

(8/14/24) This continuing education resource is from the national  
**Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA**

### Featured

#### >Request from a colleague:

**Need resources on students transitioning from group homes, those in foster care, and others who may have vulnerabilities**

Also for discussion:

**>Is flexible learning an essential student support?**

And, as always:

**>Links to a few other resources relevant to continuing education**

**This Community of Practice Practitioner is designed for a screen bigger than an Iphone.**

**For discussion and interchange:** A request from a colleague

**> “Do you have anything concerning students transitioning group homes, foster care students and vulnerable youth?”**

### Center Response:

A good starting place is to go to our website feature called **Quick Finds**. It is organized by topic (over 130 on the menu of items). Each has links to our Center resources on the topic and links to relevant resources from other sources. For example, see the following *Quick Finds*:

**>Foster care**

**>Prevention for Students "At Risk"**

**>Supports for transitions**

Here is an example of a resource listed on the Foster Care Quick Find

>From: **Foster Youth and Schools**

All students need schools that maximize safety, stability, and support. These concerns have been especially emphasized as essential for foster youth. For example, schools are expected to (a) ensure prompt enrollment, (b) provide emotional support, (c) minimize school transitions by making students aware of their right to maintain enrollment at their current school, and (d) provide accommodations if school moves are unavoidable, including allowing for partial credit and immediate transfer of records and enabling recover of credits. They also are expected to actively communicate with the child welfare services and help student's widen their social networks by introducing them to various personal, professional, and community connections.

Schools are expected to play a significant role in helping foster care youth and all others who encounter barriers to succeeding at school. Given the overlapping nature of the problems manifested by different subgroups of students, policy makers must move beyond the tendency to design so many separate assistance programs. Instead, school improvement efforts need to focus on (1) unifying all activities at a school for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and then (2) developing them into a comprehensive and equitable system that weaves together school and community resources....

Here are a few more resources related to the request:

- >*Supports for Students Deemed At-Risk*
- >*Transitions: Turning Risks into Opportunities for Student Support*
- >*The impact of changing neighborhoods, switching schools, and experiencing relationship disruption on children's adjustment to a new placement in foster care*
- >*Changes in Placement among Children in Foster Care: A Longitudinal Study of Child and Case Influences*

**Send us links to any resources you can share in response to this colleagues request**

Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

### **For discussion and interchange:**

#### **>Is flexible learning an essential student support?**

It is a given that teachers and student support staff are faced with a complex continuum of learner motivation. This fact requires schools to provide a range of ways to enhance engagement. Student engagement involves not only engaging and maintaining engagement, but also reengaging those who have disconnected from classroom instruction. For school personnel to do all this effectively, they must broaden their understanding of motivation, especially intrinsic motivation, and the complex relationship between extrinsics and intrinsics.

Unfortunately, maintaining engagement is a widespread problem in schools. For those students who become disengaged from classroom learning, the disconnection is both symptomatic of one or more causal factors and an additional factor exacerbating learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

Some discussions emphasize the importance of designing instruction as a *flexible learning* program. For example, see:

#### ***From 'pushed out' to reengaged: Experiences from a flexible learning program***

Excerpt: "...Disengagement from education is defined as a complex, fluid, state. It is characterized by students who, to some degree, do not feel they belong at school or have withdrawn from academic endeavors. There is a multiplicity of causes of disengagement, which can lead to detachment from education, including personal and school- level factors, or often a combination of both. Students' disengagement cannot merely be seen or addressed within an individual or institutional framework. It must include the interplay between these dimensions and contexts outside the school environment....

Learning cannot occur without engagement. To explain 'engagement', we relied on extensive, well established, and rigorous research by Fredricks et al. and Skinner and Pitzer. These researchers define engagement as comprising three factors:

- >interest in and enjoyment of school, positive relationships with teachers and peers, and feelings of belonging to school
- >internal investment in the learning process and formulating personal learning goals
- >high levels of attendance, participation in school-related activities and appropriate behavior regarding classroom or school norms, expectations, or rules...

Classrooms are complex social systems, and student-teacher relationships and interactions are also complex, multicomponent systems. The nature and quality of relational interactions between teachers and students are fundamental for student engagement. The teacher-student relationship is one of the most powerful elements within the learning environment, influencing a student's academic outcomes and behavior. Supportive and positive teacher-student

relationships ultimately promote a sense of school belonging and encourage students to engage in their education ....

Re-engagement is defined as a school leaver returning to education. For this study, reengagement includes students referred to the flexible learning program from a mainstream education setting. Re-engagement programs offer tailored support for disengaged students or students at risk of disengaging from mainstream school....

Flexible learning adapts to learners' needs and circumstances, placing the learner at the center with resources adapted to suit the needs of the student. Flexible learning has successfully engaged students across several engagement domains (e.g. behavioral and cognitive). Flexibility in learning, which emphasizes student choice, has been considered one key to enhancing education equality and satisfying highly diverse student needs....

Flexible learning is a rich and multi-layered concept with a continuum of approaches in terms of time, place, pace, content, and mode of learning applied in varying degrees....

Teacher support (e.g. how well students feel supported and encouraged to succeed as well as the extent to which they believe their teachers care about them) is an essential predictor for student engagement (e.g. behavioral and cognitive engagement)....

The importance of a strong, respectful student-teacher relationship where students felt that their teachers genuinely cared about their well-being and progression was discussed by all student interviewees. Typically, students discussed a positive relationship as characterized by warmth, supportiveness, trust, involvement, and responsiveness, whereas previous unstable relationships were characterized by mistrust, fear, and avoidance.. Strong relationship-building skills in teachers and implementing positive relationship characteristics should improve students' social, emotional, and academic development....”

Our Center’s approach addresses the engagement and reengagement concerns as a classroom and schoolwide concern – emphasizing *personalized instruction* (with *special assistance* added as necessary). For example, see

>[\*Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide\*](#)

Central to all this is enhancing the focus at schools on *intrinsic motivation*. See, for example:

For more on this approach, see our Center resources

>[\*Student Engagement and Disengagement: An Intrinsic Motivation Perspective and a Mental Health Concern\*](#)

> [\*School Engagement, Disengagement, Learning Supports, & School Climate\*](#)

***Are the above topics being discussed in your locale?***

If so, please let us know so we can share the info widely. Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

***We need to recognize that students need a range of supports  
in order to be successful academically.***

FutureEd Director Thomas Toch (2024)

## >Links to a few other relevant shared resources

- >>Considering the Possible Relationship between Personalized Learning and Service Learning: A Historical and Pragmatic Perspective
- >>A Systematic Review of Research on Personalized Learning: Personalized by Whom, to What, How, and for What Purpose(s)?
- >>A Multidisciplinary Perspective on Person-Environment Fit: Relevance, Measurement, and Future Directions
- >>Cultural Dimensions Moderate the Association between Loneliness and Mental Health during Adolescence and Younger Adulthood
- >>Gender differences of individual and contextual factors in predicting bullying and victimization: A multi-informant approach
- >>Affirming Facilitation Practices in Youth Spaces
- >>Online Health and Safety for Children and Youth: Best Practices for Families and Guidance for Industry
- >>Cultural Inclusiveness & Equity WISE: Resource Collection
- >>Talking to Kids About Back-to-School Worries

### A Few Upcoming Webinars

*For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts*

8/14 Responding to bias and discrimination in schools  
8/15 Managing challenging behavior  
8/15 Conversations with youth  
8/20 Welcoming students through transitions  
8/21 De-escalation and personal safety  
8/21 Inclusive learning  
8/21 Hospital to school transition  
8/22 Re-entry from juvenile justice  
8/22 Compassionate leadership  
8/26 Giving effective feedback  
9/5 Parental Rights: Special education  
9/12 Evaluation and eligibility: special education  
9/19 The IEP: special education series  
9/19 Empowering grassroots mentoring  
9/26 Organizational culture  
10/17 Wellness and resilience

*How Learning Happens* (Edutopia's updated series of videos explores how educators can guide all students, regardless of their developmental starting points, to become productive and engaged learners.

Webinar recording: *Unpacking the Impacts of Structural Racism on 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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### 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](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

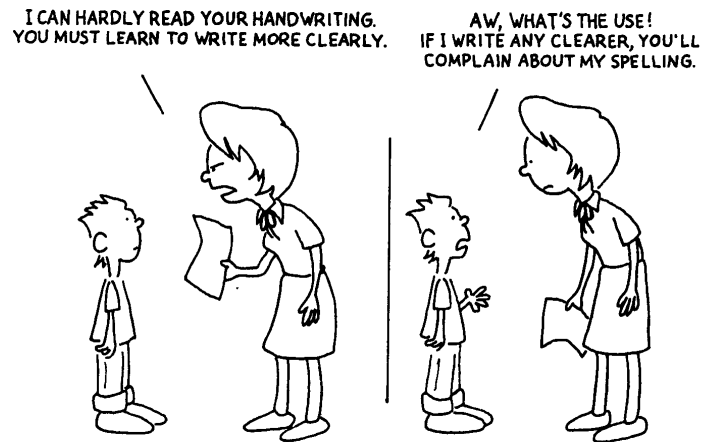
Looking for information? (We usually can help.)

Have a suggestion for improving our efforts? (We welcome your feedback.)

We look forward to hearing from you!

Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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Schools committed to the success of all children must be redesigned so that teachers, student support staff, and others at the school can help students as early as is feasible when they become aware of a behavior, emotional, learning, and/or physical problem. Such a redesign can minimize the impact of such problems and appropriately stem the tide of referrals for out of class specialized assistance (e.g., mental health services) and special education.

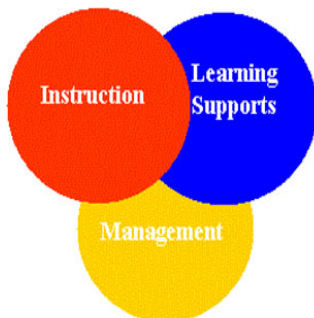
Through the ***National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports***, our Center emphasizes the opportunity to start now to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students.

If you are aware of efforts underway to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching, please share with us.

And if anyone is thinking about increasing the capacity of a district or school with respect to developing *a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports*, we have many resources to help in moving forward. For example, see our recent guide:

> ***Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions***

Send all info and requests to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)



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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.**  
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**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!**

**For new sign-ups – email [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

**Also send resource ideas, requests, comments,  
and experiences for sharing.**

**THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF THE PRACTITIONER**

Who Are We? Recently renamed the Center for MH in Schools and Student/Learning Supports, our national Center was established in 1995 under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project (which was established in 1986). We are part of the Department of Psychology at UCLA. The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor.