's website provides creative and innovative lesson plans and resources about immigration. It can be accessed here:

 <http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/immigration/>

What is a Newcomer Intake Program

Newcomer Programs tend to have similar goals of other language support programs, yet there are unique, distinguishing characteristics that reflect a somewhat different philosophy (Short, 2002). Generally, Newcomer Programs are designed for immigrant students with the lowest English skills, those who begin school after the year has already started, and for older learners such as 17 year olds or above (Short, 2002), although some school districts with large immigrant populations now incorporate Newcomer Programs for all immigrant students for a short phase of time and longer for students whose use of English is limited. Literature generally defines Newcomer Programs as temporary and as supporting students for their first year or two in the United States (Ovando & Combs, 2012; Short & Boyson, 2012; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008).

Bridging Gaps

Short (2002) also states that most newcomer programs typically limit students to one to three semesters within the program. It is important for students to not be segregated from the main student body, according to Short. An important goal of Newcomer Programs is to bridge any gaps that might exist in the newcomer student's education prior to arriving in their welcoming country, or in our case, the United States. Newcomer students may have had a good system of organized education

in their country of origin or they may have had disrupted education; in some cases, students may have had very limited schooling. Because of this phenomenon of interrupted or intermittent education, Newcomer Programs also assist with helping students whose linear age does not match their grade level. In the United States, it would be difficult to put a twelve-year-old who had never been to school in a kindergarten class. Newcomer Programs provide a safe and encouraging space to help students be able to learn and then mainstream into general classrooms with a more age appropriate group of peers.

Distinctions of a Newcomer Program

Newcomer courses are usually “distinct from the regular ESL or bilingual education programs” (Short, 2002, p. 175). Courses such as “native language literacy development, orientation to school and the community, and foundational content courses such as arithmetic or introduction to U.S. History are common courses in Newcomer Programs (Short, 2002). An important component of Newcomer Programs is helping student learn a:

...range of school skills, depending on their backgrounds and needs, such as how to hold a pencil or to follow a high



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school schedule, how to negotiate the city transportation system, how to read textbooks, how to solve mathematics problems and perform science experiments, and more. (Short, 2002, p. 175)

Finally, Newcomer Programs tend to involve families and provide services for them as well. Short (2002) states that Newcomer Programs do “more than just encouraging parents to attend school meetings, Newcomer Program staff reach out to help families access social, health, and employment services, often through school-community partnerships established for these purposes (p. 175).

Data from Large National Study on Newcomer Intake Programs

Short (2002) led the first national study of its kind of 115 secondary Newcomer Programs during 1999-2000 for the U.S. Department of Education through the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) to identify and document the design of Newcomer Programs and describe implementation features of these programs. Research of the 115 schools studied showed that 62 of the programs were in high schools, 26 were in middle schools, and 27 served both middle and high school students (Short 2002). The study was valuable in collecting data on how Newcomer Programs were structured and how they operated. Short determined that “high school immigrant students, especially older adolescents, need targeted intervention strategies beyond traditional ESL and bilingual programs to prepare them for high school graduation and beyond” (2002, p. 177). The data revealed that 76% of the programs were in urban metropolitan areas, 17% were in suburban locations, and 7% were in rural communities (Short, 2002).



Three Common Newcomer Models

Short (2002) found that there were three common school models. According to Short (2002), “To choose the model, districts take several variables into account besides the physical plant: the location of newcomer students’ homes, availability of staff and material resources, transportation options, and educational goals of the program” (p. 179). These are the three types of Newcomer Programs in the study (Short, 2002):

1. Newcomer Programs that existed within a school: This was the most common kind of Newcomer Program model in the study. 77% of the schools used this type of model. Students were generally served in their own school and interacted with other students within the school for about half of the day through participation in activities such as physical education art, music, and school clubs. Some of these programs set up meaningful collaborations of newcomer students with mainstream students in order to facilitate meaningful integration among students. In some cases, newcomer students were bused to the hosting school for the duration of the Newcomer Program and then returned to their own school sites when they completed the program. Benefits of this kind of program were that students were not “fully separated from the main student body and staff can work part time in the Newcomer Program and part time in another program at the school” (Short, 2002, p. 179). This model tended to work best as most students typically live in the neighborhood where the school was located.
2. Newcomer Programs at a separate site: 17% of the studied Newcomer Programs had a separate site for their Newcomer Programs. Sometimes this program was a facility that was older and had been retired as a school building. Some school districts leased a site. Half of the separate site programs were full day programs. Some programs featured half days at the Newcomer Program site and then half the day at the

main campus. Students tended to be in this separate site for approximately one year. Only a few programs in this study allowed students to stay for more than one year. One of the main reasons for separate site programs was to service students from multiple schools within a district. These programs also tended to prefer to offer specialized courses, perhaps only teach curricula for one grade such as the 9th grade for all high school students, offered block scheduling or other differing school routines, and consolidated resources so the needs of the newcomer could be the intense focus. According to Short (2002), “Although some criticism has been raised about separate sites because students are seemingly isolated from the rest of the student population, these sites have not been found to violate the students’ educational civil rights” (p. 180). Students at the off-site centers frequently participate in projects with mainstream students on their soon-to-be school campus in an effort to begin integrating newcomers into their eventual school site. These centers claimed that students learn English faster and therefore transition better to their eventual school. One challenge for these Newcomer Programs models is where to situate the centers that serve students as ease of access is important.

3. Newcomer Program whole school models: In this model, the entire program was housed within the school building and students were with the program for the entire school day. This was the least common model (Short, 2002). In Short’s study only 6% of the schools used this model. It was primarily for high school students and was only found in urban sites. This model offered a total educational program for students’ school level. Students typically began the program as ninth graders, regardless of their age, and stayed in the program until they graduated from high school. This model was typically found in large urban districts that already had both traditional and specialized types of



schools. It was lengthier than other newcomer models, since students could stay in this program for about four years—the duration of their high school career. This model tended to target students who had not been successful at other schools due to interrupted education prior to coming to the U.S., students that were over-age, or students who dealt with other factors that made graduation unlikely without this particular kind of intervention. All schools that provided this model gave students and their parents the option to participate or not participate. While Short's study revealed that not many schools used this whole school model, other research shows varying opinions about this kind of model. Opponents of the whole school model believe that students could be segregated into sub-standard schools (Belluck, 1995), which depending upon the resources of the district could be entirely plausible. School board member Luis Reyes of Queens, New York said in 1995, "Having a whole school that is only for limited-English-proficient students does have the potential for denying the students certain opportunities that are available in other schools, as well as the chance to mix with native English speakers" (Belluck, 1995). Yet in 2012, Duval County High School in Florida proudly announced the creation of a district newcomer school. News sources stated that "among the first of its kind in Florida, the district's Newcomer School will join about 162 similar schools nationwide, according to Center for Applied Linguistics data" (Stepzinski, T., 2012, n.p.).

Benefits of the Newcomer Program Models

In all of the Newcomer Program models in Short's study, students tended to "become literate for the first time in their first language and/or in English, although they are beyond the expected age of initial literacy instruction" (Short, 2002, p. 185). Some students were found to be linguistically isolated at school because they did not speak English and some were also culturally isolated because they were not yet familiar with

American traditions, school practices, and even popular teenage culture. All of the Newcomer Programs recognized these areas of isolations and worked to address them. A common denominator of the programs studied was that they did not want to delay students' acculturation, but rather wanted to help newcomer students become familiar with "American culture, their community, school routines, and educational expectations in the United States" (Short, 2002, p. 185). Field trips, cultural activities, and special events were common acculturation goals of the programs in the study. 42% of the programs offered career awareness.

Staffing of Newcomer Models

Staffing of the Newcomer Programs in the study revealed that "support staff who are bilingual and familiar with the students' first languages and cultures" (Short, 2002, p. 187) were particularly sought out to lead the programs because they could communicate more effectively with students and could also potentially bring additional resources for students' needs. Urban schools tended to find staff easily. Administrators reported carefully selecting caring staff for these programs. Teachers who reported having had prior experience with recent immigrants, literacy experience, bilingual skills, ESL, training in sheltered instruction methods, or training in cross-cultural communication, or who had worked in sheltered classes or had second-language acquisition theory training were a high priority. Staffing of Newcomer Programs included hiring administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and guidance counselors. In all of the programs, there was at least one person who spoke the students' native language. 78% of the programs had 1-10 staff members who were proficient in at least one of the native languages of students and some of the programs had as many as 30 staff members.

Additional Support Offered by the Newcomer Models

Newcomer Programs tended to provide more in the way of service than typical ESL programs and the goal was to help students and their families make a smooth transition to school and the new culture they were experiencing (Short, 2002). The Newcomer Programs commonly offered physical health services, mental health services, social services, career counseling, and tutoring (Short, 2002). Some programs provided legal assistance and day care. Social workers tended to be on site and were available to help students and their families understand the medical and social services available in their area (Short, 2002). Newcomer Programs tended to provide orientation classes for parents, and in the case of some schools, provided these courses either at night or during the school day or both. All Newcomer Programs in the study by Short (2002) promoted the involvement of parents and communication with parents was a high priority. 31% of the school programs worked to develop community partnerships. (This percentage seems low and it is this author's thought that since 2002 Newcomer Programs have probably worked to produce more community partnerships, as it takes a village, literally, to help newcomer families make a smooth transition. In interviews I have done with school Newcomer Intake Specialists in Kansas and Colorado and school administrators, these additional services have also been reported (S. Bird-Hutchison, personal communication November 10, 2017; J. Millen, personal communication, May 7, 2016; S. Wasko, personal communication, Oct 23, 2017).

Another Significant Study

Another significant national study, *Exemplary Programs for Newcomer English Learners at the Secondary Level*, was conducted over three years on behalf of the Carnegie Corporation of New York by the Center for Applied Linguistics. The report concluded that there was not one set model for programs for newcomer students (Short & Boyson, 2012). The

study was also led by Deborah J. Short, along with Beverly A. Boyson in 2012. The study revealed and extended many of the same positive attributes as the 2002 study, but also revealed some areas of concern as potential inhibitors to student success including family reunification and trauma, No Child Left Behind accountability measures, special education services, high school graduation credits, and postsecondary options for newcomer students.

This study built upon the 2002 study and further advanced the research with an in-depth case study of ten Newcomer Programs. This is the webpage for the study entitled, *Helping Newcomer Students Succeed in Secondary Schools and Beyond* (The Helping Newcomer Students report can be also be downloaded from this link):

 <http://www.cal.org/resource-center/publications-products/helping-newcomer-students>

Some Examples of Newcomer Intake Programs

1. **Wichita Public Schools, Wichita, Kansas:** Wichita Unified School District #259 in Kansas has a webpage devoted to multilingual education services. Their Newcomer Program is highlighted on the homepage. The Newcomer Intake Center is a main and first point of contact for newcomer parents and students. Students' English skills are tested and staff members answer parents' questions and assist them with paperwork. Information is provided about community resources for newcomer families. The district offers free ESOL classes for parents and other adult family members, with childcare being provided during class. They also offer a Kid's Club for homework and tutoring while parents are in the evening ESOL classes. The school district offers on-site interpretation and translation for parents. The Newcomer Program also offers other activities, services, and important courses for students. Read more about the

Wichita USD Newcomer Intake Program here or contact them for further information:

 <https://www.usd259.org/mes>

2. **Richardson Independent School District, Richardson, Texas:** Richardson ISD in Texas enrolls students at their neighborhood school first, and then has parents come to the Newcomer Intake Center after being referred there by their student's school. Read more about their Newcomer Program here:

 http://risd.org/Group/Departments/NewcomerCenter/Newcomer_Main.html

3. **Denver Public Schools, Denver, Colorado:** Denver Public Schools has an impressive Newcomer Program, with six Newcomer Centers situated across the geographic district providing intense social-emotional, educational, and linguistic support to newcomer students. Parents have the choice of enrolling their students at one of the centers for approximately one to two semesters, depending on a survey of students' needs. All teachers in DPS are required to be ESL certified, whether they are teachers at the Newcomer Centers or not. Their Newcomer Handbook is a useful document for other school districts and can be accessed here:

 http://thecommons.dpsk12.org/cms/lib/CO01900837/Centricity/domain/107/ela_department_page/secretary/Newcomer_handbook.pdf

4. **Oakland Unified School District, Oakland, CA:** Oakland USD also offers an impressive webpage for their Newcomer Program. The page shares their program overview, explains their Newcomer Wellness Team, and shares a Newcomer Tool Kit, and special supports available for newcomers. The district has more than 15 newcomer

sites situated within schools and also offers connections to community services. The resources available on their webpage would be a valuable resource to any district wanting to start a Newcomer Program.

 <https://www.ousd.org/newcomer>

5. **Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis, Minnesota:** Minneapolis Public Schools offers many resources for newcomer students and families on their webpage including handbooks for varying ages of students, assessment documents, instructional tools, and staff resources. The district's Multilingual Department webpages are comprehensive and informative, serving as good resources for other districts. Their newcomer webpage can be accessed here and the main page for the Multilingual Department can be accessed from this page as well:

 http://multilingual.mpls.k12.mn.us/newcomer_toolkit

Tips for Schools Considering Starting a Newcomer Program

According to Short (2002), the initial rise of Newcomer Programs in the United States was "primarily because an increasing number of students learning English as an additional



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language were not being adequately served by the programs in place” (p. 194). As a result of Short’s study of 115 secondary schools with Newcomer Programs which she conducted for the U. S. Department of Education, Short contends that school districts have important decisions to make, based on the large rise of immigrant populations. Short states that school districts should ask two questions regarding the student population to guide their decision making: “a) Does a population of newcomers exist in the district, and b) are they unsuccessful in the current language support program?” (2002, p. 195). If there is a newcomer population within the school district and students are not successful academically (perhaps because they are over-age or have low literacy skills), Short advises a Newcomer Program “could be planned and criteria set for student enrollment” (2002, p. 195). In moving to a second phase of planning, Short reports schools should ask: “a) Where should the newcomer site be located, and b) what school model should be selected?” (2002, p. 195). Next schools should determine how many school periods will be offered a day, what content subject will be offered in addition to English language instruction, and how long students can be enrolled in the program (Short, 2002). All of these decisions affect staffing, budgets, and resource decisions.

School should think of features and design of the program, leadership, vision, hiring staff that are advocates for the students and offer support for native language, and have plans for systematic instruction for English language development (Short, 2002). Newcomer Intake Programs have some features that set them apart from traditional ESL programs (Short, 2002):

Programs should use field trips and curriculum activities to familiarize students with school routines and expectations, American culture, the community, and the United States. Likewise, they must be prepared to help orient the families to the new environment by arranging

family events, encouraging parents to take adult ESL classes, and helping families link up to social and health services, for example. Programs should create projects and other structured activities to ensure the interaction of newcomer students with English-speaking students. Furthermore, because so many newcomer programs serve older learners, these programs are more likely to provide career education and work internships. Some of the urban programs have been able to find work internships where the students are able to use their native language on the job (p. 195-196).

Also of prime importance is a well-designed plan for transition to move students from the Newcomer Program and its language and content focus to the regular programs offered within the mainstream school. “This process requires a sequenced curriculum for English language acquisitions as well as a series of courses to help students either further their content knowledge or address gaps in their educational backgrounds” (Short, 2002, p. 196). This transition is important for students’ overall academic success and preparing for their futures in the United States. Newcomer staff generally make sure the mainstream school staff has been acclimated to student’s experiences and abilities before they make the transition. A team within the mainstream school, usually through ESL courses, bilingual programs, or within the mainstream content areas, is typically prepared to be the first point of contact for the newcomer student and help their transition be successful (Short, 2002).

Get the Parents Involved

According to various Newcomer Intake Specialists, both district specialists and campus specialists from interviews I have conducted, it is very important to get parents involved in their children’s education, but more so in the greater environment of the school. Students do better when their parents are involved in their education. By watching their parents learn English in



the school's ESL class for parents, students are also motivated to work harder as they see the entire family unit learning (S. Wasko, personal communication, October 23, 2017). A sense of pride, belonging, and identity happens and parents who were initially slow to advocate for their students find themselves feeling more comfortable doing so (S. Wasko, personal communication, October 23, 2017). Wichita USD in Kansas offers ESL courses for parents both during the school day and at night to accommodate parents' work schedules. After working my entire career in schools where only parent volunteers were allowed in the building after an official sign-in process, it was so delightful and inspiring for me to see parents attending classes in the room next door to their students during the school day at Curtis Middle School in Wichita, Kansas.

A Denver area newcomer specialist that I interviewed was thrilled with the camaraderie and connection that occurred with parents after an international night was held early in the school year (J. Millen, personal communication, May 2016). Parents and students were encouraged to wear traditional dress from their countries of origin if they so desired, and to bring food dishes from their countries as well. She reported being hesitant to ask parents to do these things, but wanted to see how the event would be accepted by newcomer families. The newcomer specialist was so surprised at how much of a celebration parents from many countries turned the evening into, even gifting her with traditional clothing from their countries. After the event, she noticed many parents much more involved in the Newcomer Program and feeling more welcome and comfortable volunteering in other capacities at school. We must remember that most newcomer parents were professionals in their previous countries and outstanding members of their previous communities. These kinds of events can really advance the facilitation of feeling welcomed and valued in their new country.

Get the Community Involved

Newcomer Programs are more successful when the community is involved. An Internet search will quickly reveal many community partnerships that exist around the United States with Newcomer Programs and give new programs ideas. Greeley West High School in Greeley, Colorado made news when a community organization donated money for technology for the Newcomer Program and also excitedly agreed to be mentors for students in the programs to assist with their English acquisition experiences (Redmond, 2015). The Newcomer Intake Program in Wichita USD in Kansas works to develop community partnerships that can offer internships for students and other opportunities. School and community partnerships can help the collaboration of schools with newcomer students and their families be much more successful. The ultimate goal of community and school partnerships is to help immigrant students more easily phase into life in the community as contributing members of the society.

Implications for the Future

While the debate over learning English, offering dual language programs, and what curriculum to offer in ESOL programs will continue as many educators and policy makers voice their research data and experience, one thing that is certain is that immigrant students must be welcomed in schools and to do so involves teaching them more than English. While the growing diversity of America will most likely influence future decisions made regarding whether to teach English or not in schools, and how to teach it, students currently need to learn English to be successful in most American schools as they have been traditionally organized. Eighteen years ago, according to Fillmore and Snow (2000), data existed that showed that non-English-speaking students were actually having a more and more difficult time learning English. In 2000, Fillmore and Show reported learning English used to take five to seven years



(Cummins, 1981; Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Klesmer, 1994) and a study from Ramirez, Pasta, Yuen, Billings, and Ramey (1991) found that it took seven to ten years to master English. Fillmore and Snow (2000) reported that immigrant students classified as limited English proficient (LEP) often begin kindergarten in school districts and 13 years later would graduate from the same school district still classified as LEP. There is much debate as to the reasons, such as problems with the bilingual education program, the ease with which Spanish speakers can now speak their first language frequently in the United States—at home, with family members, and in the community (Schmida & Chiang, 1999), and because the prevalence of growing bilingual education programs makes it less necessary for students to learn English (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). Fillmore & Snow report that other studies — such as research done by Collier (1992) and Collier and Thomas (1989) — found differing results; in these studies, they found that “students in well-designed bilingual programs master English more rapidly (5 to 7 years) than do students in English-only programs (7 to 10 years)” (2000, p. 22).

Current data regarding the learning of the English language by students, as written about in *Education Week* on March 7, 2017, from the prestigious National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, reveals that limited English skills are still a substantial problem and barrier to the academic success of more than 5 million children in the United States (Mitchell, 2017). The study determined that we must find out why we are not doing better and why some students who have been learning English for more than seven years have still not mastered the language (Mitchell, 2017). The study was not about learning English, according to Mitchell, but rather it was a study to survey the English-language-learner programs as well as factors outside of the classroom. The study even reviewed successful language-revitalization efforts with Native Americans and Alaskan native communities. The study concluded that learning English for immigrant

students involved dealing with unique nonacademic factors and stress associated with learning a new language while simultaneously studying in the new language and navigating life in communities where the language was spoken. The study called on the federal government to expand outreach to parents. The report on learning the English language by students, according to Mitchell, also found that the availability of language education is declining in the United States, even with growing interest in bilingual and dual-language programs in schools. It also unflatteringly stated that the number of U.S. citizens that speaks another language is shrinking (Mitchell, 2017). The report asked for early childhood programs in dual language, programs for parents, and also changing the minds of teachers and parents in the United States who think that they should only speak English to their children. The report finalized the study’s opinion by stating that pre-service education programs must implement training to ensure educators are ready to work with the growing diversity of students (Mitchell, 2017). The report asks educators to not think of limited English speaking students as having a deficit and instead to focus on the assets diverse immigrant and non-English speaking students bring to the classroom and school (Mitchell, 2017). The same day the study’s report was released, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences released their own report urging education and community leaders to encourage and offer help for native-English speakers to learn foreign languages (Mitchell, 2017).

While the debate continues around immigrant students and schools regarding English learning, Newcomer Programs offer a knowledgeable method of welcoming, transformation, and transition into new schools in a welcoming country. The American school system is so entrenched in learning content such as math, history, literacy, science, and we also include ESOL/ESL, physical education, career training, the arts, technology, and a variety of other electives and special courses as we continue to educate the whole child. Yet, the data on



immigration and non-English speaking students clearly makes it evident, when paralleled with other data on teachers and schools addressing the social emotional needs of learners, that Newcomer Programs are a relevant, 21st century need in school district, especially districts with a detectable number of refugee students. Whether the district has one newcomer student or 1,000, whether two languages are spoken in the district or 125 languages, welcoming newcomer students to our classrooms, schools, school districts, and communities is of vital importance in the growing diverse student population of our schools to help them understand our culture, customs, ways of being and knowing at school, and participating in communities and society. Students and teachers will also grow and learn by learning about newcomer's own customs and culture. The 21st century asks American schools to become intercultural in the fullest sense.

It is clear that many of the challenges we face in education stem from the fact that ours is a diverse society. Students in our schools come from virtually every corner of the planet and they bring to school diverse outlooks, languages, cultural beliefs and behaviors, and background experiences. Teachers in our schools have not always known what to do with the differences they encounter in the classrooms. As a society, we expect teachers to educate whoever shows up at the schoolhouse, to provide those students the language and literacy skills to survive in school and later on in jobs, to teach them all of the various school subjects that they will need to know about as adults, and to prepare them in other ways for higher education and for jobs.

All teachers must be trained in how to understand language learning and the teaching of language learning, not just the ESOL/ESL teacher. Courses in educational linguistics are imperative for the 21st century American preservice teacher and the minimal need of today's schools in preparing to educate all students. With school districts reporting over 120 languages spoken by families within their district, more

than 60 languages spoken in their school buildings, and the percentages of diverse students rising in the United States, we must be prepared as educators. After all, as Acostas said in his description of his poem, In Lak'Ech, "we are all part of the same universal vibration" (Valdez & Paredes, 2017) and we are also sharing the same classrooms throughout the universe.

About the Author

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Discussion Questions

Use the following questions as helpful inputs into your own meaning making and reflection on the content of this chapter.

1. Why does the growing number of immigrants in our schools indicate the need for Newcomer Intake Programs?
2. What are the concerns with high stakes standardized testing for immigrant students?
3. Who are newcomer students? What walks of life do they come from?
4. What are the main purposes for a Newcomer Intake Program?
5. Define the off-site model for Newcomer Programs.
6. Define the whole school model for Newcomer Programs.
7. Define the in-school model for Newcomer Programs.
8. What is environmental psychology and how does it apply to the newcomer refugee student?
9. Describe personal, social, and place identity in terms of the refugee student. Is one more important than the other to the refugee student?

10. Why is it important to get parents and the community involved in Newcomer Programs?

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Spotlight 15

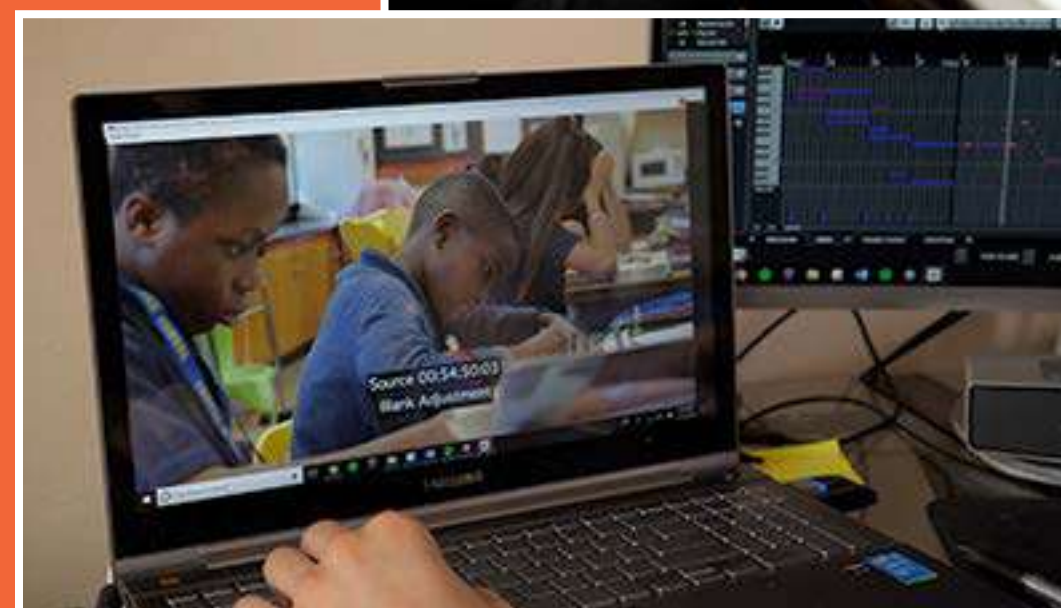
A Composer's Story: Alex Wakim

Trina Harlow and Alex Wakim



The emotional journey of *Refuge in the Heartland* was told through Alex Wakim's music, utilizing a combination of balance, tact, and raw emotion. Wakim has written various musical scores for professional and student projects, most notably *Alex*, a thriller which won the 2018 K-State 48 Film Festival. The K-State College of Education's vision for the refugee project drew Wakim in, but what really fueled his passion was the subject matter: dealing with humans who were forced to leave their homes. This hit close to home for him since his parents had to flee Lebanon during the Lebanese civil war.

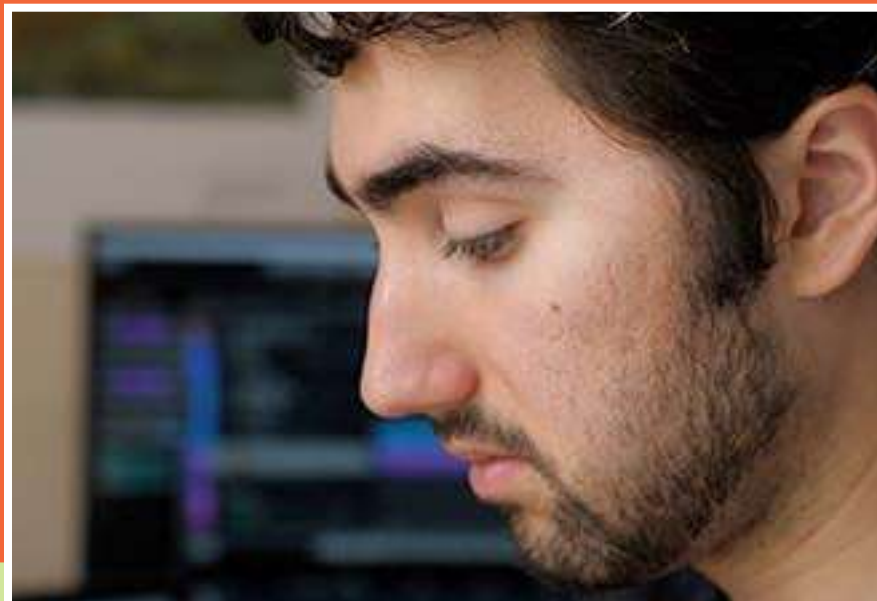
By really assessing the emotional nuances of the film, Wakim gained the tools and inspiration to truly do the film justice through the musical score. By mixing the tenderness of the interactions, the direness of the situation, and the subsequent understanding that can be brought about by acknowledging a person's humanity, Wakim was able to use his musical talent, training, and skill to conceptualize the sound for the score he wrote for the film.



Learn more about Alex's effort for *Refuge in the Heartland* here:



Video: *A Composer's Story: Alex Wakim*



Wakim is a Lebanese-American composer who received his BM in Composition and an entrepreneurship minor from Kansas State University. He is now obtaining a Masters in Film Music Composition from New York University. Wakim has won numerous national and international awards and performed all over the world, including a Phi Kappa Phi graduate fellowship, premiers and commissions from the Boston New Music Initiative and the Alba Music Festival, three subsequent wins in Kansas Soundscapes (a blind-submission composition contest open to all Kansas composers, including seasoned professionals), annual invitations to present his work in Lebanon, a week-long learning and performing residency in Cuba with the K-State Latin Jazz Ensemble, and continued development of his musical, *An American in Beirut*.

Wakim believes that music is an amazing medium to convey complex meaning and to provoke thought in listeners.



Watch this interview with Alex Wakim on Lebanese national TV:



Video: *Alex Wakim: An American in Beirut*

This is a link to Alex Wakim's website:



Alex Wakim, Composer | Pianist

<https://alexwakim.com>





Epilogue

This Book is for You!

Dr. Jeff Zacharakis

Newcomer! As someone who has never taught in a public school, worked in a refugee camp, or even heard the term newcomer, I have had the unique opportunity to read and proofread every chapter in this book as a second set of eyes supporting Trina's editorship. I did not read these chapters as a copy editor or an expert, but as a consumer. And in doing so, I tossed aside my title and expertise and became a student. If this book is marketed to only P-12 teachers and administrators it is missing its mark; this book will resonate with a much wider audience.



*Dr. Zacharakis and his Papou
(grandfather) from Greece.*

As I read this book I reflected on my life experience. I read this book as the oldest grandchild of newcomers who immigrated to this country at the beginning of twentieth century as teenagers, without their parents, to escape poverty in search of new opportunity, recalling the stories Papou shared of his childhood and how he came to the United States. I read this book as the son of a man who was raised in a tenement and did not speak English until he entered school, and a woman who was raised in northern Minnesota who did not know a person of color until she graduated from high school and left her community. I read

this book as one who was raised in a part of the country that was originally part of Mexico, who went to school in the United States with fourth and fifth generation Mexican students who no longer spoke Spanish but still celebrated their heritage. I read this book as someone who has spent most of his life in the Rockies, high plains, and western corn belt, interacting unknowingly with immigrants who worked in meatpacking plants, feedlots, construction, mines, and other jobs that my children never considered pursuing. I read this book thinking back to the soccer coach of a youth team in Rochelle, Illinois, who did not speak English but was the best available coach for these kids. I read this book thinking about the skilled craftsmen who remodeled our bathroom, who spoke only Russian, Ukrainian or Spanish. I read this book as someone who is old enough to recall the famous debate between George H. Bush and Ronald Reagan (1980) where both argued for an open border with Mexico. This book resonates with me, as I am sure it will resonate with many other people who are not public school teachers and administrators.

If we consider that Native Americans are the only group of people who can claim original rights to citizenship, then our entire society in the United States is a complex mosaic of newcomers. It is arguably the most diverse society on Earth, and is much stronger and resilient because of this diversity. The American Ideal as articulated by John Rawls (1999), based on justice as fairness and the rights of each group to be treated with dignity, is my roadmap to how we should build our society. It is hard for me to imagine living in a homogeneous community where everyone is of the same color and same economic status. It is hard for me to dwell on whether or not someone is here legally or illegally, even though the one lesson I learned in this book is that refugees have legal status that a few of my friends do not have because their parents carried them across the Rio Grande as babies. What I care about is how do we provide opportunity for everyone — regardless of their



country of origin, language, or color — to become contributing members of our society, where they can raise a family, pay taxes, and provide a rich thread to this complex mosaic.



Everett Historical/Shutterstock

Immigrant children waiting to be processed at Ellis Island around 1908. Dr. Zacharakis' Papou (grandfather) from Greece came through Ellis Island as a teenager.

I'm an adult educator who works with communities and organizations, primarily in Kansas and the Midwest. It is a fact that communities like Marshalltown, Iowa, and Garden City, Kansas would not be thriving if it were not for the influx of newcomers. And if it were not for these hardworking people immigrating to these many rural communities, their population would be in decline and their towns drying up with shuttered storefronts. Hats off to those employers who provide opportunity for these new immigrants! Public schools are essential for the future of these towns and communities to educate their children, to enfranchise them and their families into our society, and to educate future generations of adults who will make meaningful contributions as leaders.

This book opened my eyes to the trauma newcomer children have experienced, visualizing the sheer size of the massive refugee camps like Dadaab in which hundreds of thousands of people live with the hope of a better future where they can live safely and pursue the same dreams as my grandparents. This book opened my eyes on how schools can make a profound difference. This book is important and relevant to community leaders, policy makers, employers, wage earners, and all people who care about their community and neighbors. It is through our schools where children from all backgrounds interact and learn with each other. It is through our schools that we build a foundation for adults to respect, live, and work in harmony with each other. I for one am more of a pragmatist than an idealist. I realize that in order for many of the communities I have worked with over the years to grow and prosper they need to not only welcome newcomers but they also need to invest in them through education and other opportunities so they will be integrated into the community and raise their children to be the next generation of leaders. This book is not written as some esoteric academic tomb, but is a very practical and applied lesson in how schools, their administrators, boards, and teachers can make a profound contribution to their communities. We should not be afraid of newcomers but should see them as an opportunity to build the future.



Hikren/Shutterstock

Forcibly displaced people wait to enter Dadaab Refugee Camp.

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Documentary Film Supplement

The Making of *Refuge in the Heartland*

Trina Harlow

The film *Refuge in the Heartland* can be seen on the K-State College of Education's YouTube channel in its entirety at:



Video: *Refuge in the Heartland*



The first screening of the film was held on Kansas State University campus at the College of Education's Education Symposium on October 12, 2018. Left to right: Dean Debbie Mercer, Stephanie Bird-Hutchison (Wichita School District), Dorcas' sister, Dorcas, Leslie (ESL Coordinator, Wichita North High School), Alain, Trina Harlow, and Rusty Earl.



Rusty Earl filming segment regarding Wichita employers who hire refugees.

This book and the corresponding film *Refuge in the Heartland*, while born in the minds of Kansas State University video producer Rusty Earl and faculty member Trina Harlow, materialized because of the vision of Dean Debbie Mercer of Kansas State University's College of Education and her desire for the college to be leaders not only in Kansas, but also in the United States and the world in the field of education. While Dean Mercer is a scholar, researcher, and leader, she is a teacher at her core. She is a champion for children, adolescents, and



Trina Harlow at Washington Elementary School with Shebani admiring a paper story quilt made by newcomer students.



Video: *Shebani's Artistic Journey*

adults and knows the power of education in the lives of human beings and society. Dean Mercer knew this was a difficult topic to address, especially from Kansas, located in the heartland of America and geographically a very long ways from where most of the people UNHCR lists as forcibly displaced experience the life-changing difficulties that uproot them from their homes and communities. Dean Mercer, Rusty, and I worked together to bring this important world story to light, and she trusted Rusty and myself to not only tell the story, but to tell the story well. This section of the book will be very personal about both the film and the experiences of those who were intimately involved in its production. One cannot work on a project like this refugee book and film without it having a profound effect on your thoughts and emotions, and that is simply because the subject is literally the thoughts and emotions of others – refugees – who have lost nearly everything and now are trying to find it here in Kansas and elsewhere in the various places they resettle.

Film Summary

Refuge in the Heartland was produced by Kansas State University's College of Education from 2017-2018. Filming took place in Washington, D.C., Kansas, and Toronto, Canada. Rusty Earl and Trina Harlow were the co-directors of the film, with Rusty Earl serving as the video producer for Catalyst Productions and Dean Debbie Mercer producing the film for the College of Education at Kansas State University. Various leaders in child refugee policy, education, and community representatives came together to share their experiences and knowledge in this field. However, the most poignant aspects of the film are the stories of the refugees themselves. While the film introduces the viewer to several refugees, the film most profoundly follows the story of two high school students, Dorcas and Alain, as they share parts of their life's story in an effort to call attention to the circumstances that caused them to leave their homes in Africa and come to Kansas. The film has the purpose of informing the viewer about what it means



to be a refugee and how children are affected by the issue of forced displacement and being a refugee. The film also is a tremendous resource for educators and others who work with refugee students. By hearing from teachers and other educators in schools in Wichita, Kansas, the film gives educators all over the world insight into how to provide more meaningful learning and experiences for students who have been forcibly displaced and sought asylum as refugees.

Experiences of the Directors and Crew

It took a village to produce, direct, and develop this film—hundreds if not thousands of people contributed their professional skills, recommendations, advice, personal experiences, and stories. This section gives a personal look into the experiences of the film’s directors and crew as they explored and created every image, every scene and edited and crafted every word to boldly bring honor to the topic of forced displacement, asylum, resettlement, and the experiences of refugees and newcomers in our American schools and communities. It is through the sharing of personal experiences that we all grow and learn more about the overall issue of displacement and resettlement and then, and only then, as a collective world people we may begin to find better solutions for the people it affects.



The technical crew for the film, left to right: Rusty Earl, Safiya Woodard, Hannah Phipps, and Nick Abt.

Hannah Phipps

Video Editor, KSU Undergraduate Student, Majoring in Journalism and Mass Communications with an Advertising Emphasis

“Fighting hatred and spreading love in the smallest of encounters can impact people in unimaginable ways.” – Hannah Phipps

Being a part of the production team of *Refuge in the Heartland* has made a significant change in my life. Going into this process I knew little to nothing about the refugee crisis here in America. I knew that there were refugees in bigger cities such as in my hometown, Kansas City, but I had no idea that there was such a huge population in smaller cities such as Dodge City and Wichita.

One of the biggest ways the many hours, days, weeks, and months I spent working on this project has affected me is by allowing me to see refugees as people rather than just refugees. I think it is a lot easier to dismiss the refugee crisis because we see them as a group of people rather than the individuals that encompass it. We see them as something we see on the news, but as not really effecting our own daily lives. I learned that these people are daughters, wives, husbands, sons, friends, and humans. They are so much more than just “refugees.”

One of the most meaningful parts of being involved in the process of making this film was being able to meet the refugees involved with the film. During my second trip to Wichita, I was able to film the high school graduation of Dorcas and Alain. After the graduation ceremony Nick, another person on our film crew, and I filmed Dorcas meeting back up with her family. The joy and excitement on their faces was so special to me. To me, graduating high school wasn’t that big of a deal—it was just something that I did. But to Dorcas and a lot of refugees, something as simple as graduating high school isn’t



even viewed as something feasible because of the difficulty of their life situations. I profoundly realized that some of the most mundane and ordinary things that we do here in America can be some of the most exciting and important things for others, simply because so many basic life experiences have been stripped away from them.

During my first trip to Wichita, I was also able to interview two refugee women who worked at a company called MIS. Being able to hear their stories and everything they have gone through was extremely eye-opening and I remember this vividly. These women have gone through so much in their lives and now they work harder here in America than I have ever worked. It made me realize how strong these women and other refugees are and how the “struggles” that I think I face are nothing compared to what these women have gone through and continue to go through.

Being able to interview these resettled people – refugees – and hear their stories has made me more aware of the realities that these individuals have gone through, as well as what they continue to go through because of the negative stigma that can sometimes surround refugees. I’ve learned about countless things, such as the rigorous application process to legally obtain refugee status, as well as the long length of the relocation process. But, I think the most important thing that I’ve learned is the answer to the question *what do I do now?* Me. Refugees are survivors of conflict, health, the environment, and other factors and have fought hard to get to safety – to be here in Kansas. They have overcome numerous trials and tribulations to now live in a place where they aren’t in constant fear of persecution or even *death*. And so, I think the answer to my question is simply to recognize that they are here, be *joyous* that they have made it this far, and to meet them where they are at. What are simple things that we all can do to make their transition here smoother? Whether we become heavily involved in a local organization or slightly involved, I think two things

that we can all do is *love and advocate*. First, make sure they are cared for, ask them about their journey, and take the time to listen to them. Second, advocate for refugees both in your community and elsewhere, and stand up for them by dismissing incorrect stereotypes that might come up in everyday conversation. Fighting hatred and spreading love in the smallest of encounters can impact people in unimaginable ways.

Safiya Woodard

Video Editor, 2018 KSU Graduate in Mass Communications

There was a moment while working on the film when I was looking at all the things going on in the world and in America and started wondering if this project would do anything? – Safiya Woodard

I helped a lot with researching and fact checking for the film, as well as cutting down edits. There was a moment while working on the film when I was looking at all the things going on in the world and in America and started wondering if this project would do anything? I wondered if it would actually make a difference for people who come to America to flee persecution. I wondered about this all the way up until the premiere in Wichita, Kansas, but all that worry seemed to go away when I saw that while there’s some potentially negative outcomes to these types of things, there’s also many positives as well.

The most inspiring thing for me was seeing all of the people this project brought together on the night of the premiere of the film. Not only was there a mix of cultures and languages in the auditorium in Wichita, but there was also a sense of community there – with people wanting, willing, and able to help each other. I guess my hope in people was renewed a bit that day. I saw people going up to each other and introducing themselves and giving out hugs and words of support and encouragement. I saw the hope that the documentary helped bring to both the refugees and the teachers in the room, as well as the other

people in attendance. I saw that this project made a difference and had the potential to do far more good.

Rusty Earl

*Co-Director, KSU College of Education, Catalyst Center
Video Producer*

“I think that, just like Kim, by stepping out and working with and serving these newcomers to our communities, we will all realize in the end that we are the ones actually being served.” – Rusty Earl

One of the most profound things I learned while working on this project was how knowledge about refugee resettlement can empower audiences to see beyond political opinions and to develop true empathy. I found the more I learned about the process of resettlement, the more I wanted to share that knowledge. While filming the documentary, opportunities continually arose to do just exactly that. About 6 months into our project, I was at a barbershop in a small town in Kansas where political talk in common. When my friend, the barber, asked me what project I was working on for K-State a great discussion took place. I was not only surprised at how many questions he had, but also the other men in the room. These were working class men with strong political views who asked thoughtful questions and said things like “I never heard that before,” or “I didn’t know that’s how it worked.” They were



*Rusty Earl
interviewing
Principal Stephanie
Wasko at Curtis
Middle School.*



Rusty Earl films Mrs. Kang, ESOL aide at Curtis Middle School in Wichita, as Jessica Mow, ESOL teacher, looks on.

really willing to listen. I believe it was because I was not just sharing a political opinion but actual data and facts about the resettlement process. I was also telling them real stories about some of the refugees we had met and worked with during the filming process. Knowledge is power.

I was affected by this project in a number of ways. I was able to meet people from all over the world while filming in Canada, Washington, D.C., and right here in Kansas. I was also able to share a common bond of humanity with the people I was meeting. Additionally, I felt like I was actually contributing to the dialog happening in our state of Kansas, rather than just sharing an opinion.

While editing Blessing and Kim’s story – a story of how two grown women, an American woman living in Wichita, Kansas and a refugee woman from the Congo – I had an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the opportunities and responsibilities we all have to step out of our comfort zone and serve other people. I think that, just like Kim, by stepping out and working with and serving these newcomers to our communities, we will all realize in the end that we are the ones actually being served.



Filming ESOL teacher Jessica Mow in her classroom at Curtis Middle School, where newcomer students are learning English and about American life, social needs, and culture.

I remember filming Neil Maki's adult ESL class and thinking, "This is the missing link in our education system." Watching parents from around the world in that simple classroom learning English and then seeing the respect and care Neil had for them was incredible. You could feel their gratitude and engagement. You could envision them coming home and practicing their English skills with their children. It was incredible. If schools around the world could do what they are



doing at Curtis Middle School under the leadership of Stephanie Wasko, there would be so much more community, and so much more engagement with parents. I felt privileged to have witnessed that.

These, and many other stories that occurred during the filming of *Refuge in the Heartland*, will stay with me forever.

Trina Harlow

Co-Director, KSU College of Education, Art Education Faculty

"There are so many people in the world facing difficulty and suffering, for so many varied reasons – I'm so thankful to be a part of a meaningful film like *Refuge in the Heartland* that calls attention to the needs of 70 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, specifically the children – and the need for the world to not just watch, but listen and then act." – Trina Harlow



Trina Harlow with parents at Curtis Middle School.

I will be very honest here. Focusing on the topic of this film for nearly two years was hard, really hard. It kept me awake nights, it caused me to daydream ...and always I was thinking of who else we could interview and what else we could do to tell the story. I pondered and sometimes agonized over what part of the story we should tell in an hour-long film and what was not as important. As we worked on the film, life was also

happening around us. During the filming of this documentary, Rusty Earl and I faced many challenges. Sadly, Rusty's young son passed away and my father, who I took care of and whose dementia grew seriously difficult during this same time period, also passed away. There were times I wondered why so much was happening all at once and in those moments I would always conclude that how could Rusty and I fully and knowledgeably share about the difficulty and trauma of others if we had not experienced it ourselves – and in my own mind, life gained more meaning. The stories were not just linear, they were shooting off in all kinds of non-linear directions and the various beginnings and endings seemed to happen daily.

Everyone likes a good story. We all like going to the local movie theatre and seeing a film with a good ending, yet we often feel cheated when a film leaves us “hanging” or ends badly. The ending can often ruin a film for us if it doesn't meet our needs or expectations. As we made this film, the daily focus on the profound difficulties of other people was substantially heavy. Knowing that children, adolescents, men, and women were suffering greatly, and feeling essentially helpless to do



The library of Wichita North High School where we filmed Dorcas, Alain, and other refugee students.

something about it right where my two feet stood on any given day wore hard on me. Yet, in the most difficult of moments, I heard a voice saying, “but if we all do something right where our own two feet stand to assist in this world crisis of displacement, maybe collectively we can all do something about it.” And, I'd find fuel for another day. I'd keep searching for the good ending to the story. We all would. Somehow, we knew this was one of those times the mission was more important than how we felt or its effect on each of us. As a team, we often shared moments of great satisfaction as an interview came through or a story developed more. I'm forever indebted to Professor Jaqueline Bhabha for immediately agreeing to participate in the film and book after I crossed paths with her at York University's Centre for Refugee Studies summer program. I'm forever indebted to so many that joined this project. Rarely did anyone say no when asked to join the effort. This confirmed to me that there are many people in this world who have great concern for this issue.



After interviewing Dorcas at Wichita North High School in December of 2017.



Video: *Behind the Scenes: Trina's Video Journal*

One of the most profound moments in filming this documentary for me personally was when Rusty Earl and I were filming in the library at a Wichita, Kansas high school, one student after another. They would tell us their story and then go back to biology or physics. While some carefully guarded how much they told us, others were more vulnerable and traumatized and



I thoroughly enjoyed the adult literacy classes. There was so much camaraderie in the classroom and those parents work so hard.

revealed much more about their difficult past, including one girl who shared about something that happened to her sister. I thought how odd that this girl came in the library to tell us about her family suffering and was then simply asked to walk back down the hall to study and learn some math or English. It was a very odd moment for me and I found myself hoping and praying that schools accepting these refugee students are also meeting their emotional needs. I strongly feel that our schools must do more than teach these refugee students math and science; we must meet their emotional needs, not only for the children's benefit, but also for our society's.

I was profoundly impacted by the various stories that students told us of the difficulties they had in schools where they "had been" and then now the joys here in Kansas. Child after child, adolescent after adolescent, told us of being beaten when they didn't know the answer to questions or if they didn't have money they needed for something. Then, as they smiled and glowed, they told us of feeling so very loved and cared for by their American teachers. They told us how much they loved being able to learn to read and write and that they were safe at school. I specifically remember one high school girl telling us that she was so glad that no one could come get her out of school except her parents. She felt safe. I remember high

school students wishing their teachers would talk slower because school was getting harder. I remember the smiles of the children and the nervousness of the teenagers.

Through all of these experiences, and others I have had in my life, where inequality is evident, I have often found myself wondering why life gives some of us a roof over our head, food to eat, water to drink, and a safe place to live, and then why others struggle with so much difficulty and danger. That is a complicated thought and involves power, greed, the environment, our physiologies and psychologies, and other factors. It is still something I ponder – before the filming of *Refuge in the Heartland* and with other life experiences I have had – and now for a long time to come. While I have developed some of my own philosophical answers to the reasons why there is so much human suffering across the globe in the early 21st century, I wonder what your thoughts are? What thoughts does this film (and book) generate in you and how can you contribute to a better life for others by what you have learned? There are so many people in the world facing difficulty and suffering, for so many varied reasons – I'm so thankful to be a part of a meaningful film like *Refuge in the Heartland* that calls attention to the needs of 70 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, specifically the children—and the need for the world to not just watch, but listen and then act. Education is power. This, we know.





Thoughts of Those Attended K-State Film Screening

In the KSU College of Education, we continually focus on the experiences of our pre-service teachers and watching how they grow and learn through the opportunities they have in and through our college. In recent years, the college has produced and shown a documentary film we have produced at an event called Education Symposium and I have attended these film screenings since I have been on faculty at K-State. When we showed *Refuge in the Heartland*, even in the darkness as I sat with Dorcas on one side of me and Alain on the other, I could see the students and faculty intently watching the film, I could see the tears being wiped, and there was literally not a sound coming from the auditorium full of about 600 or so people. You could sense and feel the emotion of those watching the film. Afterwards we asked those in attendance to share their comments on the film so that we could more fully realize the impact of the film. The following are some of the comments shared by students and demonstrate the growth of mind of those who watched the film:

“This documentary film made me realize how privileged I am to have opportunities in America. Now, I have more of an open mind about refugees that come to America and how I can be more mindful and respectful in my future classroom.”

“It’s amazing how all of this is happening around us, but so many people, myself included, are unaware.”

“It was said in the film and it’s so important – you’re getting the whole person, their culture, past, trauma, personality, and more. All of that is important. Every part of the child should be embraced and addressed, especially their culture and personality. Their culture and personality are a major part of who they are and shouldn’t be lost, especially after losing so much already.”



*The first screening of *Refuge in the Heartland* on the campus of Kansas State University on October 12, 2018. Wichita school district staff and Alain and Dorcas were in attendance.*

“After this, I realize how much bigger the world is. I realized how small my world has been. And, I realized what impact one voice can have in a community of voices that raises an individual. I aspire to be another voice.”

“The subject of refugees has been a very controversial topic in the United States and all I’ve ever heard are bad things, drama, and violence on the news. This was my first experience watching the benefits and the good that comes out of bringing in refugees and all that is sacrificed and fought for to get to the U.S. – my country that I take for granted way too much. Seeing the global impact that I can contribute to as an aspiring ESL teacher really motivates me. I never knew that it could take years to get to the U.S. and the hefty process. I can’t believe that some Americans view them as violent or lazy when they’re fought tooth and nail to earn their place in the United States.”

“I am so profoundly impacted by this film. My words are not sufficient, but thank you.”

“This film made me very emotional. It was very impactful and amazing. My view on refugees has changed tremendously.”



"I learned what a refugee was. I learned what they go through. It changed how I viewed a refugee because I now better understand what they go through. I loved that the film said that as teachers we don't have to lower the expectations or content, just adjust what and how we do things to accommodate their language needs."



It was an honor to work on this film and the above image captures a moment when we were all genuinely proud of the knowledge and message conveyed through the film, not just to K-State, but to the world. Left to right: Dean Debbie Mercer of the KSU College of Education and film producer; Dorcas and Alain, refugee students who shared their story in the film with the world; and co-directors Trina Harlow and Rusty Earl.

"Teachers have the power to make or break an experience. It is our job as educators to ensure that our students are getting the most value they can from our lessons. It is also important to make sure our environments remain inclusive and mindful of the students we teach and their needs."

"This film opens your mind, your heart, and your soul! Before today, I had never really considered how refugee students' lives fit in after reaching safety but that all changed today! Refuge in the Heartland has awakened a calling inside myself I didn't know was there! I now have even more pride in being from Wichita and I can't wait to return. A huge thank you to all involved and those making a difference in the lives of the families. You have greatly impacted my life today as well!"

"This film has really opened my eyes and mind to what refugees have to go through to find peace. They want to feel safe. Wichita is doing amazing things for these families and it is awesome to see how much they are cared for. This film warmed my heart and made me tear up because you see how vital it is for these students and families to feel welcome. They deserve to feel loved, welcomed, and cared for in this country just as much as we do. They are valued."

"Something that I took away from the film is acculturation is like a salad bowl. We are all different but can mix together and stay ourselves."

"Riveting. Speechless."

"Every life is precious. Take a deep breath and take time to appreciate the little things and the big things. You never know what another person is going through and what they've given to be there. It's also ok to ask!"

"You never know what burdens your students are carrying. Be accepting! Be inclusive! Teachers can make a world of difference!"



“This documentary was an awesome reminder that refugees don’t choose their journey. It is so important for us as future teachers to help these students’ transitions become as welcoming and painless as possible.”

“Every child should be heard. This film makes me feel so proud of my future profession. Being a teacher is so much more than a profession. It is a responsibility, a privilege, and a joy to grow with our students.”

“I am 100% guilty of buying into the refugee stereotype and that comes from a lack of education on my part. This documentary has helped me open my eyes to the fact that there is a lot of information out there that I have access to but don’t utilize. I have a lot of growing to do still.”

“I’m going to be honest. I didn’t know there were still wars going on that affected people so much that they would have to leave their homes. I’m even more surprised that there are refugees here in Wichita, Kansas. This makes me want to be more aware of what is going on in this world. It makes me want to be a part of this process and help students’ needs, as much as I can.”

“The dedication of the refugees and the people working with them is astonishing. The interactions between the people in this film and their devotion to bettering lives gives me renewed hope for the future.”

“I’m left thinking that there are a lot of misconceptions and ignorances surrounding refugees and that all it takes to change a life is to be kind. Meeting students’ needs is difficult and there are barriers, but it is so worth it and so powerful. As a future educator, I now truly recognize the importance of valuing all cultures and creating relationships with ALL students.”

Conclusion

About twelve years ago I grew restless with the modest comfort I’d had in my life here in the United States and I decided I needed to do something about it. Positioned somewhere within varying levels of the middle socio-economic class in the United States all of my life, I had always had my basic needs met and had led a safe and good life. I had lived life following the rules, had a keen sense of order and responsibility, I worked hard and was careful, and I wouldn’t even ride a roller coaster because there was risk involved. The restlessness in me, however, as my own children grew older and were not so dependent on me led me to branch out of my own comfort zone and venture to far corners of the world to teach, to help where it was needed, and to expand my own world view. I lived in a place where life was fairly easy and I was also fortunate enough to be surrounded by many people who cared profoundly about others. I instilled this in my students each year, whether they were five years old or eighteen, or anywhere in between. The opportunity to co-direct this film, and edit the book that goes alongside the film, is not anything I ever expected to happen in my life, either personally or professionally. I am deeply humbled by the opportunity that part of my own story now involves telling a much more needed story of the 70 million displaced people in the world, the 25 million refugees, with more half of those refugees being children. And, I still hope for a happy ending to the story. I end this book with the mantra that now guides my life:

“If we all did something right where our two feet stand, collectively we might do something to help make the world a better place for the children, adolescents, and adults that call it home.” – Trina Harlow



*Thank you, Rusty,
for the keen skills and efforts
you contributed to this film.*

The Contributors' Journeys



Trina Harlow, Editor

Trina Harlow, MA.AeD, who resides in both Prosper, Texas and Manhattan, Kansas, has been an educator for 24 years, teaching K-12 art and other subjects in the north Texas area in both public and private school. For the last five years, she has been an instructor and coordinator of the Kansas State

University College of Education's Art Education Program, as well as a doctoral candidate who will defend her dissertation in May of 2019. She was awarded the 2016 Kathryn B. Holen Service Award from KSU. She received her Bachelor of Science Degree in clothing and textiles from Kansas State University and her Master of Arts Degree in art education from Boston University, also studying in Florence, Italy. Her Ph.D. is from KSU in educational curriculum and instruction with a focus on art education and using arts-based research (ABR). The International Arts in Society Research Network recently gave her the award of Emerging Scholar.

Recently, she co-directed the documentary film, *Refuge in the Heartland* (the full version is available on You Tube), on the education of newcomer children, specifically refugees, in American schools and edited this companion book, entitled *Journey to Refuge: Understanding Refugees, Exploring Trauma, and Best Practices for Newcomers and Schools* (the full ebook is available at <https://coe.k-state.edu/journey-to-refuge/>). To develop the film and book, she worked with world policy makers, UNHCR directors and educators from Kakuma and Dadaab Refugee Camp, a Harvard Law School professor, York University's Refugee Studies Centre representatives,



educators, the Wichita IRC, The Center for Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy (CIMA), global artists, trauma experts, graduate students, other global leaders, and most importantly, refugees who shared their life experiences. The film and open source eBook are provided free to the world in an effort to assist with and bring knowledge to a difficult humanitarian issue within the educational setting.

During her teaching career, she taught refugee and displaced children in a variety of settings. She has taught art in rural Uganda, Switzerland, and Ecuador. As a delegate of the National Art Education Association to Cuba in 2010, she conducted pedagogical research on the arts in schools. Selected as a Fund for Teachers Fellow, she researched ancient mosaics in Istanbul, Turkey in 2014. She travels avidly around the globe for leisure and education, and everywhere she journeys, she finds inspiration for globally inspired art, a focus of her teaching practice. Tradigital art has also been a focus of her art education practice for more than 12 years— in 2012 Skype in the Classroom referred to her as a pioneer in digital video media for curriculum development, making connections with schools in various parts of the world. These efforts were included in a PBS special and also in various national newspapers. She has written numerous articles for *SchoolArts Magazine* and her artwork has been featured in *If Picasso Had a Christmas Tree* and *If Picasso Went to the Zoo*.

She is a frequent National Art Education Association (NAEA) convention presenter, serves on the Professional Learning Through Research Group and is president-elect for the NAEA Public Policy and Arts Administration Group. She also serves NAEA in a variety of other capacities. She has been a member of the Texas Art Education Association and convention speaker on multiple occasions. She is a member of the Kansas Art Education Association, serving on the board for one year, helping with various events, and selected as the 2015 Higher Education Educator of the Year.

She leads *Latitudinal & Longitudinal Art Workshops* in various settings including Santa Fe, New Mexico, New York, and Ireland; worked as the International Folk Art Alliance education outreach volunteer coordinator and in other capacities; and she leads summer children's art workshops in northern New Mexico for vulnerable children's groups. She recently founded the Global Art Education Council, an organization with the goal of uniting the world in and through art education. The organization leads professional development experiences for art educators and all educators, awards art educators for accomplishments involving globally inspired work, and mentors younger teachers. She founded *Aprendiendo del Arte-Learning through Art* and brings international artists to Kansas State University. She's an active supporter and art camp leader for both the Boys & Girls Club of America and the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America organizations.

She is available to speak at or lead professional development workshops and seminars or to be a keynote speaker at events in various art-related areas including social and emotional artistic learning, biopsychosocial learning, biography driven instruction and culturally relevant pedagogy in art education, globally inspired art, and tradigital art. Contact her at tharlow@ksu.edu or globalartedcouncil@gmail.com. For more information, see this webpage: <https://coe.k-state.edu/art-education/>. For additional information, see the following social media accounts: Twitter – @ksuarted, @globalarted. Facebook – K-State Art Education, Global Art Education Council LLC.

Website:

<https://coe.k-state.edu/art-education/>

**Dean Debbie Mercer**

Debbie K. Mercer serves as dean of Kansas State University's College of Education, the state's largest teacher education program. She joined the university in 2010 and was named to the leadership position in June 2012.

Mercer's accomplishments as dean include a commitment to teaching and learning by instituting a number of strategic initiatives designed to create a technology-rich learning environment. Classrooms and conference rooms are state of the art technological learning spaces, and preservice teachers and instructional faculty members receive iPads that are integrated into the curriculum. Faculty members have applied for College of Education grants and developed open/alternative textbooks that align with these technology initiatives. But Mercer's vision extends far beyond Bluemont Hall.

In 2014, the college hosted its first iCamp, a daylong iPad professional development institute for Kansas educators at all levels. The same day, the college also hosted the inaugural iPad Technology Initiatives Summit designed for technology directors in school districts across Kansas. Mercer also has led the college's concentration on international education and outreach through a number of different programs, including GoTeacher, a contract to train 3,000 Ecuadorian teachers in English as a foreign language. A strong supporter of the military, Mercer has signed on to the nation's Joining Forces Educate the Educator program. In addition, she commissioned a video focusing on military life to enhance the educational opportunities of the college's preservice teachers and graduate students. Mercer has also kicked off a recruitment program "Why Teach?" to attract underrepresented populations to the profession.

Mercer's leadership and guidance have had a statewide impact on teacher preparation. Her work led to the development and implementation of assessment systems to document effective candidate preparation for teachers and school personnel. She has also provided extensive service to the Kansas State Department of Education, including accreditation-related activities such as consulting for the department's accreditation training workshops, serving as a program reviewer and a board of examiner for onsite visits. Additional state education department work includes service on the Kansas Education Commission, Kansas Education Leadership Commission, Kansas Teaching Commission and Kansas Educator Evaluation Project. She was named by Gov. Sam Brownback to the Mid-Continent Regional Advisory Board and most recently appointed to the Central Comprehensive Center.

Her road to the deanship at K-State began as a library media specialist then a kindergarten teacher in a rural Kansas school district. Mercer holds four degrees from Kansas State University: a doctorate in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in reading and English as a Second Language; a master's degree in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in reading and language arts; a bachelor's in elementary education; and a bachelor's in family and child development.

**Mary L. Hammel**

Mary Hammel, designer of this *Journey to Refuge* eBook, has been a graphic designer and media/technology specialist for the College of Education at Kansas State University since 1980, and currently serves as the Associate Director of the College's Catalyst Technology and Media Services. In

that capacity, she is responsible for the design of the college's recruitment and event marketing materials, publications, photographic support, and website administration. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Graphic Design, a Master of Science Degree in Secondary Education with emphasis in Educational Media and Technology, and a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Visual Communication, all from Kansas State University.

Her career has taken her from pre-computer graphic design creating slide/tape presentations for K-State Research and Extension, to full digital design work for both print and web for the College of Education. She has worked on many funded technology projects with school district partners, in collaboration with institutions such as the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, KS and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, MO. She has also designed and formatted numerous periodicals through the years, including the KSU College of Education's *Educational Considerations* journal, the *Kansas Journal of Reading*, and the KSU College of Education annual alumni magazine, *Connections*. Working with the Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, she helped create two extensive guides for educators: *Exploring Kansas Natural Resources* and *Exploring Plants: Kansas Crops*. Her most recent book designs for the university include *Being the First: A Narrative Inquiry*

into the *Funds of Knowledge of First Generation College Students in Teacher Education*, published by New Prairie Press, and *K-State: An Alphabet Journey Across Campus*, published by the KSU College of Education. She also helped her friend Dr. Susan Allen format and publish *The Tao of Nonviolence: Why Nonviolence Matters*, in an effort to help people find ways of changing the world.

Mary and her colleague Dennis Devenney started the university's iPad User Group in 2010, and she enjoys teaching people how to make meaningful use of technology. As an artist and accomplished photographer, she has exhibited her work in both solo and group shows. Her solo exhibit *Survival Stories* was a set of handmade books about the experiences of four women, including Mary herself, who had overcome cancer. For many years she has shown her images in a local juried photography exhibit at the Manhattan (KS) Art Center.



Rusty Earl

Rusty Earl, from Wamego, Kansas, is the video producer for Kansas State University's College of Education. He holds a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Education. Earl has produced and directed more than a dozen documentaries for educational institutions and nonprofits on topics such as,

African American history, the Holocaust, military life, first-generation college students and faith-based issues of interest. His films have aired on local and regional PBS affiliate stations across the country, with one was nominated for a regional Emmy. In 2013, Rusty collaborated on the short film "*My Brother Hyrum*" that has been seen worldwide on BYUtv. Prior to working on films, Rusty was a junior high/high school teacher in southern Idaho. For seven years, he taught a number of subjects including theater, speech, and video production. As a young missionary for his church, Rusty spent four months in Stockton, California, a city of 300,000 people that included a large population of first- and second- generation refugees from post-Vietnam. The Hmong, Cambodians, Laotian and Vietnamese were resettled to the Bay area around 1975 and found refuge in the cities and suburbs of northwestern California – little did he know at the time how their lives and stories would affect his own life.

Fast forward to 2017 – while working as a video producer for the College of Education at Kansas State University, Rusty teamed up with Trina Harlow and Dean Debbie Mercer to produce the film *Refuge in the Heartland*. It serves as a resource for anyone interested in working with refugee populations, especially for educators, or for those curious to learn more about the lives and experiences of refugees. Earl's greatest hope is that the film will find its way into classrooms

and training sessions across the country where it can help to open minds and hearts and inspire others to contribute their talents towards helping refugees, both near and far.

Website:

<https://coe.k-state.edu/documentaries/>



Jeff Zacharakis

Dr. Jeff Zacharakis, the copy editor of this eBook, is a professor at Kansas State University in adult learning and leadership. Prior to coming to K-State he worked for Iowa State University Extension and the Lindeman Center at Northern Illinois University. He

has an A.B. in mathematics and geology from Bowdoin College and a Master of Art Degree in educational foundations from the University of Wyoming. He also holds an Ed.D. in adult continuing education from Northern Illinois University. He is the lead editor for *Adult Education Quarterly* and has served as a consulting editor for various publications including *Adult Education Quarterly*, *Journal of Research and Practice for Adult Literacy*, *Secondary, and Basic Education*, the *Adult Basic Education and Literacy: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Adult Literacy Educators*, the *Journal of Transformative Education*, and *Educational Considerations*. He has been an editorial board member for *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, the *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology*, the *Online Journal of Rural Research and Policy*, and a guest reviewer for *Convergence*. He has been honored with various awards during his career including the Association of Continuing Higher Education Leadership Award, the Kansas Board of Regents Scholar Program, Kansas State University Excellence in Engagement Award, Kansas Adult Education Association Humanitarian/Awareness Award, and the Commission of Professors of Adult Education-American Association of Adult and Continuing Education Innovative Curriculum Award.

Website:

<https://coe.k-state.edu/edlea/index.html>



Joel Bergner

Joel Bergner (aka Joel Artista) is an artist, educator and organizer of community-based public art initiatives with youth and communities around the world. He works in acrylic and aerosol, creating elaborate murals that explore social topics and reflect a wide array of artistic influences.

Beyond his art, he has a background as a youth counselor and received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in sociology from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). He has organized and facilitated community projects in over 20 countries across Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Europe and North America, along the way developing his unique combination of community work and mural art in partnership with dozens of institutions, community groups and local artists. His projects have addressed issues including the Syrian refugee crisis, mass incarceration in the U.S., the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the plight of street youth, gaining attention from international media outlets like CNN, Al Jazeera and Reuters. He has a passion for connecting and sharing with people through collaborative art-making. His community and personal work can be seen at joelartista.com. He is a Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director of Artolution, which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in the state of New York in 2016. Artolution began as a community-based public art initiative founded by Max Frieder in 2009. During that time, he began to work with Frieder and in 2015, following many collaborations, Bergner and Feider joined forces as Co-Directors to launch Artolution as an international organization built on partnerships with community-based artists, educators, and institutions around the world.

Website:

<https://www.artolution.org/>

**Pat Rubio Bertran**

Pat Rubio Bertran is a 2012 graduate of Blanquerna Universitat Ramon Llull in Barcelona, Spain with a degree in international relations. At the time of this book, she is the Communications Coordinator for the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) Jordan. The NRC is an independent

humanitarian organization helping people forced to flee. NRC works in crises in 31 countries where they help save lives and rebuild futures. She is responsible for the communications and promotional work for this humanitarian, non-governmental organization that protects the rights of refugees.

Website:

<https://www.nrc.no>

At the time the book *Spotlight on Lighthouse Relief's efforts at Ritsona Refugee Camp in Greece* was submitted, she was the Communications Officer at Lighthouse Relief Hellas, the Greek branch of the Swedish NGO Lighthouse Relief. She worked as a Digital Marketing Specialist at Education First in Zurich, Switzerland. Prior to that she was in Beirut working for AIESEC Lebanon mobilizing youth to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals set forth by the UN.

Website:

<https://www.lighthouserelief.org/>

**Jacqueline Bhabha**

Professor Jacqueline Bhabha is a Professor of the Practice of Health and Human Rights at the Harvard Chan School of Public Health. She is Director of Research at the Harvard FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, the Jeremiah Smith Jr. Lecturer in Law at Harvard Law School, and an Adjunct Lecturer

in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. She received a first class honors degree and a M.Sc. from Oxford University, and a J.D. from the College of Law in London. From 1997 to 2001 she directed the Human Rights Program at the University of Chicago. Prior to 1997, she was a practicing human rights lawyer in London and at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. She has published extensively on issues of transnational child migration, refugee protection, children's rights and citizenship. She is the editor of *Children Without A State* (MIT Press 2011), author of *Child Migration and Human Rights in a Global Age* (Princeton University Press, 2014), editor of *Human Rights and Adolescence* (U Penn Press, 2014) and the co-editor of *Realizing Roma Rights* (U Penn Press, 2017) and *Research Handbook on Child Migration* (Edward Elgar Press, forthcoming 2018). Her most recent book published in 2018 is entitled "*Can We Solve the Migration Crisis*" (Polity Press, 2018). She serves on the board of the Scholars at Risk Network, the World Peace Foundation, the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, and the Journal of Refugee Studies. She is a frequent adviser to UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM and civil society organizations working on forced migration-related issues.

Websites:

<https://scholar.harvard.edu/jacquelinebhabha/home>

<https://www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty/jacqueline-bhabha>

**Diana Delbecchi**

Diana Delbecchi, from Green Bay, Wisconsin is a passionate human rights advocate with a key interest in the educational rights of refugees. In recent years, she launched an innovative educational project in a Greek refugee camp and provided mentorship for out-of-school refugee youth. Upon

returning home she founded a community group focused on building resiliency and capacity in young female refugees called the United ReSISTERs. The group is in the process of publishing a book documenting their project. She currently serves as the Assistant Director of a first-year college program at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin that aims to create global change-agents. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in psychology and human development from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and a Master of Arts Degree in gender, globalization, and rights from the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Websites:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQkUI6wCFeg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYovGEEwqAo>

**Max Frieder**

Max Levi Frieder is an artist and educator from Denver, Colorado who is based out of New York City. He graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design with honors and a degree in painting with a focus in community based public arts and received his

Master of Education Degree in community arts in art and art education from Teachers College, Columbia University. He has worked with communities in different contexts across the globe. His work ranges from community building in refugee crisis, hospital workshops, abuse and addiction counseling through art, trauma relief, reconciliation and conflict resolution. He leads collaborative mural programs as well as creating the Foundstrument Soundstrument Project, building interactive percussive sculptures out of Trash and recycled materials. His projects have taken him from Israel and Palestine to the Jordanian-Syrian border, Turkey, India, New Zealand, Australia, Costa Rica, Colombia, Cuba, Peru, Mexico, Canada and throughout the United States. His work focuses on cultivating public engagement through creative facilitation and inspired participation. He is a co-founder and co-executive director of Artolution, which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in the state of New York in 2016. Artolution began as a community-based public art initiative founded by Frieder in 2009. During that time, he began to work with Joel Bergner who was also involved with community street art initiatives around the world. In 2015, following many collaborations, Frieder and Bergner joined forces as co-directors to launch Artolution as an international organization built on partnerships with community-based artists, educators, and institutions around the world.

Website:

<https://www.artolution.org/>

**Paola Gomez**

Paola Gomez is a trained human rights lawyer from Columbia, community organizer, public speaker, artist facilitator, writer and dreamer. She is an unstoppable force of energy for those who have been and are persecuted and this energy and strength comes from her own experiences of fighting

for victims in Columbia, eventually having to flee the country, and seek protection in another country. A member of PEN Canada's Writers in Exile and an advocate, Paola is involved in causes such as ending violence against women and forced migration. Her works integrate arts, community engagement and anti-oppressive frameworks. Paola is the co-founder and director of the Muse Arts Project. Muse Arts works on community art projects that engage children and youth in art and literature while having conversations about issues of social justice. The ambitious work of the organization reaches young people in spaces such as shelters and transitional houses around Toronto, Canada. Muse Arts projects teach equality and diversity through collective art-making. Her work with refugee and newcomer communities have been greatly recognized in Canada, where she arrived as a refugee in 2004.

Websites:

<http://musearts.ca>

<https://canadianimmigrant.ca/people/artists/writer-and-humanitarian-paola-gomez-uses-the-arts-to-inspire-and-heal>

**Socorro G. Herrera**

Dr. Socorro Herrera serves as a professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Kansas State University and is Executive Director for the Center for Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy (CIMA) in the College of Education. Her K-12 teaching experience includes an emphasis

on literacy development and biography-driven instruction. Her research focuses on literacy opportunities with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, reading strategies, and teacher preparation for diversity in the classroom. She has authored nine textbooks and numerous articles for nationally known journals such as the *Bilingual Research Journal*, *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *Journal of Research in Education*, *Journal of Latinos and Education* and the *TESOL Journal*. In addition to her writing, she conducts multi-state professional development on issues of instruction and assessment with CLD students. She also gives presentations at national and international conferences on a variety of topics related to teacher preparation for pre-service teachers, biography-driven instruction, and classroom accommodations for CLD students. She also serves as a KSU faculty advisor for the College of Education pre-service teacher training Study Abroad trips to China, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, and Ecuador where students are placed with host families and spend time in local classrooms to observe, assist, and co-teach with local classroom teachers in addition to completing university course assignments. As a result of her interest in teacher preparation and global education as it relates to culturally and linguistically diverse populations, she has been instrumental in creating and supporting a professional development program that has brought inservice educators from Ecuador, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia to Kansas State



University. Educators participate over several months up to a year in university coursework, completing observations and interacting in local school classrooms, writing research papers, networking in university contexts, and exploring the community by participating in local events and attending professional conferences. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in elementary education with certification in bilingual education from Eastern New Mexico University, a Master of Science Degree in multicultural guidance and counseling from Eastern New Mexico University, and an Ed.D. in educational psychology with an emphasis in cross-cultural dynamics and bilingual/ESL education from Texas Tech University.

Websites:

<https://coe.k-state.edu/cima/>

<http://www.socorro-herrera.com/projects/>

**Melissa Holmes**

Melissa Holmes is an associate director at the Center for Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy (CIMA) in the College of Education at Kansas State University. She has a Bachelor of Science Degree in English literature with a Spanish minor and a Master of Science Degree in adult and

occupational education, both from Kansas State University. Her post-secondary teaching experience focuses on the academic literacy development of English learners in teacher preparation programs. Her research and professional development efforts emphasize use of biography-driven instruction as a culturally responsive method for promoting language and literacy development in domestic and international K–12 settings. She supports educators to leverage the assets and background knowledge that each learner brings to the classroom. In addition to supporting Kansas teachers to meet the needs of all learners, she has been devoted to collaborating with teachers from Ecuador, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia to explore new ways of engaging students and fostering English acquisition. She has presented at international, national, and regional conferences on the differential learning needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, effective recruitment and retention strategies, and the preparation of pre-service and in-service educators to be responsive teachers and advocates for CLD students and families. She has coauthored *Crossing the Vocabulary Bridge: Differentiated Strategies for Diverse Secondary Classrooms* (2011) as well as book chapters for *Linguistic Minority Immigrants Go to College: Preparation, Access, and Persistence* (2012), *Revisiting Education in the New Latino Diaspora* (2015), *Optimizing Elementary Education for English Language Learners* (2018), and *The Handbook of TESOL in K-12* (in press). Her work has appeared



in journals such as *American Secondary Education*, *Forum for International Research in Education*, *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, *Journal of Bilingual Educational Research and Instruction*, *Journal of College Student Retention*, *Journal of Curriculum & Instruction*, *Multicultural Learning and Teaching*, *Teaching Education*, and *Texas Foreign Language Association Journal*.

Website:

<https://coe.k-state.edu/cima/index.html>



Judy Hughey

Dr. Judy Hughey, National Certified Counselor, is an Associate Professor and Coordinator and Clinical Director of Counselor Education at Kansas State University in the Department of Special Education, Counseling, and Student Affairs. She was named the KCA 2016 Kansas

Counseling Association (KCA) Counselor of the Year, Northeast Kansas Counselor of the Year award, and presented the 2016 Counselor Educator of the Year award. She earned an Ed.D. in school counseling, administration, and vocational special needs from the University of Missouri-Columbia and has been a faculty member at Kansas State since 1980. She holds a Master of Arts Degree in education, guidance, and counseling and a Bachelor of Art Degree in education and speech communications, both from Southeast Missouri State University. She teaches coursework in the M.S. in school counseling, Ph.D. in counselor education and supervision, M.S. in academic advising, and undergraduate educational psychology. She is professionally active serving as the Chair of the NCACES Government Relations Committee and on the Program Review Committee. She is the President-Elect of the Kansas School Counselor Association (KSCA). She has served on numerous KACES, KCA, and KSDE committees and chaired the KSCA/ASCA Ethics Task Force and the KSDE Counselor Student Standards Committee. She also represents the College of Education as a university faculty senator. In addition to her faculty responsibilities, she serves on the SECD External Review Committee, Kauffman Foundation Trauma Matters KC Resilient Task Force, and Co-Director of the KSU School Counselor Summer Camp. She has served as assistant managing editor for the *Journal of Vocational Special Needs*



and assistant to the editor for *Professional School Counseling*. She has published chapters in Jossey-Bass and NACADA books, co-published in The *Handbook of Career Advising* and in journals *Beyond Behavior*, *Educational Considerations*, *Journal of Career Development*, *Community College Journal*, the *School Counselor*, the *ASCA Counselor*, *KS ATE Journal*, *NACADA Online Journal*, and ERIC Publications.

Website:

<https://coe.k-state.edu/secsa/index.html>



Sally Adnams Jones

Dr. Sally Adnams Jones, originally from South Africa and now from Victoria, British Columbia, Canada first became interested in human transformation at a young age. Raised in a country in Africa torn by violence and injustice, she understands what it means to be displaced, and survive grief and

loss - of family, culture, citizenship, and community; and start again as an immigrant, with nothing but hope. Sally has a Ph.D. in transformative art education, a Master of Education Degree in yoga education and art education, and a Bachelor of Art Degree in drama and English literature. For five decades, she has studied the expressive arts and meditation as a way to recreate herself – build an authentic identity, grow resilience, and evolve her own consciousness. Her research into self-actualization has taken her into diverse, trans-national, learning communities, including schools, studios, grassroots indigenous communities, yoga ashrams, colleges, sweat lodges, drumming and dance halls, digital seminars and universities. As a teacher, she supports students to empower themselves through their own creative self-development. She now brings this integrated knowledge to her counseling practice, supporting others to become present, empower themselves, and heal from traumas, through creative self-expression. Clients gain the courage in a safe environment to find their innate personal voice, express their deepest truths, and expand their identity. She also maintains an active studio practice, and writes books about creativity, deep healing, and enlightenment practices that help people move into their full potential. Everyone longs to know who they are, to be fully seen and heard, to have impact, and become more intimate with themselves and their communities. She is an advocate for understanding that power lies within personal growth. With a



bias towards non-dual humanism – an understanding that each of us is a uniquely creative fractal within the creative whole, she helps clients align themselves with their own longings, their personal creativity and their deepest evolution, within a context of universal, creative evolution. This perspective builds resilience, capacity and power – to not only survive change – but make change - as clients realize and express their full potential and true identity. For more information on her work, or to schedule a consultation or an e-counselling session, contact her: sally@sallyadnamsjones.com.



Shabina Khalid Kavimandan

Shabina Khalid Kavimandan is the associate director of curriculum and planning at CIMA, Kansas State University. Her primary responsibilities include curriculum development, project management, and providing professional development to collaborating districts. She currently manages a

Title III NPD project funded by U.S. Department of Education. Currently a doctoral candidate at Kansas State University in Curriculum and Instruction, her research focuses on systemic issues that often challenge high-needs school districts and schools to overcome the institutional challenges they face with teacher professional development and academic and linguistic needs of their learners. Her passion includes teacher capacity building with an emphasis on Biography- Driven Instruction (BDI) as it relates to lesson planning and delivery. She has co-authored multiple books and articles in the field of second language acquisition and vocabulary development. She holds a Bachelor of Art Degree in English Literature from Delhi University in New Delhi, India and a Master of Science Degree in Elementary Education from Kansas State University.

Website:

<https://coe.k-state.edu/cima/index.html>

**HaEun Kim**

HaEun Kim (on the right in photo) holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree and a Bachelor of Education Degree from York University in Toronto, Canada. She is a Child and Youth Outreach Worker running preventative programs for youth and families living in marginalized communities in Toronto, Canada.

She is also a certified secondary school teacher completing her Master of Education Degree at York University in Toronto, Canada, alongside two graduate diplomas in language and literacy education and refugee and migration studies. Her research is embedded in forced migration and refugee studies from an educational context. She has previously worked for the Borderless Higher Education for Refugees Project in Dadaab, Kenya as a teaching and administrative assistant. She was also a Student Refugee Program Coordinator for the World University Services of Canada at York University, supporting students from refugee situations through their resettlement and academic studies. She has a passion for education and youth development – both in urban contexts such as inner-city Toronto, as well as settings considered to be ‘education in emergencies.’

Websites:

<http://crs.info.yorku.ca/>

<https://www.bher.org/>

**Holly Kincaid**

Holly Kincaid is an art educator at Skyline Middle School in Harrisonburg City Schools, Virginia. Prior to that, she was an art teacher at the Space Center Intermediate School in Texas. She is highly involved in the National Art Education Association, attended the 2018 NAEA School for Art Leaders,

and was the NAEA Southeastern Regional Middle Division Educator of the Year. She was a Fulbright-Hays Seminar awardee for China and selected as a Prezi Educator and PBS Digital Innovator Educator for 2015-2016. She is a National Board Certified Teacher in EC-12. She is a member of the Alpha Delta Kappa International Honorary Organization for Women and a member of the Virginia Art Education Association. Her work appeared in Firehouse Publication’s *If Picasso Went to the Zoo*. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Art Degree in printmaking and art education from West Virginia University and a Master of Arts Degree in studio art from New York University. She also attended the George Mason University Virginia Center for Excellence in Teaching from 2014-2015.

Website:

<http://capitolofcreativity.weebly.com>

**Jessica Mow**

Jessica Mow, from Mulvane, Kansas is the ESOL Building Lead teacher at Curtis Middle School in Wichita, Kansas. She began her teaching career 15 years ago with Wichita's USD 259 in 2004. She started gaining ESOL experience her first year of teaching

and worked with newcomer students. After 5 years of teaching, she was given the opportunity to become an Instructional Coach for the school in which she worked. Her role was to provide professional development training for teachers with an emphasis on ESOL instruction. During this time, she also taught the ESOL endorsement classes through Newman University, both before and after school to the staff and teachers within the district. The goal was to get ESOL endorsement of teachers for the benefit of the large ESOL population at the school. After six years of Instructional Coaching and teaching ESOL endorsement classes, she made the leap back into the classroom where her heart truly lies – with the students. Jessica is currently working with middle school newcomer students and refugees as an English teacher. She loves finding new teaching strategies, Pinteresting ideas for her classroom, and researching different ways to engage her students. Every day is an adventure for her and her students. Jessica was also nominated and became a semi-finalist for the “Distinguished Classroom Teacher Award” in her district shortly after returning to the classroom. She continues to share her passion with others and give advice to teachers in her building regarding ESOL students and strategies. She holds a bachelor's degree in education from Wichita State University and a master's degree in ESOL curriculum and instruction from Friends University. Jessica was featured in the documentary film, *Refuge in the Heartland*.

Websites:

<https://www.usd259.org/curtis>

<https://www.usd259.org/domain/631>

**Joshua Orawo Onong'no**

Joshua Orawo Onong'no holds a Bachelor of Laws Degree from Moi University in Kenya. He has seven years of experience in humanitarianism—four of these years were directly linked to his significant work in the field of refugee protection. He has

worked with Save the Children International–Kenya as a Child Protection Officer in Dadaab Refugee Camps. Save the Children International is a subsidiary of Save the Children Fund, a non-governmental organization that promotes children's rights, provides relief, and helps support children in developing countries with its headquarters in London, United Kingdom. He also worked with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Dadaab for 13 months before leaving the Dadaab operation in January 2018. He currently serves as a Senior Protection Assistant at UNHCR Sub-Office Kakuma, a position he has held since February 2018. As a part of this role, he coordinates sexual and gender based violence (SGVB) activities in the Kalobeyei Settlement (near Kakuma Camp), working in liaison with the SGVB implementing partner. He co-chairs monthly SGBV working group meetings in Kalobeyei. He also conducts protection assessments in Kakuma camps and Kalobeyei settlement. He is originally from Kisumu- a town situated on the shores of Lake Victoria in the western part of Kenya. In November 2018, Joshua was named a Global Goodwill Ambassador by the USA based Global Goodwill Ambassadors in recognition of his work in impacting humanity. He has twice received the Correspondent of the Month Award from the Commonwealth Youth Programme through his articles on youth perspectives at YourCommonwealth.org.

Websites:

<https://www.unhcr.org/ke/kalobeyei-settlement>

<https://www.unhcr.org/ke/kakuma-refugee-camp>



Nicole Palasz

Nicole Palasz is a Program Coordinator at the Institute of World Affairs (IWA) in the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Center for International Education. In that role, she organizes global education and engagement programs for K-12 educators, youth and the broader community. She has implemented programs on a wide range of global issues including international human rights, conflict and peacebuilding, and refugee migration. She also co-developed and coordinates IWA's Global-to-Local Service-Learning Initiative which supports educators and students in identifying global connections to local challenges and drawing inspiration from efforts to create positive change around the world. That initiative has been featured as a best practice at conferences nationally and internationally. Nicole has also been involved in numerous efforts in Milwaukee to support immigrant and refugee youth through professional development workshops for K-12 educators and staff and interactive youth programs for immigrant and U.S.-born students. Previously, she worked with the New Tactics in Human Rights project at the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT), where she supported human rights defenders in identifying new ideas for action in their countries and communities. While working at CVT, she co-authored the award-winning book *New Tactics in Human Rights: A Resource for Practitioners* featuring stories of tactics being used to advance human rights around the world. She has a bachelor's degree from Macalester College, which awarded her a Young Alumni Award in 2010 for her work in international human rights and global education. She also holds masters' degrees from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

Website: <https://uwm.edu/cie/iwa/>



Andrea Davis Pinkney

Andrea Davis Pinkney is the *New York Times* bestselling and award-winning author of more than thirty books for children and young adults, including picture books, novels, works of historical fiction and nonfiction. Her books have been awarded multiple Coretta Scott King Book Awards, Jane Addams Children's Literature Honor citations, four NAACP Image Award nominations, the *Boston Globe*/Horn Book Honor medal, as well as several Parenting Publication Gold Medals, and American Library Association Notable Book citations. Andrea was named one of the "25 Most Influential Black Women in Business" by *The Network Journal*, and is among "The 25 Most Influential People in Our Children's Lives" cited by *Children's Health Magazine*. She was included in *Good Housekeeping* and *Women's Day* magazines' "50 Over 50" extraordinary women, and was named among L'Oreal's "10 Women Who Light Up the Arts Scene." She was selected to deliver the May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture. This honor recognizes her significant contributions to literature for young people provided through a body of work that brings a deeper understanding of children's books and their impact. Additionally, she is the recipient of the Regina Medal, a citation for her distinguished contribution to children's literature. In addition to her work as an author, she has had an illustrious career as a children's book publisher and editor. She has acquired and published a robust mix of titles, including the Newbery Honor Book and Coretta Scott King Book Award-winner *Elijah of Buxton* by Christopher Paul Curtis; Allen Say's Robert F. Sibert Honor Medal-winner *Drawing from Memory*; Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award-winner *The Skin I'm In* by Sharon G. Flake; and Toni Morrison's *Remember: The Journey to School Integration*, winner of the



Coretta Scott King Author Award. During the course of her career, Andrea has launched many high-profile publishing and entertainment entities, including Hyperion Books for Children/Disney Publishing's Jump at the Sun imprint, the first African-American children's book imprint at a major publishing company; the hugely popular Cheetah Girls series, and the teen book *Serving from the Hip* by world-class tennis pros Venus and Serena Williams, an Oprah featured selection. She is a graduate of Syracuse University's Newhouse School of Public Communications and is a former member of the Newhouse School's Board of Trustees. She lives in New York City with her husband, award-winning illustrator Brian Pinkney, and their two children.

Website:

<http://andreadavispinkney.com/>



Johanna Reynolds

Johanna Reynolds was born in a small town in Québec, Canada. She has a Bachelor of Arts Degree (Honours) in political science from Carleton University and a Master's Degree in environmental studies from York University. She is currently completing a Ph.D. in

geography at York University, funded by Fonds de recherche duQuébec - Société et culture (FRQSC). Her research interests focus on spatial strategies of exclusion and their implications for migrant mobilities. Her dissertation considers the use of technology in border and migration management with an emphasis on the scale of the body. She is a member of the Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS) and recipient of a Regional Studies Association (RSA) Network grant. She has been a collaborator on a number of research projects funded by the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), including, most recently, on borders and displacement in North America. She has worked at the Centre for Refugee Studies (CRS) at York University in several capacities including: as Director of the annual Summer Course on Refugees and Forced Migration and as Managing Editor of *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, the only bilingual (French-English), interdisciplinary, open access, peer-reviewed academic periodical focusing on refugee and forced migration issues. For more than 10 years, she also worked with international students and English language learners providing academic support and language classes. Since 2015, Johanna has collaborated with Muse Arts and has worked as a facilitator with Muse Art Projects providing arts-based workshops with children in transitional housing. Johanna can be reached at johanna.reynolds@gmail.com.

Websites:

<http://musearts.ca/>

<http://crs.info.yorku.ca/programs/summer-course>



Hawa Sabriye

Hawa Sabriye (on the left in photo) holds a Master of Education Degree from York University in Toronto, Canada, and an Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree and Bachelor of Education Degree from the University of Toronto. During the duration of her master's degree, she worked as a teaching assistant

for the Borderless Higher Education for Refugees Project in Dadaab, Kenya. She was a summer educator for Black Lives Matter Toronto's first Freedom School and has worked for the Toronto District School Board as an occasional teacher for the past two years. She has volunteered with the World University Service of Canada throughout her undergraduate and graduate studies, assisting and supporting newly sponsored refugee students resettle and begin their postsecondary studies. Currently she works for the Aga Khan Academy of Maputo, Mozambique as an Outreach Program Support Fellow. She is supporting the development and delivery of literacy and numeracy programs that meet the needs of the learners and teachers from the 16 cooperating primary schools and works closely with the academy faculty as KG 3 and Grade 1 teachers and in information communication and technology.

Websites:

<http://agakhanacademies.org/>

<http://crs.info.yorku.ca/>

<https://www.bher.org/>



Leah Spelman

Leah Spelman, the executive director for Partnerships for Trauma Recovery, headquartered in Berkeley, California in the United States, brings a background in human rights, organizational leadership, and global mental health to Partnerships for Trauma Recovery (PTR). Prior to joining

the PTR team, Ms. Spelman was the Chief Operating Officer for Days for Girls International, where she helped expand the organization's global impact. She oversaw the development of a new monitoring and evaluation program, the launch of DfG's enterprise model in Uganda, and communications and fundraising efforts. Prior to Days for Girls, Ms. Spelman lived in Jordan, conducting research under a Fulbright Grant. Ms. Spelman has an MPH in Global Health from the University of Washington, with a focus on global mental health and culturally-aware approaches to trauma care. She holds a BA in International Affairs with a concentration in Middle East Studies from George Washington University, and speaks Arabic, Spanish, and French.

Website:

<https://traumapartners.org>

**Be Stoney**

As a multiculturalist and interculturalist, Dr. Be Stoney began her journey in learning about different ethnic groups and cultures at the university and public school levels. As an associate professor who prepares educators for the future, keeping a delicate balance between a diverse society, while not forgetting the excellence of past teaching practices is extremely challenging. She is a professional who must be a diplomat, confessor, a sounding board, an innovator of ideas, a consummate business person, a dedicated educator, advisor, and a coach – all at the same time. To hold that position requires relevant knowledge, tact, leadership, foresight, daring and compassion and passion for human beings. As an educator and individual and preparing future teachers for the classroom, she is a mentor who works with students from various communities of learners, inspire future teachers who understand the passion for educating students, and educate students on accepting others regardless of their background. These experiences, as well as others, required her to think about how to act and verbalize their thoughts within various communities of learners. She is an associate professor in the Department of Secondary Education and teaches physical education and health classes. She currently serves as the Physical Education and Health Coordinator in the College of Education. She serves on the NCAA Women's Basketball Rules Committee, NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative Association Advisory Board, FAR, representing K-State in the Big 12, former Big 12 Women's Basketball Evaluator, Former Basketball Official, and former student-athlete, women's basketball. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in special education and health and a Master of Education Degree in kinesiology, both from the University of Texas at El Paso. She received a Ph.D. in General Special Education and Multicultural Education from the University of Texas at Austin.

**Marie Taylor**

Marie Taylor, the artist of the cover artwork of this eBook, is a graduate of the Kansas State University College of Education Art Education Program. She is a middle school art teacher at Valley Center Middle School in Valley Center, Kansas. Marie excelled in athletics while at the university as a member of the university's track team. She volunteers for the International Folk Art Market in Santa Fe and served on the education outreach team for two years. She traveled to Santa Fe, New Mexico and New York, New York with the KSU College of Education Art Education Program. She also was the artist for the K-State coloring book, *Coloring with the Cats*. Marie serves on the board of directors for the Global Art Education Council and is a member of the Kansas Art Education Association and the National Art Education Association. Marie grew up in Liberty, Missouri but now resides in Wichita, Kansas.



Alex Wakim

Alex Wakim is a Lebanese-American composer who received his Bachelor of Music Degree in composition and an entrepreneurship minor from Kansas State University. He is now obtaining a Master of Music Degree in film music composition from New York University. He

scored the music for the documentary film, *Refuge in the Heartland*, by Kansas State University College of Education. He has won numerous national and international awards and performed all over the world, including a Phi Kappa Phi graduate fellowship, premiers and commissions from the Boston New Music Initiative and the Alba Music Festival, three subsequent wins in Kansas Soundscapes (a blind-submission composition contest open to all Kansas composers, including seasoned professionals), annual invitations to present his work in Lebanon, a week-long learning and performing residency in Cuba with the K-State Latin Jazz Ensemble, and continued development of his musical, *An American in Beirut*. He is originally from Wichita, Kansas.

Websites:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoWiTOok-Fw>

<https://alexwakim.com>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRDpTJUig4w>



Lily Yeh

Lily Yeh is a global creative genius whose work is known all over the world. From 1956 to 1966, she earned a Master of Fine Arts Degree from the University of Pennsylvania, a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the National Taiwan University, and studied classical

Chinese painting in Taiwan. She has led arts based initiatives all over the world including in places such as Rwanda, Kenya, Taiwan, Syria, Haiti, India, the West Bank-Palestine, the Ivory Coast, the Republic of Georgia, Ghana, Ecuador, China, and the United States. Her organization, Barefoot Artists, aims to train and empower local residents, organize communities, and take action for a more compassionate, just, and sustainable future.

From 1986-2004 she served as the co-founder, executive director and lead artist of The Village of Arts and Humanities, a non-profit organization with the mission to build community through art, learning, land transformation and economic development. The Village has been used as a model for urban renewal all over the world. She has won or been bestowed upon many significant honors and awards including serving on the National Cabinet of the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture, the Muhammad Ali Center Daughter of Greatness Award, Honorary Doctorate Degree from many universities including Moore College of Art and Syracuse University, special congressional recognition by the United States Congress and the Philadelphia Chapter of The National Organization for Women and is a fellow of the Pew Fellowship in the Arts.

She has presented workshops and lectures all over the world and has written in many publications, some of which are *Awakening Creativity: Dandelion School Blossoms*, *Painting Hope in the World*, *How Art Can Heal Broken Places in*



Moonrise: The Power of Women Leading from the Heart, The Rwanda Healing Project in The Harvard Advocate, and has been featured in many publications.

Websites:

<http://www.barefootartists.org>

<http://barefootartists.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/lily-yeh-cv.pdf>



Susan M. Yelich Biniecki

Dr. Susan Yelich Biniecki has over 25 years of experience as a researcher, adult educator, and administrator in settings such as the College of Education at Kansas State University, the Institute of World Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the U.S. Peace Corps, AmeriCorps,

military affiliated sites, and multinational organizations. Her research focuses on culture, knowledge construction, and international adult education. She has published in *Adult Education Quarterly*, *Adult Learning*, *Rocznik Andragogiczny*, *The Journal of Continuing and Higher Education*, and many other forums as well as serves on several editorial boards including the *Journal of Military Learning*. She is the co-author of the book *Organization and Administration of Adult Education Programs: A guide for Practitioners* (2016). Yelich Biniecki was twice selected as an ERASMUS+ European Union visiting scholar. She holds a Ph.D. in urban education from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Website:

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Susan_Biniecki

Help the Journey Continue

I've spent the last two years building community through education by co-directing the documentary film – *Refuge in the Heartland* – about the education of newcomer students in our American schools and what it means to be a resettled person – a refugee, an immigrant whose number was drawn in a camp halfway across the world where it was 110 degrees outside and found themselves three days later getting off an airplane in snow and single-digit temperatures in Wichita, Kansas, wearing shorts and flip-flops. I've also spent the last two years, with a world village of authors and contributors, editing this book called *Journey to Refuge* – all working to improve the local and global community for those people who have been forcibly displaced from their home.

Through my doctoral research, I'm spending time with refugee children in an urban population center public middle school where just this week an 11-year-old boy from the Congo revealed to me through his artwork that he had been a part of a terrible atrocity prior to coming to the United States. Now he sits in an American school learning fractions, English, and photosynthesis. Through this art class and my research, he crossed paths with a teacher who will not give up, and who believes that if we all did something right where our own two feet stand, we might be able to do something to help the 70 million displaced people in the world—we might be able to do something to make a meaningful difference in our own communities, and therefore the global community. Education is the one real power in the world and it is a tool to be harnessed. Will you join the journey?

– Trina Harlow



“Making sure all our students get a great education, find a career that’s fulfilling and rewarding, and have a chance to live out their dreams... wouldn’t just make us a more successful country – it would also make us a more fair and just one.”

– Bill Gates