

## Equity Based Research Theme

*How do we as teachers develop strategies that allow our students to find value in each other and form a larger community of learning?*

Booker, K. (2021). Rules Without Relationships Lead to Rebellion: Secondary Teachers and School Belonging [Review of *Rules Without Relationships Lead to Rebellion: Secondary Teachers and School Belonging*]. *School Community Journal*, 31(1).  
<https://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/SCJ.aspx>

In this article, Booker attempts to explain the competing societal demands that the contemporary average high school student is surrounded with, and expresses how important the teacher's role is in creating a psychological safe where students can connect with each other in meaningful ways. Booker makes the analogy of the teacher as the gatekeeper of belongingness, in that the choices they make on a daily basis and throughout the year determine the degree to which the learning environment will thrive. According to Booker, teachers must form relationships with students that show caring, warmth, and build trust, while simultaneously as an instructor provide elicited actional feedback, give students voice and choice in their work, and create curriculum that is both relatable and relevant. Additionally, it's important for teachers to be consistent both with their expectations of all students and how they reward and enact consequences for student behavior. I found this article helpful in that Booker does a good job of writing in a way that doesn't feel like an academic text and is both accessible and concise. I can definitely see myself coming back to this text in the future as a great source for evaluating and reflecting on my own teaching style.

Chu, L., & Casimere, H. (2023). *Should Daily Attendance Be a Measure of Success? Prioritizing Community Building and Student Engagement. Case Studies in High School Redesign* [Review of *Should Daily Attendance Be a Measure of Success? Prioritizing Community Building and Student Engagement. Case Studies in High School Redesign*]. Center on Reinventing Public Education.

How important is attendance when it comes to building a positive school and classroom community? This is the question that Chu and Casimere attempt to tackle while looking at the specific case of Nowell Academy in Providence Rhode Island, a school that primarily serves pregnant and parenting, overaged, and uncredited high schools, of whom the majority have had problems with chronic absenteeism. In the article, the authors explain that the most effective methods for reducing absenteeism has come from connecting with its students on a personal level. The school has a Primary Person model that emphasizes at least one strong relationship between students and teachers. Additionally, the school tries to clear as many obstacles as possible with strategies such as ride-shares, day care, checking in with students via texts throughout the day, and creating curricula that are more relevant, engaging, and community based.

I found the article to be especially insightful and interesting as it discusses the importance of attendance and the negative effect that absenteeism can have on community building. I see chronic tardiness and absenteeism as a main obstacle to

building community in my own classroom as students who are chronically absent or late become labeled by other students as people they don't want to work with or be around, and this only leads to a continuous cycle of tardiness and absenteeism. The article expresses that there is no silver bullet and that each student's challenges and obstacles are different, however the overarching goal is to engage students who have disengaged from school and learning in the past.

Hall, M. P., & Panarese, C. M. (2016). Building Community through Shared Spaces and Intention. *Metropolitan Universities*, 27(3), 124–135.

Social Emotional Learning is the missing piece to building communities that last, or so would argue the authors of this article. In their writing, Hall and Panarese make the case that only prioritizing cognitive gains from students, and not seeing them as whole human beings makes it difficult for any sort of community of trust to be formed. Along with Social Emotional Learning (SEL), mindfulness, literacy, and diversity should be at the forefront of students' minds in the classroom.

The article documents a case study where experts got together and shared best practices and examples of how to use SEL, mindfulness, deep reading, literacy, and social justice in a variety of settings. The article explains why each of these categories are both important for developing community in the classroom and how by using these strategies, we can start to see the student as more than a test score. The article is helpful in the way that it compiles a group of important and relevant topics that I've learned about over the last two years, however it fails to explain any new or useful ways to implement these strategies in the classroom. This article seems more apt to someone just entering the realm of progressive pedagogies who has not heard about the aforementioned educational pedagogies.

Malinda Hoskins Lloyd, Kolodziej, N. J., & Brashears, K. M. (2016). *Classroom Discourse: An Essential Component in Building a Classroom Community*. 26(2), 291–304.

In this article, Lloyd, Kolodziej, and Brashears discuss the importance of student discourse as a main pillar of building classroom community. Aimed at classrooms of all ages, the authors attempt to define a traditional teacher's role in the classroom as Initiate-Respond-Evaluate (IRE), whereas they encourage teachers to instead assume the role of Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE). As a facilitator, the role of the teacher is to get students talking with one another, ideally to the point where the teacher can join in as another participant instead of the leader, and can rely on students to lead discourse and conversations based on the context of the learning content.

The article then goes on to provide several examples of how to do this with different classroom protocols such as Inner-Outer Circle, a variation of a Socratic Seminar, Numbered Heads Together, a small group strategy where each person can be randomly called on to answer a discussion question in a whole group after an initial small group discussion, and Discussion Webs, a graphic organizer to help prepare students for a larger discussion that asks students to visually express their ideas before presenting them orally. Overall the article seemed somewhat useful, but mostly explained ideas

that seemed somewhat common knowledge among progressive educators, but attempted to give their own acronyms and names to common practices in the teaching world.

Nieto, J., & Valery, S. (2006). Creating a Sense of Community in the Classroom. *Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism, and Practice*, 3(3), 71.

In this article, Nieto and Valery discuss multiple strategies that teachers have used to build classroom communities both at the K-12 and college level. The article provides specific and helpful examples of strategies for teachers to implement in their classrooms. These include sitting in a circle, using name tags, sharing food often, modeling exploration of personal biases by instructor, hearing everyone's opinion on topics, creating value lines, being respectful of all views, encouraging authenticity and self reflection, as well as creating retreat experiences. Each of these strategies is followed by a short paragraph that explains them in more depth. This article proved helpful in that it not only explained what a good classroom community looks like but also provided specific examples and strategies on how to build one. I was pleasantly surprised by the depth and breadth of this article and the usefulness of its specific strategies that I could potentially try out in my classroom in the future.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2017). Complex Instruction: A Model for Reaching Up—and Out. *Gifted Child Today*, 41(1), 7–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217517735355>

Project group work in school presents many challenges. Working with others you're not familiar with, defining group roles, and feeling like everyone played an equal part in the work are just some of many challenges both teachers and students face when it comes to collaborating. In this article, Tomlinson defines Complex Instruction as tasks assigned by a teacher that are group worthy. In other words tasks that require different perspectives, different kinds of intelligence, and open ended assignments that encourage creativity. The article provides various adjectives that describe what a good collaborative assignment looks like, but doesn't show a clear path to lesson design or development for teachers. The article seems like an introduction to the pedagogy of Complex Instruction more than it is a piece of text that allows access to the pedagogy itself.