

Professional Reciprocal Altruism in Education: PRAE in Practice

Jessica Bogunovich, Kimberly Greene
University of Massachusetts Global, USA

Abstract

As a grounded theory, Professional Reciprocal Altruism in Education (PRAE) offers an empowering means of understanding how the predominant motivator of those entering the teaching profession, altruism, serves as a shared value to inspire the individual's personal practice beyond a siloed experience and into one of authentic engagement within the Community of Practice (CoP) of professional educators. The process of aligning one's personal values, attitudes, and preconceived cultural constructs with those of the CoP, affords the alignment of the authentic and professional self; thus, continuously fostering one's intrinsic motivation to remain engaged in their individual continuous process of growth and development for their students, community, profession, and themselves. Such engagement affords an empowering means of staying off compassion fatigue and empathy exhaustion.

Keywords: altruism, Community of Practice, cultural constructs, teacher attrition, reciprocal altruism, value congruence, compassion fatigue, empathy exhaustion.

1. Introduction

Throughout the winter months of 2020, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) swept through the world, ravaging lives in various ways. The pandemic brought about unprecedented challenges for the entire world, from the biggest nations to the smallest of local communities. Over a year later, progress toward a reopening of a semblance of normal life initially was, and continues to be, stymied by an omnipresent issue that has become even more alarming as our society and economy attempts to purposefully move our society and economy into the future. This critical issue, the ability of our nation's teachers to remain engaged in their roles mindfully, meaningfully, and in a healthy, positive, professional fashion, correlates directly to the teacher burnout, compassion fatigue [7], and worrisome rates of teacher attrition. Each of these concerns have the potential to spiral out of control and into an additional crisis of their own; however, viewing these challenges through a singular

lens. This allows for greater focus on how they are directly addressed for today and into the future. Since the day that the World Health Organization declared the virus a "global pandemic" [1], the reality for today's public schools is such that: "[T]he coronavirus pandemic has put significant pressure on America's teachers. Some have been asked to weigh risks to their personal health and teach in person. Some have been asked to teach from behind computer screens and perfect distance learning. Many have been asked to do both" [2].

Anecdotal evidence from local news outlets across the United States [2], [3], [4], [5] offers a body of qualitative evidence that is worrisome. The picture painted does not bode well for ensuring the work that must be done presently to afford public education to move ahead purposefully with the work of ensuring the education of today's youth continues to serve the needs of individual learners as well as society's ability to function and flourish in a global economy. Such complex work demands understanding, knowledge, and the nuanced application of the multifaceted skills of properly trained professionals [6]. Thus, identifying means of not merely halting the detrimental stressors leading to burn out and attrition, but of supporting and further empowering today's teachers to continue in their roles, despite the myriad of challenges of these times, is crucial.

Public-facing conversations relating to teacher attrition usually focus on tangible issues such as pay and benefits [6] but the situation is both more nuanced and expansive. Wang and Hall [8] examined the detrimental effects on an individual's ability to thrive and remain active when experiencing a repeated disconnect between their personal values and those of their work environment. Such a discrepancy is the antithesis of "value congruence" (p. 3), the alignment between one's personal values and those of the professional environment in which that person applies their knowledge and skills. Positive value congruence has been associated with well-being in one's professional life [9], [10]. Conversely, "negative relations between value congruence" appear as a key psychosocial indicator of a lack of well-being in professional settings and therefore, serve as

underlying factors to the teacher attrition problem [8] (p. 3).

Van Beurden et al. [11] examined the import of value congruence and teachers' feelings about their sense of positively belonging in their schools. In times of uncertainty and reactive change, the need for experienced educational professionals is profound [12]. The cruciality of a means of ensuring teachers are empowered to want to remain mindfully and purposefully engaged in their practice is apparent; ensuring alignment between the values of the individual and those of the profession as a whole is both timely and timeless. That understanding frames the import of the following proposed grounded theory, PRAE, Professional Reciprocal Altruism in Education [27].

2. The core of PRAE: Professional reciprocal altruism in education

Professional Reciprocal Altruism in Education (PRAE) serves as a grounded theory, an applicable means of understanding how within a community of practice, each individual's choices, actions, and behaviors are not siloed. The shared values that undergird the work of 21st-century educators and elevate one's practice of teaching to that of the meaningful call to altruistic service has been identified as a person's primary motivation for becoming an educator at the start of their career [13]. Thus, there is potential for an appropriate, shared vision that explains how the on-the-ground responsibilities, pressures, and realities of teaching align with the values of the profession.

PRAE affords meaningful alignment of altruism, the research-identified, predominant personal value of those who enter the teaching profession [14], [15]; with Lave and Wenger's "legitimate peripheral participation" [16] (p. 29) to invoke the support and sense of belonging to the profession via an authentic connection to the greater community of practice [16], [17]. Framing this paradigm in an actionable fashion supports the individual both in the classroom and beyond through the direct connection to a greater sense of cohesion and shared purpose within the community of practice of educational professionals, despite physical separation of time and location. Such an effort bolsters educators on a micro and macro level to ensure each person is empowered to continuously foster their desire to remain mindfully engaged in the continuous process of growth and development for their students, their community, the profession, and themselves and healthy, happy, educational practitioners.

The alignment of altruism, reciprocal altruism, and Professional Reciprocal Altruism in Education (PRAE) directly engages the individual in crafting personal awareness of the transformative empowerment afforded by value congruence and the

recognition that without it, intrinsic motivation dissipates; this sets the stage for burnout, compassion fatigue, and teacher attrition [7]. These understandings, brought together through the paradigm and purpose of a grounded theory, further clarify the importance and timeliness of PRAE as a cognitive construct for all educators across the spectrum (pre-k - through graduate).

3. Altruism defined

According to Monroe, altruism is an act or behavior that benefits another person or persons, even when the person committing the act is making a sacrifice, reaping no reward to oneself [18]. Altruism can only occur when the person giving seeks no benefit or reward in return [19]. This idea relates to decreased motivation of egoism, which is central to ensuring that the action is carried out and is not dependent simply on good intentions. Egoism, according to LaFollette, is when one cares only about self-interest and in obtaining self-satisfaction, even at the expense of others [20]. Once a person decreases that motivation for egoism, the person demonstrates higher levels of empathy towards others and their citations, exhibits a decrease in prejudice and bias, is less aggressive, and stirs away from being self-oriented and moves towards selflessness [21].

It is important to note that altruism can have both positive and negative outcomes, such as when an act does not go as expected, causing some type of significant loss. However, the positive aspects clearly outweigh the negative outcomes, which is why altruism becomes essential to professionalism in many fields, specifically education [15].

Altruism focuses on actions benefiting others with no intention or promise of external reward to the person committing the act. This idea is centered around the value of selflessness. In addition, altruistic people value both empathy and sympathy and are motivated by these emotional reactions [22]. Many teachers immerse themselves in the field of education with no focus on conditions of service but are motivated by the desire to enhance the lives of others; this context highlights a dichotomy present in the literature on altruism. While it is defined in terms of action and behavior [14], [8] it is reported by educators as a value, a guiding desire, "something that is wanted and needed but at the same time something that is necessary" [23] (p. 103).

This does not mean that there are not educators today who wish to obtain both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, such as wealth, leadership status, and power, however, with altruism being part key component of the field of study and practice that is pedagogy, identifying the professional connection of altruism with the import of recognizing and harnessing the potential motivational factors afforded via such elements as gratitude from students, satisfaction of

helping others, acquisition of wisdom, and respect from colleagues, serves all teachers in the way of professional empowerment [15]. Embedding a purposeful focus on altruism into teacher preparation programs proactively empowers educators to recognize and appreciate the personal, as well as the professional, intrinsic value of all they will be responsible for with their future students. A teacher-in-training can only benefit from being authentically immersed in the communal understanding that the reward, the betterment of the entire community, takes time to spread out beyond the confines of the classroom. With this understanding, the stage is set for the even greater personal and professional gratification and intrinsic motivation that reciprocal altruism affords educators across the whole of the community [24].

4. Reciprocal altruism defined

Building upon the recognition that altruistic actions are performed with no expectation of a return, reciprocal altruism scaffolds these same acts around a deeper understanding that there will be some kind of benefit eventually, in the future; additionally, the reward is not related to self-gratification, but rather, it is for the greater community [25]. This correlates to the idea of sacrificing something now to reap the benefits later. For example, Levi [26] argues that reciprocal altruism determines how well a community or society will prosper. Reciprocal altruism “sets in motion a process of reciprocity that defines expectations of those in the society” (para. 4). The overall goal of reciprocal altruism is that the individual’s actions afford outcomes that are sustainable and long-lasting, they pave the way for continuous development and ongoing improvements for the educational community [27].

This desire to be of service to the greater community aligns directly with the findings from a growing body of research on the motivational factors identified within groups of both working teachers and those in the process of earning their certifications [28], [29], [30]. “The main reasons which influence students’ choice to become teachers fall into a number of categories: (a) altruistic reasons related to seeing teaching as a socially worthwhile and important job, having a desire to help children in difficulty, and contributing to and helping society improve; (b) intrinsic reasons, which refer to the job activity itself, such as teaching children, and a will to use their subject matter knowledge and expertise...” [29] (p. 175).

The reasons, noted in the previous quote, describe the core values identified in the existing literature as being key motivators for individuals in their decision to become teachers [11], [13]. While not exhaustive, these preeminent core values are as follows: empathy, generosity, patience, and compassion; each of which

are in direct alignment with both reciprocal altruism and society’s definition of a good educator [31]. Such motivations are affective in nature; they highlight the individual’s emotional connection to each value. In concert with the same individual’s cognitive or intellectual valuations for each value, they work together to spur professional action and behavior. With all three domains, the affective, cognitive, and behavioral, working in such harmony and aligning with one’s values, the person is engaging professionally more deeply than simply being a good educator, and, consciously or not, is fluidly practicing educational reciprocal altruism in the very fashion that was publicly lauded by the media and the greater American society throughout the early stages of the COVID-19 quarantine [32]. The challenge, however, is that many educators find themselves stymied by the incongruence between their core values and the reality of what has become the expected teacher work of today, such as inordinate amounts of bureaucratic paperwork, conflict resolution with stakeholders, and demands placed on teachers who are given incomplete support, instructions, or materials [5], [6] this situation sets the stage for systemic burnout, compassion fatigue, and teacher attrition [6], [31].

PRAE, as a grounded theory, affords a means of identifying and directly addressing these challenges. Additionally, PRAE fosters the deliberate integration of reciprocal altruism across one’s practice, from initial teacher preparation to ongoing professional development. It offers teachers the type of transformative empowerment that is too often missing in the educational arena [6].

Higher education paves the way for employing the first step of the transformative empowerment afforded by the harnessing of all that reciprocal altruism offers teachers and the greater education community. Within teacher preparation programs, many practitioners provide educational methods to support the development of student attention, emotional balance, empathetic connections, compassion, and necessary altruistic behaviors [33]; however, the tools and resources for self-care within the curriculum of teacher preparation programs do not exist. New teachers are trained to educate, manage, and care for students, but not themselves. Professors in the field share new pedagogical methods in order to support creativity and innovation for the learners in the classroom, along with providing knowledge and course content to mold individuals into great educators. Currently, many teacher preparation programs fail to prepare future educators for the reality of the educational environment where the focus is completely external, leaving no time or energy for anything internal. Teacher preparation programs have a unique opportunity to embed the awareness of core values and how external service aligns with these values and personal self-care when identified and understood as such. Without such

awareness, “[E]ducators are falsely encouraged to neglect their own mental health in favor of privileging a student’s ... emotional distress over their own” [34] (para. 6). This understanding elevates PRAE from being a mere instrument for identifying the disconnect that drives many from the classroom, and instead, imbues it with the power to proactively stave off and/or support both pre-service and in-service educators from burnout, compassion fatigue, and related stressors that lead to attrition.

5. Professional reciprocal altruism in education defined

Professional Reciprocal Altruism in Education, or PRAE, is “a conceptual construct for understanding that the preparations and decisions made by educational professionals *now* are influential in designing the *future*” [27] (p. 12). It aligns the actions and behaviors of the individual with the value of service to others that initially draw many into the profession [23]. This especially holds true in higher education, and arguably, most directly with teacher preparation programs, as instructors aim to instill new knowledge and skills in future educators that reflect the recent shifts in education due to the ongoing pandemic crisis. Further, leaders in the field of education must work proactively to find solutions and revise what is identified as *best teaching practices* at any given time to support the greater educational community and the state of the society in which it exists, supports, and serves.

During the process of reimagining the teaching practice, many teachers developed a greater depth of empathy and compassion for those affected by the current crisis [35]. These characteristics, along with a positive growth mindset, finding ways to become part of the solution, and leading from the heart, surround the main inspiration behind PRAE. These qualities and values also promote the concept of developing new pedagogical skills for future teachers and educational leaders to be implemented into the new teaching [27]. PRAE empowers educators to engage in a proactive approach to the entire learning process [27] and its symbiotic relationship with the educational community of practice through its connection to the import of each individual’s legitimate peripheral participation, be they “a newcomer... an old-timer” [16] (p. 56), or anywhere on the spectrum in-between. PRAE provides a transformative paradigm for understanding the way education is perceived by the teacher in an effort to modify the actions of a siloed experience to that of a larger community of practice and collaborative partnerships. It moves one forward from novice to practitioner to expert within the CoP because of the authentic, legitimate participation the teacher is engaged in. When this realization is purposefully integrated into an individual’s paradigm, it creates a

sense of support and belonging that will further motivate teachers to stay within the field of education, continuing to grow and develop into educational leaders. Additionally, this paradigm of support and belonging will better serve current and future teachers and administrators by supplying the skills and knowledge necessary to teach and meet the needs of the community [27].

6. The value of PRAE

“Emotional intelligence may enhance altruistic behavior as it enables employees to recognize and understand their coworkers’ feelings” [36] (p. 408). Being that educators are essentially molding society’s future, it is important they better understand the role of their emotions and how this affects change within the greater community. Educators form bonds and relationships with their colleagues, students, families, community members, and most people they have direct contact with. By doing this through the lens of emotional intelligence, PRAE enhances the importance of transformative empowerment.

According to Ma [37], every relationship has some depth of altruism because there are costs and benefits scattered throughout each connection. Altruism forms the substance which allows relationships to develop; reciprocal altruism provides a platform upon which these relationships grow to become more purposeful and meaningful. PRAE serves as an even greater enhancement to this understanding of human relationships that teachers need to bolster their emotional stability via the empowerment that comes from value congruence and its correlation to intrinsic motivation.

7. PRAE as a bridge for value congruence

Wang and Hall [8] examined the role of personal values and an individual teacher’s perceptions of their professional well-being or lack thereof. They quoted Schwartz’s 1992, *Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries* article to articulate their agreement that values are “the concepts or beliefs that pertain to desirable end states or behaviors, transcend specific situations, guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and are ordered by relative importance” [8] (p. 2).

The process of aligning one’s personal values, attitudes, and mindsets with those of the CoP, affords the bridging of the authentic and professional self, thus continuously fostering one’s mindset to remain engaged in their individual continuous process of growth and development for not only their students and local community, but also for our shared profession, and themselves.

The overarching values of PRAE include altruism, reciprocal altruism, service, compassion, empathy,

and community. Fig. 1 provides a metaphorical correlation between one's personal values, professional values, and values associated with PRAE, as a grounded theory.

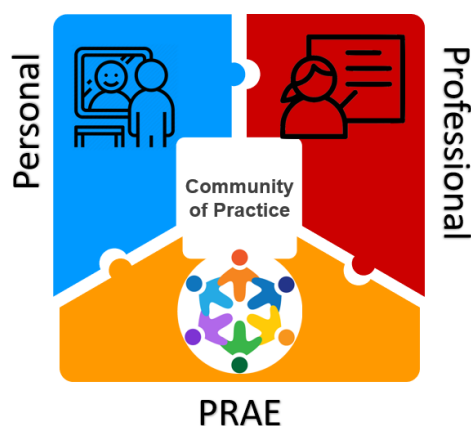


Figure 1. The desired relationship between personal, professional, and PRAE's values

Figure 1 illustrates the connections that are central to the transformative understanding of PRAE as a grounded theory. Personal values allow an educator to reflect upon his or her own reasons for entering the teaching profession, in addition to examining the importance of this to one's character, morals, and continued motivation to teach. The professional values component provides an opportunity for an educator to exude his or her perception of teacher values onto others in their work environment. PRAE, then, becomes the bridge between one's personal values, perceived values of educators as professionals, and the greater Community of Practice, enhancing or renewing one's passion for teaching.

PRAE, by serving as a mechanism to directly identify and align one's personal and professional values, empowers transformative growth. It encourages rich, critical-thinking-focused reflection, which affords awareness of one's motivational factors so the individual can move beyond employing actions that bring momentary or immediate self-gratification to reframing behaviors around long-term goals and desires. PRAE's elevation of reciprocal altruism as a shared professional value, empowers educators to be fueled by their desire for rewards that come not at the moment, but in the future (i.e: inspiring, motivating, and supporting students, peers, and related community members). Thus, PRAE demands reflection, one of the most critical components of both professional growth and positive mental health. As espoused by John Dewey [38] over a century ago, engagement in reflection is crucial for the individual educator to be able to elevate one's practice from a series of mechanistic actions and reactions into a professional process of continuous awareness and improvement via the continuous goal of making

meaning and expanding awareness through the deconstruction, examination, and extrapolation of deeper insight and critical thinking born of experience [39]. PRAE's outlining of the connections between the personal, professional, and greater CoP's values, is especially empowering when correlating Dewey's [38] emphasis on reflection alongside Maslow's highest level of individual cognitive growth, self-actualization [40].

8. PRAE Applied in Real-Life

University Retreat Workshop - A

A PRAE interactive workshop was presented virtually to a cadre of 31 participants; all attendees were members of the School of Education of a mid-sized, private American university. Those participating were a mix of deans, associate deans, program chairs, full time faculty, and educational professionals from the school's teacher accreditation department (TAD). All involved were familiar with working collaboratively online as approximately 99% of the school's courses had been delivered to students in either a blended/hybrid or a fully online format since 2012. The group was gathered for a bi-annual retreat. Up until the Fall of 2020, all such retreats had been face-to-face, three-day gatherings where all fulltime faculty, academic administrators, and high-level staff had met together in Southern California for general meetings, professional development, and collegial engagement designed to foster innovation and creativity. Additionally, each retreat was designed to bring all faculty together in clarity of focus of the school's mission, which was openly communicated as intending to:

develop strategic, innovative and caring leaders, scholars, and practitioners who are able to fulfill the promise and purpose of education in a pluralistic and democratic society by promoting the individual to become an agent of change within local, state, national and global communities. The School of Education is committed to ensuring that all candidates successfully complete their programs with not only the knowledge and skills necessary to work in educational settings, but also with the appropriate dispositions [27].

However, due to travel restrictions and health and safety concerns at the time due to the ongoing COVID 19 Pandemic, face-to-face gatherings were not possible. While there had been some discussion regarding the holding of a truncated, carefully orchestrated, on-ground gathering for the Fall 2020 retreat, the university's administrators felt the cost of managing the necessary health mitigations were too

great; thus, the Fall 2020 retreat became the second time this group had come together for a two-day virtual retreat in place of their traditional three-day event.

PRAE was put on the agenda at the request of the dean of the school. She was intentionally seeking relevant, engagement-oriented opportunities for the faculty, administrators, and high-level staff to focus on actionable means of being empowered to continue serving the university's students while also being able to focus on meaningful, appropriate, self-care strategies and practices. The intention of bringing attention to self-care was purposeful in that it not only potentially afforded a more collaborative workforce through such professional development and collegial engagement, but it empowered stronger role-modeling of an appropriate form of self-care that was actionable, and potentially healing, for all teachers in the midst of that time of ongoing quarantine teaching stress for the faculty's student body, most of whom were in-service and pre-service teachers, counselors, and other school leaders.

The workshop opened with a general introduction to PRAE and a clarification that this was not to be considered a one-shot experience, that what all was to be shared and discovered throughout the 90-minutes was only a first step in an ongoing program which would be carried over into the next retreat, at that time scheduled for Spring of 2021. From there the focus was on the importance of personal values to one's professional life and the connection between the two with career longevity, job satisfaction, and the ability to stave off burnout from stress. Participants were randomly put into virtual breakout rooms of three to five people. They were instructed to spend a solid 20 minutes discussing their own values using a set of pre-crafted Google slides that contained 28 text boxes that could be rearranged on the slide. Twenty-six of the text boxes on the slides contained the name of a specific value that came from research conducted by The University of Michigan [44] relating to the specific values educators reported as being important to them as individuals who had chosen to serve in the teaching profession. Two of the text boxes were left blank for people to complete themselves if they had values that were not listed.

After the initial 20 minute conversation on individual and shared values, the groups were tasked with coming to some semblance of consensus amongst the members as to which values they felt were their top three, the most important to them as guiding principles in their professional roles and personal lives, as well as the top three that best described the values that seemed to be those that best represented the culture of the school.

The entire cadre reconvened to share out their top three individual professional values and those they felt were most prominent in the educational community of the school.

Group Values Share Out			
Group 1 Teacher Values: 1. Fully Inclusive 2. Learning/Growth 3. Empathy Professional Environment Values: 1. Community 2. Integrity 3. Altruism	Group 2 Teacher Values: 1. empathy/compassion, service 2. service 3. innovation Professional Environment Values: 1. respect/integrity 2. learning/growth/innovation 3. diversity/culture	Group 3 Teacher Values: 1. Service 2. Compassion 3. Learning Growth (Growth Mindset) Professional Environment Values: 1. Justice/Equity (we added: Wise) on list 2. Innovation 3. Learning/Growth mindset	Group 4 Teacher Values: 1. Empathy 2. Diversity/culture 3. Respect Professional Environment Values: 1. Empathy 2. Diversity/culture 3. Respect
Group 5 Teacher Values: 1. Culturally Responsive (reading the classroom) 2. Compassion 3. Perseverance Professional Environment Values: 1. Learning/ Growth 2. Integrity 3. Service	Group 6 Teacher Values: 1. Empathy 2. Respect 3. Learning and Growth Professional Environment Values: 1. Integrity 2. Respect 3. Unity/balance health	Group 7 Teacher Values: 1. learning/growth mindset 2. integrity 3. empathy Professional Environment Values: 1. innovation 2. perseverance 3. service	Group 8 Teacher Values: 1. Diversity 2. Security \$ 3. Learning & Growth Professional Environment Values: 1. Don't get to (too much discussion on list)

Figure 2. PRAE group values share-outs

A conversation ensued as to how similar the responses were despite initial worries voiced by several individuals that the activity would only identify differences and thus highlight divisions as opposed to shared commonalities. Feedback from the whole of the activity identified this specific component of the workshop as one of the most meaningful for multiple participants. The common theme in those responses was that the visual of the chart helped them to recognize that they were not alone in valuing such things as being intentional with inclusivity, empathy, and focusing on a growth mindset for themselves and their students.

Lilly Conference Workshop

To gain further insight as to the relevancy and effectiveness of the PRAE model, the authors presented their research at the *ITLC Lilly Online, Onsite and Hybrid Teaching & Learning Conference* as an interactive session. This workshop consisted of a 20-minute pre-recorded introduction to the model and the engagement component that would follow. PRAE materials were explained so participants would be ready to take full advantage of the ensuing fully immersive workshop that followed the video. Once ready, the attendees participated in a guided experience of aligning their values, attitudes, and mindsets with those of the greater Community of Practice. This afforded each individual the opportunity to intentionally focus on bridging their personal and professional self, thus fostering a connection between their affective and cognitive domains in a fashion that empowers intrinsic motivation to remain engaged in their continuous process of development. Such ongoing awareness and growth serve not only themselves and their students, but also the local and greater community that makes up the educational profession.

With the foundation of PRAE established, participants were projected forward to the next, and final for this workshop step. The goal was to provide a means for sharing their newly illuminated understandings in a collaborative fashion that would benefit their peers at their worksite. While the initial PRAE work began with each individual being tasked to select their *personal* top three and bottom three

values, this final component had them circling back to then identify the top three and bottom three values that were most appropriate for *teachers* (in general). They reflected on their personal work environments and selected the top three and bottom three values that best aligned/described the values of their current *professional environment*. Once they did this, they were charged with comparing the three lists, taking into consideration any alignment (value congruence) between the top three values and/or any disconnects or value discrepancies (the lack of value congruence) between the top three values. Finally, participants used this knowledge and developed an action plan to integrate PRAE as a bridge between one’s authentic self and his/her/their vision of themselves as a fully engaged participant in the CoP of practicing educational professionals.

PRAE-Action Plan/Values Reflection

Now that you have identified the connections and/or discrepancies between the top 3 values in each of the three groups (personal, teaching profession, PRAE), it is time to reflect, think ahead, and take action. If you truly are passionate about education, then now is the time to try to better align your values. If you cannot find alignment, then reflect back to when you decided to become a teacher. What made you do this? How can you encourage colleagues to align their values? Complete the action plan below to get you started.

Objective	Action Needed	Why is this important?	Timeline for Achieving Objective	Indication of Success
Example: I will introduce the idea of PRAE to my curriculum team by completing the values activity with them.	Plan time (25 min.) during a team meeting. Share my experience with the values activity. Provide background/knowledge of PRAE and its values.	This will help form alignment between my own values, as well as get my colleagues thinking about theirs. This will, in turn, support the Community of Practice and greater educational field.	Within the first month of the new school year start.	I will see exactly where my goals align personally, professionally, and with the greater educational community. My colleagues will be able to do this as well. We will have more cohesiveness as a team and be able to work together for the greater good of students.

Figure 3. PRAE action plan/values reflection

Participants’ post workshop reactions and feedback validated the importance of PRAE as an applicable means of understanding how, within a community of practice, each individual’s choices, actions, and behaviors are not siloed. Comments clarified how PRAE was seen as a means of crafting an appropriate, shared vision; one that allowed each person to correlate how their on-the-ground responsibilities, pressures, and realities of teaching can and do align with the values of the field. Additionally, participants reported finding value in employing PRAE as an effective tool for discovering how their vision of themselves as a whole person could be more authentically integrated into their practice, thus empowering each person to develop a personal action plan that they were enthusiastic about incorporating into the fabric of their everyday lives.

Examination of the archived materials, text conversations and video of discussions and actions, demonstrated how the attendees both embraced and appreciated the structure of the PRAE conceptual framework. Several individuals stated that they had not previously even thought about bridging their authentic and professional selves; these participants went on to share how they *now*, moving forward, felt

a genuine sense of empowerment because of the clarity in crafting a vision, of how they truly *did* fit in as fully engaged, participating members of the CoP of educational professionals, despite location, socio-economic status, or other personal demographic factors.

The PRAE process afforded an easy-to-understand mechanism for aligning the very values and associated intrinsic call to altruistic service that had served as the primary motivation for many to become an educator in the first place [13]. Recognizing that they truly did have shared values, despite the different language each had originally used when trying to define them, and then aligning these more clearly articulated core values with those of their fellow 21st-century teachers, inspired the participants to reframe their mindset surrounding the various on-the-ground responsibilities, pressures, and realities of education today. What had been viewed as burdensome and antithetical to their intentions as practitioners became a connection amongst peers. Participants shared that the whole of the process helped them connect with a deeper sense of empathy and compassion for themselves and the frustrations they deal with in their professional roles because they saw for themselves how each individual is essential in serving the greater good, that, again is that idea that is altruistic in nature, in their own unique fashion. Final thoughts shared were consistently positive and enthusiastic about taking the PRAE materials back to their individual worksites and engaging in parallel experiences with their peers, only this time they would be acting as facilitators and leaders rather than as individual participants.

University Retreat Workshop - B

In the spring of 2022, the PRAE researchers were invited to return and continue working with the same cadre of faculty, school administrators, and key educational staff that they had in the Fall of 2021. Being that this Community/CoP had survived major personnel and structural changes throughout the previous 24 months, it was essential to take an active, deep dive into regaining morale, realigning their common values, and revisiting why each individual chose this profession in the first place as a refreshed idea to continue building on this next step of the professional (and personal) evolution.

As this group had already been introduced to the broad concept of PRAE, the workshop began with a focus on the concepts of *Reframing, Revisiting, Refreshing, and Replenishing*; these objectives were specifically requested as there was a recognized need by the school leadership to empower the practitioners, both as individuals and as members of a Community of Practice, to rebuild their shared sense of purpose after the high levels of pressure and anxiety brought about by the extreme demands placed upon faculty

throughout the pandemic. Thus, this workshop was designed to give a structured means of *reframing* the stress faculty reported feeling in the semi-post pandemic environment, *revisiting* the very things that enticed the participants to enter the educational profession in the first place, *refreshing* their vision of *what it means to be a teacher today*, and *replenishing* each individual’s intrinsic motivation.

Reframing started with the purposeful engagement of the affective domain. Participants were guided through collaboratively exploring their personal visions of themselves as 21st-century educational professionals. That work allowed them to see more deeply into the actual paradigms each person had for the various choices made and actions taken related to their personal practice.

Building upon that foundation, the revisiting component had each individual then participating in an activity that walked them through the process of constructing an understanding of themselves as being integral components of a complex, human-oriented system rather than siloed lemmings completing a series of preordained, isolated tasks and obligations. This modified vision of themselves served as the key tool to unlocking the door to a shared *aha* moment as described by Lev Vygotsky with his Zone of Proximal Development [45] where an individual experiences a cognitive discovery that illuminates a higher level of understanding which previously was out-of-reach. The faculty recognized that they were a connected group of individual professionals where each person was necessary and essential because everyone, in their unique fashion, made invaluable contributions to the greater community.

By consciously walking through the PRAE process together, each individual refined their sense of professional as well as personal purpose to a level that afforded the refreshing of their inspiration and motivation to stay present and meaningfully engaged in their roles. This directly led to a communal understanding of the import of self-care, healing, and rediscovering the sense of joy in their practice, as they saw how burning themselves out disempowered them, as a whole, to be present and engaged with their practice, their peers, and greater professional community. Thus, the stage was set for the community to purposefully work together to replenish each individual’s ability to realign their shared environmental values with those that PRAE brought back into their paradigms of their everyday lives.

During this final replenishing stage of the workshop, participants directly looked at how the affective and cognitive domains, and the expansion of understanding via exploration and alignment of actions/preferred actions, afforded clarity in value congruence, or in some cases, demonstrated a values discrepancy that could then be addressed. Participants took a quiz that highlighted specific core values of the teaching profession and PRAE. The quiz intentionally

employed terminology and vocabulary from both existing research and the recognized core values of PRAE to assist those taking it in making meaningful connections and alignment to their own personal values.

The quiz reiterated the six core values of PRAE:

1. Reciprocal Altruism: giving to others and having a positive influence;
2. Service: purposefully engaging in serving needs or issues and seeking out such opportunities;
3. Empathy: embracing the moment while, at the same time, caring for others;
4. Altruism: one’s authentic purpose in the field;
5. Compassion: caring for oneself; and
6. Community: connecting with others within one’s area of practice.

PRAE Assessment-Dominant Values and Traits (Spring SOE Retreat 2022)		
INSTRUCTIONS: Please select ONE response from each of the 5 groups by changing the default NO for your selection into a YES		
NOTE: Use the arrow to the right of each No to change your selection into a Yes		
GROUP 1		
I believe that everyone deserves a second chance	No	-
I have strong emotional intelligence	No	-
I believe that people are inherently good	No	-
I smile at people I don't know, especially if it seems they are having a challenging day	No	-
I would consider hosting a foreign exchange student	No	-
If I saw a person in distress (i.e. mental breakdown), I would reach out to help them	No	-
I ask direct questions to find out how someone else is doing	No	-
GROUP 2		
I hold the door open for others	No	-
I take time to clear my mind (i.e. mental break)	No	-
I spend my personal time tutoring students	No	-
I ask others how their day is going	No	-
I ask for feedback as it helps me better understand the expectations of others	No	-
I like to give gifts	No	-
I prefer to work alone	No	-
GROUP 3		
If the opportunity presented itself, I would welcome interns/student teachers	No	-
I give advice to others on how to balance (work/life/school) to avoid a burnout	No	-
I actively seek out volunteer opportunities to help the community	No	-
I use active listening to determine how someone else is doing	No	-
I applaud the actions of others for acts of kindness to show appreciation	No	-
I would consider fostering/adopting a child in need	No	-
I give up easily/get overwhelmed easily	No	-
GROUP 4		
I prefer to work in a team	No	-
I am resilient	No	-
I communicate gratitude to strangers when they do nice things	No	-
I enjoy seeking out cultural foods, clothing, etc. to learn more about them	No	-
I don't hold grudges in the workplace	No	-
I serve meals on holidays at the Food Bank or other community organizations so no one goes hungry on these special days	No	-
I keep to myself and do not share materials unless asked	No	-
GROUP 5		
I share my ideas to help others grow	No	-
I participate in activities for personal growth	No	-
I enjoy sharing resources to empower peers to do their best	No	-
I purposefully seek out authors whose ideas are different than mine	No	-
I use the language of compassion in professional conversations	No	-
I easily forgive others	No	-
I only engage in staff/faculty development if I must do so	No	-
TOTAL SCORE=====	0	

Figure 4. PRAE dominant values self-assessment

By completing the quiz, each individual received a personal score. They were then put into discussion groups by those scores to share how they felt about being identified within that group (by those core values). The reports from the various groups were positive and illuminating. Not a single person disagreed with their score or grouping. The transcripts show a genuine sense of positiveness and enjoyment in finding others who were in the same group. This built an open sense of fellowship that several participants said later they had been missing for some time.

Members of each group were then randomly partnered up with another in that same identified core

value. These pairs were given time to complete a document (PRAE Pledge) that outlines specific actions each person could take to empower one another to purposefully weave their core value into their every practice as an ongoing effort to ensure their professional environment did stay in alignment with their personal and professional values.

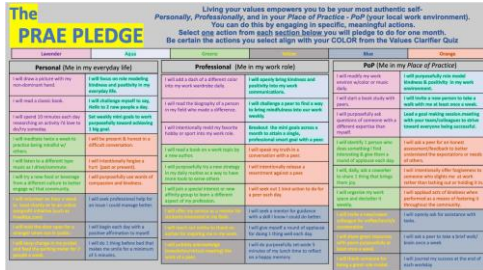


Figure 5. PRAE pledge

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

Professional Reciprocal Altruism in Education, PRAE, directly serves teachers, educational leaders, and policy makers across the local, state, and national levels with its focus on the individual educator understanding and strengthening their affective, as well as cognitive and behavioral connections for everything that goes into being an effective educational professional. Indirectly, PRAE supports and provides multiple positive benefits to a wide spectrum of related stakeholders, going beyond the confines of a single group of students and their families. Recognizing that educators are actually service providers in a humanistic enterprise that involves ongoing development, maturation, and engagement, and the goals of such processes are intended to empower more than just a person’s ability to survive, but to authentically thrive and contribute to the greater good, PRAE’s benefits extend beyond the schoolhouse. As Dewey [38] shared back at the start of the 20th century, “[E]ducation is not preparation for life; education is life itself” (p. 239), PRAE’s reach extends to the whole of our current and future society.

The clarity and coherence of PRAE’s spotlight on altruism and reciprocal altruism affords two crucial understandings: (1) each individual educator’s professional reality is greatly affected by their values and sense of value congruence, or the lack thereof, whether consciously identified or not; and (2) guidance and support are needed to enable practitioners and their communities to address and rectify value incongruence to alleviate the alarming rates of burnout, compassion fatigue, and teacher attrition. This focus on the correlation between reciprocal altruism as a professional paradigm and one’s core values, offers a powerful tool for actively integrating the affective, cognitive, and behavioral domains of every individual teacher across the United

States into their daily professional practice to ensure longevity in a healthy fashion. Supporting purposeful engagement with one’s Community of Practice ensures that not only America’s educators are able to be mindfully present in all that their multifaceted role demands of them, but teachers around the globe are as well.

The upheaval of the world caused by the COVID 19 pandemic was challenging for educators who had to find new and innovative ways to keep serving their students despite quarantines, school closures, and a lack of resources. Yet, because of the very values that brought so many into the profession, especially altruism and reciprocal altruism, most persevered, but in doing so, they found themselves dealing with unanticipated high levels of pressure and stress. This led to great numbers of burnout and attrition. Thus, focusing on how to support teacher well-being led to values and value-congruence. The examination of the extent to which value congruence effects an educator’s well-being and professionalism highlighted a gap in the literature; however, what was present demonstrated the various effects value incongruence and its associated negative ramifications on teachers and their ability to remain healthy and effective in their practice [41], [42], [43], [34]. Hence, there was an identified need for quantitative and mixed methods studies along such lines as the ideas and findings discovered could offer both validation of the import of value congruence and a greater understanding of how mindful implementation and integration of interventions to elevate one’s ability to harness all that it affords. It is worth noting that what relevant research does currently exist comes primarily from work being conducted outside of the United States. This research adds an interesting twist to the discussion of core values as it adds an additional layer of culture and universality that is otherwise unspoken of when examining one’s own cultural vantage point. Therefore, there is an opportunity to explore, not only the potential of PRAE to serve educators across the United States, but also to collaborate with international colleagues to further understand value congruence as it relates to the global Community of Practice of educators and educational systems.

9. References

[1] Cucinotta, D., and Vanelli. M. (2020). WHO declares COVID-19 a pandemic. *Acta Biomed.* 2020, 91(1):157-160. DOI: 10.237 50/abm.v91i1.9397.

[2] Hess, A.J. (2020). 27% of teachers are considering quitting because of Covid, survey finds. *CNBC* 2020. <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/12/14/27perce> (Access Date: 05 April 2022).

- [3] Irish, L. (2020). Survey: Covid-19 leads more teachers, staff to quit before classes begin. *Arizona Education News Service*. (Access Date: 19 March 2022).
- [4] Jones, C., and Pflaum, N. Teacher exodus: Data shows teachers retiring in droves amid COVID-19 pandemic. 2020 KUTV. <https://kutv.com/news/beyond-the-books/covid-19-pandemic-prompting-teacher-exodus> (Access Date: 04 March 2021).
- [5] Will, M. (2020). Teachers are stressed out, and it's causing some to quit. *Education Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/teachers-are-stressed-out-and-its-causing-some-to-quit/2021/02> (Access Date: 06 March 2021).
- [6] Diliberti, M. K., Schwartz, H. L., and Grant, D. (2021). Stress topped the reasons why public school teachers quit, even before COVID-19. RAND Corporation. DOI: 10.7249/RR1121-2.
- [7] Westervelt, E. (2016). Frustration. Burnout. Attrition. It's time to address the national teacher shortage. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/09/15/493808213/frustration-burnout-attrition-its-time-to-address-the-national-teacher-shortage> (Access Date: 09 March 2021).
- [8] Wang, H., and Hall, N.C. (2019). When "I care" is not enough: An interactional analysis of teacher values, value congruence, and well-being. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 86. DOI: 10.1016/j.tate.2019.102906.
- [9] Bao, Y., Dolan, S.L., and Tzafir, A. (2012). Value congruence in organizations: Literature review, theoretical perspectives, and future directions. *ESADE Working Papers Series*. DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.2154976.
- [10] Edwards, J.R., and Cable, D.M. (2009). The value of value congruence. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94. DOI: 10.1037/a0014891.
- [11] Van Beurden, J., Van Veldhoven, M., Nijendijk, K., and Van De Voorde, K. (2017). Teachers' remaining career opportunities: The role of value fit and school climate. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 68. DOI: 10.1016/j.tate.2017.09.002.
- [12] Mizrav, E., and Weber, G. (2020). Why retaining deeply experienced teachers is critical during a global pandemic. *American Institutes for Research*. <https://www.air.org/resource/why-retaining-deeply-experienced-teachers-critical-during-global-pandemic> (Access Date: 17 April 2021).
- [13] Kelly, N., Cespedes, M., Clara, M., and Danaher, P.A. (2019). Early career teachers' intentions to leave the profession: The complex relationships among preservice education, early career support, and job satisfaction. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 44(3): 93-113.
- [14] Gicheva, D. (2020). Altruism and burnout: Long hours in the teaching profession. *ILR Review*. DOI: 10.1177/0019793920981055.
- [15] Kohlhepp, W.C., Brennerman, A., and Robinson, P. (2008). Professionalism. In Ballweg, R., Sullivan, E.M., Brown, D., and Vetrosky, D. *Physician assistant: A guide to clinical practice*. Saunders.
- [16] Lave, J., and Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press.
- [17] Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press.
- [18] Monroe, K.R. (2001). *The heart of altruism: Perceptions of a common humanity*. Princeton University Press.
- [19] Numan, M. (2015). *Neurobiology of social behavior: Toward an understanding of the prosocial and antisocial brain*. Elsevier.
- [20] LaFollette, H. (1988). The truth in psychological egoism. In J. Feinberg, (Ed.). *Reason and responsibility: Readings in some basic problems of philosophy*, 7th ed. Wadsworth Pub. Co.
- [21] Stocks, E.L., and Lishner, D.A. (2015). Altruism. *Neurobiology of Social Behavior*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/medicine-and-dentistry/altruism/pdf> (Access Date: 04 March 2021).
- [22] Sutton, J. (2020). What is altruism in psychology? 8 inspiring examples. <https://positivepsychology.com/altruism/> (Access Date: 17 February 2021).
- [23] Koksoy, A.M., and Dasedemir, I. (2019). Factors affecting teacher candidates value preferences. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, (15)6. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1237221.pdf> (Access Date: 20 February 2021).
- [24] Allen, S. (2018). The science of gratitude [White paper]. Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley. https://thesnipermind.com/images/Studies-PDF-Format/GGSC-JTF_White_Paper-Gratitude-FINAL.pdf (Access Date: 09 March 2021).
- [25] Trivers, R. (1971). The evolution of reciprocal altruism. *Quarterly Review of Biology*, 46: 35-37.
- [26] Levi, M. (2017). What scientific term or concept ought to be more widely known? *Edge*. <https://www.edge.org/response-detail/27170> (Access Date: 13 March 2021).
- [27] Bogunovich, J., Greene, K., and Guzman, C.V. (2020). PRAE: A singular paradigm for understanding the necessary skills, mindsets, and attitudes of effective schools, leaders, and educators in the new normal of today [White paper]. <https://digitalcommons.brandman.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=soe-faculty-papers> (Access Date: 14 December 2020).
- [28] Chan, K., and Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE). (2006). In-service teachers' perceptions of teaching as a career; Motives and commitment in teaching [Conference proceedings]. *International Education Research Conference: UWS Parramatta: Papers Collection*.

- [29] Jungert, T., Alm, F., and Thornberg, R. (2014). Motives for becoming a teacher and their relations to academic engagement and dropout among student teachers. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 40(2): 173-185. DOI: 10.1080/02607476.2013.869971.
- [30] Pop, M.M., and Turner, J.E. (2009). To be or not to be ... a teacher? Exploring levels of commitment related to perceptions of teaching among students enrolled in a teacher education program. *Teachers and Teaching*, 15: 683–700.
- [31] Gökçe, A.T. (2021). Core values in education from the perspective of future educators. SAGE Publication, 1-14. DOI: 10.1177/21582440211014485.
- [32] ABC News. (2020). Teachers going the extra mile for their students [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I90hmdK6vWQ> (Access Date: 22 January 2021).
- [33] Zajonc, A. (2013). Contemplative pedagogy: A quiet revolution in higher education. *New Directions in Teaching and Learning*, 2013(134). <http://www.arthurzajonc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Contemplative-Pedagogy-A-Quiet-Revolution-in-Higher-Education.pdf> (Access Date: 12 January 2021).
- [34] Ewing, S. (2021). Compassion fatigue is overwhelming educators during the pandemic: We need acknowledgement and healing. EdWeek. pandemic: We need acknowledgement and healing". https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-compassion-fatigue-is-overwhelming-educators-during-the-pandemic/2021/06?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=eml&utm_campaign=tu&M=60749947&U=1437804&UUID=1c3014d2925e038519a4cce7862b15fe (Access Date: 19 March 2021).
- [35] Jones, A.L., and Kessler, M.A. (2020). Teachers' emotion and identity work during a pandemic. *Frontiers in Education*, 5(583775). DOI: 10.3389/feduc.2020.583775.
- [36] Carmeli, A., and Josman, Z.E. (2006). The relationship among emotional intelligence, task performance, and organizational citizenship behaviors. *Human Performance*, 19: 403-419. DOI: 10.1207/s15327043hup1904_5.
- [37] Ma, H.K. (2017). The development of altruism with special reference to human relationships: A 10-stage theory. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 5(271). DOI: 10.3389/fpubh.2017.00271.
- [38] Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. Macmillan.
- [39] Rogers, C. (2002). Defining reflection: Another look at John Dewey and reflective thinking. *Teachers College Record*, 104(4): 842-666.
- [40] Holt, L. (2020). John Dewey: A look at his contributions to curriculum. *Academicus International Scientific Journal*, XI(21): 142-150.
- [41] Kendrick, A. (2020). Compassion fatigue, emotional labour and educator burnout: Research study [Phase 1]. Alberta Teachers Association. <https://www.teachers.ab.ca/> (Access Date: 18 March 2021).
- [42] Boinott, C. (2021). Recognizing when it's time for a change; From switching schools to pursuing new opportunities in the district, teachers can make changes to address their burnout, writes a teacher career coach. Edutopia. https://www.edutopia.org/article/recognizing-when-its-time-change?utm_content=linkpos1&utm_campaign=weekly-2021-06-02&utm_source=edu-legacy&utm_medium=email (Access Date: 12 April 2021).
- [43] Cure, L. (2021). 5 ways to overcome compassion fatigue in K-12 education: Unaddressed compassion fatigue leads to anxiety, trouble concentrating and desire to leave one's position. <https://districtadministration.com/5-ways-overcome-compassion-fatigue-higher-education/> (Access Date: 14 April 2021).
- [44] University of Michigan's College of Literature, Science, and the Art's (U-M LSA). (2021). Core values. <https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/core-values/> (Access Date: 18 February 2021).
- [45] Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.