NUA Summer Institute 2020
@ University of St. Thomas
Learning and Equity in the Time of COVID
Learning in the Time of COVID

- Dealing with – and solving -- the Digital Divide
- Privileging authentic learning and assessment
- Focusing on progress, not labelling
- Centering social and emotional needs
- Teaching from a trauma-informed and healing-informed perspective
What We Know from Science

The brain and the development of intelligences are malleable. The brain develops throughout life as a function of experiences that activate neural pathways which permit new kinds of thinking and performance. The kinds of experience matter greatly.

- Secure relationships
- Rich, stimulating environments
- Back-and-forth conversation
The quality of a person’s relationships and social interactions shapes their development and health, both of the body and of the brain.

Yang, Darling-Hammond, & Krone (2018). *The Brain Basis for Integrated Social, Emotional, and Academic Development*
academically accepted
socially accepted
respected socially
respected
socially included
academically included
a sense of relatedness
included socially

Outcome: Sense of Belonging
- Human relationships are the essential ingredient that catalyzes development & learning.
- Learning is social, emotional and academic.
- Children actively construct knowledge based on their experiences, relationships, and social contexts.
- Cultural well-being also matters.
- Stress, anxiety, & identity threats impede learning.
How Identity Threats Influence Learning

Social, Emotional and Academic Development

- Can I be seen?
- Can I be affirmed?
- Can I find my passion?
- Can I succeed?

Made more complex by racism & discrimination

- Can I be seen, affirmed … and valued … for who I really am?
- Can I succeed against the odds?
Social Identity & Stereotype Threat

- Are vividly present in society
- Are often reinforced in school
- Create a physical toxic stress condition
- Trigger a fight or flight reaction
- Impede learning

Can be reduced by:
- Affirmation of value
- Clear commitment to equal access
- Strong relationships
- Cultural competence in all aspects of school
- Schoolwide social-emotional learning
NUA’s High Operational Practices

- Identifying and activating student strengths
- Building relationships
- Eliciting high intellectual performances
  - Multiple modalities – read, write, talk, draw
  - Visual maps that show relationships
  - Drawing connections and using the knowledge
- Providing enrichment
- Integrating prerequisites for academic learning
- Situating learning in the lives of students
- Amplifying student voice

http://redwoodcity.nuatc.org/?page_id=202
1. Identify a notable person that you believe is resilient.
2. Research that person to find information that supports your belief.
3. Create a Bubble Map that describes the person.
4. Frame your Bubble Map and provide evidence from your research that supports your descriptors.
5. Imagine that the person was nominated for “The Room 9 Resilience Award”.
6. Use the information from your Bubble Map and Frame to write a letter of recommendation for her or him explaining why they should win the award.
Create a WWWWW&H rap about the person.
What Kind of Schools Are Needed?
Redwood City NUA initiative
Bronxdale High School, NY

- > 90% low-income
- > 25% students with disabilities
- High rates of graduation and college success
- Full inclusion & team teaching
- Personalization through small size and advisories
- Explicit social-emotional learning & restorative practices
- No tracking
- Project-based learning
- Performance-based assessment
- Teaching students about the brain & learning strategies
Implications for Practice

1. Organizational supports for attachment and relationships
2. Curriculum, teaching, and assessment that support learning
3. Intentional social, emotional, and academic development
4. Multi-tiered systems of support
5. Educator Development
Supports for Attachment and Relationships

• *Structures for personalization* that enable adults to know students well, so they can teach them well:

  • **School structures** – small schools or small learning communities; continuous relationships provided by looping and advisory systems, block scheduling; longer grade spans for schools;

  • **Classroom practices** – supportive classroom communities; culturally competent teaching practices that help teachers know their students well;

  • **Relational trust and collaboration** among staff and with families -- planned teacher time for home visits, outreach to parents, positive calls home.
Affirmation and Community
II. Curricular designs & instructional strategies that support academic capacity, competence, efficacy, and motivation:

Well-scaffolded instruction and ongoing formative assessment that
• takes students’ prior knowledge, cultural practices, & experiences into account;
• provides the right amount of challenge and support on relevant, engaging tasks;
• integrates inquiry & explicit instruction, reduces cognitive load, stereotype threat
• supports metacognition, learning to learn, & growth mindset through feedback, reflection, & revision.
What Gets Learned: College Prep for All
What Gets Learned: Culturally Connected

Content
And How:
Student Generated Questions & Inquiry

- When was America "America" according to L. Hughes?
- Was the North really free?
- IS Segregation happening today?
- Why did L Hughes tone in his poetry get darker?
III. Support for the Development of Social, Emotional, and Cognitive Skills, Mindsets, and Habits

• Self-regulation
• Executive function
• Intrapersonal awareness
• Interpersonal skills
• Growth mindset
• Restorative practices
• A sense of agency and self-efficacy that supports resilience and productive action.
Developing Resilience

• Peer Leaders for Advisory
• Supports for moments of need
• Sharing experiences and stories
• Explicit instruction from peers, restorative coaches, and teachers in
  • How to recognize and manage feelings
  • How to interact and resolve conflicts productively
  • How to repair harm
  • How to understand and care for others
  • How to collaborate
  • How to use a growth mindset
  • How to take leadership and responsibility
Neuroscience Research Reveals 4 Rituals That Will Make You Happy

Here's what brain research says will make you happy:

Ask, "What am I grateful for?" Not answers! Doesn't matter, just searching helps.

Decide. Go for "good enough" instead of "best decision ever made on Earth!"

Label those negative emotions. Give it a name and your brain isn't so bothered by it.

Hugs, hugs, hugs. Don't hurt someone else.

You said to me: Hug me forever...
What the best and wisest parent wants for his or her child, that must the community want for all of its children. Any other goal is narrow and unlovely. Acted upon, it destroys our democracy... Only by being true to the full growth of all the individuals who make it up, can society by any chance be true to itself.”

-- John Dewey