

# POWER *of* PLACE

LEARNING COMMUNITIES



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

This past October, my husband had his right hip replaced. This month, our family is in the thick of a long-overdue renovation of our circa 1960s kitchen. What do they have in common? Both are significant remodeling projects.

Remodeling often requires breaking something. The orthopedic surgeon was required to break my husband's old hip before building him a new one. The home contractor demolished our kitchen right down to the studs, laying waste to the familiar cupboards, counters, and flooring that have defined the room for decades. Remodeling also necessitates rehabilitation. My husband used crutches and compression socks, and was prescribed physical therapy sessions and daily exercises. Electricians rewired the outlets in the kitchen, contractors installed insulation and plaster, and plumbers replaced corroded pipes – bringing the room "up to code."

Remodeling also - usually - requires reflection. In most cases you can't just tear everything down and start over. Instead, it's important to keep what works and change what has outlived its usefulness. It is sometimes painful—and often disruptive, messy, disorienting, and inconvenient. And yet, patience is ultimately rewarded: My husband now has full mobility and, in a few weeks (fingers crossed!), our kitchen will be beautiful, modern, and much more efficient.

Here's my point: We are all in the midst of *remodeling* our education system to accommodate an ever-changing world. We can no longer teach the way we did a century ago, or even in the 1960s when my kitchen was built. Instead we need to mindfully retool how we approach education to create learning environments and experiences that engage and inspire us as educators so we can engage and inspire our students. This means bringing our pedagogies and practices "up to code" to meet the daily realities of young people's lives in 2024.

In education, we often hear calls for transformation, reinvention and revolution. I find such language unhelpful—and sometimes harmful—because it can make the pursuit of change feel unattainable to educators and scary to parents and members of the community. It can also take attention away from the small, incremental changes we make every day that are having an impact. Some of these changes may be invisible to the eye—a shift in mindset that allows for deeper human connection, a small change in the school schedule that yields unexpected gains, a lesson plan that foregrounds student voice - but they still move us forward in a meaningful way.

The language of remodeling allows us to keep our aspirations high and our expectations higher, while also keeping our feet planted firmly in the realities on the ground. Remodeling projects can be monumental, modest, or somewhere in between.

We see PoP/ECLC as a space for remodeling, rethinking, and reimagining learning for all of our students. We've seen time and again that when educators have the opportunities to dream and experiment together, they feel energized and have renewed faith in themselves as adult learners and as teachers. Such feelings of efficacy are contagious – and students invariably benefit.

With warmth and appreciation,

Jane

**Register Now**

## ***The Project Habit: Designing for Rigor with Project-Based Learning - February 8***

Life is full of authentic challenges that can only be met with clarity, creative problem-solving, collaboration, and feedback. School should be the same. Looking to close opportunity gaps while providing students with real world, authentic learning experiences? Join us for a day with Project Based Learning (PBL) thought leader **Michael McDowell** to discuss his framework to eliminate systemic opportunity gaps by developing critical 21st century learning skills that will serve our students for life.

Michael's workshop is designed to address both the individual educator's practice and the opportunity to approach PBL in a more systemic way. To make the most of Michael's expertise, **we encourage schools/districts**





## ECLC Winter Gathering

### *The Project Habit: Designing for Rigor with Project Based Learning*

*featuring Michael McDowell,  
The Core Collaborative*

Wylie Inn & Conference Center

February 8, 2024  
8 am to 3 pm



to participate in teams of 5-6 staff, including representation from:

- Special and/or general education teachers
- Instructional coaches
- School and district leaders in teaching and learning

In addition to the recommendation to put together participating teams, **we invite all participating administrators to join Michael for a special lunch** in which Michael will offer more detailed insight into thinking about school-and district-wide strategies around getting started, or diving deeper, with project-based learning at scale.

Register [here](#).

## *A chance for administrators to become stronger anti-racist, justice-seeking leaders*

Join us on **February 29, March 13, and March 27** for an intimate, administrators-only series of conversations about some of the most challenging issues in education today. This learning experience is ideal for those who wish to build up their courage and become more effective leaders in the process.

Register [here](#).

## SEED for Administrators



**Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED)** is a peer-led model, that has - until now - been unavailable to administrators.

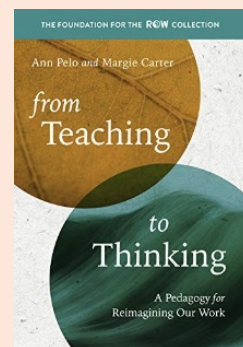
School and district leaders are invited to join us for our new **SEED for Administrators**, and to join their peers in a unique SEED experience.

**February 29 | March 13 | March 27**  
8 am to 3 pm  
Wylie Conference Center  
Beverly, MA



## Join an Exploratory Mini-Grant Experience

### **From Teaching to Thinking: Rediscovering the joy and wonder of early childhood education.**



*“When we shift our focus from instruction to inquiry—from teaching to thinking—we commit ourselves to the humility of listening, the rigor of researching, and to creating possibilities rather than pursuing predefined outcomes.”*

In their work *From Teaching to Thinking: A Pedagogy for Reimagining Our Work*, authors and early childhood consultants, Ann Pelo and Margie Carter present a series of stories and concepts which explore the joy and wonder of teaching and learning in the early years.

Please join Shannon Tenney, a Georgetown early childhood educator, for a book study that will ignite new ideas and encourage a re-envisioning of our work in early childhood. Shannon is a recipient of our first-ever ECLC Exploratory Mini-Grants.

The book study will begin with guided, independent reading and will culminate in four collaborative sessions in which participants can dig deep into the ideas presented within the text.

To join the book study (or for questions), contact Shannon Tenney at [tenneys@georgetown.k12.ma.us](mailto:tenneys@georgetown.k12.ma.us).

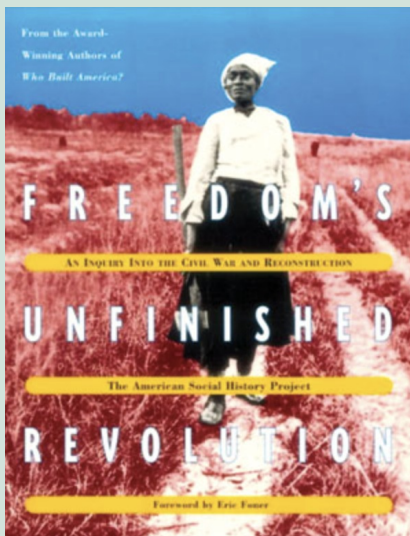
## Save the Dates

**Wednesday, May 8**  
**ECLC Spring Gathering: 2023-2024**  
**Showcase of Learning**  
**Peabody Essex Museum | Salem, MA**

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



## Recommended Reading



### Honoring Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

*"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied to a single garment of destiny. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." - Martin Luther King, Jr.*

A Teaching Guide from American Social History Project, *Freedom's Unfinished Revolution: An Inquiry into the Civil War and Reconstruction* with foreword by Eric Foner.

***Access the updated 2023-2024 Learning Agenda here.***

## Resources from the Field



## Student mental health and well-being: A review of evidence and emerging solutions

In the summer of 2022, the Center on Reinventing Public Education convened a panel of education and youth development experts to take stock of recent efforts to address students' mental health and well-being and to reestablish core elements of social and emotional learning (SEL) in schools. CRPE initially convened a group of experts in 2021 to assess the pandemic's impact on young people's well-being, with a particular emphasis on the social impact of school closures. The panel has continuously reflected on what would be needed for recovery. Read the full review [here](#).

## The Portrait Model: Building Coherence in School System Redesign

A "Portrait" framework helps leaders implement a new collective re-design vision. To facilitate and empower leaders in this transformative journey, we start with a comprehensive visioning and strategic process that revolves around five interconnected and dynamic portraits: the Portrait of a Learner, the Portrait of a System, the Portrait of a Leader, the Portrait of an Educator and a Self-Portrait. These interrelated and adaptable elements of the framework have both interconnected and discrete competencies. Access the Portrait Model [here](#).



### Touchpoints Training for Mental Health Clinicians and Developmental Services Providers

Touchpoints: The How of Child and Family Engagement is an intensive training program that introduces the Touchpoints Approach, which is an evidence-based approach to building strong family-child relationships from before birth through age 5. Participants who implement Touchpoints in their practice partner with families to lay the vital foundation for children's early learning and healthy development. Touchpoints provides a practical, preventive approach that supports professionals in forming strength-based partnerships with families. Register [here](#).



### Courage in Education: Facing Challenges with Strength, Determination, and Hope

Educators face enormous challenges these days. Disgruntled community members, outdated school policies, relentless workload and time pressures, and students' growing mental health issues, to name a few. To face these challenges on a daily basis and not succumb to a world-weary sense of grief or Monday-morning dread requires courage. *Courage in Education: Facing Challenges with Strength, Determination, and Hope* is a new online course designed to inspire courageous action in you and your students—in classrooms, schools, and beyond. Register [here](#).

**Just for Fun**



"I know I didn't do my homework, so I understand keeping me in from recess. Then again, recess offers badly needed exercise, social interaction, and the opportunity to refocus. It's a quandary."

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

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