

2024 CTE Faculty Fellow

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Maslow before Bloom

The neuroscience of learning suggests that students learn best when they feel safe; literally, this means that when a student's emotional state is calm, their neurological environment is stable and capable of remembering and processing information (Imad 38). Many of our students do not feel safe. COVID 19, climate crisis, gun violence, racial violence, wars and rumors of wars have yielded a population of traumatized college students. [As many as half of our students report experiencing trauma](#), and [other studies show even higher numbers](#). Trauma disproportionately affects [students of marginalized identities](#); it also [affects faculty](#) who teach regularly on traumatic topics (environmental crisis, racism, sexism, and others). Taken together, a huge number of us are regularly experiencing or recovering from dysregulated emotional states in the classroom, and not in our best minds to learn.

Trauma-informed pedagogy names a host of practices and principles that recognize the impact of trauma on teaching and learning. For me, recognizing that there is trauma in the classroom has led me to focus deliberately on creating the conditions in my classroom where learning can happen. This semester the CTE sponsored a gathering of faculty from across the university to discuss the impacts of trauma and mental unwellness on teaching and learning. Together we considered how COVID and other recent crises influence student learning and explored strategies for reducing student stress without increasing our own.

Trauma-informed pedagogy is on facet of an access-literate DEI curriculum and culture. As a faculty fellow with The Coelho Center (TCC), I have worked to increase "access literacy" on LMU's campus. I have fostered connections between TCC and other colleges at LMU, anticipating and developing meaningful research and programming opportunities towards the

goal of increasing disability visibility and channeling resources towards disability justice. I've worked to help integrate TCC into the bluff as the dust has cleared on the actual construction of TCC's new office (UNH 2236). My work with TCC will continue in the coming weeks with a year-end celebratory [community building event](#). As we look ahead, plans are underway to support faculty to develop disability-related courses and programming and to organize a disability research and advocacy conference in Spring 2025. With increased visibility of disability – including mental unwellness and trauma – and its impacts on student learning, we will invite opportunities to create even more optimal conditions for learning while operationalizing our strategic commitments to DEI.