Story as Advocacy: Preservice Teachers Discover Resilience, Purpose, and Identities of Well-Being

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Utilising narrative inquiry in a teacher preparation programme, the author examined ways that rural preservice teachers explored their resilience through writing stories of overcoming obstacles. The presented research investigated links among resilience, purpose, and advocacy for social justice. Data for this study (16 female, rural students) were collected, analysed, and interpreted through Social Emotional Learning and cultural lenses. Results demonstrate that participants recognised both internal and external supports needed to navigate obstacles. The external resources of extended families and religion helped students to mediate trauma. The internal resources of affirming experiences heightened self-insight and generated new outcomes helped students mediate identity confusion. These resources were needed for agency, which enabled students to challenge power inequities in relationships and expand identities of well-being. Sharing stories of resilience may decrease stigma, increase community resources, and be a vital source of sustaining educators' mental health.

Keywords: resilience, narratives, mental health, purpose, trauma.

Introduction

Teachers and students experience a variety of traumatic experiences both inside and outside of the classroom (e.g., school shootings, abuse, racial discrimination), while sustaining their own mental health with few resources. This context contributes to teacher attrition, signalling calls for increasing research on the ways beginning teachers navigate emotions and well-being (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014; Corcoran & Tormey, 2012;

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Farnsworth, 2016; Forgasz et al., 2014; Greene et al., 2013; Greene & Kim, 2018; Kaynak, 2020; Shelemy et al., 2019)**.**

In teacher education, reformers often debate the professionalisation of teaching and advocate for strengthening links between theory and practice that prioritises Social Emotional Learning (Darling-Hammond, 2014). Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is a set of attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Weissberg et al., 2015); all of which are needed for well-being.

Seligman (2013) stated that important ways to achieve *well-being* include feeling positive emotions, having positive relationships with others, and finding meaning in a job. Well-being and mental health are related in that *mental health* is defined as a "state of well-being in which every individual realises his/her own potential, copes with the normal stresses of life, works productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his/her community" (World Health Organization, 2005, as cited in Cavioni et al., 2020, p. 65). Teachers must cope with the external sources of stress in the classroom, and often are coping with previous internal stress (i.e., trauma). Therefore, the term *resilience* is useful with the definition as the ability to adapt well to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress (McCleary & Figley, 2017). This definition of resilience emphasises the change from *coping with* (mental health definition, WHO, 2005), to *adapting well* to adversity. Malin (2018) builds on these definitions by further clarifying that to adapt well, one must locate and act on a goal that is personally meaningful and beyond-the-self oriented (i.e., benefit others), which is *purpose.* The terms *social emotional learning, well-being, mental health, resilience, and purpose* are complex concepts that are interrelated and contain similarities as exemplified in the literature. For this study, these terms were merged together for a basic understanding of well-being as adapting well (i.e., utilising internal resources) to adversity by successfully navigating stressors (external), which enables one to make contributions to their community.

This study is a qualitative investigation of preservice teachers' perspectives on well-being through examining their stories. It is guided by the following research question: How do preservice teachers determine their resilience (i.e., adapting well) through writing stories of overcoming obstacles (i.e., sources of stress)? Sharing stories of resilience may decrease stigma, increase resources for communities, and be a vital source of sustaining educators' well-being. The present study also adds the cultural lens of investigating the links among resilience, cultural assets, purpose, and advocacy for social justice. In the next sections, the conceptual framework of SEL in teacher education with focus on resilience and purpose are discussed, followed by a description of the research design, data analysis, and presentation of findings.

Conceptual Framework: SEL in Teacher Education

Proponents of SEL advocate for a comprehensive framework in education that clearly defines the positive impact of teachers' mental health, with approaches that address social and emotional problems, and promote

well-being and resilience (Cavioni et al., 2020; Weare & Nind, 2011). The positive impacts of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) are well documented (Weare & Nind, 2011); however, supporting mental health in education all too often focuses on K-12 students, leaving teachers' mental health inadequately addressed (Shelemy et al., 2019). Some research has identified protective factors that help teachers deal with challenging situations. However, most studies on teachers' mental health were about coping and "designed to reduce stress and risk of burnout by introducing cognitive-behavioural techniques or relaxation strategies" (Cavioni et al., 2020, p. 70).

Preservice Teachers' (PST) well-being is also a low priority in teacher preparation programs (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Onchwari, 2010), resulting in few courses required to support mental health. Darling-Hammond & Richardson (2009) recognise that teaching requires more than theory, and teacher educators must tend to the development of teachers' inner lives, which often receive little attention. The term *inner lives* refer to personal dispositions or characteristics developed as internal resources from which to draw on for meaning-making (e.g., reflectiveness, humility, purpose, resilience, strengths, values, beliefs, etc.). Inner lives is a similar term to *identity,* which is a broader term encompassing origins, ethnicity, and cultural beliefs that impact behaviours (e.g., belief of childrearing, role of elders, personal space, emotional expression, etc.). Other terms to describe identities are cultural assets, *funds of knowledge* (Moll et al., 1992) or *funds of identities* (i.e., values and practices cultivated as adults) (Moll, 2014). Another way to understand identities of well-being is by "examining the connection between the things one values most, events in their past, and expectations of who they will be in the future" (Malin, 2018, p.17). Korthagen (2017) hopes that teacher educators will change their perspectives when "comparing the limited outcomes of traditional teacher education with those of approaches starting from teachers' actual concerns and experiences" (p. 393); thereby navigating external stress by problem-solving.

Resilience and Purpose

Teaching has always required teachers to problem-solve by employing multiple aspects of their inner lives, such as cultural assets, resilience and purpose. While resilience in children has been well documented, there remains limited research on building resilience in teachers. Gu and Day (2013) found that resilience (i.e., ability to adapt well to significant stress) is:

> influenced by individual circumstance, situation and environment and which involves far more complex components than specific personal accounts of internal traits or assets alone claim. The nature and extent of resilience is best understood, then, as a dynamic within a social system of interrelationships (p. 25).

This definition clarifies that in addition to inner strengths (i.e., internal resources), the social, cultural and political context (i.e. external resources) contribute to developing resilience. Researchers found that teachers "with strong beliefs about their core purposes and values retain their commitment and resilience because of their inner strengths, support from colleagues and their leaders, or a combination of these" (Day and Gu, 2010, as cited in Gu and Day, 2013, p. 24; OECD, 2005).

Cognition, emotion and motivation are three dimensions influencing teacher behaviour (Korthagen, 2017), which are related to purpose. Malin (2018) defined *purpose* as the ability to identify a goal that is personally meaningful and "motivated by a desire to have consequence in the world, to do something positive for the world beyond the self" (p.14). Many benefits occur when students find purpose, including "being more engaged at school…and feel a greater sense of social belonging" (Malin, 2018 p. 60). People with purpose are physically healthier than those without purpose, showing more consistent levels of cortisol, less inflammation, and appearing to live longer (Ryff, 2016). Purpose is also associated with resilience following traumatic events. "People develop early purpose when they see problems and challenges impacting the people closest to them-family, neighbours and members of their community, and feel compelled to do something to help" (Malin, 2018, p. 56). Purpose connects internal resources (e.g., values and motivation) to the action of problem-solving, which often requires the navigation of external power structures.

Cultural Analysis

Researchers suggest situating teachers' lives in the broader and larger systems, power structures, and policies (Kelchtermans, 2017). Although the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) literature provides a deep practice in sustaining respectful relationships, it also "reflects a colour-blind approach privileging white-middle-class American values of what constitutes SEL competencies" (Hoffman, 2009, as cited in Swanson et al., 2019, p. 71). This research seeks to add a cultural lens of analysis by examining power in participants' stories of resilience and identities of well-being, related to social justice. *Social justice* is a broad term addressing many concepts such as power, privilege, prejudice, discrimination, and inequity. For the purposes of this study, I am conceptualising the term social justice to focus on power inequities in relationships (i.e., abuse of power), which is an external stressor and thus part of the research context.

Methodology

Narratives

Narrative research in education centres on teacher knowledge and often constructs stories collaboratively in order to gain insight into participants' experiences (Gay et al., 2011; Wertz, 2011). With a variety of effective SEL practices that support PSTs' well-being (i.e., writing narratives, self-care strategies, mindfulness, etc.), I chose the practice of writing narratives to investigate PSTs' identities. Kelchtermans (2017) found that most insight into teachers' identities was discovered through narratives; finding that their emotions were always present and rooted in the moral commitment to their work. Narratives in educational settings have received attention as a "way of personalising knowledge, heightening self-insight and influencing the social environment of the classroom positively" (Skumsnes, 2007, p. 186).

Polkinghorne (2013) describes one technique within narrative therapy is for people to reinterpret or view a situation from a different perspective or reframe the events. The act of telling is part of the method, in

which one calls on imagination in reflection on past events, thereby negotiating challenges through different points of view. "Narrative therapy is one way to assist people in becoming aware of themes in their lives, and focuses on their strengths and resources, as experts on their own lives" (Polkinghorne, 2013, p. 37). Narratives as methodology provide a platform through which stories can be revised retroactively through the (re)telling of the language they selected, and the descriptions used to enhance the past (Bochner, 2007).

Working with narratives in teacher education is not new; but focusing on narratives of "successful action are especially important, and seem less common" (Tyson, 2016, p. 457). Two familiar story genres include the "*success story* (overcoming obstacles to reach one's goal) and the *quest story* of finding one's true self by facing particular challenges" (Chase, 2005, p. 80). Since overcoming obstacles is a central part of teachers' lives, one story structure stood out as being an effective way to uncover PSTs' resilience-, namely *The Hero's Journey*. Joseph Campbell (1973) found a universal theme across cultures involving a journey of an archetypal hero who sets out on an adventure and faces many trials. Through the aid of others, the hero rises to the challenge, has many revelations, and is completely transformed through the process. The four main stages in this model: (1) origins; (2) falling into the well; (3) climbing out of the well; and (4) returning with the elixir. "On triumphing over a dark presence, the protagonist returns to the familiar world as a new person with strengths and powers that he lacked before the ordeal and is promoted to full membership in the community" (Polkinghorne, 2013, p. 29).

Data Sources and Participants

After obtaining ethics approval, the instructor introduced the research project to students in the Education Studies program in the 2018-19 licensure cohort. The writing assignment was described in one core course ED431: *Teaching English Language Learners*, and in alignment with aspects of *culturally responsive pedagogy* which values students by affirming their experiences and utilise these experiences as resources for teaching (Gay, 2010). After explaining the risks and benefits, 16 participants (who all identified as female) were recruited by gaining consent and ensuring confidentiality.

Participants were enrolled in the university's Satellite Program, which was created for students in surrounding rural counties to access higher education institutions by (1) offering courses at local community colleges, and (2) allowing students to perform their student teaching (i.e., internship) in their home communities. Participants came from the largest rural county in the region, which also has the second largest number of American Indian/Alaska Native students in Oregon. The majority of participants were first generation college students. At the time of research, seven of the 16 participants were hired on state restricted (i.e., emergency) teaching licenses and teaching in K-12 schools full time, and three students were Educational Assistants working part-time in local schools. Working while attending school added additional elements of stress and responsibility in balancing work, school and home. As youth, participants had attended rural K-12 public schools that faced obstacles such as isolation, low graduation rates, limited resources, and poverty.

Participants were given four prompts (below) at the beginning of the term and were given a three-week timeframe to complete them. They were directed to write brief paragraphs for each prompt: (1) origins, (2) description of the obstacle (falling into to the well), (3) navigating the obstacle (who/what resources helped, climbing out of the well), and (4) lessons learned from the obstacle (returning with the elixir). This four-part structure allowed students to share any obstacle they chose, such as paying for school or experiencing abuse. Written stories and exit tickets were collected during the term of instruction (Spring 2019) and analysed during the following year.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed through a multiple-step process as outlined by Marshall and Rossman (2011). The first occurred while students were reading their stories in whole class sessions. Field notes were written describing the orator's physical behaviour (i.e., emotional expression). In the second step, the author (aided by a colleague) organised the written data by reading individual printed stories, separated responses into each of the four prompts (see above), and coded words and phrases that were repeated or emphasised. In the third step, all stories were looked at together and analysed for recurring themes. In the last phase, interpretations and alternative understandings of findings were made through analytic memos. In the following sections, I present results including common obstacles, and discuss key findings that demonstrated resilience. These sections are best illustrated with participants' own words directly from their stories.

Results

In returning to the research question of ways that preservice teachers determine their resilience through writing stories of overcoming obstacles, results demonstrate that participants utilised both internal and external supports to navigate obstacles. The external resources of extended families and religion helped students to mediate trauma, whilst the internal resources of affirming their own experiences heightened self-insight and generated new outcomes which helped mediate identity confusion. These resources were needed for agency (i.e., taking action to be in alignment with core values), which enabled students to challenge power inequities in relationships and expand identities of well-being.

External Resources

Two central themes were found in navigating the obstacles of trauma (e.g., loss, abuse, addiction, mental illness, and neglect) (1) family support and (2) religion. Trauma is defined as "The result of an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds one's ability to cope or integrate the emotions involved with that experience. Trauma differs among individuals by their subjective experiences, not the objective facts" (Statman-Weil, 2018, as cited in Nicholson et al., 2018, p. 18).

Theme 1. Family. Twelve students cited relationships with extended family as the most critical resource in overcoming obstacles. Student D described her that her relationships with grandparents helped her survive an abusive childhood.

An obstacle that has impacted my life greatly was the loss of my grandmother. Growing up I had an abusive childhood, physically and emotionally. My grandmother was my safe haven. She took on the role of what I wanted and needed a mother to be. I survived because of her. I made it through this life changing event by turning my attention to my grandfather (Student D).

Another student had multiple female family members' support in all aspects of her life.

I have a large extended family, and although my mother never really fulfilled the role of my mom, I had strong women family members who did. My great-aunt taught me to read, picked me up from school, and was the strongest emotional support figure I had. She was the one I called when I was feeling extremely upset…My great-grandmother cooked breakfast and was my babysitter …Both of my grandmothers were also significant figures in my life. They were the ones to take me shopping, on vacations… Aunt Y was the woman who allowed me to develop my creativity; we would have sleepovers at her house, film fake cooking shows, and create jewellery (Student E).

Students demonstrated that their connections to family served as the foundation for resilience by developing values of loyalty and care, manifesting in close relationships.

Theme 2. Religion. Many participants described their experiences as adolescents with religion as helping them persevere through childhood traumas. Student J struggled with her ethnic identity, had an abusive father, became homeless to escape her father's abuse, and claimed Jesus helped her survive. Another student, a native Spanish speaker, faced language barriers in English-only classrooms, and described Jesus as a role model who helped her understand the discriminations she faced. Malin (2018) affirmed that for many people, purpose is a spiritual feeling of connection to something larger that the self, that often manifests in religious beliefs. These connections shape the internal resources of values, belonging and finding meaning.

Internal Resources

Results indicate that participants drew on their internal resources of courage, curiosity, and perseverance, which heightened their self-insight and affirmed their experiences. These resources were needed for agency (i.e., taking action to be in alignment with core values), which enabled students to challenge power inequities in relationships.

Theme 3. Cultural assets heightened self-insight and challenge power structures. While students D and E described extended family members' support during parents' absences, student B described her courage to challenge her mother's decision to keep her home from school.

I was 11 years old, watching my baby brother and watching my other three brothers when they came home from school, and taking care of the household. I was mad one day and told my mom I wanted

to be back in school. I was not enrolled in school for three years, and during this time my mental health had declined (Student B).

By acknowledging the emotion of anger, Student B named her desire to return to school, thereby challenging the power structure in her family. By speaking out, she demonstrated agency (i.e., self-advocacy or taking action) to be in alignment with her core values. Through adult reflection, Student B personalised knowledge, heightened self-insight (Skumsnes, 2007), and challenged power inequities in relationships.

A second obstacle faced by students was confusion due to unclear ethnic/cultural identities. The writing prompts provided students opportunities to examine their origins, cultural assets, or funds of knowledge as potential inner resources to solve problems. As adults telling their stories, PSTs now had the benefit of reframing events through adult eyes, which generated new outcomes. Student A described the inner strength of curiosity about her ethnicity, but is met with external resistance.

> Throughout most of my life I have felt so uncomfortable when trying to research the Native American side of my family. I'm so intrigued by the culture and what it means especially when getting to look back at my own family lineage. Although, when I speak about this side of myself, people have been offended as if I was just wanting to pretend as though I understand the culture. I was always told that because of my physical features, there was no way that I had that kind of background. This was always so frustrating to me and eventually I gave up trying to figure it all out for myself and just told everyone that I either didn't know my heritage, or I'm just Caucasian. Although this occurrence might have stopped me from ever being confident in where I came from and who I am, it did teach me some valuable lessons. I feel it is so important to teach children how to be proud of where they came from and to not let the opinions of anyone stop them from being who they are. I feel as though this will be valuable in the future when I work with children who have similar issues as I did (Student A)

Student A faced the obstacle of identity confusion as a youth, which gave her purpose by influencing her (1) values (e.g., strong sense of what matters and why), (2) self-regulation (e.g., skills to select appropriate goals and regulate behaviour needed to pursue the goals), and (3) agency (e.g., take action and determine this action has the desired impact) (Malin, 2018). Student A stated two goals (1) to teach her future students about their own cultural assets needed to better understand themselves (i.e., be proud of), and (2) to contest others' opinions of them. She also demonstrated the culturally responsive premise of affirming her own experiences (and future students), and seeing them as resources for teaching (Gay, 2010). Kelchtermans (2017) states that beginning teachers have a clear idea of what they think is right and want to live up to their personal ideas of good teaching. These desires often lead to micropolitical actions that address power inequities.

Theme 4. Reframing events to consider different viewpoints and generate new outcomes. Participants' heightened self-insight also generated new outcomes to expand identities of well-being.

Student F demonstrated resilience in utilising the internal resource of perseverance (i.e., grit) to navigate the external stress of trauma. She generated a new outcome to her story of abuse (sexually abused by daycare workers, and physically/emotionally abused by her mother).

> My level of grit was one that came from the cultural values on my mother's side of the family. My mother used verbal, emotional and physical abuse to try and keep the three of us children in line. Mother was raising us the way she was raised (Student F).

Her way of making sense of these experiences was to reframe the events to consider a different viewpoint (i.e., the German culture was responsible for her mother's behaviour). She also showed empathy by understanding her mother's motives, which generated a new outcome to her original story.

Student J described the disappointment in finding out her origins were from Europe, due to the negative impacts of colonialisation. She then generated a new outcome to her story by imagining possibilities of finding positive aspects from her heritage.

> As a child, I believed I was a mutt. Despite the light colour of my skin, I would boast to my friends that "I had a little bit of everything" in me. My parents would say that we really didn't know our heritage. I wished to be anything but English or Irish, then found out I was. I learned something about myself that tells me more than my ethnicity alone ever could – I am insecure about my European heritage. But most of all, I did not want to be European out of shame. It is no secret that pieces of their past are shutter worthy. I have come to terms with my ethnicity, and the fact that it isn't all bad. I hope to learn to have pride in my heritage and be thankful for where it has brought me (Student J).

Through reading and listening to student stories, I caught glimpses of the social and cultural resources students "drew from, resisted, and transformed as they told their stories" (Chase, 2005, p. 81). Students demonstrated identities of well-being by examining the connection between the their values, events in their past, and expectations of who they will be in the future (Malin, 2018).

Shared Stories Created Empathy, Relationships and Belonging

Participants expressed that sharing stories created connection with others and increased their empathy for peers and future students. Student C predicted that overcoming her obstacles will help her gain more empathy with future students. She also expressed the desire to stay in her community and advocate for students like herself who may experience similar obstacles.

> My life experiences have taught me a lot. I think that because of the circumstances I dealt with, I can be more understanding of others' experiences, particularly in my community that I plan to teach in one day (Student C).

Student G commented that sharing stories built her inner resources of trust and empathy, which helped create relationships with peers quickly.

In class we shared stories that made us all feel closer and I was able to learn about stories of my classmates. Through this emotional time, I was able to show empathy for my classmates I hadn't known for long. It was amazing to see how we are all so different but are able to connect to one another. Trust was created between us all and this has helped me see how I will be able to build relationships with students (Student G).

Student H described vulnerability in sharing stories of grief out in the open, which was part of healing.

By sharing our personal stories, we were vulnerable in that moment and I was in awe of the outpouring of concern and support from everyone. I think this practice of processing grief is especially important for teachers to be open and authentic with students, and to care deeply about students. I felt that sharing my story can help healing because it will be told, out in the light, not enclosed in the dark. Some might be hard and sad, but we connect because we understand that we all have something in common and that we all suffer (Student H).

When students read aloud their stories to peers, they displayed emotions and expressed belonging in realising they were not alone. These relationships demonstrated positive identities that connect internal and external resources. Peer support was a positive influence on teachers' abilities to stay connected to their mission to teach, and in maintaining a sense of positive identity, well-being, and ability to thrive in challenging contexts (Goleman, 2007; Gu and Day, 2013). Luthar (2006) stated that "resilience rests fundamentally on relationships" (p. 780). However, authentic caring relationships cannot be established if issues of social justice that directly impact students' lives are not engaged (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

Conclusion & Implications for Teacher Education

In this paper, the benefits of utilising student narratives to navigate identities of resilience in a teacher preparation programme were examined. In answering the research question. Results indicate that rural participants recognised both internal (i.e., agency) and external (i.e., extended families and religion) sources of resilience to overcome the obstacles of trauma and identity confusion. Their stories demonstrated resilience by (1) reframing events to consider different viewpoints and generate new outcomes, (2) heightening self-insight and affirming strengths as resources, and (3) increasing empathy, belonging and purpose. Agency and purpose involves action, and enabled students to challenge power inequities and expand identities of well-being. Purpose seems to be the link between resilience and mental health, which emphasises adapting well and the action of making a contribution to one's community.

Supporting Preservice Teachers' Mental Health

Given the increased accountability for PSTs to focus on student learning in increasingly unsafe environments, teacher education programs must prioritise courses for supporting PSTs' mental health. Specifically, these programs need to provide their students with both internal and external supports to promote resilience, purpose, and the ultimate goal of well-being. Nicholson et al., (2018) suggests a Trauma-Informed Care approach, which is a framework that involves understanding, recognising, and responding to the impact of trauma on students' learning. "Emotionally attuned interpersonal relationships with a reliable and caring teacher help students feel safe and calms their stress response systems, which helps healing from trauma, buffers their toxic stress… and engage in the learning process" (Nicholson et al. 2018, p. 67). One basic step is for educators to understand their own stress responses to students' behaviours and understand students' past traumas. "As we continue to learn more about neurobiological pathways and right- brain contributions to trauma and attachment, we better understand the ways in which stories have the capacity to open up right- brain processes, activate sensory memories, trigger strong unresolved emotions, and stimulate the "aha" of insight that propels behaviour change" (Pernicano, 2014 p. 19).

Stories Create the Language of Resilience and Advocacy

Sharing stories offer opportunities for developing internal resources and healing. "Telling your story is part of the healing of a traumatic event" (K bler-Ross & Kessler, 2005, p. 62). By naming the obstacles they faced and resources that helped them, participants learned the language of resilience. "Language gives us the power to change ourselves and others by communicating our experiences, helping us define what we know, and finding a common sense of meaning" (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 38). Specific calls to action include illuminating stories of trauma by defining and acknowledging its' existence by naming the trauma (i.e., abuse, addiction, mental illness, neglect), including intergenerational and historical trauma. Baldwin (2011) reminded us that not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced. Therefore, bringing attention to abuse of power may reduce stigma and increase resources for healing.

"Teacher educators can create and sustain environments that value emotions as a catalyst for learning about the self and others by providing safe containers for students to share their stories" (Farnsworth, 2016, p. 16). These environments privilege the social-emotional realm so students feel cared for, understood, and supported (Darling-Hammond, 2017), and can also "invite exploration of possible identities and encourages visions of a successful future" (Malin, 2018, p. 68). Additional longitudinal research is needed to validate the connection among resilience, empathy, purpose and advocacy (i.e., action) for social justice throughout teachers' careers.

Cultural Lens of Resilience

Participants from rural communities navigated the external obstacles of poverty, low educational attainment and lack of resources, with similar internal resources. Longhurst (2017) found that rural students' cultural assets often include attachment to family (i.e., familial responsibilities) and community. They chose to stay

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and teach in their home communities, in which Corbett (2007) states, "attachment to any particular place is, in the face of post-modernity, a form of resistance" (as cited in Longhurst, 2017, p. 59). In authoring stories of resilience, PSTs demonstrated *place-based advocacy* (Adams & Farnsworth, 2020) by wanting to help their students face similar challenges they themselves faced. The majority of participants (11/16) expressed desire to challenge power inequities in their classrooms, which demonstrated empathy, purpose, and advocacy to improve educational opportunities in their communities, aspects of social justice. By challenging the power relationships, students may engage in "micropolitical actions to protect, establish, or restore them when they were threatened, absent, or abolished" (Kelchtermans (2017, p. 16).

One central obstacle that participants faced was confusion about their ethnic/cultural identities. In some other stories similar identity confusion arose with LGBTQ+ and neurodiversity (i.e., disability). With shortages of teachers from diverse ethnic groups (only 8.9% teachers of colour) (State Department of Education Report, 2015-2016), teacher preparation programs need to allocate more resources for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Resources are needed in not only recruiting, but creating structures for retaining and supporting diverse preservice teachers' intersectional identities of well-being (ethnic, cultural, linguistic, ability, sexual orientation, etc.). Teacher education programs that integrate social justice education with social emotional learning across the curriculum can connect purpose to action, necessary to promote social justice. Examples include anchoring teacher education competencies in social, emotional, and cultural standards (Swanson, et. al., 2019). Another example of power inequity is with the Hero journey prompts themselves.

> In the West, the mainstream story plots are set within highly individualistic and gender-distinct specifications for ways of being in the world. The culturally provided plots are limiting for individuals whose actual lives are more complex that these plots can integrate (Polkinghorne, 2013, p. 37).

Strandén-Backa (2013) suggested that researchers use an intersectional self-reflective analysis, which heightens awareness of the meaning they are giving to students' stories and scrutinise basic assumptions that are "internalised through our own upbringing, class, gender, and educational systems" (p. 91); because "it is easy to sympathise with stories that suit one's own ideologies, to reproduce them and their value systems. This is especially the case if they fit together with the hegemonic ideologies of today's societies" (p. 97).

Collective Resilience Sustains Communities

Many obstacles persist in society (e.g., racial injustice, Covid-19, social isolation, economic devastation). In the local context, recent fires destroyed 3,000 homes in Oregon, creating 500 homeless families in two local school districts. Sharing stories of resilience may decrease stigma and increase resources for communities' facing trauma. Gu and Day (2013) emphasised that teacher resilience is the capacity to maintain equilibrium and a sense of commitment and agency in internal and external worlds, "a dynamic within a social system of interrelationships" (p. 25). Building collective resilience in communities will enable educators to build a sense of belonging and "provide intellectual, spiritual and emotional resources" for their continuing

development (Gu and Day, 2013, p. 37). By adding external supports from leaders, colleagues, standards and policies, teacher education programs have the potential to increase resources needed to sustain communities of resilience and well-being, leading to purpose, healing and advocacy for social justice.

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