

Inclusion

Inclusion is defined as “a sense of belonging.” In order to have inclusion, three opportunities must be provided.

1. Each person needs to be able to **introduce himself/herself**, not just by stating his/her name but by offering a short description of his/her feelings, interests, resources, talents, or special qualities.
2. Each person needs to be able to **express his/her hopes or expectations** for what will happen during the group's time together.
3. Each person needs to **be acknowledged** as having been heard, appreciated, and welcomed.

Inclusion is a basic human need; and, unless it is met, people feel vulnerable and defensive. Time spent up front building inclusion and trust is the most valuable commitment a group can make. Two examples of ways to promote inclusionary practices are Great Expectations and TRIBES. An example of the TRIBES model follows:

TRIBES

The philosophy and concepts urging a focus on the full range of child and youth development (intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual) provide a foundation for the process of TRIBES. Recognizing that human development and learning are influenced by the ecology and interaction of the many systems in children's lives (family, school, peers, and community groups), a shared mission and goal statement is used throughout TRIBES schools (Gibbs, 2000).

THE PURPOSE OF TRIBES IS: to assure the healthy development of every child so that each has the knowledge, competency, and resilience to be successful in a rapidly changing world (Gibbs, 2001).

THE GOAL OF A TRIBES SCHOOL IS: to engage all teachers, administrators, students, and families in working together as a learning community that is dedicated to caring and support, active participation, and positive expectations for all students (Gibbs, 2001).

ENTRY/FOCUS ACTIVITY

An Entry/Focus Activity is a brief opening exercise to build inclusion in the classroom.

THE PURPOSE OF AN ENTRY/FOCUS ACTIVITY IS: to create the learning climate that will prevail the rest of the class period. Teachers should foster an atmosphere of inclusion and belonging that creates a positive learning environment for every member in the class. Students will feel valued and recognized as important contributors to the class community.

Framework

- Greeting The teacher will personally greet students as they enter.
- Thinking Activity Students begin to do an open-ended critical thinking activity.
- Sharing Students and teacher discuss the activity and share ideas.
- Appreciating Recognition and appreciations are given.
- Closing Teacher closes the session, reviews the agenda.