Addressing Barriers to Learning

New ways to think . . .

Better ways to link

Want Equity of Opportunity for All Students?
Move Beyond Tweaking School Improvement Policy and Practice

Is there anyone who really believes that equity of opportunity for success at schools can be achieved without a fundamental transformation of public policies related to poverty and how schools address the many barriers to learning and teaching?

We all know that it will be sometime before anything substantive is done to reduce growing economic disparities. But there are indications of increasing awareness and readiness for addressing factors interfering with equity of opportunity for success at school.

The challenge is to turn the awareness and readiness into *transformative* action. This requires that schools stop approaching the many overlapping barriers to effective schooling (such as bullying, school shootings, substance abuse, health problems, disconnected youth, newly arrived immigrants, homeless students, etc. etc.) as if each needed separate initiatives and programs.

What analyses of school improvement guides and planning indicate is a long-term pattern of piecemeal, unsystematic, and often superficial attention to these matters.[1] Moreover, over the last 25 years report after report and initiative after initiative have continued to ignore fundamental systemic change implications of all this. When it comes to recommendations for improving how schools address barriers to learning, the primary focus repeatedly is on hiring more personnel, linking with community services, and doing more to coordinate and integrate services.

At schools, for example, the main call is for more staff (e.g., counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, special educators). Those in the community who need to work with schools call for school-linked services, integrated services, one-stop shopping, wraparound services, seamless service delivery, coordinated school health, co-location of services, integrated student supports, full-service schools, systems of care, and more. For example, see the recent well-intentioned policy-oriented reports from *Child Trends[2],* the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) and the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health[3], and the *Education Commission for the States*[4]. Relatedly note how the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*[5] describes the revamping of the agency's "Coordinated School Health Program." And see the description for the U.S. Department of Education's *Full Service Community Schools Grant Program.*[6]

More resources and better integration of efforts clearly are needed. However, the overemphasis on these has led to insufficient attention to the need for fundamental system transformation.

On the positive side, all this activity underscores concern about the nature and scope of inequity of opportunity and the widespread inadequacy of current school and community interventions. It also reflects an appreciation that connecting school-home-community is essential to the well-being of children and youth and to enhancing equity of opportunity for them to succeed at school and beyond. Such connections can provide more support for schools, students, and families. Linking with and collocating at schools also is seen by agencies as providing better access to families and their

Also in this issue:
>*School Adjustment Problems*
>*About Motivation*
>*Center News*

children, promoting greater engagement, and enhancing opportunities for having an impact on hard-to-reach clients. Moreover, the hope is that integrated interventions will increase the pool of resources for student and learning supports and address disparities. All good outcomes.

On the negative side, however, all this activity amounts to just more tweaking of current policies and practices, rather than facing-up to the imperative for *systemic transformation*. Moreover, as currently implemented, serious unintended negative consequences have been observed (e.g., increased marginalization of student supports, counterproductive competition for sparse resources, reductions of school support staff in the false belief that linkages to community resources will be sufficient).

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A Snapshot of Current Efforts

Mapping a district's existing efforts to address learning, behavior, and emotional problems yields a consistent picture of a variety of activities that are pursued in a fragmented, piecemeal, and usually disorganized way. The range of activity can be extensive and expensive.

Schools differ, of course, in what student and learning supports they provide; some offer a few; some have many. Some are connected with community services (e.g., health and social services, after-school programs). However, given the sparsity of community services, agencies endeavoring to bring their services to schools usually must limit activity to enhancing supports at a few schools in a neighborhood.

Moreover, too often when community professionals connect with schools, the working relationship is not well-planned. Problems arise not only related to communication, coordination, and integration but also because of competitive roles and functions and concern by student and supports staff members that "outsiders" are undermining their positions and are threats to maintaining their jobs. Indeed, some policy makers want to believe that linking community services to schools will reduce the number of student support staff schools need to hire. In the struggle to balance tight school budgets, this belief already has contributed to serious cuts in student support personnel, and, of course, because community agencies are overburdened, they aren't able to fill the gaps.

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Focusing on Transformation

It is essential and it is time to end the long-standing *marginalization* of student and learning supports in school improvement policy and practice. Because of the marginalization, most efforts to *directly* use student and learning supports to address barriers to learning and teaching are not a *primary* focus in school improvement planning. The marginalization perpetuates fragmentation of supports. The marginalization contributes to the trend to make student support staff among the first cut when budgets tighten. The marginalization encourages counterproductive job competition among student support staff and with community professionals bringing services to schools.

Ending the marginalization requires moving to a three component framework for improving schools. Analyses indicate that school improvement policy and practice currently is guided primarily by a two component framework (i.e., an instructional component and a management component). As a result, all interventions for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students are given secondary consideration at best.

Advocacy for ending the disorganization and effectively weaving together whatever a school has with whatever a community is doing to confront barriers to equity of opportunity should, first and foremost, be directed at establishing a three component school improvement framework.

This expanded policy framework is needed to ensure a *primary* commitment to addressing barriers to learning and teaching.
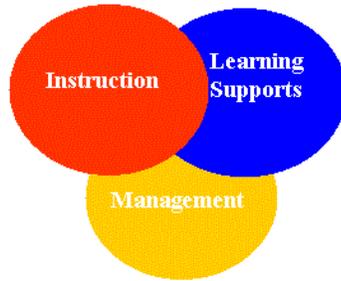
Operationalizing the third component into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable school-community system of student and learning supports involves:

- integrating it fully into every school's improvement plan
- unifying the many separate organizational and operational infrastructure entities that have been built up around the piecemeal and ad hoc establishment of initiatives, programs, and practices
- facilitating essential systemic changes
- weaving together school, home, and community resources

Because all this amounts to a fundamental *transformation* of current practices, policy also must ensure there is a well-designed and resourced process to facilitate implementation of essential systemic changes.

The *2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports* has both enhanced awareness about all this and has delineated action steps for moving forward.[7]

It's Time to Escape Prevailing Notions about Providing Student Supports

Some time ago, John Maynard Keynes cogently stressed:

> *The real difficulty in changing the course of any enterprise*
> *lies not in developing new ideas but in escaping old ones.*

So in espousing the transformation of student and learning supports into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system, we are well aware that success requires leaving various established ideas behind. Here are some old ideas to escape are:

- the idea that student and learning supports are not essential

- the ideas that addressing barriers for the large number of students in need can be accomplished by relying primarily on direct services for individuals and an emphasis on wrap-around services

- the idea that improving student and learning supports mainly involves enhancing coordination of current interventions and co-locating community resources on a school campus

- the idea that adopting a simple continuum of interventions is a sufficient framework for transforming the nature and scope of school-based student/learning supports

- the idea that effective school improvement can be accomplished without ending the continuing marginalization in school improvement policy of efforts to develop a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student and learning supports

- the idea that transformation of student and learning supports can be achieved without considerable attention to the challenges of promoting and facilitating systemic changes.

Concluding Comments

Tweaking is Not Enough. Despite the many efforts to improve schools, the attack on public education continues on several fronts from a variety of stakeholders. Concerns continue about the achievement gap, student dropouts, the plateauing of achievement test gains, and low performing schools.

Teachers are regularly assailed, are dropping out at high rates, and recruitment is suffering.

The criticisms fuel the movement to privatize schooling.

When the many societal problems that hamper school improvement are pointed out, the concerns are branded as excuses. Ironically, at the same time, legislative bodies regularly recognize and wrestle with matters such as bullying, school shootings, substance abuse, disconnected youth, and the many barriers arising from being raised in poverty, being a newly arrived immigrant, and being homeless.

Leaders for school improvement, of course, understand all this. Nevertheless, school improvement guides and planning tend to address barriers to learning and teaching in superficial ways.

The reality is that schools are confronted daily with multiple, interrelated problems that require multiple and interrelated solutions. These include a host of neighborhood, family, schooling, peer, and personal factors. Policy must fundamentally transform how schools connect with homes and communities so they can work together in pursuing shared goals related to the general well-being of the young and society.

As folks have told us, much of this simply is common sense. However, that doesn't mean making it happen is easy. Transforming schools is anything but easy; not transforming schools, however, is a recipe for maintaining the inequalities found in too many places.

Equity of opportunity is one of democracy's most elusive goals. Public education has an indispensable role to play in achieving this goal, but schools are hampered by fundamental gaps in school improvement policy and practice.

Leading the way to equity requires high levels of dedication and perseverance. The *2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports* is both an invitation and a call to action to all who want to enhance equity of opportunity for students to succeed at school and beyond.

Notes:

[1] *School Improvement Planning: What's Missing?* (2006) – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsmissing.htm

[2] *Making the Grade: Assessing the Evidence for Integrated Student Supports* (2014). Child Trends. – http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2014-07ISSPaper.pdf

[3] *Developing Structure and Process Standards for Systems of Care Serving Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs* (2014). Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) and the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health – http://cshcn.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Developing-Structure-and-Process-Standards-White-Paper.pdf

[4] CDC's *Coordinated School Health Program* – http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/cshp/schools.htm

[5] *Health barriers to learning and the education opportunity gap* (2015). Education Commission of the States – http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/20/69/12069.pdf

[6] U.S. Department of Education's *Full Service Community Schools Grant Program* – http://www2.ed.gov/programs/communityschools/index.html

[7] For more on the 2015 National Initiative, see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html. As part of the initiative, a free book is online outlining the needed policy shift and a prototype for a unified, comprehensive, and equitable learning supports component to replace the existing fragmented and disorganized student/learning supports – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf. This resource also covers what is involved in designing and implementing such an approach. With respect to the costs, the emphasis is mainly on redeploying existing resources and garnering economies of scale.

About Center Assistance for Transforming Students & Learning Supports

It is clear from the responses to the *2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports* that many places are ready to move forward. We hear appreciation for the details and resource aids included in the Center's Guidance Notes on "Relaunching Student and Learning Supports" –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/relaunch.pdf.

And, districts and schools have e-mailed us wanting to know more about what direct assistance our Center can provide.

Here's How We Can Directly Help in Making it Happen:

We know that transforming student and learning supports is challenging (especially with everything else that has to be done on most days). Our hope has always been that, given their sparse resources, state departments, districts, and schools will avail themselves of the free and easily accessible resources we have developed to guide efforts to transform student and learning supports.

In addition, with a view to supporting state and local efforts in developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable   system of learning supports, the Center offers free mentoring, coaching, and technical assistance by email and phone to teams that are moving this work forward. Those making such systemic changes have found it particularly helpful when we work with them in preparing a design document and strategic plan that integrates the transformation into their existing school improvement plans.

For those seeking our no cost coaching and technical assistance, we find the best way to start is to have an initial conference call with key leadership and then schedule follow-up exchanges with any and all who are working on the transformation. *In preparation for the first call, we suggest the following:*

   (1) read Part I in *Transforming Student and Learning Supports* ...
        http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf

   (2) as a supplement to the reading, look at the brief introductory webinar at
        http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/powerpoint/briefintroslidesrec.pptx
        and the accompanying handouts at
             http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/intropphandouts.pdf

   (3) browse the resources compiled in our System Change Toolkit
             http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm

   (4) as the agenda for the call, email us the topics that need immediate discussion.

If you're ready to move forward, let us know by sending an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Saving Starfish and Keeping Students from Drowning

In making the case for student and learning supports, some leaders have stressed the starfish parable. We think it important also to use the bridge metaphor to more fully indicate the role schools must play in addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. Here is how we present both:

The Starfish Parable

The day after a great storm had washed all sorts of sea life far up onto the beach, a youngster set out to throw back as many of the still-living starfish as he could. After watching him toss one after the other into the ocean, an old man approached him and said, It's no use your doing that, there are too many, You're not going to make any difference.

The boy looked at him in surprise, then bent over, picked up another starfish, threw it in, and then replied: It made a difference to that one!

This parable, of course, reflects all the important clinical efforts undertaken by staff alone and when they meet together to work on specific cases.

The Bridge Metaphor

In a small town one weekend, a group of school staff went fishing together down at the river. Not long after they got there, a child came floating down the rapids calling for help. One of the group on the shore quickly dived in and pulled the child out. Minutes later another, then another, and then many more children were coming down the river.

Soon every one was diving in and dragging children to the shore and then jumping back in to save as many as they could.

In the midst of all this frenzy, one of the group was seen walking away. Her colleagues were irate. How could she leave when there were so many children to save? After long hours, to everyone's relief, the flow of children stopped, and the group could finally catch their breath.

At that moment, their colleague came back. They turned on her and angrily shouted:

"How could you walk off when we needed everyone here to save the children?"

She replied, "It occurred to me that someone ought to go upstream and find out why so many kids were falling into the river. What I found is that the old wooden bridge had several planks missing, and when some children tried to jump over the gap, they couldn't make it and fell through into the river. So I got some local folks and we fixed the bridge."

Fixing and building better bridges is a good way to think about the type of unified and comprehensive system that underscores the importance of taking time to improve and enhance resources, programs, and systems in urban schools (including a focus on mental health concerns) so that all students at all schools in a district have an equal opportunity for success at school and beyond.

Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights;
transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to
enabling equity of opportunity and promoting whole child development.

Focus on School Adjustment Problems:
INVEST NOW . . . OR PAY LATER!

Some students experience difficulties adjusting to new classes, new schools, new teachers, new classmates. It's particularly poignant to see a student who is trying hard, but can't keep up.

Over the first few weeks, teachers realize quickly who has and hasn't made a good adjustment to their classroom and to the school. This is the time to address the problem before it gets worse. If adjustment problems are not addressed, student motivation for school dwindles, and behavior problems increase. Misbehavior often arises in reaction to learning difficulties.

Now is the time to be proactive. Staff development needs to focus on strategies that enable good student adjustment, as well as identifying and addressing problems as soon as they arise. This is the time for student support staff to work with teachers in their classrooms to intervene before problems become severe and pervasive and require referrals for out-of-class interventions.

We address the problem as part of the school's focus on Supports for Transitions which is one of the six arenas of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports.

Addressing this as a Regular Transition Problem

(1) To facilitate a strong focus on school adjustment, use a staff development session to encourage structured discussions about what teachers can do and what other staff (e.g., student support staff, resource teachers) can do to team with teachers in the classroom to enhance school adjustment. Also clarify ways to use aides, volunteers, peer tutors/ coaches, mentors, those in the home, etc. to help with additional strategies designed to enhance social, emotional, and cognitive engagement.

(2) Establish the first month for "Getting the School Year Off to a Good Start" (see *Is the School Year Off to a Good Start? –* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/goodstart.pdf)

(3) Let staff know about the following free and easily accessed Center resources:

- *Supports for Transitions* – Chapter 4 in Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf

- *Addressing School Adjustment Problems* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/adjustmentproblems.pdf

- *What Schools Can Do to Welcome and Meet the Needs of All Students and Families* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/WELMEET/welmeetcomplete.pdf

- *Welcoming Strategies for Newly Arrived Students and Their* Families – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/practicenotes/welcomingstrategies.pdf

- *Welcoming and Involving New Students and Families* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/welcome/welcome.pdf

- *Learning Supports: Enabling Learning in the Classroom* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/rtipract.pdf

- *Engaging and Re-engaging Students* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engagingandreengagingstudents.pdf

For more, use the Online Clearinghouse Quick Finds to link to other Center resources and to online resources across the country. For example, see:

>Transition Programs/Grade Articulation/Welcoming – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm
>Classroom Focused Enabling – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/classenable.htm
>Motivation – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/motiv.htm
>Response to Intervention – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/responsetointervention.htm

About Motivation

*External reinforcement may indeed get a particular act going and may lead to its repetition,
but it does not nourish, reliably, the long course of learning by which [one] slowly builds
in [one's] own way a serviceable model of what the world is and what it can be.*

Jerome Bruner

From the perspective of addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development, motivation, and especially *intrinsic* motivation, must be considered in all facets of teaching and student and learning supports.

What's required is

- developing a high level of *motivational readiness* (including reducing avoidance motivation) so participants are mobilized

- establishing *processes that elicit, enhance, and maintain motivation* so that participants stay mobilized

- *enhancing motivation as an outcome* so that the desire to improve oneself and address problems increasingly becomes a positive intrinsic attitude that mobilizes activity outside the formal intervention situation

An increased understanding of human motivation clarifies how essential it is to avoid processes that make people feel controlled and coerced, that limit the range of options, and that limit the focus to a day-in, day-out emphasis on short-term outcomes. From a motivational perspective, such processes often can produce avoidance reactions and thus reduce opportunities for positive learning and development of positive attitudes.

Valuing and Expectations

Two common reasons people give for not bothering to do something are "It's not worth it" and "I know I won't be able to do it." In general, the amount of time and energy spent on an activity seems dependent on how much the activity is valued by the person and on the person's expectation that what is valued will be attained without too much cost.

About Valuing. What makes something worth doing? Prizes? Money? Merit awards? Praise?

Certainly!

We all do a great many things, some of which we don't even like to do, because the activity leads to a desired reward. Similarly, we often do things to escape punishment or other negative consequences that we prefer to avoid.

Rewards and punishments may be material or social. Rewards often take the form of systematically giving points or tokens that can be exchanged for candy, prizes, praise, free time, or social interactions. Punishments include loss of free time and other privileges, added work, fines, isolation, censure, and suspension. Grades are used both as rewards and punishments.

Because people will do things to obtain rewards or avoid punishment, rewards and punishment often are called *reinforcers*. Because they generally come from sources outside the person, they often are called *extrinsics*. Extrinsic reinforcers are easy to use and can have some powerful immediate effects on behavior. Therefore, they have been widely adopted in the fields of special education and psychology as "incentives" for those with behavior and learning problems, Unfortunately, the immediate effects are usually limited to specific behaviors, rote learning, and outcomes often last only for a short duration. Moreover, extensive use of extrinsics seems to have some undesired effects. And sometimes the available extrinsics simply aren't powerful enough to get the desired results.

Although the source of extrinsic reinforcers is outside the person, the meaning or value attached to them comes from inside. What makes some extrinsic factor rewarding to most people is the fact that it is experienced as a reward. And what makes it a highly valued reward is that the person highly values it. If you don't like candy, there is not much point in our offering it to you as a reward.

Furthermore, because the use of extrinsics has limits, it's fortunate that humans sometimes do things even without apparent extrinsic reason. In fact, a lot of what people learn and spend time doing is done for intrinsic reasons. Curiosity is a good example; it leads to a great deal of learning. Curiosity seems an innate quality that leads all of us to seek stimulation and avoid boredom.

People also pursue some things because of an innate striving for *competence;* humans value *feeling competent*. We try to conquer challenges, and if none are around, we often seek one out.

Another important intrinsic motivator is an internal push toward *self-determination*. People value *feeling that they have some degree of choice* and freedom in deciding what to do.

And people are intrinsically moved toward establishing and maintaining *relationships* with others. That is, most people value *feelings of being interpersonally connected.*

About Expectations. We may value something greatly; but if we believe we can't do or obtain it without paying too great a personal price, most people are likely to seek other valued activities and outcomes. Expectations about these matters are influenced by previous experiences.

Areas where we have been unsuccessful are unlikely to be seen as paths to valued extrinsic rewards or intrinsic satisfactions. We may perceive past failure as caused by our lack of ability or effort or due to the unavailability of needed help. If we think little has changed with respect to these factors, our expectation of succeeding now will be rather low.

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Expectancy times Value

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In general, then, what we value interacts with our expectations, and motivation is one product of this interaction. Motivation theory captures the sense of this as *E x V*. If this equation stumps you, don't be surprised. The main introduction to motivational thinking that many of us were given in the past involves some form of reinforcement theory. Thus, even though motivational theorists have wrestled with intrinsic motivation for a long time, and intuitively, you probably understand much of what they are talking about, you may not have read much of what has been written on the topic.

For our purposes here, the *E* deals with an individual's expectations about outcome (e.g., success or failure). The *V* deals with valuing, with valuing influenced by both intrinsic values and extrinsic reinforcers, albeit in a complicated way. Such theory recognizes that human beings are thinking and feeling organisms and that intrinsic factors can be powerful motivators.

Motivational theory has immense implications for learning, teaching, parenting, and psychosocial interventions. For example, high expectations and high valuing tend to produce high motivation, while low expectations (E) and high valuing (V) produce relatively weak motivation. High expectations paired with low valuing also yield low approach motivation.

Thus, the oft-cited remedial strategy of guaranteeing success by making tasks easy is not as simple a recipe as it sounds. Indeed, the approach is likely to fail if the outcome is not valued or if the tasks are experienced as too boring or if doing them is seen as too embarrassing. In such cases, a strong negative value is attached to the activities, and this contributes to avoidance motivation.

Clearly, motivation is not something that can be determined solely by forces outside the individual. Others can plan activities and outcomes to influence motivation, learning, and behavior change. However, how the activities and outcomes are experienced determines whether they are pursued with a little or a lot of effort and ability or are avoided. Personalized teaching and student and learning supports provide the type of motivational and developmental match that can increase expectations of success and intrinsic valuing of learning.

Concluding Comments

A 2015 report from the Carnegie Foundation cautions: "When rewards come to be expected, they can have the effect of undermining motivation in general and intrinsic motivation in particular" (Headden & McKay, 2015).* The report further highlights research stressing that among the factors contributing to student motivation are

> "a student's belief that he is able to do the work, a sense of control over the work, an understanding of the value of the work, and an appreciation for how he and the work relate to a social group. These factors, in turn, can be shaped by many others, including how academic content is taught and how students interact with and practice that content.
>
> Motivation is also affected by life experiences both in and out of school. In the classroom, recent research shows that so-called 'toxic stress' brought about by such problems as hunger or homelessness can show up in students as distraction, lack of self-control, and distrust of others. All depress motivation."
>
> * http://cdn.carnegiefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Motivation_Matters_July-2015.pdf

With respect to daily school practices, motivational theory helps expand understanding of factors influencing students, school staff, parents, and other stakeholders. In doing so, it provides a perspective on conflicting forces operating in schools and resulting differences in agenda and behavior.

Despite the differences in agenda, agreement is emerging about the need for greater attention to student engagement and to re-engaging disconnected students. With this in mind, we suggest that personnel preparation and continuing education for anyone working in schools pay greater attention to:

- expanding understanding of engagement, re-engagement, and intrinsic motivation in the context of school improvement and school climate

- 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

- enhancing understanding that teachers can't and should not be expected to do it all alone and that their work needs to be embedded into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student and learning supports.

To these ends, the Center has developed the following free and easily accessed continuing education modules:

> >*Engaging and Re-engaging Students and Families* –
> http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engagei.pdf

> >*Personalizing Learning and Addressing Barriers to Learning* –
> http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/personalizeI.pdf

Mother to son: *Time to get up and go to school.*

Son: *I don't want to go. It's too hard and the kids don't Like me.*

Mother: *But you have to go – you're the teacher.*

Examples of the Focus on Intrinsic Motivation in the Six Arenas of a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System of Learning Supports

The intervention prototype featured in the 2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports organizes programs and services into a circumscribed set of content arenas of activity. Below are examples of how a focus on intrinsic motivation in the six arenas promotes student and staff feelings of competence, self-determination, and positive relationships with significant others:

1. *Classroom focused interventions to enable and re-engage students in classroom learning*

     By opening the classroom door to bring in available supports (e.g., student support staff, resource teachers, volunteers), teachers are enabled to enhance options and facilitate student choice and decision making in ways that increase the intrinsic motivation of all involved.

2. **Support for transitions**

     Welcoming and ongoing social support for students, families, and staff new to the school provide both a motivational and a capacity building foundation for developing positive working relationships, good school adjustment, and a positive school climate.

3. *Home involvement and engagement in schooling*

     Expanding the nature and scope of interventions and enhancing communication mechanisms for outreaching in ways that connect with the variety of motivational differences manifested by parents and other student caretakers enables development of intrinsically motivated school-home working relationships.

4. *Community outreach for involvement and support*

     Weaving together school and community efforts to enhance the range of options and choices for students, both in school and in the community, can better address barriers to learning, promote child and youth development, and establish a sense of community that supports learning and enhance hope for the future (higher ed/career choices).

5. *Crisis assistance and prevention*

     School-focused crisis teams can take proactive leadership in developing prevention programs to avoid or mitigate crises by enhancing protective buffers and student intrinsic motivation for preventing interpersonal and human relationship problems.

6. *Student and family assistance*

     Providing personalized support as soon as a need is recognized and doing so in the least disruptive ways minimizes threats to intrinsic motivation and when implemented with a shared and mutually respectful problem-solving approach can enhance intrinsic motivation and the sense of competence and positive relationship among all involved.

For more details on all this, see the continuing education modules cited on the previous page.

Center Update

Latest Center Resources

For regular updates about new Center resources, go to
>http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu and click on *What's New*.

Examples of Recently Developed Resources

New

>*Relaunching Student and Learning Supports* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/relaunch.pdf

>*A Sociological View of the Increase in ADHD Diagnoses* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/sociol.pdf

>*Underrepresented Minorities: Making it to and Staying in Postsecondary Education* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/postsecond.pdf

>*About Intrinsic Motivation from the Perspective of Self-determination Theory* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/selfdeter.pdf

>*Preventing Teen Dating Violence* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/dating.pdf

Updated Resources

>*About Mental Health in Schools* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/aboutmh/aboutmhinschools,pdf

>*Financial Strategies to Aid in Addressing Barriers to Learning* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/financial/fund2000.pdf

>*Working Collaboratively: From school based teams to school community connections* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/worktogether/worktogether.pdf

>*Assessing to Address Barriers to Learning* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriers/barriers.pdf

>*Screening/Assessing Students: Indicators and Tools* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/assessment/assessment.pdf

>*Violence Prevention and School Safety* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/violence/violence.pdf

>*Evaluation and Accountability: Getting Credit for All You Do!* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/evaluation/evaluation.pdf

Want resources? Need technical assistance? Coaching?
Use our website: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu
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The Center for Mental Health in Schools operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project in the Dept. of Psychology, UCLA.

Center Staff:
  Howard Adelman, Co-Director
  Linda Taylor, Co-Director
  Perry Nelson, Coordinator
  . . . and a host of students