

Chapter 15

Rethinking Competences for Initial Language Teacher Training Through Trauma- Informed Lens

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ABSTRACT

The chapter discusses the importance of implementing the trauma-informed approach in pre-service language teacher training. The purpose of this chapter is to identify the scope of competencies language teachers should possess when implementing a trauma-informed approach in teaching languages. This study is exploratory research extensively employing a qualitative research methodology through the grounded theory. The triangulation strategy was used to collect the data on the issue from the analysis of certificate teacher training curricula at universities, analysis of policy requirements for initial teacher training and the analysis of quantitative data on perspectives of pre-service elementary school language teachers on trauma-informed approach. The results are presented as a competency-based matrix covering subsections of knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for pre-service English language teachers implementing the trauma-informed approach.

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INTRODUCTION

Recently there have been a number of global events that have raised the issue of reconsideration of approaches towards education. For instance, some of the recent events that shook Europe include global pandemics, war in Ukraine, migration, and displacement across the continent. According to Filio, such events on a global scale together with minor local events (e.g. natural disasters, etc.) and personal issues (e.g. divorce, health issues, etc.) constitute a domain of multiple layers of student trauma (Filio, 2020). Traumatic events are common for all people. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 out of 6 adults has experienced adverse childhood experiences, also recognized as traumatic, which have influenced their health conditions, behaviors, and socioeconomic challenges (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023). Additionally, based on the analysis of World Mental Health surveys, Kessler states that trauma exposure is common among people with an average of 3.2 traumas per person (Kessler, et al., 2017). Hence, providers of education need to be able to take into account the background and prior experiences of learners, including traumatic ones.

A rising interest to finding ways of responding to various traumatic events has led to the establishment of trauma studies in various subject fields. For instance, trauma-informed care and practice in health care, social work, and education. A trauma-informed approach to education is a relatively new framework. It is defined as responding to students' previous experiences by creating a regulating environment that meets the needs of an individual (Forbes & Maki, 2020). It emerged as an integrated approach grounded in physiology, neurobiology, psychology, medicine, and social work. Teaching students who experienced trauma requires teachers to have a separate set of competencies beyond a list of those included in the university curricula. The analysis of the Scopus database for the keyword "trauma-informed AND approach AND education" returns a rough 361 papers published and indexed in this database between 2008 and 2023 (Figure 1). Figure 1 shows a sharp rise in the number of articles on trauma-informed practices in education published after 2020. This approach has attracted the attention of scholars due to COVID-19 and post-COVID fatigue and trauma.

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