

March 2021 REL Corner: Creating Communities within Classrooms

[Learn about REL Appalachia and its work](#), and dive into these resources from across the REL program to consider how educators can create communities within classrooms to provide students with targeted supports.

- [What research is available on practices to build a sense of community in online courses?](#) This Ask A REL response from REL Midwest features research studies and descriptive articles that assess the relationship between students' sense of community in online courses and student engagement and learning. The response offers community-building strategies that K–16 educators can implement in virtual classroom settings and suggestions for further research on the topic.
- [Strategies for Educators to Support the Social and Emotional Needs of Students Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Demand for Racial Justice](#). This publication from REL West shares a list of equity–focused practices and resources for K–12 district leaders and educators to help students, educators, and families feel connected, safe, and supported during the COVID-19 pandemic and times of racial injustice.
- [Sense of Belonging in Math](#). This webinar from REL Northwest shares research and recommendations for elementary educators interested in promoting a sense of belonging in math classrooms. Strategies shared include normalizing uncertainty, establishing group membership and identity, and jigsaw configurations for cooperative learning.
- [Is there rigorous research on the use of peer-assisted learning, cooperative learning, or small groups to support student learning?](#) This Ask A REL response from REL Pacific summarizes research studies of peer–assisted learning, cooperative learning, and small group interventions to support elementary and secondary student outcomes, with an emphasis on English learners in literacy and reading comprehension.

- [Bilingual Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition \(BCIRC\)](#). This What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Evidence Snapshot provides an overview of the findings on the effect of the BCIRC program—a small cooperative learning group program designed to support the English language development of Spanish-speaking students in grades 2–5. The intervention was found to have potentially positive effects on reading achievement and English language development.
- [Peer Assisted Learning Strategies \(PALS\)](#). This WWC Evidence Snapshot shares an overview of findings on the effects of the PALS program—a supplemental peer-tutoring program—on K–6 student outcomes in several disciplines. The intervention was found to have potentially positive effects on reading achievement for English language learners. The [WWC Intervention Report on PALS](#) provides more details on the study and its findings.