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& counting**

**School Practitioner  
Listserv**

**A Weekly Community of Practice Network  
for Sharing and Interchange**



*April 10, 2017*

**Request:**

**>What's a good instruction program for a "behavior" room?**

- Center Comments
- Comments from a Colleague in the Field

**Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives**

**Featured Set of Center Resources**

**>Re-engaging students in learning**

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**Please forward this to a few colleagues you think might be interested.  
The more who join, the more we are likely to receive to share.**

**For those who have been forwarded this and want to be part of  
the weekly exchange, send an email to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

**For previous recent postings of this community of practice, 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 114,000 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.**

**R** **request:** “We are looking for an instructional program for high school students that would address conduct problems, coping mechanisms and pro-social peer relationships. This would be conducted in our in-school behavior classroom. Thanks in advance for some suggestions.”

**C** **enter Comments:** This is an especially important topic as schools move from out-of-school suspensions to in-school suspensions. For a sense of all this see,

- >*In school suspension: A learning tool* –  
<http://www.educationworld.com/admin/admin/admin329.shtml>
- >*Alternatives to suspension* –  
<http://www.teachsafeschools.org/alternatives-to-suspension.html>
- >*Instead of Suspension* –  
[https://law.duke.edu/childedlaw/schooldiscipline/downloads/instead\\_of\\_suspension.pdf](https://law.duke.edu/childedlaw/schooldiscipline/downloads/instead_of_suspension.pdf)
- >*Best Practices: In school suspension* –  
<http://www.childrensdefense.org/library/data/best-practices-in-school.pdf>

We address conduct problems in terms of classroom **and** schoolwide student/learning supports (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/whatis.pdf> ). From that perspective, there are a couple of basic concerns we want to discuss. Then, we provide some comments from a colleague in the field and highlight some programs from the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs relevant to the request.

(1) *Understanding the student’s view of the problem.* With a view to minimizing future problems, it is critical to approach all this with a focus on re-engaging a student in classroom instruction and promoting positive social interactions with adults and peers at school. Given this, it is essential at the outset to explore with a student their view of what is causing the behavior problems, how much they want to deal with these problems, and what to do next.\* This helps avoid premature decisions about what is needed to correct the problem (e.g., making the assumption that the student is motivated to problem-solve or doesn’t have the knowledge and skills to interact appropriately). It also helps move the school from an overemphasis on punishment/discipline to a system of interventions focused on addressing barriers to learning, re-engaging disconnected students, and preventing future problems.

(2) *Countering an overemphasis on discipline and consequences.* We find it necessary to actively counter staff tendencies to respond as if the solution is just consistent application of discipline practices. Schools hopefully choose staff who understand the nature of providing such students with support and guidance and not overemphasizing strategies designed mainly for social control. At the same time, there is a need for personnel development about promoting intrinsic motivation, personalizing instruction, and providing special assistance in ways that re-engage students in classroom learning. .

(3) *Designing a proactive intervention approach.* The causes of students’ behavior problems are complex and the solutions must be multifaceted. Students who misbehave often also have learning problems, and there usually are social-emotional concerns. A proactive approach to all this involves (a) personalized instruction and special assistance (including accommodations) that promote not only academic, but also social and emotional learning and fosters intrinsic motivation for learning and (b) a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student and learning supports that addresses barriers to learning and teaching and that re-engages disconnected students in classroom learning and schoolwide activities. Underlying all this is a focus on expanding options and student involvement in decision making, with a view to enhancing student intrinsic motivation for learning at school and moving back into a regular classroom. (Note: Given that promotion of social-emotional learning should be a regular part of all classroom and schoolwide interventions, adding an instructional program focused specifically on “conduct problems, coping mechanisms and pro-social peer relationships” may be unnecessary for many students who misbehave. Such a problem focus should be introduced as special assistance for specific individuals if “Responses to Intervention” identify a particular need.)

(4) *Expanding the range of support help.* One teacher can't and shouldn't be expected to work with the students alone. Student and learning support staff, aids, volunteers, peer mentors and tutors, family members, computers – all can play a role helping these students in- and out-of-the classroom.

\*About getting the students perspective on the problem and what they think might help. The aim is to engage the student in problem-solving. The following example of interview items is from the Center's resource on *Interviewing and Monitoring Tools* –

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

- >How would you describe your current situation? What problems are you experiencing?
- >How serious are these matters for you at this time?
- >What do you think originally caused these problems?
- >Do others (parents, teachers, friends) think there were other causes?  
If so, what they say they were?
- >What other things are currently making it hard to deal with the problems?
- >What have you already tried in order to deal with the problems?
- >Why do you think these things didn't work?
- >What have others advised you to do?
- >What do you think would help solve the problems?
- >How much time and effort do you want to put into solving the problems?
- >What type of help do you want?
- >What changes are you hoping for?
- >How hopeful are you about solving the problems?
- >What else should we know so that we can help?
- >Are there any other matters you want to discuss?

Below are a sample of evidence-based programs related to the request for instructional programs for an in-school behavior class.

>*School-Connect: Optimizing the High School Experience*

<http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/ProgramProfile.aspx?id=137> – A school-based, social-emotional and academic skills-building curriculum for students in grades 9 through 12. School-Connect focuses on five core competencies thought to be correlated with success in school, the workplace, and adult life: 1) self-awareness, 2) self-management, 3) social awareness, 4) relationship skills, and 5) responsible decision making. School-Connect consists of three, 20-lesson modules. Module 1, Building a Supportive Learning Community, Module 2, Developing Self-Awareness and Self-Management, and Module 3, Building Relationships and Resolving Conflicts.

>*Peaceful Alternatives to Tough Situations (PATTS)* –

<http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/ProgramProfile.aspx?id=81> A school- and community-based, aggression-management program designed to help students engage in positive conflict-resolution skills, forgive transgressions, and reduce physically and emotionally aggressive behavior.

>*YES! for Schools* <http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/ProgramProfile.aspx?id=104> – A life-skills workshop that is designed to equip middle and high school students (ages 12 to 18) with the tools to manage stress and navigate social-emotional challenges. YES! for Schools is a 30-hour workshop composed of the following three modules: 1) Healthy Body, 2) Healthy Mind, and 3) Healthy Lifestyle.

>*The PATHS (Providing Alternative THinking Strategies)® Curriculum* –

<http://www.prevention.psu.edu/projects/paths.html> Designed to facilitate development of self-control, emotional awareness, and interpersonal problem-solving skills by enhancing social competence and social understanding.

>See the recommendation for the *Life Skills Training* program in the following comments from a colleague.

>Also see the *Good Behavior Game* – [http://goodbehaviorgame.air.org/about\\_gbg.html](http://goodbehaviorgame.air.org/about_gbg.html)

**C**omments from a Colleague in the Field: The best suggestion I have is Life Skills Training by Gil Botvin. I'm not 100% sure about the research behind the high school program but I know there's good, solid evidence of effectiveness for the middle school program and both the high school and elementary programs are based on this original research. (There's more subsequent research on-line that validates effectiveness but I've not really combed through it.) The high school programs targets personal self-management skills, general social skills and drug resistance skills. There are 10 sessions for about 40-45 minutes each so it would fit nicely into a classroom setting. Sample lessons, complementary resources and more information is available at: [http://www.lifeskillstraining.com/lst\\_hs.php](http://www.lifeskillstraining.com/lst_hs.php) .

The only qualifier (I believe) is that teacher training is REQUIRED because it is an evidence-based program. Sometimes teachers will balk because of their classroom experience and training. And while teachers are already well equipped, they can benefit from the training because it helps them understand the importance of teaching the lessons as they exist — not adding to or substituting, which defeats the purpose of using an evidence-based program. They do have on-line training that is pretty well organized. I've had staff that participated and said the on-line options are pretty good since there is a "live" trainer. I highly recommend the program and strongly urge them to seek training before teaching the program.

### ***Planning on Grouping Students Who Misbehave?***

Research notes predictable negative dynamics related to segregating problem students. See, for example:

“Deviant Peer Influences in Intervention and Public Policy for Youth.” Social Policy Report, 20,(1), Dodge, K.A., Dishion, T.J., & Lansford, J.E. Society for Research in Child Development <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED521749>

Abstract: The problem is well known to every parent of a teenager, every high school teacher, every clinical practitioner, and every social policy maker: vulnerable adolescents risk becoming more deviant through association with deviant peers and peer groups. Deviant peer influences are among the most potent factors in the development of antisocial behavior. Deviant youth are prone to seek out other deviant youth, but the tendency to self-select into deviant peer groups does not fully account for the effect that the peer group has on exacerbating the problem. More exposure to deviant peers increases the opportunity for peer influences to operate. It is now becoming known that well-intentioned adults and government programs may also exacerbate deviant peer influences by placing deviant youth into programs and settings that are populated by other deviant youth. In fact, the most common policy is to segregate unruly youth from the mainstream peer group and to place them in groups composed entirely or mostly of deviant peers. New studies indicate that sometimes this practice results in harmful effects. That is, the children whom we are attempting to help may in fact be made worse by our efforts. Placing a deviant adolescent with deviant peers can reduce the intended benefits of interventions and lead to less positive, sometimes even negative, outcomes, especially under conditions of poor supervision and lack of structure. Nonetheless, deviant youth do require a response, and economic, political, and treatment considerations complicate the solution. This report reviews the evidence on group interventions for deviant adolescents and makes recommendations that address the public policy problem of placements for deviant youth. This report makes the following recommendations: 1) Programs, placements, and treatments that aggregate deviant youth that are ineffective as well as costly should be terminated whenever possible; 2) Effective alternatives to deviant peer-group placement are available and should be supported; 3) Policy decision-making should take into account the system-wide impact of interventions and placements on both deviant youth and their communities; and 4) Practitioners, programs, and policymakers should document the peer context of each placement and evaluate the impact of each placement on the youth and the community.”

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## Invitation to listserv participants:

**So now let's hear from you!**

**What have you found that is a good alternative to suspension and that helps re-engage students in classroom instruction?**

**Share lessons learned. Comments. Recommendations.**

**Send your responses to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

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## Featured Set of Center Resources

**>Re-engaging students in learning**

As schools move away from punishment toward more positive approaches for dealing with behavior problems, Three major concerns about some programs are that they are mainly reactive, ignore the context and underlying motivation for misbehavior, and do not help a teacher re-engage students in classroom learning. The immediate objective of stopping misbehavior must be accomplished in ways that maximize the likelihood that students engage/re-engage in instruction and positive learning. Engaging/re-engaging students productively in instruction is key not only to reducing misbehavior, but to maintaining positive behavior and preventing future behavior problems.

Here is a set of four free and easily accessed Continuing Education modules prepared by the Center on this matter:

*>Engaging and Re-engaging Students and Families*

I: Motivation: Time to Move Beyond Behavior Modification –  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engagei.pdf>

II: Strategic Approaches to Enhancing Student Engagement and Re-engagement –  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engageii.pdf>

III: Enhancing Family Engagement and Re-engagement –  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engageiii.pdf>

IV: Embedding Engagement and Re-engagement into a Unified and Comprehensive System of Student and Learning Supports –  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engageiv.pdf>

This personnel development package provides a perspective on motivation that goes beyond mainly reinforcing and enforcing behavior. The emphasis is on:

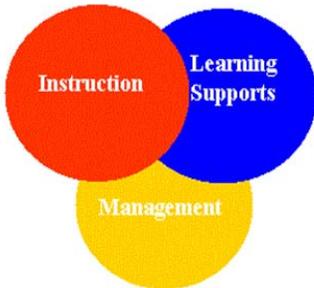
- expanding understanding of engagement, re-engagement, and intrinsic motivation in the context of school improvement and school climate
- highlighting strategic approaches to engaging and re-engaging students, with special attention to avoiding over-reliance on extrinsic reinforcers and minimizing practices that can produce reactance
- engaging and re-engaging families by attending to differences among families and other primary caretakers with respect to resources, motivation and needs, and barriers to involvement with the school
- stressing that teachers can't and should not be expected to do it all alone. Rather their work needs to be embedded into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports and that system should be built with a view to engaging and re-engaging students, families, and all the professionals who have a stake in improving schools.

**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THE INTERCHANGES BECOME!**

Sign-up for the Listserv mailings – email [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto: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/> )



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\*For information about the

***National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports***

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

See report from the National Summit on the ***Every Student Succeeds Act and Learning Supports: Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching to Enhance Equity of Opportunity*** – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/summitreport.pdf> .

And note that our new book detailing the prototypes and related resources will be available in April from Cognella <https://titles.cognella.com/> .

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