

Summer 08-31-2025

Trauma-informed Pedagogical Practices in Post-Secondary Education: An Integrative Review of the Literature

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<https://doi.org/10.5206/cjsotlrcacea.2025.1.17123>

Recommended Citation

VanderKaay, S., Begin, D., Jack, S., Lisogurski, R., Robb, C., Phoenix, M., & Vrkljan, B. (2025). Trauma-informed pedagogical practices in post-secondary education: An integrative review of the literature. *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.5206/cjsotlrcacea.2025.1.17123>

Trauma-informed Pedagogical Practices in Post-Secondary Education: An Integrative Review of the Literature

Abstract

The experience of past or current trauma can interfere with learning in post-secondary education and can be particularly problematic for people from equity-deserving groups. Implementing trauma-informed pedagogical practices could contribute significantly to post-secondary education by cultivating safe and equitable learning spaces that support a range of needs and potentially lead to better academic outcomes. However, the uptake of trauma-informed pedagogy in post-secondary institutions has lagged despite increased attention to students' experience of trauma. Post-secondary educators may not be aware of trauma-informed pedagogical practices or know how to implement them. Currently there are few comprehensive resources for about trauma-informed pedagogy. The purpose of this paper is to report on the findings of an integrative review of the literature conducted to gather and categorize information regarding trauma-informed pedagogical practices in post-secondary education. The research question guiding this study was: *What trauma-informed pedagogical practices can be used in post-secondary education and how can they be applied to promote student success?* Integrative review methodology guided the research. Relevant literature was located through a systematic literature review ($n=55$) and was analyzed in three stages (preparation, coding, creating categories). The *Four Proactive Priorities* framework guided deductive coding and data analysis. Findings include a comprehensive list of trauma-informed pedagogical practices in four proactive priority areas (connection, empowerment, flexibility, predictability). This first-known comprehensive and systematic review of the literature advances knowledge and understanding of the pedagogical practices that could be implemented to support trauma-informed teaching and learning in post-secondary education.

L'expérience d'un traumatisme passé ou présent peut nuire à l'apprentissage dans l'enseignement supérieur et peut être particulièrement problématique pour les personnes issues de groupes méritant l'équité. La mise en œuvre de pratiques pédagogiques tenant compte des traumatismes pourrait contribuer de manière significative à l'enseignement supérieur en créant des espaces d'apprentissage sûrs et équitables qui répondent à un large éventail de besoins et peuvent conduire à de meilleurs résultats scolaires. Cependant, l'adoption de la pédagogie tenant compte des traumatismes dans les établissements d'enseignement supérieur a pris du retard malgré l'attention accrue portée à l'expérience des traumatismes vécus par les étudiants et les étudiantes. Les enseignants et les enseignantes de l'enseignement supérieur ne connaissent peut-être pas les pratiques pédagogiques tenant compte des traumatismes ou ne savent pas comment les mettre en œuvre. Il existe actuellement peu de ressources complètes sur la pédagogie tenant compte des traumatismes. L'objectif de cet article est de présenter les résultats d'une revue intégrative des publications de recherche menée afin de recueillir et de classer les informations relatives aux pratiques pédagogiques tenant compte des traumatismes dans l'enseignement supérieur. La question de recherche qui a guidé cette étude était la suivante : quelles pratiques pédagogiques tenant compte des traumatismes peuvent être utilisées dans l'enseignement supérieur et comment peuvent-elles être appliquées pour favoriser la réussite des étudiants et des étudiantes? La méthodologie de revue intégrative a guidé la recherche. Les publications pertinentes ont été identifiées grâce à une revue systématique des publications ($n = 55$) et analysées en trois étapes (préparation, codage, création de catégories). Le cadre des quatre priorités proactives a guidé le codage déductif et l'analyse des données. Les résultats comprennent une liste exhaustive des pratiques pédagogiques tenant compte des traumatismes dans quatre domaines prioritaires proactifs (connexion, autonomisation, flexibilité, prévisibilité). Cette première revue exhaustive et systématique des publications fait progresser la connaissance et la compréhension des pratiques pédagogiques qui pourraient être mises en œuvre pour soutenir l'enseignement et l'apprentissage tenant compte des traumatismes dans l'enseignement supérieur.

Keywords

faculty development, inclusive education, literature review, pedagogy, post-secondary education, trauma; perfectionnement du corps professoral, éducation inclusive, analyse des publications de recherche, pédagogie, enseignement postsecondaire, traumatisme

Experiences of past or current trauma can interfere with learning at all stages of education, but can be particularly problematic at the post-secondary level (Brown et al., 2016; Kameg et al., 2020; Kostouros, 2010; Read et al., 2012; Sitler, 2010; Thomas, 2016). The American Psychological Association (APA) defines trauma as follows:

Any disturbing experience that results in significant fear, helplessness, dissociation, confusion, or other disruptive feelings intense enough to have a long-lasting negative effect on a person's attitudes, behavior, and other aspects of functioning. Traumatic events include those caused by human behavior (e.g., rape, war, industrial accidents) as well as by nature (e.g., earthquakes) and often challenge an individual's view of the world as a just, safe, and predictable place. (APA, 2020)

Trauma can take many forms (APA, 2020). Some traumatic experiences are one-time events (e.g., motor vehicle collision, discreet act of interpersonal violence), others are ongoing occurrences (e.g., chronic poverty, sustained interpersonal violence), and some are generational (e.g., impacts of colonialism among generations of Indigenous People) (Gaywsh & Mordoch, 2018; Iverson et al., 2013; Watt et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2024). Systemic and structural violence, including institutional practices and social structures that adversely affect groups or individual, contribute to both the experience of trauma and its exacerbation (Elliott et al., 2005; Iverson et al., 2013; Yasmine & Moughalian, 2016). The manifestation of trauma is inherently unique to each individual and can be shaped by personal experiences and perspectives (Wells et al., 2021).

Research conducted primarily in the United States suggests that up to 85% of students have experienced trauma prior to entering post-secondary education and students are vulnerable to (re)experiencing trauma during their post-secondary education (Cantiller, 2021; Davidson, 2017; Frazier et al., 2009). A recently published study in a Canadian context explored both the prevalence and severity of trauma experienced by post-secondary students ($N = 85$) (Wilson et al., 2024) using the *Childhood Trauma Questionnaire* (Bernstein & Fink, 1998). Findings indicated a range of prevalence and severity with the highest level of trauma reported around emotional abuse (Wilson et al., 2024). The authors noted potential underreporting of trauma for 28% of students.

Research also indicates that people from equity-deserving groups, including those who are racialized and/or minoritized, two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (2SLGBTQ+), women, disabled people, and Indigenous People are disproportionately affected by trauma including systemic and structural violence (Hollins & Sinason, 2000; Kostouros, 2010; Mooney, 2017; Panofsky et al., 2021; Watt et al., 2021; Yasmine & Moughalian, 2016). Within post-secondary institutions these equity-deserving groups are already marginalized and at risk for poorer learning experiences and outcomes (Joncas & Pilote, 2021; Taylor et al., 2020; Watt et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a collective experience of trauma thereby adding an additional layer of complexity (Bridgland et al., 2021; Horesh & Brown, 2020; Taggart et al., 2021). However, while the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on all faculty and students at post-secondary institutions (Day et al., 2020), Rashid et al. (2021) posited that “in higher education, the impact [of COVID-19] will be felt unevenly. Students from marginalized, racialized, and culturally diverse backgrounds, mirroring the realities of society, will likely bear the brunt” (p. 24). Trauma can manifest within post-secondary classrooms and among learners in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, high absenteeism, difficulty focusing, difficulty retaining and recalling information, severe anxiety and stress regarding academic performance, poorer academic performance, heightened feelings of

anger, helplessness, dissociation, and even potentially leading to dropping out (Anzaldúa, 2022; Barros-Lane et al., 2021; Davidson, 2017). There is a clear need to consider the impact of trauma on learning within post-secondary education (Cantiller, 2021; Gaywish & Mordoch, 2018; Gutierrez & Gutierrez, 2019).

Trauma-informed pedagogy in post-secondary education has been defined in several ways across the literature without a cogent definition prevailing (Goodwin, 2020; Hitchcock et al., 2021; McClinton & Laurencin, 2020). In general, trauma-informed pedagogy can be understood as an approach to teaching and learning that considers how trauma impacts learners. Trauma-informed pedagogy can encompass a vast array of practices at the level of the individual faculty member and/or student (e.g., providing student with multiple means of communication), the curriculum level (e.g., involving students course-related decision-making), and at a systems-level (e.g., provide faculty training regarding trauma) (Barros-Lane et al., 2021; Cless & Nelson Goff, 2017; Pacey et al., 2021; Shevrin Venet, 2021). Trauma-informed pedagogy does not include a relaxing or softening of teaching integrity, faculty being counsellors, or focus exclusively on “warm fuzzies” (Davis, 2020, p. 21) (Clark, M., 2023; Goddard et al., 2021; Voth Schrag et al., 2021). Instead, faculty are encouraged to maintain high expectations, refer students to counselling services as appropriate, and set and maintain clear boundaries. Implementing trauma-informed pedagogy can contribute to cultivating safe and equitable learning spaces that support a range of needs and ultimately advance accessibility and inclusivity, and lead to better academic learning outcomes (Barros-Lane et al., 2021; Davidson, 2017; Sitler, 2010). Anzaldúa (2022) stated that:

A trauma-informed...perspective could make significant contributions to post-secondary education systems to maximize mental health and academic benefits for present and future college students—a generation of student pandemic survivors predicted to experience pandemic-era psychosocial repercussions impacting their education for years to come. (p. 154)

It is critical that post-secondary faculty be prepared to identify and address layers of trauma including trauma resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic through the implementation of trauma-informed pedagogical practices (Barros-Lane et al., 2021). Doing so requires thoughtfulness and careful planning to avoid further marginalization of students who have experienced or are experiencing trauma, particularly equity-deserving students (Shevrin Venet, 2021). Trauma-informed perspectives are prevalent in elementary and secondary education (Shevrin Venet, 2021). However, the uptake of trauma-informed pedagogies in post-secondary education, particularly in the Canadian context, has largely lagged despite a significant increase in attention to the impact of trauma on learning in recent years (Cantiller, 2021; Goddard et al., 2021; Nolan & Roberts, 2021). Gaywish and Mordoch (2018) stated that “the impact of trauma on learning in post-secondary institutions is largely ignored” (p. 3). Several barriers to addressing trauma in post-secondary education are noted within the literature. First, the effects of trauma can be difficult for post-secondary educators to know how to identify and support (Sitler, 2010). Second, trauma-informed practices require extreme caution to avoid further marginalization of equity-deserving students who have already experienced marginalization (Shevrin Venet, 2021) and implementation may therefore be avoided. Third, there is little research or resources available to inform faculty in addressing trauma through implementing trauma-informed pedagogical practices (Barros-Lane et al., 2021). Finally, there can be no discreet “one-size-fits-all” approach (Barros-Lane et al., 2021, p. 78).

The purpose of this paper is to report on the findings of an integrative review of the literature conducted to gather and categorize information regarding trauma-informed pedagogical practices in post-secondary education. The research question guiding this study was: *What trauma-informed pedagogical practices can be used in post-secondary education and how can they be applied to promote student success?*

Method

Integrative review methodology guided by Toronto and Remington’s (2020) *Step-by-Step Guide to Conducting an Integrative Review* was selected to guide this research. Integrative review is a systematic approach to reviewing knowledge from a diverse variety of sources (e.g., published quantitative or qualitative research, grey literature, institutional documents). Integrative reviews are intended to capture both the breadth and depth of a specific topic in a manner that data can be used to inform practice (Kastner et al., 2016).

Searching Systematically and Comprehensively

A preliminary search of ProQuest ERIC was conducted in February 2022 using the terms ‘trauma-informed’, ‘pedagogy’, and ‘higher education.’ This preliminary search supported the identification of relevant key words and index terms. A full search strategy adapted for each database was then developed in consultation with an experienced health science research librarian and an educational developer from our university’s institute for teaching and learning. Nine databases were searched between March 3, 2022 and May 16, 2022, to identify relevant literature. A list of databases and inclusion/exclusion criteria are listed in Table 1.

Table 1
Databases and Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Databases Searched	
ProQuest ERIC	OVID EmCare
ProQuest Sociological Abstracts	OVID APA PsycInfo
ProQuest Nursing & Allied Health Premium	EBSCOhost CINAHL
OVID Medline	Cochrane
OVID Embase	Google
Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
a. Types of Studies or Literature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative or quantitative • Conceptual articles • Theoretical articles • Opinion pieces • Grey literature • Masters or Ph.D. level theses • Conference proceedings 	a. Types of Studies or Literature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books b. Phenomenon Under Investigation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma-informed care • Violence-informed care • Trauma-and-violence-informed care • Elementary or secondary school educators

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
<p>b. Phenomenon Under Investigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma-informed pedagogy • Violence-informed pedagogy • Trauma-and-violence-informed pedagogy • Trauma-informed education • Violence-informed education • Trauma-and-violence-informed education • Trauma-sensitive pedagogy • Trauma-sensitive education • Trauma-informed practices • school-wide practices • classroom-wide practices • organizational practices <p>c. Population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-secondary students • Post-secondary educators • equity-seeking groups • marginalized/oppressed students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students who are black • students who are racialized • minoritized students • students who are disabled • students who are 2SLGBTQ+ • Indigenous students <p>d. Publication Language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English <p>e. Setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-secondary institutions • Post-secondary education programs (online or in-person) 	<p>c. Phenomenon Under Investigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma-informed care • Violence-informed care • Trauma-and-violence-informed care <p>c. Population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary or secondary school students • Elementary or secondary school educators

Article Selection

Please see Figure 1 for a PRISMA diagram outlining the selection process. In total, 4037 citations were identified and uploaded to Covidence. Fifty-one duplicates were removed. Four reviewers (principal investigator [SV], research assistant [DB], and two members of research team [CR, RL]) independently screened the first 20 titles and abstracts and compared findings to ensure agreement and consistency in applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Then, three reviewers (DB, CR, RL) independently screened the remaining titles and abstracts against the inclusion

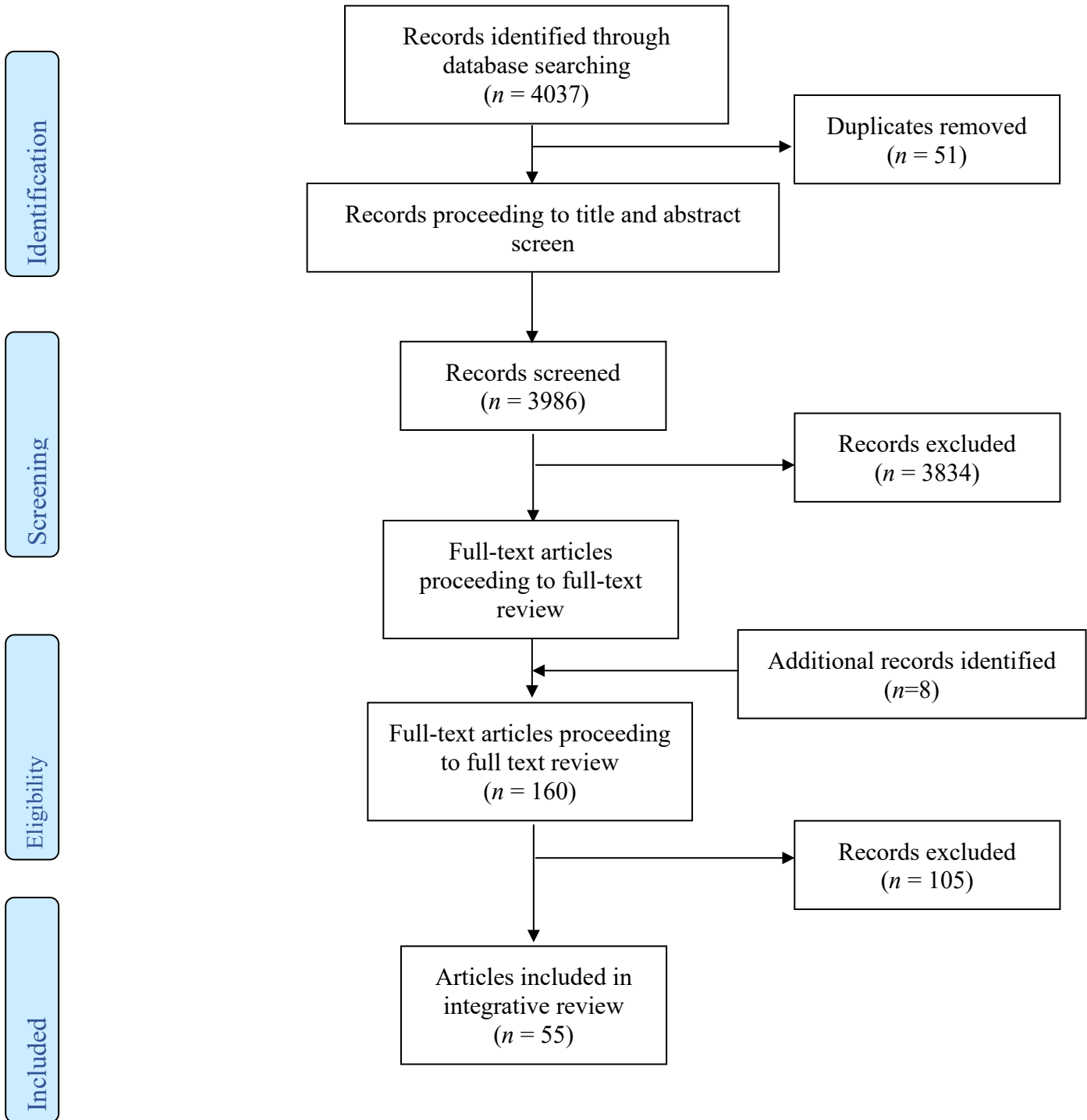
criteria excluding 3834 articles. Three reviewers (DB, CR, RL) independently assessed eligibility of the remaining 152 articles. Eight additional records identified via Google search were assessed for eligibility by SV (IR often involves searches for relevant records in addition to data base searches that typically yield peer-reviewed articles) (Toronto and Remington, 2022). Disagreements between reviewers at abstract or full-text screening were resolved first through discussion between two (of three) reviewers (DB and either CR or RL) and with a fourth reviewer (SV) as needed. Reasons for all exclusions during full-text review were noted and include: no tangible pedagogical practices listed (58), education setting not post-secondary (24), irrelevant subject (18), full book (5). Ultimately 55 articles were included in the integrative review. Given that the focus of this study was to gather and categorize the breadth and depth of existing information regarding trauma-informed pedagogical practices in post-secondary education, a formal quality appraisal of included articles was not indicated (Grant & Booth, 2009).

Analysis and Synthesis

A data matrix table was created to extract article characteristics (i.e., APA citation, article type, country of origin, context, and population). However, Toronto and Remington (2020) emphasize that the main goal of integrative review is to advance knowledge of a topic rather than “laundry listing” (p. 57). As a result, SV conducted a deductive content analysis of all articles based on the *Four Proactive Priorities* framework for trauma-informed education outlined by Shevrin Venet (2021) (i.e., connection, empowerment, flexibility, and predictability) with three distinct levels within each priority area (i.e., interaction/relationship, pedagogy/academic, and system/policy). The *Four Proactive Priorities* framework (Shevrin Venet, 2021) was selected to guide deductive analysis because the framework is squarely situated within education whereas other notable frameworks referred to in the post-secondary education literature (e.g., Barros-Lane et al., 2021) are rooted in health care (i.e., models of trauma-informed care). The deductive coding table also included a section titled *Definitions* to extract and analyze the various descriptions of trauma-informed pedagogy put forth in the literature (e.g., Cantiller, 2020, Harris et. al., 2020, and Hitchcock et. al., 2021). Data analysis consisted of three main phases consistent with deductive content qualitative data analysis (Elo & Kyngas, 2008): (1) *preparation* which involved reading and becoming familiar with articles, (2) *coding* to extract trauma-informed pedagogical practices in each area reflected in the deductive coding table, and (3) *creating categories* where data in each coded area were generalized and abstracted to convey broadly applicable pedagogical practices. Excel was used for the data matrix table and Dedoose was used to manage deductive analysis. Dedoose is a web-based data analysis software (Dedoose, 2022) similar to other qualitative research software such as NVivo. Worked examples can be found at <https://www.dedoose.com/home/resources>. Benefits of using Dedoose that informed its selection include intuitive user interface and cloud-based design. Drawbacks can include cost (as compared to using Excel spreadsheet). Strategies to ensure quality of data analysis include analytical debriefing with the research team throughout the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and use of data analysis software (Dedoose) to promote reliability (i.e., maintaining clear link from findings to data) (Elo & Kyngas, 2008).

Figure 1

PRISMA Flow Diagram of Document Selection Process (Moher et al., 2009)



Findings

The documents in the integrative review included blogs/webpages (4), literature reviews (6), perspective articles (12), program descriptions (16), and research articles (both quantitative and qualitative) (17). Most documents originated in the United States (47), but other countries of origin include Canada (5), South Africa (1), and the United Kingdom (2). Although no date-related inclusion or exclusion criteria were established, all articles were published between 2014 and 2022. While many articles were about trauma-informed pedagogy in post-secondary education *broadly*, some articles addressed trauma-informed pedagogy for specific populations of post-secondary students (e.g., Indigenous students, veterans, immigrant students, students who were previously in foster care). A broad range of departments/faculties were represented including medicine, nursing, psychology, social work, and theology. However, as described above in *Analysis and Synthesis* the final stage of data analysis involved abstracting and generalizing data from specific populations and faculties to convey pedagogical practices that are more broadly applicable.

Four proactive priority areas for trauma-informed pedagogy in education were identified by Shevrin Venet (2021) (i.e., connection, empowerment, flexibility, and predictability). Using this framework as a guide, findings from our study indicate that trauma-informed pedagogical practices to promote *connection* can be understood as those that involve cultivating healthy relationships with students, and fostering healthy relationships among students, and others. Practices that promote a sense of belonging for all within learning spaces are central to cultivating connection. Pedagogical practices associated with *empowerment* involve cultivating and supporting students' agency and autonomy and building student confidence. Empowerment practices necessarily require opportunities for students to enact their own power control over their learning when possible. Practices aimed at promoting *flexibility* are those that focus on prioritizing the most important aspect of the learning and relinquishing less important aspects as needed. Flexibility practices allow for 'doing things differently' when the actual learning is prioritized over the standardized processes. Finally, pedagogical practices aimed at promoting *predictability* involve arranging learning environments so that students clearly know what to expect, there are minimal surprises, and everyone is on the same page. Predictability practices require anticipating circumstances and situations that might feel triggering for students and finding ways to proactively ensure safety in learning. Table 2 lists tangible examples of the trauma-informed pedagogical practices identified in each proactive priority area (please visit www.doitanyway.ca for a full list of trauma-informed pedagogical practices). It is important to note that in all four proactive priority areas, the least number of trauma-informed practices were found at the system/policy level (as reflected in Table 2).

Finally, various definitions of trauma-informed pedagogy were put forth in the literature and were extracted and analyzed. As a result of the analysis, a clear and cogent working definition of trauma-informed pedagogy in post-secondary education was developed that subsumes the individual definitions analyzed — *Trauma-informed pedagogy is a way to approach teaching and learning that considers how trauma impacts learners and seeks to mitigate the effects of trauma on learning by creating safe, supportive, and empowering learning spaces that minimize re-traumatization and promote success and resilience.*

Table 2
Trauma-informed Pedagogical Practices

Connection		
Interaction/Relationship	Pedagogy/Academic	System/Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be explicit about how students can reach you and what they can expect regarding response times • Provide students with multiple means to reach you • Learn students' names • Listen actively and validate students' concerns • Share personal information as appropriate and when it may be beneficial (e.g., share a photo of a pet) • Approach students with unconditional positive regard • Check in with students • Reflect on and address your own relationship to trauma • Model self-care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate well-being activities into your class (e.g., pause for a stretch break) • Communicate informally with students at the start and end of class (e.g., greet students as they enter the classroom) • Provide option for partner or group work • Allow the opportunity for students to discuss difficult material and their emotional reactions to it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training for faculty regarding trauma and the impact on learning, as well as anti-racism and anti-bias training

Empowerment		
Interaction/Relationship	Pedagogy/Academic	System/Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students and express belief in their potential • Affirm and validate students' resilience • Avoid power struggles with students • Be respectful • Reflect on your positionality regarding power and privilege 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve students in decision-making regarding the course and classes (e.g., students create an assignment) • Cultivate learning spaces that welcome alternate perspectives • List campus resources in course syllabi • Provide many opportunities for students to provide feedback regarding the course • Adopt a strengths-base approach to student evaluation and emphasize opportunities for learning and growth • Explicitly acknowledge when something happens in the classroom that may have a negative impact on students • Maintain clear, consistent, and high expectation • Avoid romanticization of traumatic topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider providing open access food pantries or clothing closets • Hire ethnically and culturally diverse faculty • Provide financial assistance for shelter/transportation, counseling, childcare, or access to legal services • Engage in institutional reflexivity • Provide support for navigating post-secondary education

Flexibility

Interaction/Relationship	Pedagogy/Academic	System/Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise patience when offering support and resources, honouring that students may not be ready to utilize the support or resources you are offering • Model flexibility when you are faced with an unexpected change • In meeting with you, allow students to share as much or as little information about themselves or their circumstances as they choose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build flexibility into deadlines (e.g., a specified number of unquestioned or non-penalized late days, use of late-day tickets) • For in-class activities and assignments allow students the option to work individually, with a partner, or with a group • Where possible, build choice into course and lesson design (e.g., choice of topic and type of project, choice in due dates, choice in format i.e., virtual or in-person) • Vary the intensity of material over the course and within classes • Allow students to opt-out of classroom activities or discussions with no questions asked • Provide lecture notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a policy of leaves of absence for family or other reasons to allow students time to address issues • Provide physical retreat spaces through the institution

Predictability		
Interaction/Relationship	Pedagogy/Academic	System/Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear and consistent in all communication particularly regarding expectations. Miscommunication and confusion of expectations can increase the stress experienced by our students. • Establish clear and consistent boundaries for yourself and the students, and consistently maintain boundaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear and consistent regarding class and classroom routines and provide explicit advanced notice regarding change in routing. • Start and end each class in a similar way. • Communicate regularly with students regarding their progress. • Set high course expectations, be clear about expectations, and maintain them throughout the course. • Use rubrics for assignments and exams. • Create and continuously cultivate a culture of “no surprises” within the learning space. • Create group agreements at the start of the course and maintain group agreements through the course. • Become aware of the advantages and disadvantages of trigger warnings and use them thoughtfully. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a sense of physical safety in the classroom (e.g., locations of emergency exits, locations of gender-neutral bathrooms, review emergency procedures specific to your classroom). • Communicate institutional policies clearly and consistently.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to gather and categorize information regarding trauma-informed pedagogical practices in post-secondary education. This research represents the first-known comprehensive and systematic review of the literature related to trauma-informed pedagogical practices in post-secondary education and advances knowledge and understanding in several important ways. First, many tangible pedagogical practices from a variety of sources have been combined through the data analysis process and put forth in a generalized format which can be readily accessed and taken-up by post-secondary educators. However, it is important to note that there can be no “one-size-fits-all” approach to trauma-informed pedagogy (Barros-Lane et al.,

2021, p. 78). Instead, educators must thoughtfully analyze the appropriateness of the pedagogical practices while considering many other factors including student, program, and institutional characteristics to create a tailored approach to implementing trauma-informed pedagogical practices (Barros-Lane et al., 2021). As indicated in Table 2 additional important factors that must be considered is the educators' own relationship to trauma. Literature suggests that in attempting to implement trauma-informed pedagogical practices, educators could re-experience their own potentially unresolved trauma (Davidson, 2017). It is imperative that post-secondary educators attend to their own well-being in order to be best able to engage with trauma-informed pedagogy including responding to students supportively (Bedera, 2021; Davidson, 2017). Quinlan (2014) put forth a model of *Leadership of Teaching for Student Learning* that describes three conditions that help create supportive environments for student learning in higher education: *creating organizational conditions*, *modelling a meaningful life*, and *leadership of learning*. This model is an example of a tool that can be used to support educators' critical reflexivity in interrogating their relationship to trauma thereby supporting the ability to feasibly select and implement trauma-informed pedagogical practices.

A notable observation in the data is that the least number of trauma-informed practices were found at the system/policy level. Systemic change in post-secondary institutions is often slow and therefore lagging in responsiveness to societal changes and student need (Siemens & Matheos, 2010). Institutional practices and structures within post-secondary institutions, can contribute significantly to both the experience of trauma and its exacerbation particularly for those who are already systemically marginalized (Elliott et al., 2019; Iverson et al., 2013; Yasmine & Moughalian, 2016). Often referred to as systemic and structural violence, any person, structure, or system in place in post-secondary education that overtly or inadvertently negatively impacts learning can traumatize students and limit their potential. Furthermore, the experience of institutional betrayal defined as "institutional action or inaction that exacerbates the impact of traumatic experiences" (Smith & Freyd, 2014, p. 577) can add a level of mistrust of educators and education systems among students who have experienced trauma. This can further compromise students' ability to learn and their likelihood of experiencing academic success. Therefore, it is imperative that post-secondary institutions seriously interrogate practices and structures to identify and dismantle those that inflict or exacerbate trauma. Doing so requires a shift in approach from focusing solely on the individual student's or faculty members' responsibility to reduce, avoid, or address exposure to trauma to include a focus on institutional reflectivity to promote institutional change.

Limitations of this research include the fact that of the 55 articles included in this study, only approximately 30% involved empirical research of trauma-informed pedagogical practices (qualitative, quantitative, or both). Furthermore, most of the articles originated in the North American context. While many traumatic events are experienced globally (e.g., COVID-19) there are unique contextual factors in North America and in countries around the world that may limit transferability of findings.

Conclusion

This manuscript reports on the findings of an integrative review of the literature that was conducted to gather and categorize information regarding trauma-informed pedagogical practices in post-secondary education. Findings elucidate trauma-informed pedagogical practices across four priority areas (i.e., connection, empowerment, flexibility, and predictability) at three distinct

levels within each priority area (i.e., interaction/relationship, pedagogy/academic, and system/policy). In addition, a working definition of trauma-informed pedagogy is put forth.

Our program of research currently includes a broad implementation study where trauma-informed pedagogical practices were explicitly implemented universally in several courses at one Canadian post-secondary institution. Faculty and student experiences of teaching and learning while trauma-informed practices are implemented are being explored via focus groups (e.g., VanderKaay et al., 2024). Further empirical research regarding trauma-informed pedagogy in post-secondary education is recommended and could include consideration of system/policy level practices, faculty and student experiences with trauma-informed pedagogy, the impact on learning outcomes when trauma-informed pedagogical practices are implemented, and a broader global perspective regarding trauma-informed pedagogy in post-secondary education.

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