

(4/24/24) This continuing education resource is from the national

Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA
<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

Featured

(1) ***“How to engage English language learners?”***

(2) ***How are schools dealing with the negative side effects of school mental health interventions?***

(3) ***Links to a few other relevant shared resources***

For discussion and interchange:

>“How to engage English language learners?”

A colleague asks for your help

“I'm currently working at a school with middle school students learning English and I'm looking for better teaching strategies. The students don't seem to be able to learn the concepts. The environment is something I know the school has to work on because there is no library, computer lab or field. Inside of the classroom students don't want to work with other students. As for the students themselves, some of them are motivated and others aren't. However, even when the students are motivated to learn and they complete their lesson/work, they are unable to recall what they learned. I'm trying to understand why that is and to find better ways to teach them. I am also curious to know if you know of any research relevant to teaching ELS students?”

Center Comments:

Fortunately, considerable attention has been paid to English Language Students.

Here's a summary of the research from an American Federation of Teachers' article

> ***Teaching English Language Learners: What the Research Does—and Does Not—Say***

“...As a general rule, all students tend to benefit from clear goals and learning objectives; meaningful, challenging, and motivating contexts; a curriculum rich with content; well-designed, clearly structured, and appropriately paced instruction; active engagement and participation; opportunities to practice, apply, and transfer new learning; feedback on correct and incorrect responses; periodic review and practice; frequent assessments to gauge progress, with reteaching as needed; and opportunities to interact with other students in motivating and appropriately structured contexts....”

>The California Department of Education has a web page that updates trends related to ESL and includes the publication ***Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students: Research to Practice*** for individual study. There also is an accompanying **webinar series**.

Here's a few more resources:

> ***Studies of Teaching and Learning English-Speaking Skills: A Review & Bibliometric Analysis***

> ***Teaching Practices for ESL Students***

> ***Teaching English Language Learners***

> ***Addressing the Language Barrier: English Language Learners, Bilingual Education, and Learning Supports***

> ***Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades***

> ***Supporting English Language Learners: Resources for Educators and Administrators***

> ***Resource Guide for Working With ESL Students***

> ***Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School***

> ***Proven tools and support to help educators and multilingual learners succeed***

Comments from the Field:

We also asked colleagues what they would suggest. Here are a couple of the responses:

1. "My suggestion is to find self-directed activities that really spark the interest of individuals and help them figure out how to "translate" their own experiences into oral and written examples to share with others. For example, I'm guessing that these students have quite a history of experiences living in other countries. Perhaps the teacher asks students to use a specific format to relate a personal story about their country of origin. Or, these students could relate a most memorable experience, a person of high moral character from their country of origin, pick a topic. Whatever it is, the goal is to share that personal story in their first language and then in English - either verbally or written (or both). Then, the teacher is able to bring in resources and teach students how to research the information they need so that others will understand their story. These stories could be shared with other classrooms or perhaps in a school paper/assembly. It could become a very big deal and something that will boost their pride in their work. The topic is irrelevant. The work to share stories with others is where the learning takes place."
2. "... If there are students who have not continuously been enrolled in school or have had disruptions, they might not have had a solid foundation for learning habits/ retention. The tailoring of material might need to be very specific to meet them where they are at. Students who are U.S. born and are also in EL classrooms might enter middle school and be educationally behind or not at grade level~ learning about their educational histories may also inform teaching strategies.

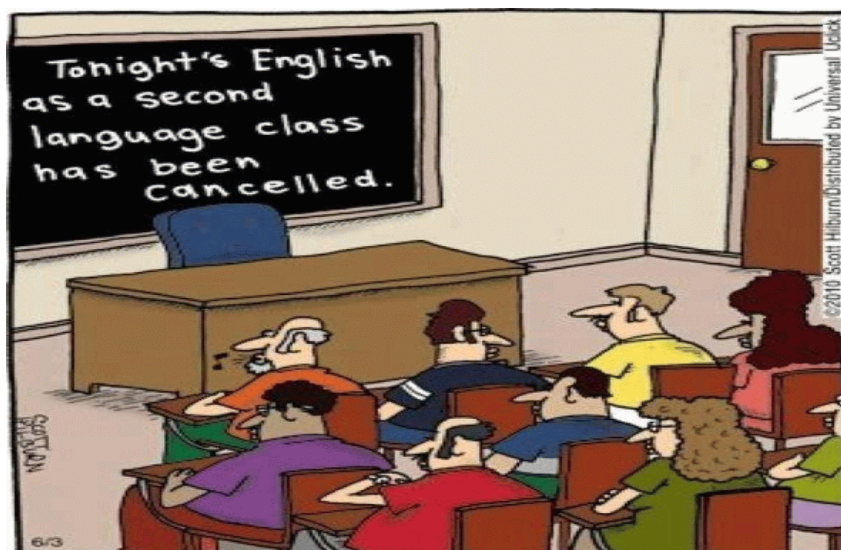
One way to support English language learners that I have seen is bringing in extra reinforcements to the classroom ~ I volunteered in an English Language Learner classroom in a high school for 2 years and teachers had several aides (usually volunteers who were college students at a local university). These volunteers would provide 1-1 support during classes, lunch time, and after school.

Another strategy I saw used in the classroom was to incorporate activities related to student interests - for instance, during one English lesson, the teacher I volunteered for had students sing famous pop songs. He would print out the songs lyrics in English - he would read through a couple of lines of the song and follow the song's melody, and the students all would repeat the lyrics. Though, many students did not need them as they knew the lyrics to the pop songs even though they were ELL students. This lesson was one all students engaged in since they all knew the song.

Another way to help with retention is involving parents. Parents of ELL students might or might not have higher education, but previous research has shown that they help motivate their students for school. Helping parents to find ways to support their children's learning by helping the parents understand tangible activities they can do at home to support learning might also be important."

For more on this, see our Center Quick Find on:

>[Cultural Competence and Related Issues \(e.g., English Language Learners\)](#)



For discussion and interchange:

>How are schools dealing with the negative side effects of school MH interventions?

In their article ***Do no harm: Can school mental health interventions cause iatrogenic harm?*** Lucy Foulkes and Argyris Stringaris (2023) stress:

In recent years, there have been extensive efforts in secondary schools to prevent, treat and raise awareness of adolescent mental health problems. For some adolescents, these efforts are essential and will lead to a reduction in clinical symptoms. However, it is also vital to assess whether, for others, the current approach might be causing iatrogenic harm. A growing body of quantitative research indicates that some aspects of school-based mental health interventions increase distress or clinical symptoms, relative to control activities, and qualitative work indicates that this may be partly due to the interventions themselves.

Note: The American Psychological Association defines *iatrogenic* as an adjective “denoting or relating to a pathological condition that is inadvertently induced or aggravated in a patient by a health care provider. It may be due to the behavior of the provider (e.g., the manner in which they examined the patient) or be a result of the treatment they prescribed.... The process of developing an iatrogenic condition is called iatrogenesis.” <https://dictionary.apa.org/iatrogenic>

From: ***Iatrogenic Interventions in Schools***

“...good intentions, “authority-based practice,” and poor understanding of what makes an intervention potentially harmful have come together in several situations to create what we call here “iatrogenic school-based interventions.”

Iatrogenic interventions are defined as interventions that have the unintended consequence of causing harm...

Because response to intervention puts such a premium on examining the potential value of universal interventions first, the notion that some universal interventions (aggression and violence prevention strategies, substance abuse prevention, abstinence education, zero tolerance policies, grade retention) may actually make students worse would give any evidence-informed RTI team strong motivation to critically appraise what universal strategies they are selecting to help their students. Interventions on the other tiers (groups for aggressive youth, boot camp treatments, grief counseling) are also concerning, but the preponderance of iatrogenic interventions we found tended to focus on larger groups of students than on students who had already been identified by more intensive supports....”

Also from: ***Do no harm: Can school mental health interventions cause iatrogenic harm?***

“...A growing body of quantitative research indicates that some aspects of school-based mental health interventions increase distress or clinical symptoms, relative to control activities, and qualitative work indicates that this may be partly due to the interventions themselves....

The potential benefits of school mental health interventions can also be their weaknesses. This is particularly relevant for universal interventions and approaches, in which all students are exposed to the same content (for example, whole-class lessons or school-wide awareness-raising initiatives). We argue that the generalised and widespread nature of these efforts means that some students could be taught information or strategies that are not only unhelpful or irrelevant to them but that may actively cause harm. Indeed, this concern is still relevant for some targeted small-group or one-to-one interventions....

For example, a recent trial assessing mindfulness lessons in secondary schools found that overall there was no change in depressive symptoms in the intervention (or control) group, but that adolescents with elevated levels of mental health symptoms at baseline experienced a small increase in depressive symptoms after the intervention, relative to those who had their usual social-emotional teaching. This should indicate to all researchers and clinicians that even if there is evidence that a school-based intervention is effective or ineffective on average, there may still be a minority of participants to whom it can actively cause harm...

There has been very little investigation into why harms such as symptom increase occur in school-based mental health interventions. Here, we speculate that one relevant mechanism might

be that interventions inadvertently encourage adolescents to ruminate on their negative thoughts and emotions. Indeed, qualitative studies highlight that although some adolescents find school mental health interventions helpful, others say the focus on negative thoughts made them feel more stressed and unhappy....

Even if school-based interventions are only ineffective, as is often the case with universal approaches in particular, this is still a serious concern, as it amounts to an opportunity cost (i.e. foregone benefits of options not chosen). Time is taken away from other activities that could potentially be more enjoyable or more conducive to better mental health for adolescents, such as physical exercise, extra time to sleep in the morning or free time to socialise. We should be very cautious about the idea that providing any mental health intervention in a school is always better than not providing one at all....”

Center Comments

Stigma is a widespread iatrogenic effect. When those with problems perceive others as viewing them negatively, feelings of shame may be aroused and efforts made to hide the problem, including withdrawal from social interactions. Social withdrawal essentially affects their relationships with peers and can exacerbate emotional, behavioral, and learning problems. As the Centre of Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) stresses: “Stigma is not just about hurting someone’s feelings. Stigma is about prejudice, discrimination and the violation of a person’s human rights.” Much that has been discussed about addressing stigma has relevance for minimizing iatrogenic outcomes of interventions for learning, behavior, and emotional problems. See the Center Quick Find on *Stigma Reduction*. Also see the potential for reducing negative outcomes of using *natural intervention opportunities*.

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

- >*School Pulse Panel report on responses to the pandemic and efforts toward recovery*
- >*America’s students are falling behind. Here’s how to reimagine the classroom*
- >*Minimizing Referrals Out of the Classroom*
- >*Prevention Science and Health Equity: A Comprehensive Framework for Preventing Health Inequities and Disparities Associated with Race, Ethnicity, and Social Class*
- >*What’s It Like To Be a Teacher in America Today?*

See the Center’s Quarterly eJournal

Volume 29, Number 2: Spring, 2024

- >*Minimizing Referrals Out of the Classroom*
- >*Arguments About Whether Overdiagnosis of ADHD is a Significant Problem*
- >*Turning Big Classes into Smaller Units*
- >*Teachers ask: What do you have that I can use right away?*
- >*The MTSS Continuum: Essential - but Not Comprehensive Enough*

Here’s a report that reflects the *prevailing view* of mental health in schools:

- >*Investing in School Mental Health: Strategies to Wisely Spend Federal and State Funding*

Here’s a series of briefs presenting a *new directions perspective*:

- >*Schools and Mental Health: A Position Statement*
- >*Embedding Mental Health into a Learning Supports Component: An Essential Step for the Field to Take Now*
- >*Time for Straight Talk about Mental Health Services and MH in Schools*

A Few Upcoming Webinars

For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to [Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts](#)

4/24 **Legal and Ethical Complications in Working with Minors in Schools**

4/24 ***Getting help for students with mental health needs***

4/25 ***De-escalation in behavioral health***

4/25 ***Cyberbullying***

4/25 ***Social determinants of health***

4/25 ***Supporting staff in AI driven instruction***

5/2 ***Supporting youth who encounter racial stress***

5/7 ***Disrupting substance use in children and adolescents***

5/8 ***Enhancing School Safety Using Behavioral Threat Assessment (part two)***

5/9 ***AI instructional tools and classroom integration***

5/16 ***Empowering grassroots mentoring***

6/5 ***Use of humor in treatment and recovery***

6/6 ***Challenges and insights around AI***

7/11 ***Enhancing School Safety Using Behavioral Threat Assessment (part three)***

8/13 ***Administrator Basics for Supporting English Learners with Disabilities***

How Learning Happens (Edutopia's updated series of videos explores how educators can guide all students, regardless of their developmental starting points, to become productive and engaged learners.

Webinar recording: ***Unpacking the Impacts of Structural Racism on Youth***

For more webinars, go to the our Center's links to [Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts](#)



To Listserv Participants

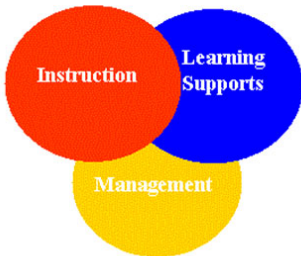
- Please share this resource with others. (Everyone has a stake in the future of public education and this is a critical time for action.)
- Let us know what’s going on to improve how schools address barriers to learning & teaching and reengage disconnected students and families. (We can share the info with the over 130,000 on our listserv.)
- For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Looking for information? (We usually can help.)
Have a suggestion for improving our efforts? (We welcome your feedback.)

We look forward to hearing from you!
Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

Our Center emphasizes the opportunity to start now to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students.



Let Us Know about what ideas are being proposed for moving in new directions to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching.

And if anyone is thinking about increasing the capacity of a district or school with respect to developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports, we can help. Send all info and requests to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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.

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.

THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF THE PRACTITIONER
 Who Are We? Recently renamed the Center for MH in Schools and Student/Learning Supports, our national Center was established in 1995 under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project (which was established in 1986). We are part of the Department of Psychology at UCLA. The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor.