

# **Best Teaching Practices for English Language Learners Who Have Experienced Trauma: A Book of Trauma-Informed, English Language Mini Lessons for ELL Teachers**

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## **Description**

The aim of this 51-page study was to create mini-lessons for ESL learners based on trauma-informed practices for elementary students. The goal of the lessons is to help ELL teachers' address the challenges encountered when teaching learners who have experienced trauma.

## **Salient Points**

The study begins with the author's reflection of her own experience teaching students with traumatic experiences. These traumatic experiences are related to students' socio-cultural background, such as witnessing war and violence, feeling of isolation and despair, inadequate food and nutrition, abuses in the family, loss of loved ones and even moving to another country and navigating a new culture. These traumatic experiences can have long term mental health consequences, as well as an inability to concentrate. This often results in disengagement in school activities, absenteeism, and a high percentage of school drop-out.

The author acknowledges that available resources tend to focus more on English language teaching techniques than trauma-informed techniques. Because of this, she developed trauma-informed lessons for teachers to use when supporting learners with trauma. The mini lessons were anchored in the literature review that she conducted and research on ELL best practices. She targeted the lessons for elementary ESL teachers, to meet particular World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment standards (WIDA) at particular WIDA levels (p. 45). Her mini lessons were sequentially structured based on experience, present encounters, and future goals that could help learners recognize trauma for a positive learning experience. She incorporated techniques such as retelling a story, using descriptions, creating a goal, acknowledging the people in the past, and working towards building a more positive self-image. She further stressed that the connections built among students are a crucial aspect of providing a meaningful and transformative learning experience.

## **Questions for Reflection**

As you explore this document, consider the following questions:

- The topics of the mini-lessons are described on p.39-40. Are any of these topics similar to lessons you have taught?

- A few examples of ELL best practices when teaching learners are listed on pages 31-32. One best practice highlights the importance of teachers' understanding of their learners' background knowledge. In your own classroom, what activities do you plan that enhance your connection with your learners?
- Working with learners who have experienced trauma can be challenging. What kind of support is offered by your team or administrator prior to or when teaching these classes?

## **Keywords**

*Experienced trauma, trauma-informed techniques, English language development, ELL (English Language Learners)*

## **Reference and Links**

Klompfen, A. (2018). *Best Teaching Practices for English Language Learners Who Have Experienced Trauma: A Book of Trauma Informed, English Language Mini-Lessons For ELL Teachers*. Hamline University; School of Education Student Capstone Projects. Retrieved from [https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse\\_cp/202](https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_cp/202)