Community-Centered: Connecting School and the Broader Community

1	Title Slide	Welcome to this module, Connecting School and the Broader Community, in the Community-Centered teaching series. To advance to the next slide, select the "forward" arrow located on the play bar at the bottom of your screen.
2	Introduction	In the last module, we discussed the importance of forming community in classrooms and schools. In this module, we will be discussing the importance of establishing relationships between schools and the broader community. According to the National Research Council, incorporating a community-centered learning environment encompasses "several aspects of community, including the classroom as a community, the school as a community, and the degree to which students, teachers, and administers feel connected to the larger community of homes, businesses, states, the nation, and even the world" (p.145, NRC, 2011). One of many hopes teachers have for their students is that what they learn in school can be connected to the outside world, and vice versa (NRC, 2000). John Dewey (1916) acknowledged the disconnection between schools and their communities long ago when he noted: "From the standpoint of the child, the great waste in school comes from his inability to utilize the experience he gets outside; while on the other hand, he is unable to apply in daily life what he is learning in school. That is the isolation of the school, its isolation from life" (NRC, 2000).
3	Learning Objectives	By the end of this module, the learner will be able to connect the broader community with the school environment.
4	Importance of Connecting School & Broader Community	Let's first begin by exploring this visual that demonstrates the importance of connecting schools with the outside world. Observe the percentage of time during a school year that students spend in school, sleeping, and engaged in activities within their home and community. Then, notice the percentage of time spent in school compared to the rest of the graph. Since students spend the majority of their time in the outside world away from school, it is imperative to connect what is taught in school to what students experience at home and in their communities.
5	Experiential Learning	Our question now is, "What are some best practices we can use to connect our classrooms and schools to the broader community?" O'Keefe (2011) provides few suggestions for answering this question. These suggestions include incorporating experiential learning, reaching out to community stakeholders, and connecting the curriculum to the real world through problem-based learning (O'Keefe, 2011). Experiential learning provides students with the opportunity to learn by doing by putting a greater emphasis on the process of learning, rather than the end product. Experiential learning can either be field-based, which includes students participating in internships, practicums, or service learning opportunities, or classroom-based, in which students gain experience by participating in case studies, simulations, or collaborative projects (Lewis & Williams, 1994).

6	Experiential Learning	Take a moment to examine the experiential learning model by Kolb (****). Experiential learning is a continuously cyclical process that starts by providing students with a concrete experience, which is followed by observation and reflection of said experience, which then leads to the conceptualization and formation of abstract ideas regarding the experience, and finally, students are able to apply what they know in a future situation, which results in another experience To learn more about how to effectively plan and implement experiential learning strategies in your classroom, click the link to examine a comprehensive guide provided by Reyerson University. **See files**
7	Community Stakeholders	An additional way of connecting classrooms and the broader community is by reaching out to stakeholders in the community, such as local businesses and industries (O'Keefe, 2011). Sharing your desire to establish a partnership with the community can spur dialogue about what is important to the community and your students, as well as how they might be able to help your students in the future. Inviting guest speakers into your science or agriculture classrooms is one effective way of connecting the outside world to the classroom. Additionally, teachers could ask stakeholders and professionals in the community to serve as "celebrity judges" to help evaluate students' major projects or assignments. This strategy requires a considerable amount of work and planning from the teacher, but students may be more motivated to do well if an external member of the community will be critiquing their work as well (Haynes, 2018). An interesting twist would be to ask students to arrange for a guest speaker to come to a classroom themselves. To see an example of how this activity could be implemented, see the link provided. **See file**
8	Project-based Learning	The last strategy suggested by O'Keefe (2011) is to connect the curriculum taught in your classroom to the real world. One way of achieving this is through project-based learning. Project-based learning requires students to investigate and respond to a complex question, challenge, problem which they created themselves or were assigned. The link between a student and the community could be made by asking a member of the community to provide students with challenges or problems to solve from their business or industry (NRC, 2000). Students may be more motivated to solve real problems that might have an influence on someone else's decision (NRC, 2000). This process of solving a real-world problem can establish and maintain relationships between the teacher, student, and community expert. Even if students never physically meet with the community expert, knowing that their projects will be seen by external audiences is extremely motivating (NRC, 2000). Click the link to learn more about how to implement project-based learning into your science-based classrooms. **See file**
9	Review	As we come to a close, let's consider all we have covered so far. We started this module by discussing the importance of connecting our schools to the broader community. We then

		transitioned into specific strategies we can use to implement this connection such as using experiential learning, establishing relationships with community stakeholders, and implementing project-based learning into our classrooms. Incorporating the concepts that we discussed in this module should help you connect the broader community with the school environment.
10	Sources	Dewey, J. (1916) *Democracy and Education.* New York: Macmillan. Moll, L.C. (1986a). Creating Strategic Learning Environments for Students: A Community-Based Approach. Paper presented at the S.I.G. Language Developed Invited Symposium Literacy and Schooling, Annual Meeting of the American EducationalResearch Association, San Francisco, California. Moll, L.C. (1986b) Writing as a communication: Creating strategic learning environments for students. Theory into Practice 25:102-108. National Research Council. (2000). *How people learn: Brain mind, experience, and school.* Washington, D.C.: The National Academic Press. 5 Steps to Better School/Community Collaboration. (2011). Retrieved from https://www.edutopia.org/blog/school-community-collaboration-brendan-okeefe Schwartz, M. (2012). Experiential Learning Report.
11	Credits	Thank you for viewing this module.