



THE HEART OF LEARNING AND TEACHING: COMPASSION RESILIENCY, AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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A book study (Chapters 1-3) prepared by the TASN ATBS
School Mental Health Initiative

Abstract

The Heart of Learning and Teaching provides readers with an understanding of trauma and resilience, self-care for educators, and strategies for implementing trauma-informed practices. The following book study provides educators, administrators, and other school personnel with questions to help guide discussion while reading chapters 1-3 of The Heart of Learning and Teaching. Users will also find a sample timeline that may be used to help guide readers and teams on page 2.

Resources

The Heart of Learning and Teaching may be downloaded at <http://www.k12.wa.us/compassionateschools/heartoflearning.aspx>. Additionally, the authors provide supplemental materials (PowerPoints, scripts, and vignettes) on their website, at www.k12.wa.us/CompassionateSchools/Resources.aspx

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Sample Timeline

Week One:	Chapter 1 <i>Introduction and the Nature of Trauma</i> Questions 1-5
Week Two:	Chapter 1 <i>Meeting the Challenge: Background Knowledge for Finding Solutions</i> Questions 1-7
Week Three:	Chapter 2 <i>The Cost of Caring and Possible Negative Consequences of Vicarious Trauma</i> Questions 1-4
Week Four:	Chapter 2 <i>Prevention and Self-Care</i> Question 1 <i>*Readers may also take time to create a self-care plan (example provided on pages 58-59).</i>
Week Five:	Chapter 3 <i>Introduction and Compassionate Teaching and Discipline Principles</i> Question 1
Week Six:	Chapter 3 <i>A Compassionate Curriculum</i> Questions 1-3
Week Seven:	Chapter 3 <i>A Compassionate Curriculum</i> Questions 4-5
Week Eight:	Chapter 3 <i>A Compassionate Curriculum</i> Questions 6-7
Week Nine:	Conclusion and Next Steps

The following resource may also be helpful in providing suggestions for conducting book studies:

- **Broward County Public Schools PLC Book Study Guide**
<http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/talentdevelopment/news/plc/PLC-Book-Study-Guidelines.pdf>

Chapter 1: Trauma, Compassion, and Resiliency: Background and Definitions

(Pages 1-35)

Brief Overview

This chapter provides an overview of trauma, ACEs, and the impact of trauma on learning. Resilience and compassion are also discussed, while a definition of compassionate schools is provided.

Introduction and the Nature of Trauma

Discussion Questions

1. What are ACEs? _____
2. Describe three ways in which ACEs can impact students:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
3. Describe the difference between stress and trauma:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
4. What are five areas of the brain that may be impacted by trauma? Briefly describe how these effects may be seen within the classroom or school.
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
5. Describe the ways in which trauma may affect learning, as outlined on pages 12-13.
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Meeting the Challenge: Background Knowledge for Finding Solutions

Discussion Questions

1. What is resiliency and how is it related to trauma? _____

2. What are the six findings on resiliency, discussed on pages 15-16?
 - _____
 - _____

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

3. Describe the nature of compassion satisfaction and areas in which you see these in your own work. _____

4. Choose five elements of a compassionate school and discuss how they can benefit children and families who have encountered trauma.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

5. Review the steps for practicing compassion on page 20. Identify two potential challenges and three benefits in practicing these steps.

- Challenge: _____
- Challenge: _____
- Benefit: _____
- Benefit: _____
- Benefit: _____

6. Choose five considerations for practicing culturally responsive teaching and support, listed on page 28.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

7. Discuss the impact of vicarious or secondary trauma. _____

Chapter 2: Self-Care: An Ethical Obligation for Those Who Care

(Pages 37-62)

Brief Overview

This chapter reviews information regarding secondary (vicarious) trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout. Prevention and self-care are also addressed and steps for building a self-care plan are outlined.

The Cost of Caring and Possible Negative Consequences of Vicarious Trauma

Discussion Questions

1. After working with students who have experienced trauma, educators may experience vicarious (secondary) trauma, compassion fatigue, or burnout. Describe the differences between these experiences and the behaviors that may be experienced as a result of their presence. _____

2. Review the areas in which vicarious trauma may impact our personal lives (p. 42) and identify one symptom from each category that resonates with you (ex: something you find surprising or have experienced first-hand).

3. Review the areas in which vicarious trauma may impact our professional lives (p. 43) and identify one symptom from each category that resonates with you.

4. Describe the term “the silencing response.” _____

Prevention and Self-Care

Discussion Questions

1. Review the self-care techniques listed on pages 49-57. Identify four techniques and why they are beneficial in practicing self-care.

Chapter 3: Instructional Principles, Curricular Domains and Specific Strategies for Compassionate Classrooms

(Pages 65-131)

Brief Overview

This chapter identifies guiding principles for compassionate instruction and outlines three domains in *The Heart of Learning and Teaching* supplemental curriculum. These domains include: safety, connection and assurance; emotional and behavioral self-regulation; and competencies of person agency, social skills, and academic skills.

Introduction and Compassionate Teaching and Discipline Principles

Discussion Questions

1. Identify the six teaching principles of compassionate instruction and discuss how each principle can be applied in your work with students.

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

A Compassionate Curriculum

Discussion Questions

1. Think about the children you work with and describe how both misattuned and overlytuned behaviors may be exhibited. _____

2. What is meant by the word *trigger*? Why is it important to recognize the signs of a student who has been triggered? _____

3. Identify three strategies in Domain One (pages 84-92) that would be beneficial in your work with students and discuss why.

- _____

- _____

- _____

4. The authors offer numerous guidelines for applying the six principles within the classroom (p. 95). After reading this, which ideas resonate with you? _____

5. Identify three strategies in Domain Two (pages 96-107) that would be beneficial in your work with students and discuss why.

- _____

- _____

- _____

6. Describe how challenges with each of following terms can impact students who have been impacted by trauma:

- Personal agency: _____

- Social skills: _____

- Academic skills: _____

- Executive functions: _____

7. Identify three strategies in Domain Three (pages 110-128) that would be beneficial in your work with students and discuss why.

- _____

- _____

- _____

Conclusion and Next Steps

Brief Overview

This section of the book study will allow users to reflect on what they have learned and discussed, as well as provide ideas for next steps that can be taken to continue building on this knowledge.

1. Identify three important takeaways from your review of *The Heart of Learning and Teaching*.

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Using the table on the following page, identify ideas that you would like to explore or implement as a result of having completed this book study.

3. Identify what step(s) should be taken or explored next.

The following list may be helpful in considering ideas:

- Read Chapters 4 and 5 of *The Heart of Learning and Teaching* and continue discussion.
- Read the books, *Helping Traumatized Children Learn Volumes 1 & 2*. Find more information at <https://traumasensitiveschools.org/tlpi-publications/>.
- Share information from *The Heart of Learning and Teaching* with other colleagues. Find PPT templates and vignettes at <http://www.k12.wa.us/CompassionateSchools/Resources.aspx>.
- Create a trauma-informed learning community to continue discussion and provide support for those beginning or exploring implementation within your school or district.
- _____
- _____
- _____

Exploration and Implementation Table

Idea or Strategy	Location in Book	What will be the benefit (to students or self?)	What are some potential challenges?	How might some of these challenges be addressed?	What resources will be helpful to exploring or implementation?

Adapted from FLDOE Professional Learning Tool Kits: PLC Book Study Guide (n.d.) Retrieved from <http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/talentdevelopment/news/plc/PLC-Book-Study-Guidelines.pdf>