

School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)

October 11 2017

Topic: Addressing barriers to learning in a low income school

Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

Featured Resources for

>Classroom and school wide learning supports

Note: Go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla> for links to other resources including

>Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops

>Calls for grant proposals, presentations, and papers

>Training and job opportunities

>Upcoming webcasts & other professional development opportunities

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

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Given shrinking education budgets, we have been asked to increase our outreach to make our free resources more available (e.g., for planning, professional development, etc.).

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>

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Note: In keeping with the National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports, this is being sent to and forwarded by over 100,000 school and community stakeholders concerned about (1) daily matters confronting schools, (2) promoting whole child development and positive school climate, and (3) the transformation of student and learning supports.

Addressing barriers to learning in a low income school.

Received this past week: “I am the Principal of a low income Title I school. We have put in place a lot of collaboration and are starting this year out strong as a staff. Our focus was on a Dream School, what it looks like, feels like and sounds like. ... [The following] formed our school wide 90 day master plan focus in these areas:

-School culture: taking the time in building positive relationships to get to know our students and families. Work to have all stakeholders buy in on academics, parents engaged, attendance (opportunity for their child to learn with them in school) and with helping us reach the goals this year in the school wide learning priorities.

- Tier I (core) instruction: strong focus on the learning outcome and making sure those who are not secure in the skills receive the proper interventions, modification and accommodations that they need (students on IEPs, SAT etc.)

- Data driven decision making: making all teachers more accountable in tier I instruction and checking for understanding to move to a "teach to learn" growth mindset instead of teaching to teach the lessons.

As the leader now going into my third year at this school I'm seeing the dedication from staff, parents and the community! We have parents onsite daily helping with morning routines, volunteering in classrooms and attending meetings that share information on district changes and state changes and well giving them the opportunity to ask questions and have their voices heard. I am hoping the work we do this year shows the gains in our academic progress. Our data analysis showed the overall areas of weakness are our lower performing kids not progressing.... I think we are on the right track but wonder what you would suggest for me and my instructional council that will help us break down barriers to learning?"

Center Response: We always appreciate folks sharing their successes and challenges. Since this principal asked for suggestions about addressing barriers to learning, here's some ideas:

In our work with schools, principals have found it productive to use our self-study surveys (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/surveys/set1.pdf>). These often are used for school improvement planning and for personnel development. As a trial, many places start with the survey on classroom learning supports as part of a staff discussion about improving practice and enhancing collaboration. See the self-study survey:

>Classroom based learning supports

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/classroomsurvey.pdf>

Another good starting place is to use the first two chapters of the new (free) online book:

>Addressing barriers to learning: in the classroom and schoolwide

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriersbook.pdf>

The topics for discussion covered in these chapters are:

1. Barriers to Learning and Teaching (Different Causes, Watch Out for the Labels, Barriers and Beyond)
2. Good Schools (Some Basic Principles, Some Added Assumptions, Being Equitable, Just, and Fair, Creating a Positive Context for Learning, Toward Enhancing School and Classroom Climate, An Emphasis on Caring, Teachers Can't Do it Alone, Opening the Door for Assistance and Partnerships, Opening the Classroom Door to Enhance and Personalize Staff Development)

The table on page 2-5 in the book is a good tool for focusing staff discussion. It highlights:

Effective Schools

- *Commitment to shared vision of equality*
 - >High expectations for student learning
 - >Emphasis on academic work that is meaningful to the student
- *Daily implementation of effective processes*
 - >Strong administrative leadership
 - >Alignment of resources to reach goals
 - >Professional development tied to goals
 - >Discipline and school order
 - >A sense of teamwork in the school
 - >Teacher participation in decision making
 - >Effective parental outreach and involvement
- *Monitoring student progress through measured indicators of achievement*
 - >Setting local standards
 - >Use of national standards
 - >Use of data for continuous improvement of school climate and curricula
- *Optimizing school size through limited enrollment, creation of small schools within big schools (e.g., academies, magnet programs), and other ways of grouping students and staff*
- *Strong involvement with the community and with surrounding family of schools*
 - >Students, families, and community are developed into a learning community
 - >Programs address transitions between grades, school, school-to-career, and higher education

Effective Classrooms

- *Positive classroom social climate that*
 - >personalizes contacts and supports in ways that build trust over time and meets learners where they are
 - >offers accommodation so all students have an equal opportunity to learn
 - >adjusts class size and groupings to optimize learning
 - >engages students through dialogue and decision making and seizing “teachable moments”
 - >incorporates parents in multiple ways
 - >addresses social-emotional development
- *Designing and implementing quality instructional experiences that*
 - >involve students in decision making
 - >contextualize and make learning authentic, including use of real life situations and mentors
 - >are appropriately cognitively complex and challenging
 - >enhance language/literacy
 - >foster joint student products
 - >extend the time students engage in learning through designing motivated practice
 - >ensure students learn how to learn and are prepared for lifelong learning
 - >ensure use of prereferral intervention strategies
 - >use a mix of methods and advanced technology to enhance learning
- *Instruction is modified to meet students’ needs based on ongoing assessments using*
 - >measures of multiple dimensions of impact
 - >authentic assessment tools
 - >students' input based on their self-evaluations
- *Teachers collaborate and are supported with*
 - >personalized inservice, consultation, mentoring, grade level teaming
 - >special resources who are available to come into the classroom to ensure students with special needs are accommodated appropriately

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Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

What plans are in place in local schools/districts to help teachers and other school staff support struggling students?

Send your responses to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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Featured Resources for

>Classroom and school wide learning supports

For more resources to focus staff development, see the Center's online clearinghouse Quick Find on

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

Center Quick Finds provide a range of online resources from our Center as well as from many other sources. Here is a sample of Center Resources included in the above Quick Find:

- >Chapter on "Classroom-Based Learning Supports" from the book: *Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System*
- >Self-study Survey on: *Classroom-based Learning Supports*
- >Information Resources on:
 - >>*Enhancing Classroom Teachers' Capacity to Successfully Engage All Students in Learning: It's the Foundation of Learning Supports*
 - >>*About School Adjustment*
- >Guidebook: *RTI and Classroom & Schoolwide Learning Supports: A Guide for Teachers and Learning Supports Staff*
- >Continuing Education Modules on:
 - >>*Personalizing Learning and Addressing Barriers to Learning*
 - >>*Enhancing Classroom Approaches for Addressing Barriers to Learning: Classroom-Focused Enabling*
 - >>*Engaging and Re-engaging Students and Families*
- >Brief Notes
 - >>*Teachers Cant Do it Alone!*
 - >>*Improving Working Relationships Inside the Classroom*
 - >>*Learning Supports: Enabling Learning in the Classroom*
 - >>*Response to Intervention*
 - >>*Turning Big Classes into Smaller Units*
 - >>*Volunteers as an Invaluable Resource*
 - >>*Working with Disengaged Students*
 - >>*Engaging and Re-engaging Students in Learning at School*

Did you miss the quarterly ejournal for fall 2017? It had articles on:

EXPANDING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT UNDER ESSA

- > *Revitalizing Local Control: Transforming Student/Learning Supports and Enhancing Equity of Opportunity*
- > *Escaping Old Ideas to More Effectively Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching*
- > *Saving Starfish Is Not Enough!*

Did you miss the monthly ENEWS? Includes discussion of
> *Enhancing Student Engagement*
as the special focus for addressing barriers to learning in October.

You can access both these resources and more from the Center's homepage
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>



Information is online about the
National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

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/>)