



# OCTOBER 2019

## RE-ENVISIONING THE CLASSROOM

THROUGH COMMUNITY-DRIVEN LEARNING

People desire meaningful connection to others...in family, in work, in learning. Through intentional development of community in the classroom we can reach all of our learners by challenging them, developing them, and helping them grow.



**Community!**

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**why?**

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**what?**

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**how?**

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**together!**

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Lilly Conference

# Community-Driven Learning...

## Why? What? How?



- Why:
  - People desire meaningful connection to others, and through community-driven learning in the classroom, we can reach all of our learners by challenging, developing, growing them.
- What:
  - Community-Driven Learning is a re-envisioning of the classroom, one that intentionally engages learners through the lens of community in authentic, life-connected, individual and collaborative learning, aimed at building connectivity through learning and learning through connectivity.
- How:
  - How it looks:
    - Focuses on students and instructor to build learning, make decisions, etc...
    - Focuses on language being authentic, engaging, varied, and connected to what learners can do with the learning.
    - Instructor models, and students work in circulating pairs, groups, and individually depending on purpose
    - Students work with less instructor monitoring, but instructor shares feedback, help, answers and direction as needed.
    - Students build connection with self and others through the “what” and the “how” of the learning.
    - Activity in the class aims at learning in a community of learners who grow, support, encourage, and become together.
  - How we can build it:
    - Look at your course, your space, your population, and yourself.
    - Ask yourself what areas of your current teaching are building community among your learners.
    - Look at one aspect of your course where you could embed a community focus.
    - Ask yourself what would engage your learners in a way that would encourage them to work collaboratively...each bringing their skills to the learning to deepen thinking, search for understanding, problem-solve, add new knowledge, enrich social interaction, organize efforts among themselves, and assess their own performance.
    - Look at one aspect of your course where you could design community-knowledge building in a way that connects the learning thematic with your life and that of the students and engages all of the above in sharing and learning about each other through the course.

- Ask yourself “Where could my students work together in a way that grows the whole group?”.
- Begin sketching out one piece at a time and design it.
- Involve your learners in the process... It is a community, after all.
- Ask yourself how you are setting the tone for community-building from the very first meeting.



# Collaborative Mind Mapping

Build a mind map of what you understand community to mean, and how what you teach prepares students to participate in the larger social community.

Understanding that our minds remember strands of connections between pieces of information in various ways, including kinesthetically and visually, we want to harness the power of mind mapping as a collaborative tool for learning.

Using mind mapping as a pre-learning brainstorming tool can be powerful for group collaboration. Student are given/or choose a word/concept being studied and then write it down. After the word is written down, the next person in the team circles the word draws a line outward from it, adding another shape and the next word. As the map builds, individual clusters of closely associated words and ideas form. Pictures are added, and the strands of connectivity form an image of the theme in a way that represents the thinking of the group.

In addition to pre-learning, this activity can be used to tell or retell a story about a learning segment, relate review a learning segment, brainstorm a project, and more. Collaboratively building mind maps can help students share information in a way that allows them to become acquainted with each other early on. It offers easy access with less encumbered output for more introverted students (since the focus is on creating together). It also supports learning of a life skill... divergent and convergent thinking.

**The community goals:** students closely observe each other's' thoughts and sharing while connecting to the learning of their teammates. The end product is a visual representation of community effort.

## Notes and Expansions:

# Collaborative Mind Mapping

(Workspace)

# Learn & Teach

## Learn & Teach

Community is...
Community does...

A, B

**Building Community in your Neighborhood**

"On some level, we all live connected. We tend to live with a sense of being known and knowing the people closest to us. We want to be part of a community," says journalist Peter Lapanowicz, author of *The Power of Community on the American Street*. Lapanowicz is not alone in his concern that we've lost a physically close community and that isolation can affect our general health. Psychologist Susan House, author of *The Village Effect: How Face-to-Face Contact Can Make us Healthier and Happier*, describes study after study finding that socially disconnected people are at greater risk of going early, while social integration—the feeling of being part of a group—builds resilience and even a stronger immune system.

"Showing your neighbors affects everything from the crime rate to life expectancy," says Dave Rayson, coauthor of *The Art of Neighboring* and a former pastor. Rayson says that because we don't know neighbors the same way we choose friends, "you are guaranteed to be in relationships with people who think about the world differently than you do. If polarization is bad for our culture, relationships with our neighbors are the antidote."

Leaving your neighbor, says Rayson, starts with one gesture: Learn, remember, and use their words. "This can be super awkward," he cautions, particularly if you're both parents for your or they've introduced themselves to you multiple times. Rayson's motto: "Learn in to belong!"

Excerpt from the article "How to Feel at Home in a New Neighborhood" by Melissa Peters, *Fast Company*, September 2019, p. 68.

**When a Community Comes Together for a Cause**

Community is a powerful word. I had just recently moved to New York before Hurricane Sandy devastated many homes in the local area. As a company, we helped shelter our workers and their families. Workshops in Manhattan with power were opening offices to people without. Here was an event that impacted the lives of New Yorkers and the simple act of donating clothes resulted in a group of people to get from seeing signing in to helping becoming a community that helped one another live our lives in the aftermath.

Not all communities are created or meant. Some take practice to create. As part of the 90:10:10 challenge, social coach I've seen the power of a few dozen people reaching out to their personal networks, business connections and celebrities to create awareness on #ShareAbility. Monitoring the reach of an inspirational message or important piece of information requires the dedication of partners to stepping out to share and connecting content that opens awareness.

1. Read
2. Write
3. Walk
4. Explain
5. Ask
6. Respond
7. Compare

Divide team into two smaller groups. Supply two paragraphs that talk about different aspects of community in general. Then participants rejoin to teach each other what they have learned and draw a compare/contrast.

1. Instructor(s) create(s) two separate texts that share different aspects of the topic to be learned.
2. The class divides into even-numbered groups and then divide into pair **A** and pair **B**.
3. Participants read their assigned text (*A* or *B*) and take notes on important ideas (ideas from the text, connections to their experiences connected to the topic, etc.)
4. Then, partners *A* take an “academic walk” with other *As*. (Likewise partners *B* do so with other *Bs*) and discuss their understandings of the text and what stood out to them.
5. Next, they rejoin the larger group, and each *A* chooses a *B*.
6. Now, the partners *A* and *B* share and teach each other what they have learned, asking and answering questions of perspective, experience, etc...
7. Finally, they draw a compare/contrast of their learning to share out in a large discussion.

**The community goals:** This activity aims at building shared learning between instructor and students and among students. It allows multiple levels of learning to occur. Individual learning and meaning-building allows for each person to “interact” alone with the article before sharing. It also encourages common and contrasting interaction on the topic before entering into large-scale discussion. Each person is able to learn from, through, and about others in class.

# Learn & Teach

(Workspace)

## Create!

1. Collaborative
2. Production
3. Creative
4. World - Applicable
5. Life-authentic



Community-Driven Components:  
Community growth through collaboration...deeper thinking, searching for understanding... acquisition of and application of new and old knowledge... expanding/sharing individual perspectives... social interaction. Students organize efforts, source materials, make decisions, and play roles in assessing work...all building community and shared growth.

# Create It!

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These ideas stand of examples of activities and projects that can help draw classroom learning into community, but the beginning and end of the matter is a) who we (the instructors) are b) how we engage our students from the time they approach our shared learning space to the time they leave the learning space and beyond c) how we establish and support interaction with and among our students.

For this activity, we will collaborate to actually design a CDL class mockup. We will join in new small groups to conceptualize a “dream” picture of community-driven learning in the classroom. What would contribute to community-driven learning? What are all of the what-ifs? Physical environment, teaching methods, goals, etc.. Nothing is a bad idea. Groups will think divergently to expand beyond the obvious with the goal of taking away feasible actionable ideas. Then, think convergently and zero in on ideas that could really work.

**The community goals:** By working together in this way, community will grow through collaboration, deeper thinking, searching for understanding, acquisition of new and new application of old knowledge, expanding and sharing of individual perspectives, and social interaction. Students will organize efforts, source materials, make decisions, and play a role in assessing work...all of which build community and shared growth.

# Create It!

(Workspace)

# Learn & Teach

## Text A

Building Community in your Neighborhood “On some level, we all crave connection. We want to live with a sense of being known and knowing the people closet to us. We want to be part of a community,” says journalist Peter Lovenheim, author of *In the Neighborhood: The Search for Community on the American Street*. ... Lovenheim is not alone in his concern that we’ve lost a physically close community and that isolation can affect our physical health. Psychologist Susan Pinker, author of *The Village Effect: How Face-to-Face Contact Can Make us Healthier and Happier*, describes study after study finding that socially disconnected people are at greater risk of dying early, while social integration – the feeling of being part of a group – builds resilience and even a stronger immune system. ... “Knowing your neighbors affects everything from the crime rate to life expectancy,” says Dave Runyon, coauthor of *The Art of Neighboring* and a former pastor. ... Runyon says that because we don’t choose neighbors the same way we choose friends, “you are guaranteed to be in relationships with people who think about the world differently than you do. If polarization is dividing our culture, relationships with our neighbors are the antidote.” Loving your neighbors, says Runyon, starts with one gesture: Learn, remember, and use their names. “This can be super awkward,” he concedes, particularly if you’ve lived somewhere for years or they’ve introduced themselves to you multiple times. Runyon’s motto: “Lean in to awkward.” Excerpt from the article “How to Feel at Home in a New Neighborhood” by Melissa Petro, *Real Simple*, September 2019, p. 68.

# Learn & Teach

## Text B

Community becomes even more powerful when it includes the entire community. When all members of the community pull together for a united cause, the power becomes unlimited. The change, or transformation, that occurs from the entire community is something greater than just what a small group of the community or an individual can achieve.

Communities are diverse. We have people of all ages and backgrounds who are skilled in different areas. By working together, having old mentor young, young inspiring old, and strong helping weak, we all give fully. Only together, as a community, can we give beyond our individual means. Participation is essential.

We all have something to contribute. One may be a storyteller. Another may be an inventor. Some may be artists, and others mathematicians. What we saw in Hutto was students changing the world by sharing causes that matter to them, working together with the community of teachers, city government members and concerned citizens on how to solve them, and then collaborating with mentors to have these become reality. We can expect to see an anti-bullying day or week and a campaign to end childhood hunger tied with a national charity as only a couple of examples of what will result from this community. This wouldn't be possible without us all coming together.

Usually we see communities come together when they stem from a cause or disaster. The community effort at Hutto ISD is a great example of a community coming together because they want to. We need these sorts of pure motives to nurture genuine communities. What they will create will be something remarkable. How do I know this? Because if they didn't come together, nothing would happen.

Excerpt from the Article "When a Community Comes Together for a Cause" by Tim McDonald 01/24/2014 07:06 pm ET Updated Mar 26, 2014, [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/when-a-community-comes-to\\_b\\_4662269](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/when-a-community-comes-to_b_4662269)

shared ideas



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