School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)
(3/9/22)

Contents

>*About redesigning classrooms so every student has equity of opportunity to succeed at school and beyond*

>*Students Helping Students*

>*Links to a few other relevant shared resources*

(Scroll down to read about the above and for hotlinks to resources)

Note: Go to http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/ for links to other Center resources.

This resource is from the
   Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, UCLA

So please feel free to share with anyone you think might benefit (e.g., forward our resources to individuals and share on listservs and websites).

****
For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu
For previous postings of community of practice discussions, see
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm

****

For discussion and interchange:
>**About redesigning classrooms so every student has equity of opportunity to succeed at school and beyond**

Request from a colleague:

"I am designing a class at our Middle School to try and provide academic, social-emotional, and mentoring support for students identified by means of failing grades and school disengagement. Do you have any recommendations for resources that might be most helpful as I am designing the components of this class?"

Comments from the Field:

(1) "There is no 'handbook' for how to create such a class (as far as I know). However, I believe the key is to be open and willing to let students direct their own learning within the context of a supportive environment. The teacher also needs to keep context in mind since these students are only in this class for one period during the day. What can be done to help them successfully navigate their environment the rest of the time? If this class can help them learn such skills, they will want to come back to learn more. What is important to them?

A recommendation I would make is to consult the Collaborative for Social and Emotional Learning website (https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/). Their framework outlines the work in general and offers guidance in terms of creating a supportive classroom and school environment. While this is more than one teacher will undertake, it's helpful to think about the larger context as the class is being designed. This website also provides research showing evidence for what works and why. ...

From there, I would encourage the teacher to think about building a class focused on assets rather than deficits. In other words, teaching content in the same way it's been taught to these students won't help. Material needs to be shared using different instructional strategies, such as using service-learning for example (see: National Youth Leadership Council - NYLC.org). Teaching academics through service-learning can not only connect students to one another but can help

1

them learn to work effectively as a team. Through the process of planning and implementing projects, students can learn by doing, set and achieve goals, and gain a sense of accomplishment and purpose. There are ideas for how to craft lessons at:

https://youth.gov/youth-topics/civic-engagement-and-volunteering/service-learning

This teacher may also be interested in the Search Institute (https://searchinstitute.org/) - 'standard' information for building assets in youth and their community."

(2) "Just one class? I'm hoping we have more people involved than just the one person asking the question!

Do we know-specifically- why these students are getting poor grades and are disengaged? Are we making too many unfounded assumptions about what is going on?

Do we have disengaged & low GPA students involved in the committee designing the class? How about their parents & community leaders?

Do we have teachers, cooks, coaches, bus drivers, social workers, religious leaders, etc. who are successful with the targeted students advising the design committee?

If the students come from many different community groups and we have relatively few educators from those same groups, how do we explain the cultural & social beliefs and attitudes of the more unsuccessful students to the educators?

In my experience, when students feel confident that they can be successful on a task that relates directly to their personal and community values, then they are motivated. When they don't see the point and they don't see any way they can do well, they will do what they can to avoid being embarrassed while they are waiting for the clock to run out. There are thousands of ways traditional school programs fail to serve these students well.

The first major roadblock I see is the push to 'make up' the academic progress (as measured by grades standardized achievement tests) that the pandemic abatement measures created. Already I'm seeing blame-the-victim videos and news headlines bemoaning what was 'lost.' Some time ago, some educators wrote scope and sequence of educational goals documents based on conditions at the time. There is no magic in these documents. If conditions change, students do not 'fall back' or 'lose progress.' Students are what they are at any given point of time. They may not know the quadratic equation on a particular day, but they know a lot about how diseases reek havoc, how sad it is to have needless deaths, and how terrible it feels to be unable to visit the sick to take care of them. They understand how isolation and constant stress tears at their self-confidence and health—both mental and physical. They know that many trusted adults don't know how to handle everything either, and are making judgements—some great, some not so hot—on the fly.

So, let's not go back to the old ways of schooling that are broken. Let's look at what people need to deal with right now as well as in the near future, and try to figure out what we need to learn. In my area, I could imagine educational subjects such as 'Who Are The Helpers And How To Find Them.' ... 'How To Comfort Fragile Seniors.' 'Safe Ways To Meet With Friends.' 'Creating Mutual Aid Groups In Your Block.' 'Non-Screen Entertainment.' 'Self-Calming Strategies.' 'Honoring Our Differences.'... 'Is There Something We Could Do To Make This A More Friendly School?' You'll notice these practical classes can have lots of hands-on activities and nothing that needs a letter grade.

Here are some other authors tossing out their ideas:

https://www.aecf.org/blog/reengaging-students-who-lost-their-way-during-the-pandemic
https://www.learningsciences.com/blog/why-is-student-engagement-important/
https://www.nlc.org/resource/rebuild-reengaging-middle-and-high-school-students/
https://www.edweek.org/leadership/inside-the-effort-to-find-and-help-disengaged-youth/2021/01
https://www.edweek.org/leadership/opinion-families-not-engaging-with-school-rethink-the-problem/2020/11
https://www.edutopia.org/student-dropout-retention-strategies

Center Comments:

A major facet of our work has involved development of a prototype for redesigning classrooms to help reduce the opportunity and achievement gaps by addressing barriers to learning and teaching and reengaging disconnected students. The prototype emphasizes (1) personalizing instruction and (2) enhancing special assistance in the classroom. The aim of this work is to enhance classroom efforts to (a) promote whole child development and prevent learning, behavior, and emotional problems, (b) respond quickly with supports as soon as problems arise, and (c) play an appropriate role in providing for students with severe and chronic problems. For details, see Parts I & II in *Improving School Improvement* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/improve.pdf .

Some Other Resources to Aid Classroom Redesign

(1) Personalizing instruction calls for meeting students where there are in terms of both motivation and capabilities. With respect to motivation and especially intrinsic motivation, see the Center's Quick Find

>*Motivation, engagement and reengagement*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/motiv.htm

On this Quick Find, see especially:
>*Re-engaging Disconnected Students Online and at School: Focus on Intrinsic Motivation*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/reengage.pdf

(2) With specific respect to special assistance in the classroom, see the Quick Find

>*Classroom based learning supports* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/classenable.htm

See especially the self study related to Classroom based learning supports
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/classroomsurvey.pdf

(3) With specific respect to pomoting social and emotional development, see the Quick Find on that topic at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2102_05.htm .

Note: Our Center especially emphasizes
>*Natural Opportunities to Promote Social-Emotional Learning and MH*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/practicenotes/naturalopportunities.pdf

Want to weigh-in on this?

Send your comments for sharing to ltaylor@ucla.edu

Teachers deserve more credit.

Sure, but they wouldn't need it if we paid them better.

>**Students Helping Students**

Redesigning classrooms also involves bringing in more help. See Chapter 2 in *Improving School Improvement* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/improve.pdf

Teachers can't and shouldn't be expected to work alone in the classroom. This is particularly the case in schools serving large numbers of students who are not doing well and where class size can range up to 40 students.

Schools need to develop a variety of ways that teachers can expand and integrate social capital into classrooms to improve resources and strategies for enhancing learning and performance.

One readily available set of resources are students themselves. See

>*Cross-Age Peer Mentorship Programs in Schools*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mentoring.pdf

>*Peer Tutoring: Part of Learning Supports*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/peertutor.pdf

For more, see the Quick Find on *Mentoring* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/mentoring.htm

For more on *Teacher's can't do it alone*, see
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/winter13.pdf

Student 2 Student Program

Excerpt from a news release:
https://www.lamayor.org/mayor-garcetti-launches-student-2-student-success-program-providing-paycheck-and-job-training-lausd

LOS ANGELES – Mayor Eric Garcetti launched the Student 2 Student Success program to compensate and provide training for young Angelenos who tutor their siblings or school-aged relatives living in their household.

"*The pandemic has been especially hard on young Angelenos, who faced so many disruptions to their lives and schooling,*" said Mayor Eric Garcetti. "*With Student 2 Student Success, we're making sure younger students get the extra support they need, and providing our tutors with a chance to explore a future career in education or child care.*"

Student 2 Student Success prioritizes students who have struggled academically as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their older family members and tutors contribute up to 120 paid hours — 100 hours of tutoring and 20 hours of job skills training....

Youth tutors must be low-income high school students under 25 years.... The tutors are enrolled in LAUSD Title I schools, either traditional high schools or alternative high schools, such as continuation schools or opportunity schools for older students. The younger students receiving tutoring assistance are children who have had low grades, inconsistent attendance, and missing or incomplete school assignments...

"*The Student 2 Student program offers an opportunity to cultivate LA's future teachers,*" Said LAEWDD General Manager Carolyn Hull. "*The pandemic robbed in-person learning for many of LA's most vulnerable students and there is no replacement for that lost time. Allowing older students to tutor younger students is a step toward alleviating that learning loss, while giving them a sneak peek at life as an educator.*"

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

Collaborating to transform and improve education systems: A playbook for family-school engagement
https://www.brookings.edu/essay/collaborating-to-transform-and-improve-education-systems-a-playbook-for-family-school-engagement/

Need for Long-term Strategies to Address Children's Mental Health Underscored by COVID-19 Era https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama-health-forum/fullarticle/2788866

Children's Mental Health: Understanding an Ongoing Public Health Concern
https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/features/understanding-public-health-concern.html

States Take Action to Address Children's Mental Health in Schools
https://www.nashp.org/states-take-action-to-address-childrens-mental-health-in-schools/

We won't Argue Against Adding More Counselors, BUT ...
Addressing Student Mental Health Concerns Involves Much More than Increasing the Number of Mental Health Providers http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/morethan.pdf

Center for Thriving Children https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/lynch-school/sites/ctc.html

Controversies Surrounding ADHD https://www.mentalhelp.net/adhd/controversies/

Creating safe, equitable, and engaging schools
https://www.air.org/resource/spotlight/creating-safe-equitable-engaging-schools-comprehensive-evidence-based-approach

Fact Sheet: Providing Students with Disabilities Free Appropriate Public Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Addressing the Need for Compensatory Services Under Section 504 https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/factsheet-504.html?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=

How to better engage families of English learners and special ed students
https://districtadministration.com/engage-families-english-learners-special-education-students-with-disabilities/

Early Literacy Strategies That Work https://www.edutopia.org/article/early-literacy-strategies-work

Stop isolating students with disabilities
https://edsource.org/2022/stop-isolating-students-with-disabilities/667500

Welcoming, Registering, and Supporting Newcomer Students: A Toolkit for Educators of Immigrant and Refugee Students in Secondary Schools
https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Documents/English%20Learner%20Programs/Welcoming%20Registering%20and%20Supporting%20Newcomer%20Students_%20A%20Toolkit%20for%20Educators%20of%20Immigrant%20and%20Refugee%20Students%20in%20Secondary%20Schools.pdf

Gender-affirming care improves the mental health of transgender youth
https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/article/transgender-youth-mental-health-gender-affirming-care-laws?utm_medium=email&utm_source=getresponse&utm_content=Supporting%20Transgender%20Students%20in%20School%20Mental%20Health&utm_campaign=

Supporting Transgender Staff and Students
https://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/media/SOM/Microsites/NCSMH/Documents/Resources/Supporting-Trans-Youth.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=getresponse&utm_content=Supporting%20Transgender%20Students%20in%20School%20Mental%20Health&utm_campaign=

Comprehensive School Employee Wellness Initiatives Can Lower Financial Costs to Schools
https://www.childtrends.org/blog/comprehensive-school-employee-wellness-initiatives-can-lower-financial-costs-to-schools

What to Do (and Not Do) When Children Are Anxious
https://childmind.org/article/what-to-do-and-not-do-when-children-are-anxious/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=publ_ed_nl_2022-03-01&utm_content=what-to-do-and-not-do-when-children-are-anxious

<h1 style="text-align:center;color:teal">A Few Upcoming Webinars</h1>

For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm

3/30 Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility
3/2 National Summit on Youth Homelessness
3/8 Warmth and Support and Balanced Instruction
3/9 Navigating the new normal
3/10 Cultivating Compassionate School Communities
3/10 First Semester Attendance Data: How State and Local Education Agencies Can Respond
3/15 School Avoidance and Challenging Behaviors: The Role of Special Education and Section 504
3/15 Essential Tools for Effective Home visits
3/16 Equity, Race, Gender and the Assistant Principal
3/30 Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility

---

Series On: **Building a National Movement to Prevent Trauma and Foster Resilience**
https://psu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN__AYYzYl0T4yXthlOdDLBVw

1/21: Building the Movement in the Education and Health Care

2/4: Building the Movement with Child Welfare and Justice Systems

2/18: Building the Movement through Transformative Justice and Faith-Based Communities

3/4: Building the Movement with Populations with High Prevalence of Trauma

3/18: Building the Movement with Foundations and the Private Sector

4/1: Building the Movement to Address Global Crises

4/15: Building the Movement through Policy and Advocacy
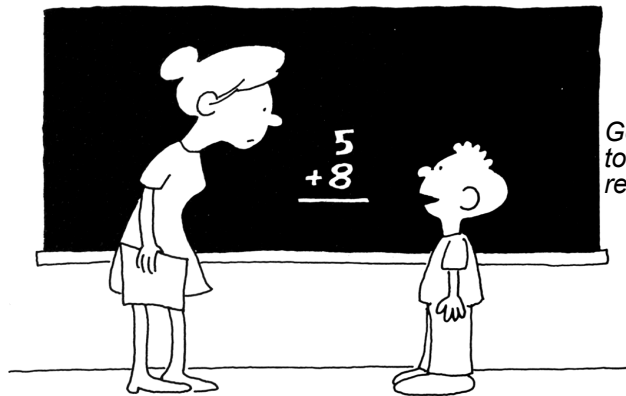
Gosh, Ms. Thompson, I was ready to learn math yesterday. Today, I'm ready to improve my reading.

The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be ignited. – Plutarch

****
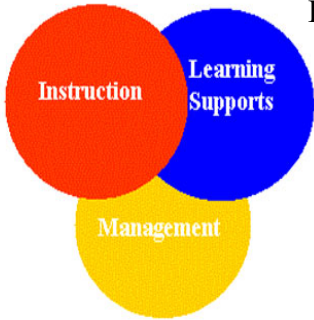
For information about the
National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
go to http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html

Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights; transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to promoting whole child development, advancing social justice, and enhancing learning and a positive school climate.

****

Invitation to Listserv Participants:

Everyone has a stake in the future of public education. This is a critical time for action. Send this resource on to others. Think about sharing with the growing number who are receiving it. AND Let us know about what we should be including.
Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!

For new sign-ups – email Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Also send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing.

We post a broad range of issues and responses to the Net Exchange on our website at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm
and on Facebook (access from the Center's home page http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/)