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DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS IN SOCIAL STUDIES
CLASSES:

HOW CAN TEACHERS BE PREPARED IN THEIR CLASSROOMS?

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Depression, Social Studies, Anxiety, Bipolar, Emotional Behavior Disorders, Secondary Grades, High School, General Education, Inclusive

Social Studies classrooms establish lifelong connections to citizenship, the world's society, and our past, present and future. Teachers in these classrooms need to have the tools to support their students academically, no matter their background or ability. I focus on the specific symptoms that cause the need for extra support in today's classroom. I argue that the social studies teachers, and teachers in general, need to be given the proper training and support needed to build the structure in their own classroom. Schools, teacher-prep programs, and the teachers themselves need to join the fight for equitable education for all.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

I was a student with bipolar II and generalized anxiety disorder. I was also a student that thrived in a social studies classroom. However, I struggled on days to keep up with my schoolwork when I was in a phase of depression, which led to increased anxiety. My teachers did their best by giving me extensions, but I would have benefited from more guidance in managing writing assignments, tests, and large projects. These tasks heightened my anxiety and often set me back because of my depressive episodes. I did not know how to express what I specifically needed help with as a teenager, but was pretty open about the struggles I faced. Writing was the hardest as I would be so scattered and without guidance that my final products suffered. Looking at my final grades a person would not view that last statement as correct, but I always knew I could have done better. That was compounded by the guilt that I disappointed my teachers (they definitely did not feel that way) for not putting my best effort into the project. Those same teachers were my heroes and inspired me to become a teacher.

Looking back on my experience, I can pinpoint times when I needed support that I did not get. My senior year was especially tumultuous, but I was not receiving the aid I needed in my classes as I was preparing to continue with my love of social studies in my college years by becoming a teacher. There was a link missing for my teachers to connect how to help me with my specific struggles with mental health. My experiences left me with questions and a curiosity about what truly is being done to support secondary teachers, especially in the social studies

classroom, to support the growing population¹ of students diagnosed with emotional behavior disorders (Office of Adolescent Health, 2017). How could have proper teacher training helped me succeed in all of my classes, especially in my social studies classes where I was most excited to learn? How could have this information made my teachers more comfortable when teaching students like me?

During my student teaching experience in an exurban middle school in Central Pennsylvania, I was faced with the challenge of supporting adolescents going through the biggest transition of their lives. We were seeing a sharp increase in emotional behavior disorders being diagnosed and a greater need to provide support. However, I felt like my teacher preparation program did not fully support me in understanding the academic supports I can provide these students, especially at a secondary level. Even though my program was **Secondary Social Studies**, my only two Special Education classes² were focused on *literacy* and *math* education and often were hyper-focused on **elementary** grades. I felt lost not only in supporting the growth of knowledge in skills in history, citizenship, and social sciences, but also in how to approach secondary students in general.

I was searching for answers to address the growing needs of my students with Emotional Behavior Disorders. I felt unprepared to tread these waters because I only had minimal training on supporting the behavioral sides of anxiety, depression, and bipolar. How was I supposed to give these students the experience I wished I had when I was an adolescent? Where did I begin? As a college student, I had access to hundreds of academic journals, but a limited number of

¹ One in five adolescents will have a major mental health disorder in their life according the Department of Health and Human Services

² I did take an additional class on using Augmentative and Alternative Communication with students to supplement the introductory courses.

articles that addressed my questions. If I did not have the university library access to the journals, I would not have even been able to afford the scores of journals I searched. In the end, I ended up picking through articles concerning ADHD and literacy and mathematics resources in order to help my students succeed in every facet of my classroom. I was, however, discouraged by never seeing my classroom reflected in the research. How do I support my students when I do not have access to the resources, training, or understanding? How do I grow my students to become the best students and global students they can possibly be? How do we support students in every classroom to become the well-rounded student teachers aim for them to be?

What are “Emotional Behavior Disorders”?

The term “emotional behavioral disorders”, or EBD, encompasses a wide array of diagnoses and implications for students in the classroom. Diagnoses under this broad umbrella term center around the theme of emotional disturbance. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), an “emotional disturbance” is, “...a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child’s educational performance:

- A) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- B) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- C) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- D) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.

E) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems” (IDEA, 2004).

The IDEA protects the rights of all students to learn, despite ability level. For children with emotional behavioral disorders, they are facing roadblocks when they cannot feel comfortable around others, act out when frustrated, or face a wall of lethargy and emptiness. As teachers, our goal is to help these students overcome their obstacles and achieve to the best of their ability.

The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (partnered with the Council for Exceptional Children) uses the definition from IDEA to list the following as some of the categories of EBD: anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, conduct disorder, eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and psychotic disorders (The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, 2020).

For the sake of this paper, I will be focusing on anxiety, bipolar, and depressive disorders³.

The fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is used by medical professionals to diagnose individuals with a variety of mental disorders. It will be by these definitions that the behavior and characteristics of students diagnosed with various emotional behavioral disorders will be discussed. I do recognize that every situation is different. No student is going to act in the same way, but we will use their definitions as a baseline.

Anxiety disorders are defined by their excessive fear and the impact it has on the individual. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, approximately 32% of adolescents had any anxiety disorder (The National Institute of Mental Health, 2017). However, the DSM lists 15 different diagnoses and one specifier in their chapter on anxiety disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). I am going to specifically examine generalized

³While the focus is on these three subcategories, the research in all areas is important. My argument stands to include the entire umbrella, but to narrow the scope, I placed limits.

anxiety disorder (GAD) and the panic attack specifier to give background on what students may be facing in a wide variety of situations, including with social anxiety.

Generalized anxiety features excessive worry in a variety of situations and events. Unlike specific phobias and social anxiety, the fear and worry are caused by multiple factors that may not be linked to a particular source and in situations that do not involve other people (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). In order to be diagnosed, the individual must face excessive, uncontrollable worry about a multitude of things almost every day for six months, at least three of the specified symptoms⁴, the symptoms cause an impairment to the individual's life, and the symptoms cannot be attributable to other mental illness or health disorders. If a student is worrying about deadlines, being around their peers, and/or interacting with their teacher, it is often normal. However, a student is in real need of guidance and assistance if the worry is out of control and they are suffering in the classroom. For a classroom teacher, instruction is needed to best support the student as they try to complete assignments against a racing mind, fatigue, and lack of sleep.

A panic attack specifier is added to an anxiety disorder diagnosis when an individual experiences an intense surge of fear combined with a variety of physical symptoms⁵ (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). There is specifically panic disorder, which is excessive fear of having a panic attack, but the specifier can be included in many diagnoses. I personally experienced several panic attacks while in middle and high schools, and the reaction of other students and teachers were mixed. Two of them in my senior year left me knocked on the floor

⁴ Restlessness, Fatigue, Difficulty Concentrating, Irritability, Muscle Tension, and Sleep Disturbance

⁵ At least four of the following: Accelerated heart rate, sweating, trembling/shaking, shortness of breath, feelings of choking, chest and/or abdominal discomfort, nausea, light-headedness/ faint, numbing or tingling, chills/heat sensation, detachment, fear of losing control or dying

of a hallway. Panic attacks are serious and can cause great physical and emotional fatigue on a student. They can also be incredibly embarrassing when they happen in a classroom. Most of my teachers that helped me were adults that also suffered from attacks, but not everyone knows from experience what to do in those situations and their impact on academic success. If a student is having these experiences, teachers need training on how to adapt their classroom and materials to prevent the student from falling behind. Anxiety can be debilitating, and topics in a social studies classroom can be difficult emotionally and taxing academically. The combination can be a huge hurdle for a student. There needs to be an increase in research that looks at how to use history as an academic tool for students with anxiety. I have identified a few resources that are being put into place for other disorders, but we could see an increase in testing resources specifically on this subset of students.

Depressive disorders feature similar effects as anxiety, but are characterized by an empty, sad, and irritable mood with changes to the body and mind (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Approximately 13% of adolescents are diagnosed with a depressive disorder, which will impact their progress in sixth to twelfth grade (Office of Adolescent Health, 2019). The DSM lists nine different disorders under the depressive disorders section. In order to get a glimpse of the magnitude of a depressive disorder, I will highlight major depressive disorder.

In order to qualify for a major depressive disorder diagnoses, an individual must see five of the following symptoms with a two week period of time: depressed mood most days, lack of interest in activities that would normally bring pleasure, significant weight change, insomnia/hypersomnia, agitation or lethargy, fatigue, feelings of guilt, indecision, or thoughts of

death/ suicidal ideation⁶ (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). When feeling depressed, a student may simply feel empty and unable to connect to the people and world around them. Teachers need to know how to keep them grounded and connected to the class community through group work and discussion. The question then becomes how do we get them engaged? Additionally, the feelings of fatigue and affected sleep may leave them scattered when approaching projects and class work. What resources can be given to these students to keep on track and still achieve their learning goals?

Bipolar disorder has a lot of myths surrounding what it is. My own sister said recently to my nephew that he was “acting bipolar” because he got angry and then was happy again. My own sister. I was diagnosed with bipolar II disorder when I was nineteen, but have faced its challenges since my early teens. Somedays I would have all of the energy in the world and did not sleep or slept very little for five days without side effects. I could not stop doing things, which was helpful when I needed to get my homework done. On the negative side, I occasionally would impulsively spend my money on frivolous things or speak without a filter and alter relationships. When that phase was done, I would fall into a deep depression for about two weeks and fall behind on my schoolwork and sleep for hours, including in my classes. It was not mood swings⁷. It was periods of emotional, mental, and physical strain.

Bipolar disorder^{8 9} is split into two subcategories: bipolar I and bipolar II. Both are equally as severe but in different aspects of the individual’s life. Bipolar I is characterized by intense manic phases, “A distinct period of abnormally and persistently elevated, expansive, or

⁶These symptoms must not be attributed to a substance-abuse disorder, other mental illness, or health problem and attributed to impairment in functioning.

⁷ Referring to regular mood swings in everyday life is especially detrimental and stigmatizing to people who are dealing with bipolar.

⁸ Formally known as manic depressive disorder

⁹ These disorders may impact up to 6% of adolescents and young adults.

irritable mood and abnormally and persistently increased activity or energy, lasting at least 1 week and present most of the day, nearly every day (or any duration if hospitalization is necessary)” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). This period can include inflated ego, a feeling of invincibility, impulsive behavior (e.g. excessive spending), agitation, and an extreme decrease and necessary sleep. This behavior can increase confrontation with peers and teachers, calling out in class, and disruptive behaviors. It also puts students at a higher risk of skipping school and dangerous activities like fighting and theft. Individuals with bipolar II are likely to have less frequent, less severe bouts referred to as hypomania. The depressive symptoms in both are the same as in a major depressive episode, but are felt more severely and for a longer duration in those with bipolar II. This puts these students at a higher risk for suicidal ideation and disconnecting from their surroundings.

The Importance of Understanding

The importance of understanding might seem like a cut and dry answer. As educators, our goal is to help all students achieve based on what success is for them. This is a reminder that every student looks different in achievement. For one student, a 100% on a paper is achievement. For another, it is simply turning it in on time. The importance of understanding involves the process, not just the goal.

When research is being conducted, we see a large portion being focused on literacy and math academic supports, especially in the younger grades (preschool- sixth grade). What we do not see is those same research goals being applied in secondary social studies¹⁰ classrooms.

¹⁰ History, Government, Economics, Geography, and the Social Sciences

These subject areas address many deep and difficult topics and a variety of skills, including understanding of maps and charts, writing based on primary and secondary sources, and application of math to economic principles. We see war and death being discussed and the current human condition on a regular basis. The students are still children, and if they are dealing with an emotional behavioral disorder, these topics may make them feel unstable. With a class that is increasingly cross-curricular and deeper in content, these classrooms are an environment where academic supports¹¹ should be researched to see how they respond when working together. Research needs to reflect the needs of teachers to raise up all students in the classroom.

Purpose of Paper

Mental illness is growing and so are the effects on the students in high school. A dialogue needs to be opened about how teachers can be supported and what resources are needed to help these students grow to their fullest potential. How can the symptoms affect students in and out of the classroom in completing assignments? In order to fulfill the requirements set by teachers, these students need to be given an equitable chance to flourish, just as any student does. If we can look into the modern research and combine the resources being discovered, teachers and students will have a fighting chance to reach their goals.

This paper is focused on what is needed by the social studies teachers and the students they represent. This area of research needs to continue growing and this discourse is a first step. What happens when a student is constantly lethargic, or has trouble focusing on long assignments? These are very real problems for students dealing with mental illness. They also might be perceived as

¹¹ These supports may be used to help support other students in the classroom as well!

disrespectful to teachers. It's true that some students are just not trying or have given up. However, there are students that want more and not to be defined by a disability. Analyzing the research can help both sides build a relationship instead of a wall. Not every student is going to respond to the same intervention, especially with the wide array of Emotional Behavior Disorders. I plan to open a discussion about how research can expand by combining resources and magnify their presence in less researched classrooms, especially in the social studies

Chapter 2

Mental Illness and the Effects on Academic Success

Due to the symptoms of a variety of mental illnesses, students with these diagnoses can face challenges in focusing in the classroom, completing assignments, and effectively interacting with peers. Among the most common issues that cause disruptions in learning are sleep deprivation/ exhaustion despite increased sleep time, procrastination, and disassociation.

Sleep

Insomnia, hypersomnia, and restless sleep are hallmarks for many emotional disorders. Teens in the United States are facing a sleep deprivation crisis with around 87% not receiving the recommended ten hours of sleep each night (Richter, 2015). This statistic is not specifically for our target group of students, which means that supports are needed in every classroom regardless of diagnosis. When an individual has a decreased amount of sleep on a regular basis, REM sleep is not achieved and limits the development of memory and restoration (National Institutes of Health, 2019). As the night goes on, REM increases in length while other sleep stages decrease. If REM is consistently disturbed, a student does not achieve the required rest needed.

Visual tasks, motor skills (both gross and fine), and long-term memory face deprivation alongside the lack of sleep (Alhola & Polo-Kantola, 2007). Using a pencil or typing to take notes

and write papers require motor skills to be intact and reliable for a student to achieve in modern classrooms. With the increase in standardized testing,¹² teachers consistently rely on formal assessment data in the form of testing and timed-essays to project student success. A student that struggles with insomnia can find their ability to keep up with lectures and within timed assessments can see the normal model of success beyond their grasp. Visual tasks involve following in-class presentations and media (Alhola & Polo-Kantola, 2007). A student needs to be able to effectively track movement within lessons and comprehend information at the same time. When combined with slower reaction time in motor skills, a student can easily fall behind in meeting standards that are required by their teacher, district, and even the state. Both of these skills are then needed to build the long-term memory required to complete assignments. Without achieving a restful night's sleep, the student cannot solidify memory and the day's classes are not strengthened in memory.

Hypersomnia is described as, “recurrent episodes of excessive daytime sleepiness or prolonged nighttime sleep” (National Institute of Health, 2019). If a student is unable to stay awake during class, learning is not occurring. If they are constantly drowsy, assignments cannot be completed. Like insomnia, the constant drowsiness is going to affect the student's ability to perform at a level needed to fit the normalized definition of success.

Social studies classes are centered around in-depth information from across the world and time. Notes and written projects are centerpieces for the classroom, but both can cause distress for a student struggling with an unsuccessful sleep schedule. Student success is measured by the

¹² An estimated 112 standardized tests were estimated to be taken by students from Kindergarten to 12th grade (Strauss, 2015).

ability to remember information, but also apply it in open-answer questions. If the base information is not solidified, the application also cannot happen.

Procrastination

To procrastinate is, “to put off intentionally and habitually,” according to Merriam-Webster. For students, this act includes putting off assignments, taking care of responsibilities for school organizations, or even completing hygiene routines. There may be a cost for delaying these activities, but the lack of ambition to begin is difficult to overcome. Among these adverse effects is increased anxiety (Constantin, English, & Mazmanian, 2018). This cycle is prominent in all three areas being discussed, with the most noted being in generalized anxiety disorder. Anxiety or depressive episodes can lead to a desire to put off work that is difficult or boring in favor of rest and other more favorable activities (for me that was reading for fun). However, as the due date arrives closer, anxiety over finishing an assignment in a respectable manner then increases the stress of even beginning. The cycle then continues until the project is finished with a range of effort depending on the student, or needs to be turned in late or unfinished.

Rubrics often are including timeliness as a portion of grades. They also might include creativity or thoroughness. All three areas can be a problem for those who struggle with procrastination. If a project ends up being thrown together at the last minute, creativity and details are the first to go in favor for correctness and completed rules. The assignment might get completed, but needs to be turned in late. The student once again is docked points. The ability to begin leads to a detrimental effect in the end.

Social studies classes use project and essays as tools to test students' abilities to apply content knowledge. These projects might include extensive research or art skills. If a student perceives herself as an inferior artist, she is less likely to care about her end product or even finishing it in the end. This feeling can lead to a later start date. If the workload is overwhelming, a student will put it off because it seems impossible in nature. While inquiry learning is important for a student to express their skills, it also might be a source of anxiety for some and will need more structure.

Disassociation

Disassociation is incredibly broad in definition. It includes the separation from time, space, feelings, and thought (Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). A student may be physically present, but that does not always mean they are mentally present. Disassociation effects disallow a student from being part of the classroom at all times. It might be seen as spacing out or plain disrespect by not paying attention. However, the student is not connected with their surroundings. Their mind has unplugged from the current situation.

If a student is struggling with a task, their lack of connection to emotions might make it impossible for them to express their needs and feelings to those around them. This can lead to procrastination and falling behind their grade-level peers. The student may also face a lack of connection with memory when stressed out. As was seen with sleep deprivation, the disconnect between memories can make assessment goals difficult to reach and requires review of student goals and acceptable forms of assessment.

Mania, depression and anxiety can all cause a student to either purposely disconnect from their environment or be taken away in thought. In a social studies classroom, topics can be sensitive or considered boring to some students. Teachers must be able to tell when their students are struggling with staying and the moment and adjust instruction according to their needs. Flexibility is key in helping students preserve their place in the classroom environment.

Chapter 3

Solutions to the Preparation Gap

Getting Information to Teachers

As an academic community, we need how to figure out to disseminate the information we do have to the people who need it most, the teachers. There needs to be a movement to make the research available and straightforward to fit into a classroom teacher's already busy schedule. More than ten pages full of data and academic language is not going to allow the teacher to implement these strategies in a quick enough fashion to address the problems. By the time the system is in place, the students have moved on to the next grade. Instead, working with school districts to deliver summaries of the scientific backing and examples of implementation are going to be digestible and solves the problem of access.

Journal costs cover the research being done. The research is simply bouncing between other researchers, though. A *New York Times* survey found that teachers spend, on average, around \$500 per school year on supplies for their classroom (Chokshi, 2018). That does not include other needs their students might be facing. Teachers are facing an already difficult financial decision in deciding what they must do to best support their students, taking away from their own finances outside of their job. I looked for the personal subscription prices for four of the journals I have read in the past few months¹³ to find out the cost I would have to pay if I did

¹³ *Theory and Research in Social Studies Education, Behavioral Disorders, Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, and The Journal of Special Education*

not use the university library. *Behavioral Disorders* was the least at \$69 and *Theory and Research in Social Studies Education* costs \$127 per year. The total cost to use all of the journals would have been \$354, which would increase our average teacher's budget to \$850. Teachers pay these prices to best support their students, but should not have to do so. Additionally, teachers need to know where to look. With the rise of Google and other search engines, it has become easier to access thousands of articles, but combing through the mass of knowledge requires time and planning.

A possible option to resolve these issues might lie in the same technologies that bring journals electronically: online trainings and webinars. While there are webinars slowly being rolled out for things like classroom management and student-centered learning, there appears to be a lack of discussion about students dealing with mental illness. If affordable webinars were released, teachers would have access to that same journal material in a compact, example-filled method that may have the option of asking questions in real time. Instead of searching through the internet, the teacher can get their answer and round out their understanding with a person-to-person interaction. Even with larger webinars without questioning, there is a face-to-face component that makes the information real and personable. Social studies involve a complex network of subjects that need an underlying support system to be implemented. Having a webinar could lead to quicker action in strengthening those systems in a school year before students fall behind.

Schools could also try implementing training programs, even once a year, focused on strategies or information about building up mental health in academic work and in the classroom. During social studies- specific professional development, the time could be used to share resources and discuss what the school is doing to build supports. If the school district could give

these teachers access to research and trainings, these times could be used to restructure how the social studies curriculum is responding to the evolving needs of today's adolescents. How is the constant use of internet for research and readings affecting students with diagnosed EBD? Are the projects and assessments appropriate for all kids in keeping their mental health as a priority? These are questions that school districts can be tackling in professional development and provide to the teachers. A conversation needs to be started, backed by research, and supported by the school districts.

The systems have to be sustainable, though. If a school starts these conversations and gives access to research, it needs to keep the discussion going. These students are not going away. They need to be supported every step through their education. Researchers could provide a link to keep the conversation happening by including resources directly for schools. These resources could then build and expand to create a strong foundation that instruction can occur. Webinars can be recorded and redistributed to provide easier access to those that cannot make live sessions. These strategies do not only have to be for students with diagnosable disorders. There may be other students in the class that can be identified as needing these same supports. It would not be a wasted effort to keep pushing forward for enhanced mental health in schools research.

Testing of Established Methods

Getting Teachers Involved

We need to get into the social studies classrooms and begin evaluating the already tested methods and to develop changes that can be established within their context. Working with

Social Studies teachers allows them to know that they are being and seen and most will be open to finding ways to support their students. Many universities that offer teacher preparation programs have connections to area schools for student teaching. These same schools should be contacted for these studies. Working with the principals can give researchers access to a variety of classrooms and a variety of teaching styles that allow for a wide-range of evaluation. Additionally, these teachers can be resources to find what structural functions need/can be changed to support students and what has/hasn't worked for students. These teachers are collecting data and know their students. Including them in the research can allow for insight not being reached by outside observation.

The University's Role

Funding from universities results in research in the classroom. The university has a responsibility to provide funding towards programs that are analyzing academic supports. These same students in middle and high schools often aspire to be future college students, thus the collegiate level should be helping provide a framework for their future students. As more schools are trying to embrace diversity programs, the funding allocations should be reflecting their mission. Penn State began its "All In" campaign in 2016 with the mission to improve diversity and inclusion at its campuses. When funding is then allocated to the College of Education for research, there should be funding being allocated to programs that close the achievement gap for students with emotional and behavioral disorders that can allow them to thrive in academics. They cannot be included if it is left out of the conversation on how they can be included.

Teacher Preparation Programs

The most common path to a teaching certificate is through collegiate teacher preparation programs. These programs are designed to train future educators in their fields to educate the whole child. As a Secondary Education Social Studies major, I took classes in history, the social sciences, economics, political science, and geography, but I also looked at child development, teaching English language learners, two methods classes, and took three special education classes beyond my three-step student teaching process. It is a wide-field of learning. The last set of classes (minus one child development class) was focused within the College of Education, especially my methods and Special Education courses. The College of Education is responsible for making sure the prescribed courses match the needs of today's students in order to prepare their future teachers.

The courses can be updated to reflect the changing discourse about diverse classrooms. Inclusion of the mental effects of technology overload and how they carry into the classroom can pair with the addition of more information on academic reinforcements. The research presented in the courses I took were from the end of the 2000s into the early 2010s with outdated terms. Universities need to examine the curriculum and update to reflect the fluidity of the educational experience.

Mental Health Training

Teachers should not be expected to do everything. Mental health is incredibly complicated and schools provide emotional support programs and access to school psychologists. However, there can be mental health training offered to educators in order to prepare them to

effectively listen and adapt to evolving students. These trainings can be implemented into the professional development days built into the school year and offered as programs through universities. The important point is that they are offered.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

There is no set solution in any academic issue. All students are different and constantly evolving. However, there is a responsibility shared by several groups to give students a ladder to success. Universities and researchers first need to recognize the importance of proper teacher preparation and development and accessible materials. Only then can they begin to build strong relationships with the teachers that need the support to implement academic restructuring in their classroom. Professional organizations need to represent their teachers by calling for additional support from school districts and researchers. They need to provide resources and accessibility just as the universities do. Teachers need to speak up for their students and let their struggles be known. It is okay to admit that structural changes need to be made. It is not a simple solution, but it is simple need for cooperation to allow for academic growth and success.

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ACADEMIC VITA

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- College of Education and Schreyer Honors College
- Major: Secondary Education, conc. Social Studies
- Minor: History
- Certification Areas being Pursued: Social Studies 7-12, Grade levels 4-8:
Concentrations in Mathematics and Social Studies

Student Teaching

8th Grade World History| Bellefonte Area Middle School| 02/01/2019- 12/13/2019

Honors and Recognition

- Golden Key Honor Society- Fall 2019
- ETS Excellence Award- May 2019
- USG Scholarship Recipient- Fall 2018
- Board of Trustees Student Speaker- November 2018
- Phi Lambda Theta- Fall 2017