School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)
(8/5/20)

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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).

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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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For discussion and interchange:

>About Teaching and Providing Student/Learning Supports Online

To learn from the experiences of school staff, we sent out the following request:

At this time and for the future, online work with students is an essential medium for online teaching and providing student supports. We want to widely share good practices and lessons learned from those doing the work. Please share what you find helpful, what has been challenging, and what's not good practice. Please share so others can benefit from your experience and perspective. Here are a few questions we formulated. Feel free to modify and add.

Here's a response from a teacher:

>>*What do you find works well?* edpuzzle works the best for me personally. I either make my own lecture videos or use ones online and add questions to the videos that allow students to interact with the video as the lecture goes on. Google classroom is also very useful, and having students comment on their assignments helps me answer their questions. I also use an app called Remind to directly message students on their phones. Having students post pictures of their notes worked out really well for me.

>>*How have you elicited participation?* Having students comment on google classroom and respond to each other has been the only consistent way I've been able to get students to participate. Edpuzzle also helps keep student engagement up.

>>*What has been most challenging (e.g., in terms of type of activity, content, process, technology problems)?* Since I teach in a rural area, synchronous learning is not possible. I think that as a teacher, I become less and less real for the students. It feels like I'm just some telemarketer. Pacing is also another challenge. Students by themselves are not able to push through as much content without the help of a teacher by their side. It's also hard to gauge student learning, since tests are all open book/open internet. It's also hard for me to tell who is really struggling vs. who is just being lazy.

>>*What recommendations do you have (e.g., for teachers, for student support staff, in general about dealing with challenges)?* For high school and middle school, I'd seriously recommend edpuzzle as a tool to deliver asynchronous lectures. I'd also recommend setting up office hours and encourage students to just drop by to ask questions or socialize (personally, I had maybe 10 out of

my 150 students show up throughout the weeks, but it was good talking to my students for my own sanity). Giving students multiple options to contact you is also important, I gave my students 3 ways (email, remind, and google classroom). Being flexible and getting parents involved is pretty important. One thing that one of my paraprofessionals liked that I did was using pacing calendars. Since I released all my assignments at the beginning of the week to give students the most flexibility, I would also create a pacing calendar that would help students decide how to spread out the workload.

From a student support staff member:

Following the school closure, I regularly attempted to meet with students through google meets or phone calls. At the start of distance learning this was rather challenging, since we hadn't been in this situation. Once distance learning moved forward, some or most of my students were able to connect with me. However, as the end of the school year approached, many of my students stopped meeting and were unavailable through phone calls. Connecting with students over google meets/phone calls while good to have that planned session, wasn't always productive in my opinion. Our sessions involved general surfaced checkins.

I had sessions with my students often back to back and because of the academic schedule, the time frame of our sessions was nearly cut in half. Surprisingly, I was usually able to get hold of parents through google meet sessions, emails and/or phone calls and we did a lot of teaming together to attempt to help their child(ren). However, in some instances it seemed like parents did not have much input as to what work their student needed to complete, and/or sometimes parents had an incredibly difficult time having their child complete the work.

Privacy and confidentiality were also a concern when I met for sessions. I wasn't able to connect with all students weekly like I had been able to when we were in the school building. Because of these two things in midst of two traumatic events (covid and the unrest), I felt conversations with students were not all that genuine and honest and therefore had difficultly processing their feelings and emotions. I can also imagine students had a lot of distractions during distance learning.

Getting used to distance learning means getting used to being on a video or phone conference call, and not everyone was comfortable with this format. When we were at school last fall, we had already developed that working relationship, trust and safety with students in our "school space" and when things moved online, all we had was the working relationship… the format of meeting online was new and uncomfortable for many. If there was no working relationships with students and families, it would not have worked the little it did work. In addition to checking in with students during regular meetings, I also created social/emotional lessons online and encouraged them to complete them on their own time which could have worked better for those students who struggled to attend meetings . While these lessons were created to be fun, short and engaging, about seven of my forty-five students completed them weekly, and towards the end of distance learning, one or two completed them. Not one student completed them consistently through spring quarter regardless of the encouraging and positive weekly emails I sent to students and parents as a reminder.

I always reminded students and parents that they could either complete the weekly lessons or have a weekly session with me — my attempts to explain this failed. There seems to be some kind of "lost translation" when working solely online.I also tried to practice compassion and perspective. I had no real idea how the pandemic/crisis and then the unrest in the wake of George Floyd's death perhaps triggered, traumatized and affected students and their families To add on to their presumed feelings and challenges of these events in addition to school work, and a tad of emotional support - no wonder some students struggled and checked out. On a bigger scale — we were/are in a national and worldwide crisis. It is common sense (to me) that when there is a crisis of any kind, all other day to day activities stop and we do what we can to support those who are suffering, grieving and having difficultly moving forward in their lives. The main focus was on academic work.

Various of our school staff including myself and other support, administrative and teaching staff were also very concerned about students' mental/emotional health and parents/students getting basic needs met. While we tried to help in those areas as much as possible, the expectations of meeting with teachers and completing academic work were always front and center.. I attempted to meet with students individually and in groups. I provided engaging, fun and short social/emotional lessons which started with a calming activity and I tried as much as possible to stay connected with parents, trying to be positive, resourceful and helpful. The saving grace in all of my attempts to "connect" with students and/or parents have stemmed having solid working relationships.

Looking ahead

See: *Re-engaging Disconnected Students Online and at School: Focus on Intrinsic Motivation*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/reengage.pdf

Invitation to Listserv Participants:

We hope you will share your experiences and suggestions as we all work in new ways to support all students, their families, colleagues, and ourselves. Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu (We will share student perspectives in a future community of practice.)

For discussion and interchange:

>A Principal sent us the following call for reopening schools – *what your position?*

Has anyone listened to the senate hearings regarding the 22 other countries that have opened schools face to face full time with little to no infection increase? Or that the facts show that kids do not transmit the virus? Or that the infection rate, if/when it occurs is .03%? Or the head of the CDC speaking on national tv stated that the CDC believes all schools should fully reopen using the CDC "guidelines" as much as possible, but they are guidelines, not mandates. I worry the risks of not having children face to face is causing more lifelong harm then the possible outbreak of Covid in a school setting. Students are playing on playgrounds and youth sports, going out and about to stores, restaurants, exposed to parents working full time in the public and traveling for vacations. How is it that no one is talking about how they are currently exposed through being alive? Why are we not hearing that the higher "outbreak" of cases correlates to increased testing for the virus? No one wants to put anyone in danger of an illness, however, given the facts we now know, it is time for a common sense approach to educating our children. WE already have a huge deficit of learning to try to regain from closures this spring, let's not make it worse by not opening up full time this fall. We need to look at the negative impact to the whole child, family, community, state and country that further school closures would have on our lives that will forever change for the future of our children.

Helping children and teens through this difficult time

Excerpt from: *5 ways to help teens feel seen and heard in an uncertain time*
https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/07/21/5-ways-help-teens-feel-seen-heard-an-uncertain-time/?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main_life-at-home-minifeed%3Ahomepage%2Fstory-ans

"Define, acknowledge and validate the losses and disappointments (big and small)... Allow kids the time and space to acknowledge their experiences and feelings. Letting them define the loss gives them a sense of ownership and validates their concerns....

Help kids identify choices, routines and rituals. ... Now more than ever, choices, rituals and routines matter, and taking the time to help kids identify ways to start and end their days and weeks, and to transition between activities, can provide a sense of structure....

Encourage teens to develop a sense of competence. This new normal is an opportunity for kids to practice executive functioning skills, creative problem-solving and critical thinking to develop increased confidence...

Promote an exploratory mind-set. It's vital to encourage teenagers to think creatively and come up with alternative solutions when initial plans dissolve....

Encourage them to establish connections. When schools closed and students started doing everything online, old rules about social media and technology use went out the window. With so many ways of interacting off-limits because of social distancing, young people can benefit from parents encouraging positive ways to stay connected..."

>Links to a few other relevant shared resource

Restart & Recovery: Considerations for Teaching & Learning Overview
  https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/CCSSO_RR_Consider_Teach-v3.pdf

School Organizational Practices and The Challenges of Remote Teaching During a Pandemic
  https://www.shankerinstitute.org/blog/school-organizational-practices-and-challenges-remote-teaching-during-pandemic

How Should Education Leaders Prepare for Reentry and Beyond?
  https://edpolicy.education.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CFC-TheReturn_5-13-20FINAL.pdf

Covid 19 and student learning in the US; The hurt could last a lifetime
  https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/covid-19-and-student-learning-in-the-united-states-the-hurt-could-last-a-lifetime#

Wellbeing and connections during covid 19 https://www.cde.state.co.us/safeschools/wellbeing

Supporting learning during covid 19 https://edpolicyinca.org

Supporting Families During COVID-19
  https://childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents/

How to Help Kids Handle Disappointment
  https://childmind.org/article/how-to-help-your-kids-handle-disappointment/

> In case you missed these; from the Center, now online:
>
>   *>Schools Re-opening: Safety Plus Enhancing Equity of Opportunity and Social Justice*
>   *>The Role of Schools in Promoting Whole Child Development and Learning?*
>   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/news.htm
>   **>***Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*
>   Access from http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

Webinars

>8/6 – *Addressing Challenges for Youth Experiencing Homelessness During COVID*

>8/10 – *What Can Schools Do to Address Inequalities,Racism, and Social Injustices*

>8/11 – *When the Monsters Live with Us: Structural Inequities, COVID-19, and Intimate Partner Violence in Latin American Families* (in Spanish)
      Cuando los Monstruos Viven con Nosotros: Reflexiones sobre el Impacto de la Intersección de las Inequidades Estructurales, el COVID-19 y la Violencia de Pareja en los Niños Pequeños en Familias Latinoamericanas

>8/12 – *Distance Learning Requires a Student-Centered Approach*

>8/18 – *Determining Eligibility for Mckinney-vento Rights and Services*
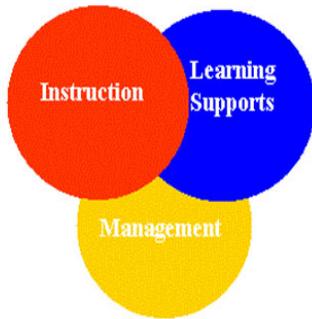
>8/19 – *Could Large-Scale Tutoring Address COVID-Related Learning Loss?* (Podcast)

>8/19 – *Addressing Environmental Challenges through Service-Learning*

>8/20 – *It Takes a Whole School to Support a Whole Child*

>9/17 – *Meeting the needs of adolescent youth*

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

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For information about the

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

go to http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html

Also online are two related free books

Improving School Improvement
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

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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.

DEAR READER:

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.

For those who are employed by state and local education agencies and schools, we know you are busy. It would be great to share what actions you are taking to address immediate concerns and how you are anticipating the problems that will arise as schools reopen.

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/)