

(1/25/23) This resource is from the national
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

Featured:

>**Do you know what students are thinking and feeling?**

>**Social capital and adolescent mental health**

>**Is personalized learning a function of technology?**

>**A high school student's concerns about technology in the classroom**

>**Links to a few other relevant shared resources**

For discussion and interchange:

>**Do you know what students are thinking and feeling?**

Through hearing authentic student self-expression, schools are in a position to validate and act on appropriate student perceptions. Understanding student thoughts and feelings is key to making learning personal and empowering and generally improving schools in ways that enhance equity of opportunity and well-being for students and staff.

Classroom management, personalizing instruction, and enhancing engagement all involve talking *with* students to hear what they are thinking and feeling. Student voice is particularly important in understanding barriers to learning and teaching. Students have thoughts and feelings about what's affecting their learning and behavior and what needs to happen to make things better.

Empathically hearing what a student has to say is a good starting point and an essential facet of building a sense of trust and engaging students. For example, when teachers are receptive to expressed thoughts and feelings, students are more likely to open-up about problems and needs. Furthermore, eliciting a student's perceptions and participation are especially critical to effective problem-solving.

Understanding what students are thinking and feelings helps establish the type of collaborative relationship between a teacher (and other adults at school) that can be a significant protective buffer against barriers to learning and teaching.

Among other potential benefits of student voice and participation in what happens in the classroom and schoolwide are improved school policies and practices and better outcomes. For example, we have experienced greater student engagement and expression, more opportunities for personalized teaching, improved learning and behavior, better school climate, and enhanced social capital.

For more on this, see

>[Talking with Kids](#)

>[Talking with Kids When Assisting with Learning](#)

>[Youth Participation: Making It Real](#)

>[About Student Voice and Participation](#)

>[Youth development Quick Find](#)

Why do you say you're wasting your time by going to school?



**Well, I can't read or write,
and they won't let me talk!**

From: *Measuring What Matters: Drawing on a Participatory Well-being Framework and Existing Data to Assess Child Well-being Outcomes Over Time*

“A growing body of research highlights the importance of increasing children’s involvement in the measurement of their well-being.... This approach enables analysis of the key areas where life could be improved for children based on what they themselves value, an examination of whether children are having well-being needs met in multiple dimensions and over time, and an exploration into the later well-being impacts of early life experiences.

Five key well-being areas children and young people identified as important to their well-being;

- >Being loved and safe comprised of connections and relationships, friendships, being in an environment with nurture, safety and support, and being safe through a stable, secure home and school environment, and the absence of conflict, abuse and harm.
- >Material basics consisted of the provision of food and water, housing and shelter, sanitation, service provision, and other material goods.
- >Healthy included physical health (nutrition and exercise), and mental health (state of mind and sense of self), as well as mental stimulation.
- >Learning included access to and participation of formal education, self-learning and development, participation and satisfaction with school, exposure to different environments and situations, and having social connections and interactions.
- >Participating domain consisted of having a say, engaging in community, sense of belonging, a network of support and provision, and activities/leisure pursuits....

By applying a participatory well-being framework we can have greater confidence that we are measuring aspects of well-being that matter to children.... Utilizing a different approach for indicator selection would have resulted in a set of indicators that were less meaningful for children and young people, thereby diverting the attention of policy makers to areas of well-being that are less relevant to this group....”

For discussion and interchange:

>Social capital and mental health

Research suggests that social capital can play a protective role with respect to people's risks for negative health outcomes across a broad range of socio-cultural and economic contexts. "Despite the proliferation of social capital research, [however] the concept remains underutilized ... [with respect to] adolescents' and young adults' engagement in risk behaviors and their associated short- and long-term poor health outcomes."

From: *Social capital and risk and protective behaviors: a global health perspective*
by Linda M. Kaljee and Xinguang Chen (2011)

Anyone working with children and youth these days is familiar with words like strengths, assets, and resilience. This reflects the progress made in moving beyond a deficit or problem focused bias and incorporating approaches that build on motivation and promote resilience.

Research emphasizes that both risk and protective factors for youngsters' learning, behavior, and emotional problems are associated with neighborhood, family, school, and peers. It is time to use social capital to build buffers to many risk producing conditions.

For more, see the Center's Quick Find:

>Social Determinants of Health, Mental Health, and Academic Achievements

From: *Associations of Social Capital with Mental Disorder Prevalence, Severity, and Comorbidity among U.S. Adolescents*

"Social capital ... comprises concepts such as social cohesion, reciprocity, and trust, as well as social support and social integration, at the individual, family, and community levels. Social capital also can be divided into cognitive and structural social capital. The former refers to the values, attitudes, and beliefs that produce cooperative behavior, while the latter pertains to roles, rules, precedents, behaviors, networks, and institutions.

Social capital is a key concept in public health, epidemiology, and behavioral sciences; its associations with both physical and mental health outcomes have been examined. Given the multifaceted nature of social capital, its measurement entails querying multiple domains at multiple levels including neighborhood (trust, reciprocity, safety), social networks (family and friends), and community involvement.

Among youth, measurement also includes the influential domains of family and school Overall, ... higher social capital is associated with better mental health (e.g., greater wellbeing and fewer internalizing and externalizing problems)"

A Few Center Resources Related to Enhancing Social Capital at School

>Schools as Caring, Learning Communities

>Fostering School, Family, and Community Involvement

>Natural Opportunities to Promote Social-Emotional Learning and MH

>Promoting Mental Health and Preventing Problems at School

More from: *Associations of Social Capital with Mental Disorder Prevalence, Severity, and Comorbidity among U.S. Adolescents*

“Social capital at the neighborhood/community level, such as neighborhood collective efficacy, may also impact youth wellbeing. Children are reliant on their families for the resources necessary to healthy development and families are, in turn, supported by their neighborhoods and communities. When families are part of socially-connected and well-resourced communities, their children benefit; conversely, in communities characterized by poverty, poor housing, and a transitory population, children tend to have worse mental and physical health

Schools are important communities for youth and families, providing not only education, but social support and, in many cases, access to nutritional food, afterschool care, and other resources including mental health and medical services. Measuring the influence of social capital derived from the community, such as school and neighborhood trust and involvement, on youth mental health could inform social policy priorities and the allocation of limited resources....

Better friendship quality, greater family cohesion, and greater school bonding are associated with better mental health.... In general, the associations we found between school bonding and lower odds of mood, behavior and substance use disorders are consistent with the literature on the important role schools play in helping students develop confidence, a sense of efficacy, and a positive sense of community. These factors are protective against mood disorders, particularly depression, and substance use disorders, as described above...

Community social capital may benefit youth well-being through multiple pathways (e.g., greater self-efficacy, positive peer relationships, sense of safety) that arise through positive effects on the families and neighborhoods in which children are embedded...”

For discussion and interchange:

>Is personalized learning a function of technology?

Discussions of personalized learning often leave the impression that the process is mainly about incorporating technological innovations. However, real personalization starts with offering an appropriate variety of learning options, facilitating student understanding of the content, processes, and outcomes related to the options, and establishing ways for some students to work independently and in small cooperative groups while the teacher pursues one-to-one and small-group interactions.

Personalization in classrooms reflects the reality that learning and teaching are nonlinear, dynamic, transactional, and spiraling processes.

Differentiated instruction focuses on improving instructional fit by accounting for individual differences. One hears two concepts in this connection: *individualized* and *personalized* instruction. The two concepts overlap in their emphasis on developmental differences. That is, most individualized approaches stress individual differences in developmental capability. Personalization, however, as we understand it is defined as the process of accounting for individual differences in *capability and motivation*.

Moreover, we suggest that personalization needs to be understood as a psychological construct. From a motivational perspective, *the learner's perception* is a critical factor in defining whether the teaching environment is a good fit. Given this, it is important to ensure learning opportunities are perceived by learners as good ways to reach their goals. Thus, a basic assessment concern is that of eliciting learners' perceptions of how well what is offered matches both their interests and abilities.

For more on this, see

>Personalizing Learning and Addressing Barriers to Learning
Two Continuing Education Modules

A high school student's concerns about technology in the classroom

From: *We cannot allow our education to be automated*

"As a high school student, it is sad and concerning for me to see the increasing reliance on technology as a substitute for direct instruction in our schools.... Our access to technology is not aiding the learning process, it's replacing the magic of teacher-to-student connection and animated classroom discussions....

All of this takes the learning out of the classroom and onto the screen. It eliminates the verbal interaction between students, their peers and their teachers — not ideal as we return from the social isolation of remote learning. Now, the overuse of technology and computer-based software in the classroom threatens to exacerbate the interaction-draining impacts of remote instruction. Schools should embrace enthusiastic classroom debates and discussions... Face-to-face discussions foster critical thinking and attentive listening skills and teach students to respectfully disagree while supporting their own positions, something that rarely happens on today's digital apps. Teachers should promote hand-annotated essays and hand-drawn posters as learning tools. Letting technology function as the teacher during in-person learning is simply a physical classroom version with distance learning's downfalls.... I advocate for the traditional method because I remember lively and engaging class debates on current events issues, small-group discussions about literature and hands-on projects from before technology dominated every lesson. Whiteboard lectures and notes taken by hand lead to priceless aha! moments.... Actual labs in science class make that light bulb go off more than staring at a screen. And writing information down for a spelling test always helped me to better deconstruct and memorize words than simply copy-and-pasting them online.

How will endless hours on computer screens solve any of distance learning's long-lasting social isolation and learning loss? We must try to save the special moments of human interaction in the classroom, or risk stifling our social and academic development. Our education is not something we can allow to be automated."

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

- >Youth voice: Indicators checklist**
- >Addressing violent behavior at schools**
- >The effect of phubbing, a behavioral problem, on academic procrastination**
- >IEPs vs 504 plans**
- >Searching for Oneself on YouTube: Teenage Peer Socialization and Social Recognition Processes**
- >The relationship between perceived stress and depressive symptoms in adolescents during high stress: The moderating role of emotion regulation**
- >Behavioral coach model**
- >Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Uniquely Supports Children's Transitions**
- >Children's Transitions to Kindergarten May Benefit from Effective Coordination Across Early Childhood and K-12 Systems**
- >Class-wide Management Strategies: 5-Part Video Series**
- >Youth Engagement Guide for Practitioners**

Previous postings of the Center's Community of Practice *Practitioner* offer discussions and links to other resources

Access Books on New Directions for Student/Learning Supports

For a big picture context and in-depth material for considering new directions for student/learning support staff, see the following three free books:

>*Improving School Improvement*

>*Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*

>*Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*

All three can be freely accessed at

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

A Few Upcoming Webinars

For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

1/25 Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility

1/25 Flipping the Youth Services Paradigm

1/25 School mental health: Connecting with school administrators

1/26 Building stronger connections

2/1 Self care with and for youth peers

2/9 Ways to Operationalize Stakeholder Engagement

2/9 Prevention and Intervention Efforts to Address Bullying and School Violence

2/10 Flipping the Script for Staff Meetings - Strategies to Create a Culture of Collaboration

2/15 School violence prevention

2/15 Preparing students for their transition out of high school

2/21 Middle level students planning for high school

2/28 The power of relationships in supporting positive school climate

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.)

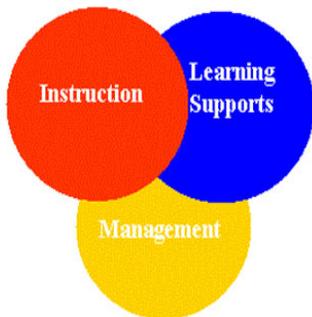
We look forward to hearing from you!

Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Another horrendous mass shooting.

As everyone grieves, schools are dealing with the aftermath.

See the letters from the superintendents of **Garvey School District** and **Alhambra Unified School District**.



For information about the

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

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

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.

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/>)