

# POWER *of* PLACE

LEARNING COMMUNITIES



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Whether you are reading this while on vacation or soon after, I hope that you have gotten some much-deserved *rest* during this vacation week. Research - and experience - tells us that **rest** is critical to our mental and physical health and that it offers great benefits to managing stress, protecting our immune system, stabilizing our moods, and boosting our creativity.

We live in a culture that prioritizes productivity and efficiency, and it can be difficult to make resting a habit. This is something I struggle with every day – reminding myself that the relentless effort to “get things done” will not always produce better results, and remembering that developing the habit of resting can help me recharge and work more effectively.

How can we develop the habits that serve us well in life? We can seek help from books like ***The Power of Habit***, by Charles Duhigg (2014), or ***Atomic Habits***, by James Clear (2018), a leading expert on habit formation (I know a teacher who swears by this book). Both books offer evidence-based advice and strategies on how to form good habits and - as importantly - how to break bad ones. These experts tell us it's the repetition of small behaviors that can make all the difference.

Earlier this month we heard a similar message from Michael McDowell, internationally known educator, and author of ***The Project Habit: Designing for Rigor with PBL***. McDowell was the guest faculty at the February 8 ECLC Winter Gathering. He asked the crowd of educators from more than a dozen districts to consider how they could develop the small habits of inquiry and instruction that offer a big return in the classroom. Citing meta analyses conducted by his mentor and colleague John Hattie, author of *Visible Learning*, McDowell emphasized the central importance of teacher clarity. Clarity, he said, "comes through conversation, not presentation."

McDowell was quick to distinguish between "motion" and "action." As he tells it, a "motion" habit is a regular tendency or specific routine linked to planning, strategizing, and learning outside of implementation (i.e. reading a book, reviewing data with colleagues, attending a conference). An "action" habit, on the other hand, is a regular tendency or specific routine linked to engaging in an activity (i.e. co-constructing the driving question with students and providing targeted feedback and monitoring progress with students).

Our colleague Gary Chapin was inspired to write the following poem after the Winter Gathering. Look for his more detailed blogpost about the learning experience next week on social media.

**i want kids to**

i want kids  
to feel like  
they're getting  
away with something  
when they learn  
something  
like it's a  
conspiracy  
a cut corner  
a minor crime  
an initiation  
into the dark secret  
we're trying to keep.  
i want kids  
to wonder about the teachers  
like, "if the teachers  
knew what we were  
learning, they would  
never let us  
learn it."  
like it's a  
conspiracy  
like kids've figured  
out they don't have  
to use this knowledge  
only for good  
and even if they wanted to  
there's too much

potential for  
damage  
like they can  
use these skills  
against us  
hurt us.  
freedom looks like joy  
and the only way  
you know you are  
free is if you do  
something the  
teachers would rather  
you not do.  
i want kids to  
break us and break  
free and the sooner  
the better  
for everyone.

Finally, on celebratory note: We are thrilled to share that Laura Tota, Power of Place's Senior Program Manager, and her husband Chris, welcomed a new baby into their family this week, joining two-year-old Addison. George Andrew Tota was born at 1:03 pm on Wednesday at an impressive 10 lbs and 22.5 inches. Everyone in the family is thriving, and we could not be happier for them. If you would like to wish Laura and her family congratulations, we've set up [\*\*a Jamboard here\*\*](#). Laura is on leave until the middle of May, so she won't be answering emails, but we promise to share your messages with her.

With warmth and appreciation,

Jane

## Follow Power of Place on Social Media

**Power of Place is on  
[LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#)!**

Follow us for photos, links  
to resources, upcoming opportunities,  
and more.



## SEED Programs: Register Now

**LAST CALL:  
SEED for**



## Administrators

For the first time, the National SEED (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity) Project is offering an exclusive, administrators-only space for ECLC partner districts.

**SEED-trained administrators will be prepared and positioned to support teacher leaders and their critical work in school communities.** These peer-led SEED seminars offer a refreshing and effective way to fight employee burnout, change an institution's social and emotional climate, and rethink school and district systems and practices.

*Sign up soon! First session is next week.*

When: 2/29, 3/13, and 3/27, from 8 am to 3 pm each day  
Where: **In person** at the Wylie Conference Center in Beverly

**[Register Here.](#)**

## SEED 101: Conversations on Race & Equity

**SEED 101** is a virtual, 5-part SEED series for educators that leads participants through experiential, interactive activities, and thought-provoking films and readings to explore how systems of advantage and disadvantage have been constructed in our society.



This series is intended to better equip educators to reflect on their own identities and develop a growing awareness of systems of oppression, power, and privilege. Topics will include gender, race, sexuality, ability, class, and how these intersect with each of us personally and systemically.

**Please join us for “Conversations on Race & Equity” as part of your continued commitment to educational justice in Essex County.**

When: March 13, 20, 27 and April 3, 24 from 3:30-5:30 pm  
Where: All sessions will be virtual, and held on Zoom

**[Register Here.](#)**

Sign up soon: This series is limited to 15 participants.

**Join Our Showcase of Learning**





**Join us on May 8** for a celebration of all we have collectively accomplished during the 2023-24 school year.

You'll experience exhibits, demonstrations and reflections on the past year of adult learning. Enjoy appetizers and cocktails, and greetings from Education Secretary Patrick Tutwiler and PEM Executive Director & CEO Lynda Roscoe Hartigan ☐

Where: Peabody Essex Museum, Salem  
When: Thursday, May 8 from 4:30-7:30 pm

Want to **attend**? Register [here](#).  
Want to **present**? Email us at [info@powerofplaceclc.org](mailto:info@powerofplaceclc.org)



Do you want to perform at the Showcase of Learning? Do you know someone else (of any age) who does?

Email us at [info@powerofplaceclc.org](mailto:info@powerofplaceclc.org)

## Save the Dates

**ECLC Summer Institute**  
Thursday, August 8  
Beverly, MA

**ECLC 2024 Fall Gathering**  
Election Day, Tuesday, November 5  
Essex North Shore Agricultural and  
Technical School | Hathorne, MA



***Access the updated 2023-2024***

## An Opportunity from Pear & Fable Vision Learning

### *Connect and Thrive: Story-Powered Circles in Elementary Education*

Are you an elementary educator or school counselor trying to build a sense of belonging and resilience in your classroom? Ever wondered how to create a classroom environment where every student feels valued and supported?

Join Dr. Gil Noam, Chair of Partnerships in Education and Resilience (PEAR), and Sara Smith, Director of Creative Education at FableVision Learning, for a **Feb. 26 webinar** to introduce story-powered circles as a strategy to address these challenges in elementary classrooms.

Learn more and register [here](#).



## Resources from the Field

### Psychology Today

#### The Hidden Learning (Theories) of Stories

Stories, broadly defined, facilitate all types of learning: abstract content, how we predict the actions of others, and even how we encode the events of our own lives. The core elements of narratives and our most famous learning theories share too much overlap to be coincidental. But why are stories disappearing at a time when we need richer, more motivating learning? The more that stories become endangered, the more we risk losing out on sophisticated learning.

Read the full article [here](#).

### edutopia

#### Using Class Agreements to Boost Engagement in Middle and High School

Don't be a "sage on the stage" or a "guide on the side." Instead, consider the impact of entering into an agreement with students to build stronger engagement in the work of learning. This is a mutual understanding that the teacher will examine their practice to consider the changing needs of students, and, in trade, students will engage fully in four behaviors that lead to success: Do All the Things, Try Your Best, Read, Ask for Help.

Read the full article [here](#).



Debby Irving  
RACIAL JUSTICE EDUCATOR AND WRITER

#### Transformational Conversations: Moving from



Understood®

#### Bias in School Discipline: When the Teacher Says Your Child is

## Fear to Curiosity

Many have not developed the insight, skill, and emotional stamina necessary to broach and navigate differences of perspective and opinion, especially when harm to a member of a marginalized group is involved. In contrast to the social norms of whiteness are norms and skills designed to develop the authenticity and courage necessary to deeply understand one another in ways that forge connection and develop resilience. In this interactive workshop, explore how to embed new, transformational norms into our personal and institutional practices.

Register [here](#).

## “Acting Out”

It’s an all-too-familiar situation for many families of color. The phone rings. It’s the school calling to say your child has been “acting out” in class again. In this podcast about bias in school discipline, host Julian Saavedra talks with Busoloa Saka and Jolie Battista and discuss key terms like implicit bias, significant disproportionality, and manifestation determination. Find out why these terms are extra important to know if you’re the parent of a child of color.

Listen to the podcast [here](#).

## Just for Fun



*Do you have something to share with your fellow educators?  
Send it to us at [info@powerofplace.org](mailto:info@powerofplace.org).*

Power of Place Learning Communities | 2 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100, Burlington, MA  
01803

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