



Strategies for Success

A publication for educators



Making Relationships a Priority



One of the biggest myths I hear in my work in inclusive education is about friendship. Teachers commonly share that they struggle to facilitate relationships during middle and high school years because older students simply are not interested in socializing with students with disabilities.

It is certainly true that no teacher can create friendships, but he/she can create conditions in the classroom that give students opportunities to strengthen social relationships, learn about and from each other and get and give support. We know this dream is possible. Here are 5 ways schools can build community.

Make it a Priority

It seems too simple to be true. In schools where teachers cultivate student collaboration, socialization is a part of the IEP and considered in developing lesson plans.

Build a School Community

Encourage community through cooperative learning experiences, conflict resolution opportunities, games, class meetings, service learning, social justice education, peer tutor/mentoring, email pals and classroom celebrations. Teachers should also try to effect

whole school change with these techniques and not limit just to their classroom.

Create Spaces for Sharing

Let students learn about each others dreams, interests and needs. Increase opportunities for participation and idea sharing. Let students manage conflict by providing "talking chairs" for students engaged in a disagreement so they can explain feelings and find solutions.

Look to Peers to Teach and Support

Peers will learn quickly how to calm, teach and encourage a classmate without adult assistance. They understand each other in ways adults do not. However, it is critical that teachers build community by giving all students opportunities to both give and receive assistance.

Provide Opportunities to Connect Beyond Class

Schools need to develop a wider array of after school activities and move beyond traditional sports and arts based groups.

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You Fit Right In!

Start the year off right by teaching students that a classroom, like a puzzle, isn't complete unless every piece is in place.

1. Draw a large jigsaw puzzle containing enough pieces for each student and teacher in the class, along with a few extras for late arrivals.
2. Cut up puzzle into individual pieces and write the name of a student or teacher on each piece.
3. On first day of school, distribute the puzzle pieces and have each child decorate his/her piece. (You might even photograph each student.)
4. If possible, laminate and

allow students to keep their piece on their desks for a few days as you learn one another's names.

5. Combine the pieces into a large puzzle which will create a bulletin board.
6. Title the bulletin board, "You Fit Right IN!"



Everyone Belongs!

Here is a time-saving bulletin board tip: Before the year begins, decide what color background you want on your board for each month of the year. Beginning with the last month of the school year, cover the board with a background layer for each month. Then when you are ready to change you can rip off the top layer to uncover a clean new background.

Do you have a bulletin board tip to share? If your idea is chosen, you may receive a \$25.00 gift card to Barnes & Noble! Send your suggestions to sally@dsagc.com

www.educationworld.com

Speaking More Slowly Helps Students Learn



Research at Wichita State has revealed that all students benefit when the instructor slows his/her rate of speech. Audiology professor, Ray Hull found that the average adult speaks at 170 words per minute but the average 7 year old processes only 120 words per minute. The average high school student processes 140 words per minute. One frustrated student claimed, "My teacher talks so fast, I can't hear her!"

Students with disabilities are at an even greater disadvantage because their processing time may be even slower than their typical peers. How slow is slow enough? Think Mr. Rogers. He spoke at a rate of 124 words per minute. The pace may sound awkward or even ridiculous to adults but to children, it is sheer relief!

Reprinted from
The Wichita Eagle

Are You Using Person First Language?



Words can create barriers and reinforce stereotypes. Therefore, the DSAGC strongly believes in the importance of ensuring that correct language is used when talking or writing about individuals with Down syndrome. A baby born with Down syndrome is not a “Down’s child or a “baby with Downs”. When describing an individual with Down syndrome, it is preferred that you say he/she is a child with Down syndrome. A person with Down syndrome is not a “Downs”. Placing the person before the disability emphasizes the person first and the disability second. When referring to peers, the correct term is “typical” peers as opposed to “normal.” It is also important to use correct terminology. A person does not “suffer” from Down syndrome, nor are they “afflicted.” It is not a disease. It is a chromosomal condition caused by an extra copy of the 21st chromosome. Person First language emphasizes respect for the individual. A child is much more than a label. Help to educate your peers.



Join the DSAGC
Book Chat Club for
Teachers

Teachers can volunteer to select a title, read, review and discuss in online format with peers. The DSAGC will provide special incentives to participants.

What’s New for Teachers in our Library?

- How to design your class to promote literacy.
- Before and after full color photos.
- Charts, reproducible forms.
- Setting up your room space by space.
- Five Stars on Amazon





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Attention Administrators and Parents
Please pass this along to any teacher, therapist or other staff who work with students with Down syndrome in your school or district.

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How Are We Doing?

Please let us know how to improve our newsletter by answering the following questions:

Do you feel that this newsletter contained helpful information to use in your classroom?

Yes _____ No _____ Somewhat _____

Would you recommend this publication to another teacher?

Yes _____ No _____

Please offer any suggestions for improvement

Please return to DSAGC 644 Linn St #1128 Cincinnati, OH 45203



Teacher Workshop

Next workshop will be held in the fall, 2008.

Please contact DSAGC for more information.

513-761-5400

