

Teaching ESL Students with Depression/PTSD: A Needs Analysis

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Abstract

This paper will cover the classroom needs of English as a Second Language (ESL) students with the mental health issues of depression and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Such students are often invisibly present in ESL classrooms. This topic is important because many ESL students enter into ESL classrooms with mental health issues such as depression and PTSD that present a challenge for ESL teachers in instructing such students because these mental health issues require delicate handling and often those with these disabilities do not disclose the fact that they have these disabilities. The literature on disabilities and depression and PTSD, as well as my own informal conversations with a college counselor about the challenges that ESL students with depression and/or PTSD reveals that these students face the challenges of isolation and a lack of focus in a ESL classroom. After numerous informal conversations with a college counselor, a college mental health specialist, and an ESOL teacher along with the findings that neither the medical model of disabilities, nor the social model of disabilities fit mental illness well, and I have found that ESL students with depression and/or PTSD require a pedagogy that is sensitive to their needs and is structured so that these students are not triggered or otherwise negatively affected in ESL classrooms. My review of the existing literature has shown that ESL students with depression and/or PTSD are best served by creating a classroom atmosphere of safety and inclusion. Other researchers have found that approaching pedagogical topics from the angles of sharing personal history and finding commonalities has helped students with depression and/or PTSD achieve course goals in a similar means as their non-affected classmates. Based on these research-informed pedagogical principles and my own personal experience, I have designed a set of teacher suggestions and strategies which can be selectively

applied so that teachers are able to serve this omnipresent population of students. Such students make up an ever-present population of underserved students.

Introduction

Sandra was an ESL student who had matriculated into the mainstream English class I was tutoring in many years ago. She came to class every day. She was always very pleasant. She was the first to arrive to class and the last to leave, and she completed essays, but her topics never matched the assignments. Then Sandra disappeared for two weeks, and when she came back, she was visibly distant and vacant. Both the teacher and I were very concerned for her. She disclosed that both she and her husband had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and she stated that was why her assignments were off topic, and she explained that she was absent because her husband was actively having violent flashbacks that required her to watch over their grandchildren. This struck me for many reasons. First, I was amazed that a tutee would trust me with such delicate and important knowledge. Second, because this was the first time that I realized that ESL students could struggle with such difficulties, and third, because I realized that not every moment of teaching comes with clear, easy to handle situations.

This project explores how ESL students with depression/Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are served in the ESL classroom. There is little literature on ESL students with depression/PTSD and the literature review of this project shows how current methods of teaching can inadvertently exclude this population of students. At present, many immigrant students in ESL classrooms come to the U.S. from countries that are war-torn or have internal conflict (such as gang activity or corrupt governments). As such, many students arrive here with a background of trauma, depression, and/or PTSD as a result of living through distressing situations. This is a challenge faced by language educators, many of whom are not prepared for these students.

To be clear, depression is not just sadness. Depression is many things. First, it is an invisible illness (e.g. it cannot be discerned by looking at a person). Next, it is an illness that

persists over long periods of time, and depression is not easily cured/fixed. Finally, depression can negatively affect a person's energy levels and concentration levels. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (another invisible illness) often occurs as a result of witnessing or experiencing traumatic events (e.g. war). PTSD affects students' attention and concentration levels, and some people with PTSD can become triggered by what may seem like innocuous moments in class (e.g. fire drill alarms, or discussion of traumatic situations).

Current discourse on ESL students with depression/PTSD in the classroom is scant and what little there is either centered on general suggestions for teacher behavior in the classroom, or on identifying learning disabled students. For examples of discussions of depression in ESL learners see Rishel and Miller's (2017) "English Learners and the Risks of Suicide" or Mona Shattell et al. (2009) "Depression in Latinas Residing in Emerging Latino Immigrant Communities in the United States" Both of the abovementioned articles deal with suicide and depression among immigrant communities, but neither deals with language learning. This project aims to serve ESL students with depression/PTSD through pedagogical suggestions for classroom use.

This project is significant because, at present, there is little discussion about these students despite the fact that they exist. Also, these students exist in ESL classrooms every day, and such students are often not recognized and are therefore excluded from full participation in ESL classrooms. This project presents pedagogical suggestions to aid instruction of ESL students with depression/PTSD. This project is also significant because this population of students often gets excluded and/or left behind in the ESL classroom. Further, this project contributes to the field of TESOL by giving concrete suggestions to teachers for pedagogy. This project will extend existing discourse on this topic, create new knowledge for teachers faced with ESL

students with depression/PTSD, and will provide strategies and resources that teachers can use to combat the problems that ESL students with depression/PTSD have.

Building on the literature and educational background of the psychological framework of the Self-Determination Theory, motivation will be discussed in this project and will provide a framework to this project.

Drawing on the literature and the motivation framework of ESL students with depression/PTSD several questions guide this project, namely, what are different ways that teachers can be inclusive of these students, how can teachers best serve these students, and what are some practical teaching methods to help these students stay present in the ESL classroom? I will answer these questions through synthesizing informal conversations with instructional professionals, and student services professionals. This paper contains the following sections: a literature review, the framework of self-determination theory, methodology, a synthesis of informal conversations with professionals, a curriculum review, discussion, suggestions for pedagogy, and conclusion.

Literature Review

In examining the needs of an ESL classroom, much must be done to be inclusive of all students. This means to be inclusive of different cultures, different races, different beliefs, and different abilities, but what is it that makes some students show remarkable progress while others seem to languish? Even as we teachers look for ways to be inclusive of the above attributes, we often miss the mark in being inclusive when it comes to learning disabilities (LD), particularly when it comes to the specific learning disabilities of depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). These disabilities often exist invisibly in ESL classrooms, and with this invisible existence comes a need for inclusion for students who have these disabilities. There is a

dearth of literature on the topic of learning disabilities in ESL classrooms, and even less is written about depression and PTSD in the ESL classroom. This literature review will attempt to make connections, first, between learning disabilities in the ESL classroom, and finally between depression and PTSD in the ESL classroom.

Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities are invisible disabilities in that they have no physically recognizable attributes, and are typically cognitive or psychological in nature. This is to say that there is no visually discernable difference between someone who has a learning disability and someone who does not. Couzens et al. explain hidden disabilities as such, “[h]idden disabilities can be developmental or acquired; hidden because they rarely have a physical presentation but rather a range of cognitive processes” (Couzens et al., 2015, p. 25). Cheryll Duquette and Stephanie Fullarton explain learning disabilities as “a number of disorders that may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, and understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information” (Duquette and Fullarton, 2009, p. 51). What this means is that a learning disability can negatively affect language learning. As such, learning disabilities can be harder to accommodate in an ESL classroom. Jovita Ross-Gordon states that disabilities are “a concern for those planning programs for adult learners across a spectrum of settings” (Ross-Gordon, n.d.,p. 2). That is to say that learning disabilities are important to consider when bringing together materials for an ESL classroom. Also important is how to work with these students to achieve their learning goals. Later, Ross-Gordon suggests “to work cooperatively with them [students] in determining what strategies and accommodations most effectively enable them to accomplish their individual learning goals” (Ross-Gordon, n.d., p. 4). Others note that identifying students as learning disabled could negatively label such students and caution is warned about doing so (Osterholm,

Nash and Kritsonis, 2007). Further, Osterholm, Nash, and Kritsonis state that “the LD [learning disabled] label has potentially negative implication for those who bear it” (Osterholm et al., 2007, p. 7). This means is that a student who is called learning disabled may have adverse associations with such a descriptor. The next section of this project deals with the existing views of disabilities.

Model Views of Disabilities

Part of the problem of ensuring accommodations for ESL students with depression/PTSD is in the view of models of treatment of these students. There exists a medical model of disability where the disability is perceived as a physical “fault” and if dealt with like a physical “fault” then the disability is seen as decreased (May and LaMont, 2014). In essence, the body is a machine that must be fixed in the medical model of disability, and disabilities are seen as deficits. However, the medical model works best with physical (visible) disabilities and since mental health is a hidden disability, the medical model is not a good fit since hidden disabilities are typically not physically disabling issues. In contrast, the social model of disability views society as the source of obstacles for disabled people (May and LaMont, 2014). That is, society sets up barriers (sometimes physical barriers such as stairs or a lack of curb cuts) for disabled people to work around and society does not see the disabled individual as a machine that needs fixing in order to work properly, but instead that disabilities are society’s problem to fix. The social model is a newer idea in the world of disabilities, and one that has aimed to surpass the medical model of disabilities. The social model of disabilities ultimately seeks to be inclusive of those with disabilities. The next section of this paper discusses ways to be inclusive of students with disabilities, and these can be applied to the ESL classroom.

10 Ways to be Inclusive

How, then, are we to ensure that such students are included in our designs for pedagogy?

The social model of disabilities ultimately seeks to be inclusive of those with disabilities.

Robin Schwarz and Lynda Terrill in their National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education article give us ten suggestions for instruction:

“[b]e highly structured and predictable, [t]each small amounts of material at one time in sequential steps, [i]nclude opportunities to use several senses and learning strategies, [p]rovide multisensory reviews, [r]ecognize and build on learners’ strengths and prior knowledge, [s]implify language but not content, [e]mphasize content words and make concepts accessible through the use of pictures, charts, maps, etc., [r]einforce main ideas and concepts through rephrasing rather than through verbatim repetition, [b]e aware that learners can take in information, but may experience difficulty retrieving it and sorting it appropriately, and [p]rovide a clean, uncluttered, quiet, and well-lit learning environment” (Schwarz and Terrill, 2000, pp. 5-6).

All of these suggestions provide a clear way to help students with disabilities to succeed. Another means of helping ESL students with depression/PTSD succeed is through the implementation of Universal Design.

Universal Design

The above list of helpful hints brings to mind the idea of Universal Design for Instruction (UDI). UDI is a set of principles that equalize learning for persons with disabilities. For more on UDI see appendix D. UDI is the idea that courses should be planned so that they are inclusive to all through the ways that activities are planned. But we cannot have UDI unless everyone involved in education (from teachers to students to administration) is also invested in what happens in the classroom for these students (Dallas, Sprong and Upton, 2014). These authors

also stress the importance of shifting away from the medical model of disability to the social model of disability. Further, these authors also state that UDI implementation will lessen the need of academic accommodations. The next section of the project deals with how ESL students with depression/PTSD are seen in the classroom.

Learning Disabilities and Stigma

Academic accommodations are based on each individual student's needs and can be a wide range of accommodations (i.e. extended time to complete homework, note taking, recording lectures, and large print). Learning disabilities in the ESL classroom can mimic the stages of learning in acquiring a second language. That is, learning disabilities can look a great deal like a student grappling with their emerging learning. Also, ESL students with learning disabilities may not want to disclose the fact that they have a disability due to anticipated stigma. Many students who have disabilities suffer from shame and isolation for having differing sets of learning skills than their peers. According to Osterholm et al. "the LD label has potentially negative implications for those who bear it" (Osterholm et al., 2007, p. 5). That is, those who are labeled as learning disabled and disclose their label are often viewed negatively by others. Osterholm et al. also state, "analysis suggests that the learning disabilities label generates reduced or negative expectations, as well as negative stereotypes and attitudes" (Osterholm et al., 2007, p. 5). What this means is that there is a perception of learning disabled students as being lesser than their non-disabled counterparts. From these examples, students with learning disabilities experience shame and isolation in the classroom. On discussing LDs Benjamin May and Elizabeth Lamont state that a common theme is that "learning disabilities are regarded as a barrier and a deficit, something that is inherently 'broken' in the individual" (May and Lamont, 2014, p. 970). This view of LDs stems from the medical model of disabilities, and this point is extended when May and Lamont state, "the 'problem' [of learning disabilities] was the responsibility of the individual

and was not shared by the classroom environment” (May and LaMont, 2014, p. 970). What this means is that, often, ESL students with LDs are burdened with being their own advocate because the classroom setting lacks the atmosphere appropriate to being inclusive to these students.

Alongside being their own advocates, LD students may have differences in behavior that can affect the classroom. For instance, regarding learning ability, Davis and Davis state, “they [may] have difficulty engaging in a single task for an entire period” (Davis and Davis, 1982, p. 424). So then, what course of action should educators take when dealing with LDs? Beth Harry suggests that those “seeking answers to key questions about the nature of disability must be aware of the limits of their knowledge and the fact that perspectives on human variation are tied to societal values” (Harry, 2011, p. 191). This means that those in “authority” over ESL students with LDs must remember that there are constraints around what they know and that mindsets are connected to social values. Essentially, while those in “authority” admittedly know a great deal about LDs, they should respect that their knowledge is not omniscient, and that they cannot know everything about all situations. Another way to look at this is in Margaret McLean’s discussion on *ableism* versus disabled people. Ableism is the view that able bodied persons are superior to disabled persons. McLean says, “when able-bodied persons get to know disabled people the basis of their previous unquestioned notions of ability and disability and normality and abnormality may be challenged” (McLean, 2011, p. 13). What this means is through contact with disabled persons, able-bodied people’s perceptions of what it means to be disabled are potentially changed. This shift of attitudes (presumably towards the positive) helps to “mainstream” (teach disabled persons in regular classes instead of placing them in separate classes) disabled students, and helps disabled students feel less judged. Judgement is a reason that ESL students with depression/PTSD may not want to disclose their disability status.

Disclosing Disability Status

There is also the fact that many ESL students with depression/PTSD often do not disclose their disability due to fear of stigma surrounding mental health. As Kranke et al. state, “[c]ollege students with non-apparent disabilities experience extrinsic and intrinsic stressors in the form of stigma and discrimination by the public” (Kranke et al., 2013, p. 36). This means that ESL students with depression/PTSD regularly face prejudicial behavior from the public. Further, Collins & Mowbray (2005) as quoted in Kranke et al. state that “86% of individuals who have a psychiatric disorder withdraw from college prior to completion of their degree” (Kranke et al., 2013, p. 35). What this means is that ESL students with depression/PTSD face different barriers to education than their non-disabled peers. The following section deals with mental illness.

Mental Illness

How do educators ensure that this population is not only physically present in class, but also mentally available as well? Tracey Lawrence (2016) advocates for discussion of mental health and the seeking out of resources for those with mental health issues. Bruce Van Stone advocates for highly structured schema (by breaking down tasks into smaller units of instruction) for dealing with depression in a student. Another means that Van Stone uses to help students with depression /PTSD is to “[c]orrect other students who attempt to “stigmatize” or “label” a classmate...” (Van Stone, 2013, p.7). Yet more suggestions for teaching students with disabilities comes from Best et al. in their list of elements designed to support education specifically for those who struggle with mental illness. Among their list is “facilitation of student’s comfort with the classroom environment, particularly at course commencement” (Best et al., 2008, p. 66), “[a]ssistance of teaching staff in-class to implement strategies designed to

compensate for student's cognitive deficits" (Best et al., 2008, p. 66) and "assertive follow up of absenteeism and identifying potential barriers to course completion" (Best et al., 2008, p. 66).

Other scholars concerned for students with mental health disabilities urge for teachers to identify certain characteristics that are key in depression/PTSD. Marsh warns that observable behaviors such as "difficulty completing school work" (Marsh, 2016, p. 320) and "becoming disinterested in activities they previously enjoyed" (Marsh, 2016, p. 320) are markers for mental illness. Goldman calls for teachers to make "mental health and well-being of our students a top concern" (Goldman, 2018, p. 399). Despite some teachers' efforts in making mental health a top concern, ESL students with depression/PTSD are often not recognized in the ESL classroom. A small part of the reason for this is because these students choose not to disclose their disability, whereas at most other times this is because little is done in the classroom to be inclusive of this population of students.

This literature review has attempted to answer the question of whether there is discussion happening around ESL students with depression/PTSD, and because there is scant discussion, there is not a working method of instruction specifically designed for this group of students. The one source (Schwarz and Terrill) in this literature review that gives concrete suggestions is very general, centers on basic ideas, and while helpful, is nearly rudimentary when looking to apply these concepts towards ESL students with depression/PTSD. Other sources acknowledge that there is a problem in addressing the needs of ESL students with depression, but they fall short of giving suggestions to be inclusive in teaching to these students. Another question this literature review has attempted to answer is what are different ways that teachers can be inclusive of these students? I attempt to reconcile the ways that teachers can be inclusive of ESL students with depression/PTSD by having a pedagogy aimed towards these students, and it might seem like

extra and possibly extraneous work, but what I propose is actually the planning for and enacting of one pedagogy aimed towards ESL students with depression/PTSD to be used for the entire classroom as a means of being inclusive to this disabled group of students. A final question I attempt to answer in this literature review is what are some practical teaching methods to help these students stay present in the ESL classroom? The following section will detail my framework for this paper. This framework defines some of the characteristics of human motivation and explains why these characteristics are important in language learning.

Self Determination Theory

The Self Determination Theory of Deci and Ryan (quoted in Sheldon, 2012) will provide a framework for the rest of this paper. Deci and Ryan (quoted in Sheldon, 2012) explain that in the Self Determination Theory (SDT) is the idea that there are intrinsic (inner) and extrinsic (external) motivations for humans. In this view of motivation are autonomy, competence and relatedness. As explained by Kirk, autonomy is not a lack of influence of others, but is instead the feeling of acting of your own volition. If these students feel that the choices they make are for and by themselves then they are experiencing autonomy. Competency in this theory is not just one's ability in class, but is instead the feeling of effectiveness or success in interacting with one's environment. If one feels they have successfully interacted with one's environment then one is experiencing competence. Relatedness in this theory is the feeling of being connected with others. (Kirk, 2010). These three concepts need to be met in order for a student to feel intrinsic motivation. See figure 1.

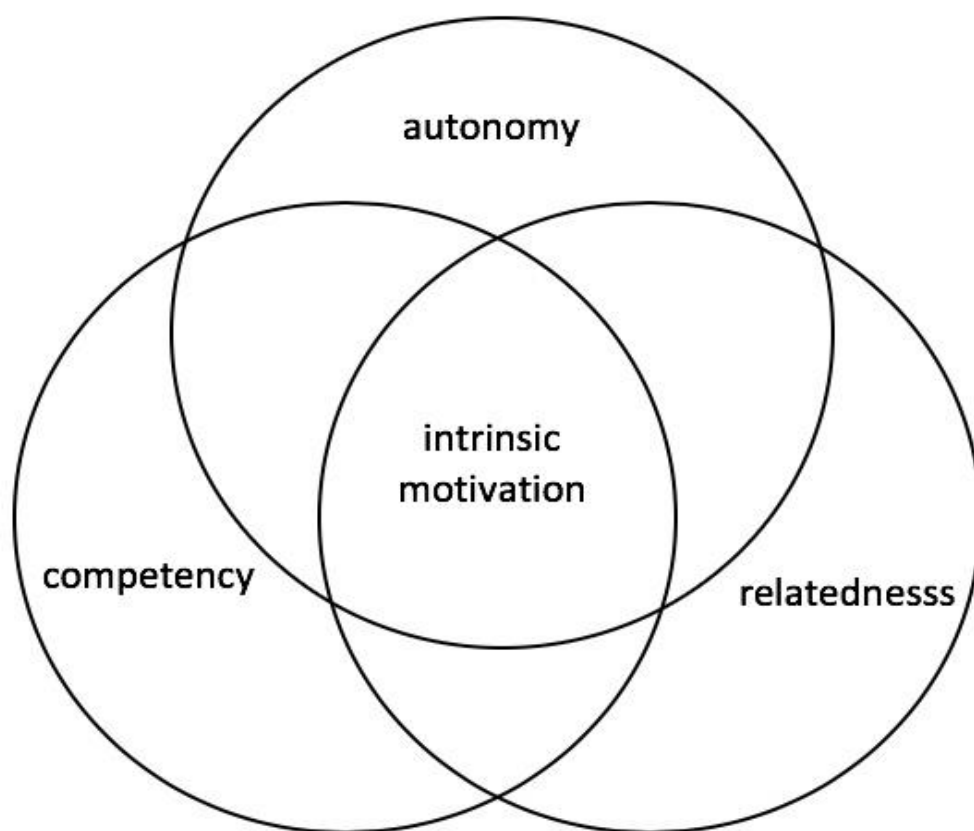


Figure 1

Intrinsic motivation is the determining factor for those who have depression/PTSD and a desire to complete academic work. Motivation is another factor that affects ESL students with depression/PTSD. Often times these students have a harder time staying motivated because depression/PTSD create barriers to attention spans and energy levels. Intrinsic motivation is the motivation that individuals carry within themselves. This is one's "drive". Extrinsic motivation can be thought of as external rewards like a good grade in a class. That is to say that frequently those with depression/PTSD have the motivation within themselves to complete ESL courses and that extrinsic motivation is helpful, but is not necessarily the highest factor of motivation for these students.

The target population for this paper are adult ESL students with depression/PTSD. These students are often in class, but teachers are often only aware of such students as a result of accommodations letters, and there are, often times, ESL students with depression/PTSD who do not have accommodations letters to signal their disability. The following section on methodology will explain the steps I took to inform this project.

Methodology

To compile this project, I gathered information from informal conversations with college disabled students' program personnel, a community college ESOL instructor, and a college mental health worker to determine how best to understand ESL students with depression/PTSD. This information revealed that teachers have a knowledge gap between ESL students with depression/PTSD who have accommodations letters, and those who do not have accommodations letters. I reviewed literature on the topic of students with disabilities (including ESL students) to provide a background for this project, and I reviewed a syllabus and teaching materials for a community college ESOL course to look for areas and ways that I can provide

suggestions for improving existing pedagogy. The literature review of this topic revealed that there is not much discussion among the discourse community in TESOL happening regarding these students and their disabilities. I also reviewed past experiences with ESL students with depression/PTSD to inform this project. That review revealed that ESL students with depression/PTSD exist in class regardless of having a recognized status of being disabled. The following section deals with my notes on this topic.

Synthesis of Informal Conversations with Professionals

On meeting with disabled students' program personnel, I found that as much happens outside the classroom for ESL students with depression/PTSD than does in the classroom. These students often need extra support from counselors and/or mental health professionals in the form of talking with these personnel in order to mitigate their symptoms. It was suggested that teachers are urged to form relationships with such students, and then teachers are urged to trust their instincts about whether students who do not have accommodations and may have depression/PTSD. Teachers are also urged to trust their instincts about how much they can handle before needing to reach out to campus resources for ESL students with depression/PTSD.

Regarding counseling, teachers are urged to seek early intervention for ESL students with depression/PTSD, as early intervention is key in providing successful help for these students. This means that teachers should refer students to the appropriate campus resource when first discovering that these students may be in need of extra support. The role of stigma in these students' lives can often be mitigated by a referral to campus mental health professionals, where students can go to have a safe place to talk about the effects of their disability. In order to refer these students to different resources on campus first we must know the resources available to students, so it is important to know your local campus' resources and what is and is not available

on campus to serve these students. Helping these students with campus resources is about creating a safe place for students to not feel isolated, ashamed and alone as a result of their disability.

Regarding in class techniques, it is important to allow students space in class that feels safe. For instance, in a lesson which the topic is about a tragic journey, perhaps the student can identify with the topic and feels the need to share their own experience. The student may feel that your gentle demeanor is helpful, and this is what allows them to share their story with the class. Also, being aware of the materials being used is helpful for these students, as some materials may trigger students, whereas other materials may make it cathartic for students to share information about themselves. Using materials that students can relate to speaks to their experiences and helps them overcome moments in class that might otherwise have been rough. Another factor in the classroom for these students is keeping the classroom a cooperative space where a variety of students can learn about each other's backgrounds and cultures. One more important factor in the classroom is making yourself available to students. This can be something as simple as using a pleasant tone of voice, maintaining a friendly presence, lingering after class, and letting students know when you are available to meet with them. The following curriculum review will give suggestions for ways to help ESL students with depression/PTSD in the classroom.

Curriculum Review

For this project I reviewed the curriculum of a community college ESOL high intermediate reading and writing class. The campus that this class takes place on has a high immigrant population of ESL students. The novel being used as the class text is an immigrant story, so it is likely to be relevant to students in this class. I found several areas where I could

add talking points to help ESL students with depression/PTSD. For instance, on week 1, when the teacher plans to talk about goal setting, I found that that was the perfect time to talk to students about any difficulties they might have in class and how to face those difficulties. On weeks 2 and 3, the focus is motivation, and that is a good time to talk to students about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and how motivation affects academic work. This is also a good time to reinforce relatedness so that students feel intrinsic motivation more fully. This is also a good time to check in with any students that I suspect might be struggling with depression/PTSD by creating moments for them to talk with me, such as lingering after class and announcing that I will be available for a few minutes after class to talk. Week 4 has the focus of character analysis, and this is a good time to talk about any similarities to the students' lives. This will help students to feel relatedness and will reinforce intrinsic motivation. The focus in week 5 is making and supporting points, and I can talk with students about how they can be supported in class. For week 6 the focus is comparing and contrasting, and this time lends itself well to discussion of the differences between the book and real life, and how students can feel supported in class. Weeks 7, 8 and 9 have the focus of rights and laws, and I can talk to students about their rights, especially rights within the realm of disabled students' rights. Week 10 is the mid-term exam, so no additional talking points will happen then. Week 11's focus is peer review, and this is a good time to talk about how students can support one another in class. The focus on weeks 12 and 13 is education and success, and this is a good time to also talk about students' definitions of success and how success impacts them. Week 14's focus is themes and this is a good time to talk with students about any themes in their lives, and the ways themes unfold in their lives. Week 15's focus is discussion of the whole book, and this is a good time to revisit any similarities and differences in real life in comparison with the book. This will help students to see their

successes. Week 16 has the focus of drafts and conferences, and the conference lends itself well to a final check in for students that may have depression/PTSD. These additional talking points can help not only ESL students with depression/PTSD, but all students. So, there is the added benefit of helping all students to achieve in the classroom. The accommodations letters that may or may not be present in class only cover certain areas of classroom instruction, and the added talking points I am suggesting above fill a gap in pedagogy that these letters do not fill, even though these letters are intended to create a “level playing ground” for these students.

These additional talking points are also outside of the realm of what is covered by the accommodations letters (if there are any), and work well in the classroom to help this sub-group of students while also helping “regular” ESL students. Through reviewing the curriculum of this class, it seems that one key way of helping ESL students with depression/PTSD is in the talking points that surround the focus of each week. These talking points add to the existing discussion in class and they allow these students to feel not only more at ease, but more welcome in the typical ESL classroom. Another means of making students feel at ease is in a pleasant tone of voice.

The tone of voice that is used in these additional talking points is also a means of ensuring the success of these students. For example, I would want to use a calm, pleasant tone while in discussion in class to ensure that I did not trigger any episodes of depression or episodes of flashbacks for PTSD. As simple as keeping a pleasant tone is, it is easy to overlook in the rush of getting through a lesson. A pleasant tone of voice helps put at ease these students, and can help “regular” ESL students feel comfortable as well, thus being of benefit to not only ESL students with depression/PTSD, but to the whole class.

Another technique that can help ESL students with depression/PTSD in the ESL classroom is lingering after class so that these students can feel less pressure about asking questions. Lingering after class was suggested to me via one of the informal conversations I had with an ESL teaching professional. This professional also suggested giving students space in class to talk about the issue/s that cause the depression/PTSD. This discussion of a lingering presence, a pleasant voice, and extra talking points have suggested ways to be inclusive for this particular class syllabus, but these examples are likely also relevant for other ESL classes in general.

Discussion

This project set forth to understand how to best help ESL students with depression/PTSD. Through literature review, informal discussions with multiple school related personnel, and through review of a curriculum and its materials, I was able to discern that carefully crafted in-class discussion of subjects related to these students is one way of helping these students succeed. Another way of ensuring the success of these students is through a pleasant, calming tone of voice-something that is so simple, but is also easy to forget in the rush of delivering a lesson. Lingering after class creates a low-pressure environment for these students to ask questions after class.

Lingering after class to create a low pressure environment to ask questions, using a pleasant tone to minimize pressure on students, and adding extra talking points may be relevant and adaptable as one way to enhance support for target students in a college ESL writing course. This project is not without its limitations. First, there is the absence of the voice of the target demographic. There is also the lack representation of other disabilities. Third is the small amount of personnel with which I had informal conversations. There was the small sample

of curriculum that I reviewed. Lastly, the fact that the needs of each class is different, and some classes will not be as discussion centered as the one in the curriculum review is not taken into account. In the next section of this paper I will give suggestions, resources and strategies for teaching to ESL students with depression/PTSD.

Suggestions for Pedagogy

To better accommodate ESL students with depression/PTSD, I reviewed the curriculum of a High Intermediate ESOL class from a local community college. In that review, I found several areas where I could add to the activities to be inclusive of this population of students. I found that each week could be enriched with extra talking points, and that some of the activities could go deeper into helping ESL students with depression/PTSD to feel comfortable in class. In one such assignment, an open ended question assignment, I was able to add an additional question to draw a link between the course reading and the lives of students in the class without making students feel ashamed or awkward. I found three places in the first unit where adding an additional question to the assignment can draw a link between the course materials and the students' lives. It is important to find places to draw students into the materials early on because doing so can create an atmosphere of safety for these students, and it affords all students the chance to see where there are similarities between themselves and others in the class. Another reason to add these kinds of questions early on is that doing so can make the difference between a student who stays in class and a student who drops the class. Adding an open ended personal question to the existing question draws students into the class in a broader way than only questions about the course materials can.

An example of asking personal questions after general questions about materials is this: What impression do you have of the apartment? (general question) Is the apartment alike or different from somewhere you have lived in the U.S.? How? (personal question) By asking these

add-on questions, students have the opportunity to bond with each other over their answers. These add-on questions can also be part of the overall class discussion, and can help ESL students with depression/PTSD to feel less isolated once they learn that other classmates have similar answers to themselves. It is important to help ESL students with depression/PTSD feel like valued members of the class because often these disabilities hinder these students' self-perception to the point of leaving them feeling unvalued and isolated. See Appendix A.

Another means of creating moments of success for ESL students with depression/PTSD is through building a sense of autonomy rather than isolation. By using personal add-on questions that are specifically designed to get students to relate to one another, teachers can help create the autonomy that is essential to these students' success. Autonomy is one way of ensuring that motivation occurs in ESL students with depression/PTSD. Autonomy is also a way for these students to feel a sense of accomplishment and to gain a sense of mastery/command over their work. See Appendix B

Another means of creating success for these students can be through reading stations. Reading stations are physical locations in the classroom with brief reading sections based on the class novel. Reading stations come to us from K-12 education and are a means of adding kinesthetics to education. Kinesthetics is a means of creating a sense of inclusivity through all three aspects of SDT of autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Each station can work on different aspects of the reading and through group work, these students can come to understand that their role in the class is both useful and needed. For instance, there can be five stations and five class groups to rotate through each station. Station one can be adjective definitions. Station two can be verb forms. Station three can be vocabulary. Station four can be making inferences. Finally, station five can be true or false statements. These activities foster inclusivity because the

nature of each station requires participation of all students to work well, and this set of activities can also help ESL students with depression/PTSD to feel included and valued. See Appendix C.

Conclusion

This project has sought to make the presence of ESL students with depression/PTSD not just known in the ESL classroom, but also help these students to succeed in the classroom. Since each classroom is different, it is difficult to make very specific suggestions for pedagogical methods, but the suggestions for pedagogy that I made for the class I reviewed in this project can be adapted to use in other classes. It appears that the most common way to help these students is to treat all students as if they have depression/PTSD and proceeding from that point to be inclusive of these students. Another thing the pedagogical suggestions do is make ESL students with depression/PTSD present in the classroom. Using extra talking points during discussions is a means of helping these students while not making their presence awkward or obvious, and it helps “regular” students as well. As I was able to share from the literature review section of this project, there is little discussion of ESL students with depression/PTSD in ESL classrooms, and it is my hope that this project has begun at least an awareness of these students if not the beginnings of discussions about these students.

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Appendix A

Activity B

Original questions in the assignment:

1. How does the building make Ma and Kimberly feel? Excited and hopeful? Nervous and scared? Other?
2. What are your impressions of the apartment building? Clean and welcoming? Dirty and threatening?

Add-on question:

3. How does this building remind you of a building you have lived in or near? If it does not remind you of a building you have lived in, how is it different?

Activity C

Original question in the assignment:

What impression do you have of the apartment?

Add-on question:

How is the apartment alike or different from somewhere you have lived in the U.S.?

Appendix B

Questions to add to each week's topic:
Week 1, discussion topic: goal setting
Add-on question: what are the difficulties that you (student) might have in class? How will you face those difficulties?
Weeks 2 and 3, discussion topic: motivation
Add-on question: how does motivation affect your academic work? Discuss intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.
Week 4, discussion topic: character analysis
Add-on question: what similarities are there between you and the main character in the book?
Week 5, discussion topic: making and supporting points
Add-on question: how can I (teacher) provide support in class?
Week 6, discussion topic: comparing and contrasting
Add-on question: what are the differences between the book and real life?
Weeks 7, 8, and 9, discussion topic: rights and laws
Add-on question: discussion of student rights and of disabled rights.
Week 10 is the mid-term exam, so no additional talking points for this week.
Week 11, discussion topic: peer review
Add-on question: how can students support each other in class.
Weeks 12 and 13, discussion topic: education and success
Add-on question: talk about students' definition of success and how success impacts them.
Week 14, discussion topic: themes
Add-on question: how have themes unfolded in their lives?

Week 15, discussion topic: discussion of the whole book
Add-on question: what are the similarities or differences between the book and students' lives?

Appendix C

Lesson Plan Reading Discussion

Overall goal(s) of lesson: To reinforce reading lesson

Objectives: To foster a sense of inclusivity among all students

Materials and equipment: 5 poster boards, markers, post it notes

Time	Activity: review of station topics	Materials/Notes
8-10 min	Warm-up activity __Form five groups to discuss review topics____ Purpose: Activate schema Procedures: discuss 5 topics of reading stations Transition: Assign groups to reading stations	
10-12 min	Activity 1: __Station 1 (adjective definitions) Purpose: to review adjective definitions Procedures: discuss adjective definitions and use post-it notes to define adjectives among group members Transition: Move to next station	Poster board, Markers, Post-it notes
10-12 min	Activity 2: _Station 2 (verb forms)____ Purpose: to review verb forms Procedures: discuss verb forms in groups and use post-it notes to show target verb forms Transition: move to next station	Poster board, Markers, Post-it notes
10-12 min	Activity 3: _Station 3 (vocabulary)____ Purpose: to review vocabulary Procedures: discuss vocabulary in groups and use post-it notes to show target vocabulary and definitions Transition: move to next station	Poster board, Markers, Post-it notes

10-12 min	<p>Activity 4: _Station 4 (making inferences)___</p> <p>Purpose: to review inferences</p> <p>Procedures: discuss inferences in groups and use post-it notes to show target inferences</p> <p>Transition: move to next station</p>	<p>Poster board, Markers, Post-it notes</p>
10-12 min	<p>Activity 5: _Station 5 (true/false statements)</p> <p>Purpose: to review true/false statements</p> <p>Procedures: discuss true/false statements in groups and use post-it notes to show target statements</p> <p>Transition: regroup as a whole class</p>	<p>Poster board, Markers, Post-it notes</p>
15-20 min	<p>Cool down: _Discuss each station as a class</p> <p>Purpose: solidify knowledge and inclusivity</p> <p>Procedures: Ask each group to share answers until all topics have been covered</p>	

Appendix D

Principle	Definition
Principle 1: Equitable use	Instruction is designed to be useful to and accessible by people with diverse abilities. Provide the same means of use for all students; identical whenever possible, equivalent when not.
Principle 2: Flexibility in use	Instruction is designed to accommodate a wide range of individual abilities. Provide choice in methods of use.
Principle 3: Simple and intuitive	Instruction is designed in a straightforward and predictable manner, regardless of the student's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level. Eliminate unnecessary complexity.
Principle 4: Perceptible information	Instruction is designed so that necessary information is communicated effectively to the student, regardless of ambient conditions or the student's sensory abilities.
Principle 5: Tolerance for error	Instruction anticipates variation in individual student learning pace and prerequisite skills.
Principle 6: Low physical effort	Instruction is designed to minimize nonessential physical effort in order to allow maximum attention to learning. Note: This principle does not apply when physical effort is integral to essential requirements of a course.
Principle 7: Size and space for approach and use	Instruction is designed with consideration for appropriate size and space for approach, reach, manipulations, and use regardless of a student's body size, posture, mobility, and communication needs.
Principle 8: A community of learners	The instructional environment promotes interaction and communication among students and between students and faculty.
Principle 9: Instructional climate	Instruction is designed to be welcoming and inclusive. High expectations are espoused for all students.

Source: *Principles of Universal Design for Instruction*, by Sally S. Scott, Joan M. McGuire, and Stan F. Shaw.

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