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Teaching and learning with care & hope

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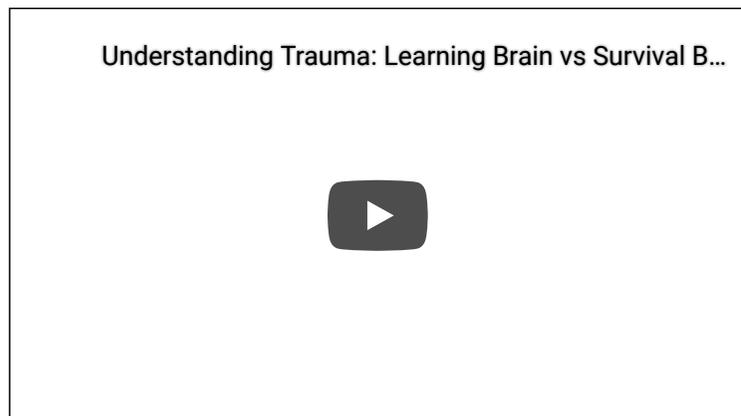


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Teaching and learning with care & hope

18 June 2020

Last week, the ACM offered the first of a series of workshops designed to help faculty think about and prepare for teaching this fall. The first workshop, led by Karín Aguilar-San Juan and Devavani Chatterjea of Macalester College, focused on ways of being with crisis, trauma, and uncertainty in the classroom. They discussed Jacob Ham’s comparison of the learning brain and the survival brain. While the learning brain is curious and comfortable with ambiguity, the survival brain is hyper focused on threat, afraid of mistakes, and seeking absolutes. Students whose brains are in survival mode will not be able to engage in our classrooms in the same ways as students whose brains are in learning mode.



How can we use this to inform our teaching? In the ACM workshop discussions, and also subsequent LACOL discussions, participants noted the importance of designing courses with flexibility, while also being organized, clear, and transparent about expectations. Although flexibility is beneficial, instructors need to be mindful that trauma can reduce executive function; providing students with lots of choices may not be helpful.

For more information:

- [“Leveraging the Neuroscience of Now” by Mays Imad, InsideHigherEd.com, June 3, 2020](https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/06/03/seven-recommendations-helping-students-thrive-times-trauma) (<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/06/03/seven-recommendations-helping-students-thrive-times-trauma>).
- [“What Does Trauma-Informed Teaching Look Like?” by Beth McMurtrie, Chronicle of Higher Education, June 4, 2020](https://www.chronicle.com/article/What-Does-Trauma-Informed/248917) (<https://www.chronicle.com/article/What-Does-Trauma-Informed/248917>).
- [Deacon, A. \(2012\). Creating a context of care in the online classroom. The Journal of Faculty Development, 26\(1\), 5.](https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.carleton.edu/docview/1095482818?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprim0) (https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.carleton.edu/docview/1095482818?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprim0).

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