

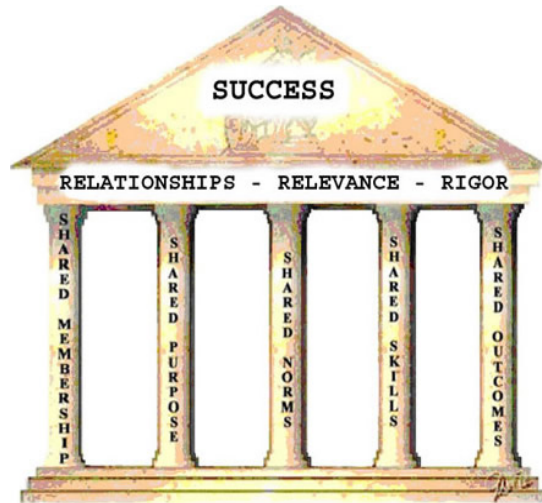
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 1



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Marilyn Ludke and Marla Varner

Marilyn came up with the idea to simplify the getting to know you game Group Bingo for the 2nd graders. The boxes are blank and the kids are to just get other people's signatures trying to fill all the boxes. Marla added the direction to introduce yourself and politely ask for the other person's signature. Way to go ladies!

Given to the staff member who made an outstanding **LEARNING COMMUNITIES** contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Today's Focus

:

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOUs

DEINHIBITIZERS

TRUST ACTIVITIES

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

- Try "**Group Bingo**" for the little ones as described above.
- "**Categories**" gets students moving and helps them see that we all have things in common. Start with safe categories for the students like eye color. If you have blue eyes, go to that corner. If you have brown eyes, go to that other corner, etc. (JTTCC page 47)
- "**Name Toss**" is a low risk game that helps students (and you) learn each other's names. Students stand in a circle and toss a soft object to someone else in the circle saying "Hello _____, my name is _____."
- **Paired Activities** gives individual students a chance to learn about each other. The class is arranged into two circles one inside the other. The students in the inside circle face outward while the students in the outside circle face inward. The students are aligned so that each person in one circle is facing one person in the other circle. The person you face is your first partner. You can have students share simple things like their favorite color or use ideas found on pages 40-45 in JTTCC.

Remember to use Matt as a resource. I have ropes, and other equipment as well as lots of books and all kinds of stuff in my head. I would love to help in your classroom too.

JTTCC = "Journey Toward the Caring Classroom"

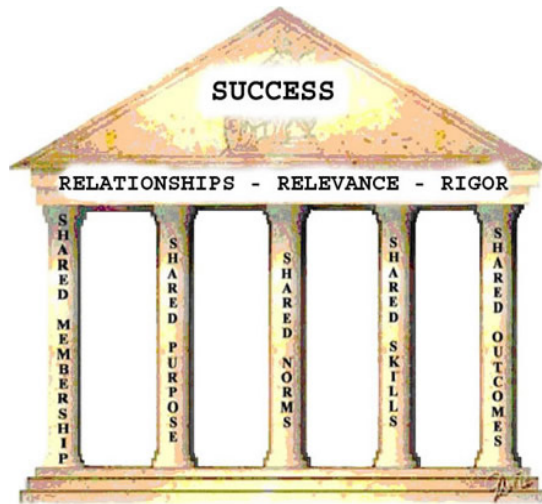
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 2



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Becky Balkan

For the groovy and very colorful "Code of Conduct" person in her classroom made up of the body parts of all of her students.

(Not the real body parts she traced them on paper - just in case you were wondering)

Given to the staff member with who made an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Today's Focus

:

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOUS

DEINHIBITIZERS

TRUST ACTIVITIES

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

- "Silent Line-Up" is a good warm-up that can show you some things about how your class functions as a group. Students are asked not to speak during the activity. They are asked to line themselves up and a line according to some criteria like alphabetically by first name, or harder, by middle name, or harder yet, by exact age, etc. This activity can lead to some good debriefs about communication, cooperation, and impulse control.
- "Everybody's It" is my favorite warm-up of all time. Works best outside or in the gym, but I also do the walking version in the classroom. Simple rules. When I say "What's the name of the Game?" the students all yell "Everybody's it!" and the game begins. Everyone is "it" so anyone can tag anyone else. If you are tagged you must freeze until the game is over. Any time you want to start again just yell "What's the name of the Game?" Be sure to review safe tag rules like two finger touch only and tag below the neck. Debriefs often include discussions about fairness and cheating as well as understanding the game is always very short so patiently staying frozen is good practice for the wiggly ones.

JTTCC = "Journey Toward the Caring Classroom"

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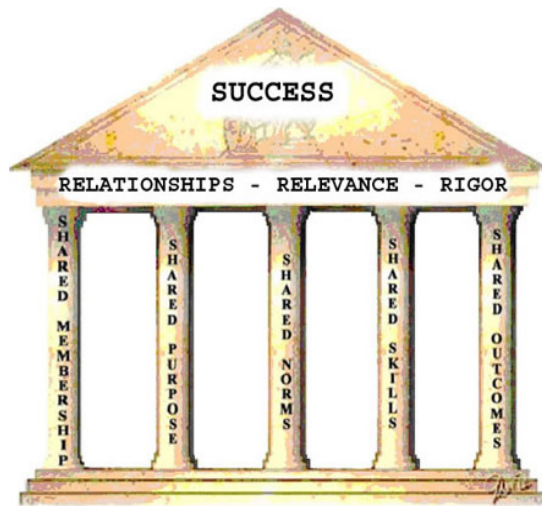
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 3



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Vince Riccobene

For coming up with the cougar logo you see to the left.

Given to the staff member with who made an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

Today's Focus : WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOUS

Today's Focus : DEINHIBITIZERS

TRUST ACTIVITIES

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

ACTIVITY IDEAS

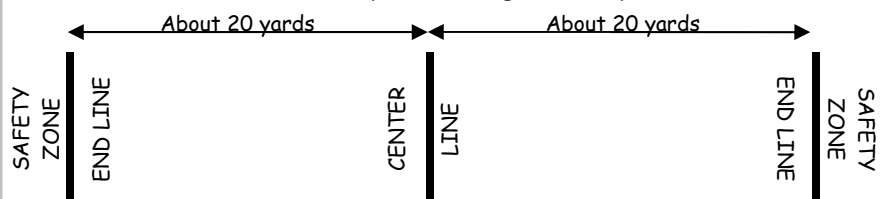
"Bear, Salmon, Mosquito" is a fun game that can be used as a warm-up and deinhbitizer and later in the sequence it can make a good group problem-solving activity if framed correctly. The play area should be fairly large with 2 end lines and a dividing line in the middle (use a basketball court or some ropes/cones to make lines). This is a large version of Rock, Paper, Scissors. Teach the students to make the 3 different animals with their bodies.

- Bear: hands up high growling.
- Salmon: hands in front at waste height palms and fingers flat together making swimming motion.
- Mosquito: one hand in front of nose with index finger pointing out and making buzzing noise.

This game is like a food cycle. Bears eat (chase and tag) salmon, salmon eat (chase and tag) mosquitoes, and mosquitoes eat (chase and tag) bears. Divide students in half (that means two groups, please don't cut any students in half-safety first!). Each group must decide which of the 3 animals the entire group will be. Once they settle on an animal, the group is to line up facing the other group lined up about 2 feet from the center line. You say 1, 2, 3, GO! The students make their respective animals while looking at the opposing group. When they see the other group, they determine whether they are to eat (chase and tag) the other group or if the other group is to eat (chase and tag) them. The goal is for each group to win members from the other group. Students that are tagged before reaching the end line behind them must join the opposing team.

Suggested Debriefing/Reflection Questions:

- What did we do well in playing this game?
- What would make this game go more smoothly?
- What was the hardest part of the game? Why?



Remember to use Matt as a resource. I have ropes, and other equipment as well as lots of books and all kinds of stuff in my head. I would love to help in your classroom too.

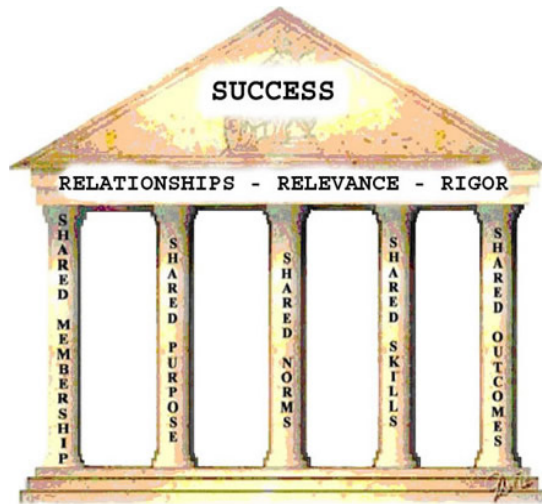
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 4



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD

GOES TO:

Olivia Shea

For taking on the challenge of creating a new learning community several weeks into the school year.

Honorable Mention to the Fifth Grade Team for the support they are providing Olivia in the challenge

Given to the staff member with who made an outstanding **LEARNING COMMUNITIES** contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Today's Focus

:

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOUs

DEINHIBITIZERS

TRUST ACTIVITIES

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

Please remember that "Challenge by Choice" should be part of any classroom norms, code of conduct, Full Value Contract, etc.

"Challenge by Choice" is a concept that involves students deciding on their own, without teacher or peer pressure to take on a challenge. Learning is deepened, because the student is in control of his/her learning. It is a concept that, when used with skill, can empower a learner to choose a level of challenge that makes for optimum learning.

In order to feel safe in a community, a person must have control over what she or he will and will not do. At some times it is appropriate to say no, even in the face of acute peer pressure. This is especially necessary when participants are asked to take risks.

Sometimes we ask students to do things they are not ready to do. We need to give them the opportunity to not completely opt out, but to participate in a way that is most appropriate for them.

(Adapted from JTTCC)

See pages 28 and 29 of JTTCC for a more thorough explanation.

JTTCC = "Journey Toward the Caring Classroom"

Remember to use Matt as a resource. I have ropes, and other equipment as well as lots of books and all kinds of stuff in my head. I would love to help in your classroom too.

“Ball Toss” (adapted from *Activities That Teach* by Tom Jackson)

Processing/Debriefing Questions:

- How did it feel when you were trying to get it in the bucket without seeing it?
- How can the blind throw be compared to not having any goals?
- Are goals important? Why or why not?
- How did you feel when you were trying to hit the bucket at 35-40 feet?
- How did you feel when you were trying to hit the bucket at 20 feet?
- How did you feel when you were trying to hit the bucket at 2 feet?
- How was it different when someone was moving the bucket to help you make it in?
- How did it feel when you were the person moving the bucket?
- Should you set goals that are really difficult to reach? Explain.
- What are some examples of goals that are difficult to reach?
- Should you set goals that are easy to reach? Explain.
- What are some examples of goals that are easy to reach?
- What are some ways that people can help you reach your goals?
- What happens when other people set goals for you to accomplish rather than you setting your own goals?

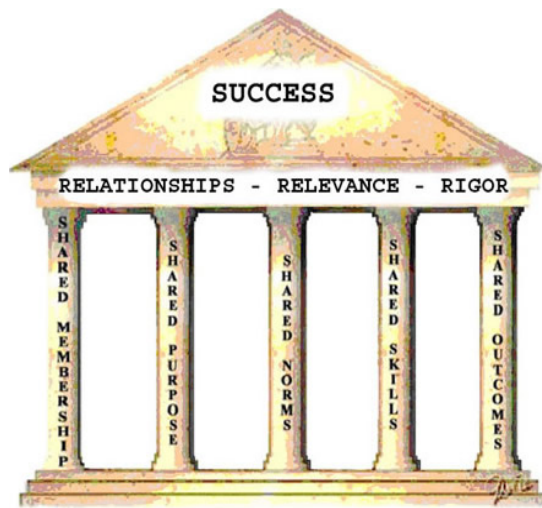
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 5



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

**Pat Davis
and
Stephanie Grotzke**

For providing technical assistance, advice, and, most importantly, guidance in color selection in the development of the LC newsletter binder you will soon see in the staff room.

Given to the staff member with who made an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Today's
Focus

:

WARM-UPS/GET TO
KNOW YOURS

DEINHIBITIZERS

TRUST ACTIVITIES

GROUP PROBLEM-
SOLVING

"Speed Rabbit" is one of my favorite deinhbitizers. It's a relatively easy way to get just about anybody going and help them loosen up a bit with the group. Works well with any age group.

The Game:

Put kids in circle. Have all make rabbit ears by putting hands on either side of head and pointing index fingers up. Tell them that they are to do this whenever you point at them and say "rabbit." Have all tap one foot on the ground. Explain that this is a rabbit's foot. Whenever you point to a student and say "rabbit," that student is to make the rabbit ears, and the students on either side are to immediately put a hand on the rabbit ear person's shoulder and tap their outside foot on the ground. This way it takes 3 people to make a rabbit. Have a group of 3 demonstrate. Explain that when you point at anyone in the circle and say "rabbit," that person and the 2 on either side of her/him must make a rabbit before you count to 10. If one of the 3 does not do her/his part before you get to 10, you take that person's place in the circle, and she/he is stuck in the middle to do the pointing. They have to really pay attention or they will get caught. As the group gets better at making the rabbit, add more animals to increase the challenge and create more good deinhbitizing silliness.

Possible debriefing questions:

- What was the most important thing in this activity?
- What did it feel like when you got caught not paying attention?
- What did it feel like when you were pointed at?
- What did you learn that you can apply when your teacher is teaching?

More details on pages 59-61 of JTTCC

JTTCC = "Journey Toward the Caring Classroom"

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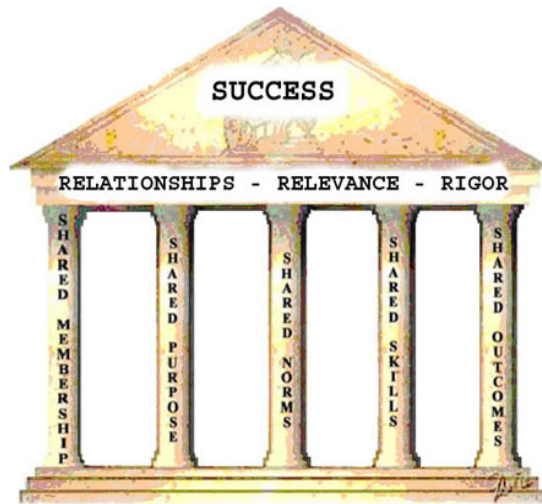
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 6



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Billy Reamer

For wisely suggesting that we develop a system where specialists receive all classroom FVC's in some organized fashion (more details on this later) so they can use them and reinforce them with the students.

Given to the staff member with who made an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Today's Focus

:

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOUs

DEINHIBITIZERS

TRUST ACTIVITIES

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

There are many ways to develop **Classroom Norms**, a **Full Value Contract (FVC)**, a **Code of Conduct**, or whatever you want to call your agreement among the members of your classroom learning community.

The key is to have all of the members participate in the development of the product so there is buy-in on the part of everyone (another one of those Challenge by Choice things), and all feel comfortable appropriately holding each other accountable to the agreement.

One of my favorite ways to develop the agreement is to have the kids brainstorm a list of characteristics of the ideal friend. Then guide them through a process of narrowing the list to five to seven things. **Safety and Challenge by Choice are non-negotiable and must always be part of the agreement.**

Remember I am happy to come into your classroom and help develop an FVC.

More info on FVC:

- can be found in JTTCC pages 28
- FVC as an activity processing tool on page 239
- FVC activities pages 81-90

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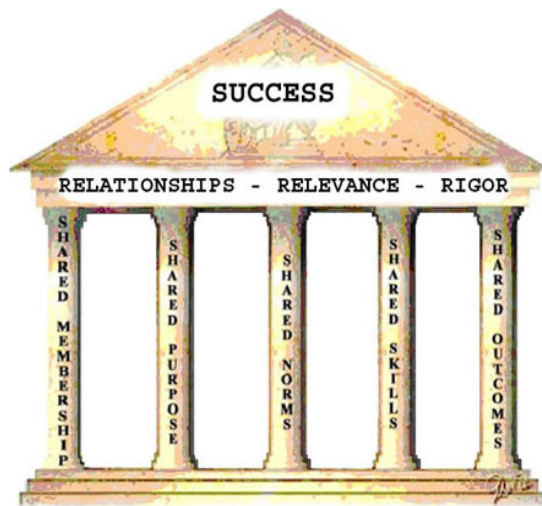
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 7



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Claire Hallinan

Check out the life-size people her kids created on the walls with the nice things written in them in her room.

Given to the staff member with who made an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Today's Focus

:

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOUs

DEINHIBITIZERS

TRUST ACTIVITIES

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

"Morphing" is a fun deinhbitizer that works well with a whole classroom. It can be a fun way to introduce, review, or remember a sequence.

Rules Adapted from JTTCC - more details on pages 56-57
Start by making sure all of your students know how to play "Rock, Paper, Scissors." Demonstrate the motions:

- Egg - squatting down
- Chicken - hands in armpits squawking
- Dinosaur - arms up, making roaring noises
- Superhero - flying through the air
- Know-it-all - arms crossed looking smug

The object is to get as high up the chain as possible.

All students begin as an egg. Everyone finds another egg and plays "Rock, Paper, Scissors." The winner gets to move up a level in the chain to chicken. Chickens find other chickens to play "Rock, Paper, Scissors" with the winner moving up to dinosaur and the loser moving down to egg. When someone makes it to know-it-all they stand outside the group arms crossed looking smug. Provide a time limit like 2 minutes.

Possible debriefing/processing questions:

How did you like acting like a ____?

How do you feel about where you ended up?

Did everyone move up or down the chain according to the rules?

Why do you think they chose to follow the rules or not follow the rules?

Modification: make up your own, or have the kids make up their own chain to help them learn or remember a sequence you are teaching.

JTTCC = "Journey Toward the Caring Classroom"

Remember to use Matt as a resource. I have ropes, and other equipment as well as lots of books and all kinds of stuff in my head. I would love to help in your classroom too.

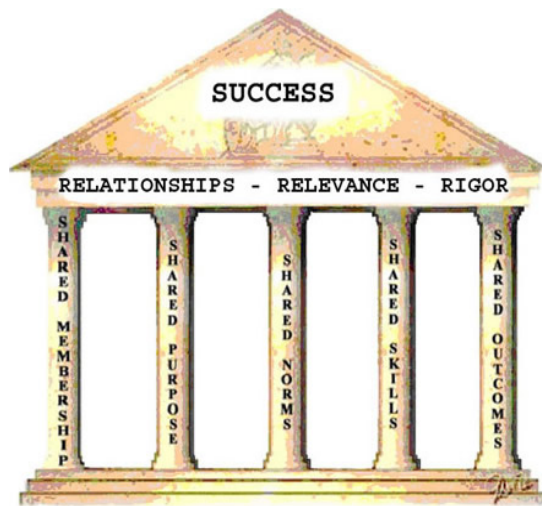
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Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 8



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Cheryl D'Labbe

You gotta see the ceiling in her room. The kids are all up there along with their individual commitments and the class code of conduct. Looks pretty cool.

Given to the staff member with who made an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOUs

After warming up, getting to know each other and doing some deinhbitizing, your students should be ready for some work on building trust within the group. **When the group trusts each other, the individual willingness to take academic risks and the ability of the group members to work together goes way up!**

DEINHIBITIZERS

There are many activities you can try with your class to build **trust outlined on pages 97 to 128 in JTTCC**. Trust activities often rely on perceived rather than actual risk.

Today's Focus

:

TRUST ACTIVITIES

I have found that activities that create a perceived physical risk are the fastest and strongest way to develop trust among a group. These types of activities need to set up and monitored very carefully in order to keep everyone safe both physically and emotionally.

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

When you feel your class is ready for this trust building step, please let me know and I will come in and help you do a trust sequence with them.

JTTCC = "Journey Toward the Caring Classroom"

Remember to use Matt as a resource. I have ropes, and other equipment as well as lots of books and all kinds of stuff in my head. I would love to help in your classroom too.

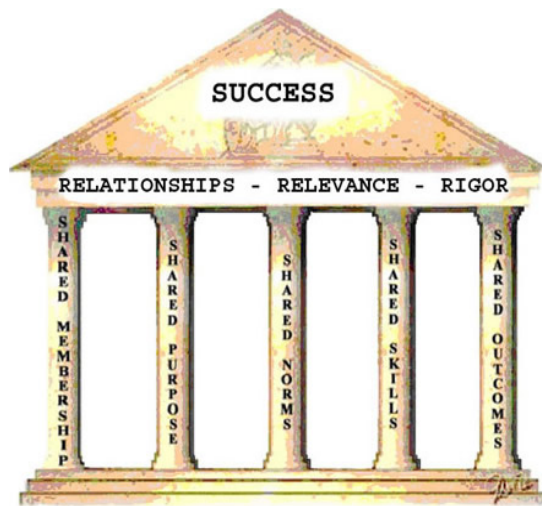
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 9



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Sharle Osborne

Check out the nice bulletin board outside her room with student self-portraits and affirmations.

Given to the staff member with who made an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOURS

Remember, any of the activity types to the left can be integrated into your curriculum with some creativity and don't need to be "just another thing" you need to cram into your day. When you get your group to the point that they are ready to do **group problem-solving activities**, these types of activities especially **lend themselves to curriculum integration**.

DEINHIBITIZERS

A good example is the "**Balloon Frantic**" activity (JTTCC pages 163-164) demonstrated very briefly in our staff meeting this morning. This one fun activity can be used to teach a number of different concepts (it's all in the way you frame it and debrief it):

TRUST ACTIVITIES

- Goal setting
- Prioritizing
- Cooperation
- Decision making
- Conflict resolution
- Teaching the concept of using **metaphors**
- Population density and sustainability
- Any topic having to do with there being too much of something to manage without making plans and choices

Today's Focus

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

JTTCC = "Journey Toward the Caring Classroom"

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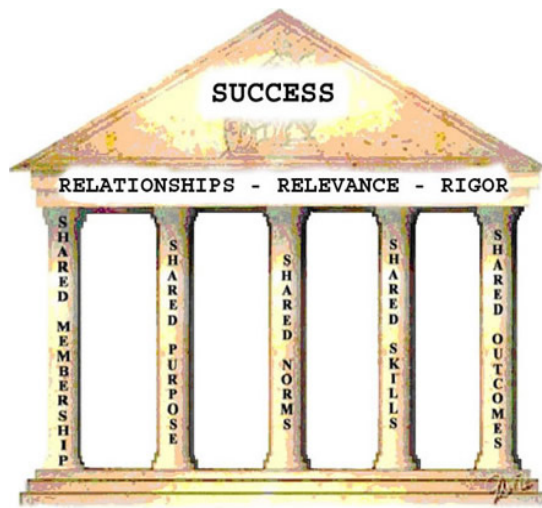
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 10



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Chris MacDougall-Danielson

Chris tells me that she played "Everybody's It" (see LC Newsletter #2) and found it to be a good way to work with her students on cheating (actually *not* cheating) and being fair.

Given to the staff member with who made an outstanding **LEARNING COMMUNITIES** contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOUs

DEINHIBITIZERS

Today's Focus :

TRUST ACTIVITIES

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

A **"Sherpa Walk"** is a trust activity that works with all ages. This can be done with no materials, "buddy ropes," (short pieces of rope students hold rather than holding hands) or a long rope. For most classes I recommend a long rope.

Have the students line up. Choose one or two people to be guides. One guide is at the beginning of the line, and if you use a second guide, that one is at the end of the line. The lined up students may hold hands, put hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them, use buddy ropes, or all hold on to a long rope. Once lined up and connected, have students (other than the guides) close their eyes. Guides lead the line according to your direction or they may determine the course themselves. No one speaks including you. You act as spotter for safety.

Possible debriefing/processing questions:

- Were you able to keep your eyes closed?
- What caused you to open your eyes?
- What would it take to make it so you can keep your eyes closed?
- How much did you rely on those around you?
- How can you rely on your classmates during ____?

[More detail on pages 111-112 in JTTCC.](#)

JTTCC = "Journey Toward the Caring Classroom"

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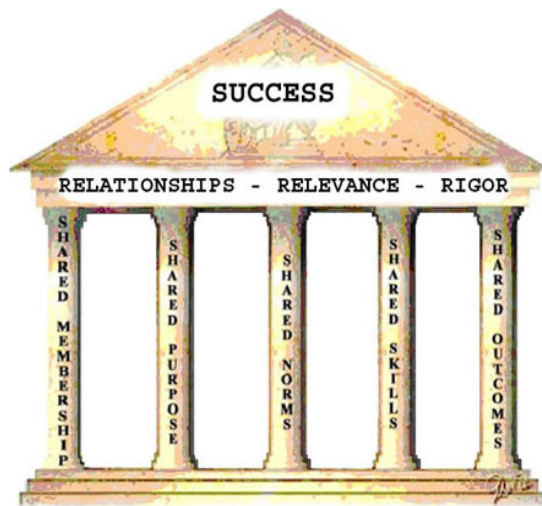
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 11



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Given to the staff member with who made an outstanding **LEARNING COMMUNITIES** contribution

Most of the fourth grade team (**Sharle, Cheryl, and Pam**) and fill in team member **Billy**, for choosing to take the challenge and demonstrate a much abbreviated version of Balloon Frantic for the staff.

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOUs

DEINHIBITIZERS

Today's Focus :

TRUST ACTIVITIES

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

"Shakers" is a fun activity for trust building, **listening** and learning about echolocation (could be a cool science activity Dave).

Choose one student to be the "bat" and one to be the "moth." Have the rest of the students form a circle. All students in the circle are spotters. Give the bat and moth each a noise maker and have them stand inside the circle. Give the bat something soft to use to tag the moth. The bat and the moth are to close their eyes. The object is for the bat to tag the moth using echolocation. The bat shakes its noise maker and the moth must in response shake its noise maker. Give the moth about a minute to catch the moth then let them choose people from the circle to take their places. The spotters are to keep the bat and moth safely inside the circle.

Possible debriefing/processing questions:

- Did you feel safe and comfortable with the spotters? Why/why not?
- What strategies did you use?
- What did you do as a spotter to keep people safe?
- Was it hard to keep you eyes shut? Why/why not?

More detail on page 104 in JTTCC

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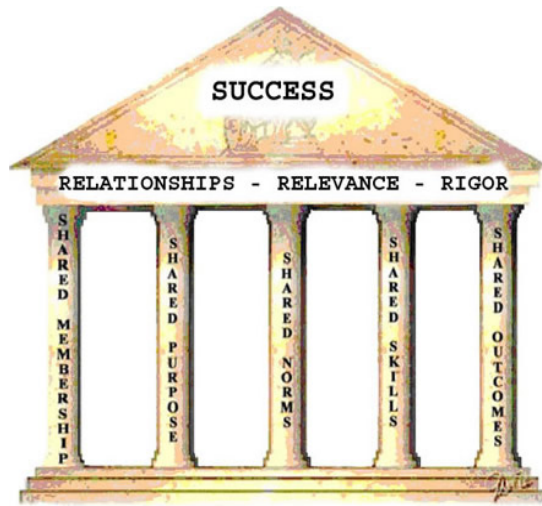
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 12



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Becky Balkan

For using learning communities stuff to make Dave Hasenpflug's day go better in the science room with the fourth graders last week.

Given to the staff member who made an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOUs

DEINHIBITIZERS

Today's Focus :

TRUST ACTIVITIES

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

"Airport" is a trust activity that you can do with any age in the classroom.

Set up

In a clear area of the room have students form two lines standing side by side with the two lines facing each other about 8 feet apart. The space between the lines is the "runway." Place objects in the runway.

Procedure

Choose one person to be the "pilot" and one to be the "air traffic controller." They stand on either end of the runway. The pilot closes her/his eyes. The job of the air traffic controller is to guide the pilot safely down the runway without touching any objects or people lining the runway. Everyone who wants to try being the pilot and air traffic controller should be given a chance (Challenge by Choice).

Possible processing/debriefing questions:

How did it feel to be the pilot/air traffic controller?

Did the air traffic controller care about keeping the pilot safe?

What did you learn about communicating with the pilot?

Is there another time in class you might need to communicate this way?

More detail in JTTCC on page 118-119

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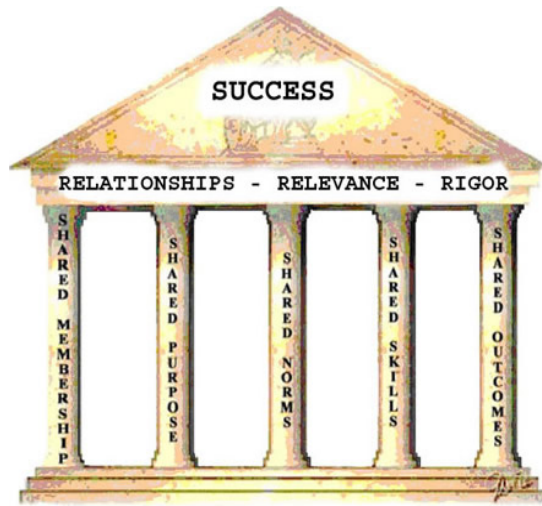
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 13



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Marla Varner's Class

For being a real community, pulling together and as a group, without prompting, helped one student learn everyone's name

Given to the staff member who made an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOUs

"Warp Speed" is a fun way to work on understanding goal setting and on group problem solving or working together as a group. I like to use it for grades four and up. The instructions are on pages 160-161 in JTTCC.

Matt's Additions:

- I like to use Kush Balls for this activity (I have some you can borrow if you wish), because they are easy to catch.
- The JTTCC directions use one ball. I like add two more as things progress to increase the interest and participation level.
- Using a stopwatch that measures to the hundredth of a second is also an important addition - after all, world records are measured in hundredths of a second

DEINHIBITIZERS

Framing/Processing:

I have students set time goals for the group and explain their reasoning behind the goals. This gets them thinking about what factors go into appropriate goal setting. As the activity is repeated there are opportunities to talk about assessing and adjusting goals. There are also opportunities to talk about how we can help each other with our individual goals and how that in turn can be helpful to the entire group. In the end I ask the kids how this relates to or is similar to choosing an academic goal (like number of AR points for the year). This activity provides opportunities to address the many aspects of working together in a group, but there is not enough space to go into that here. I would be glad to come and demonstrate this with your class.

TRUST ACTIVITIES

Today's Focus

:

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

JTTCC = "Journey Toward the Caring Classroom"

Remember to use Matt as a resource. I have ropes, and other equipment as well as lots of books and all kinds of stuff in my head. I would love to help in your classroom too.

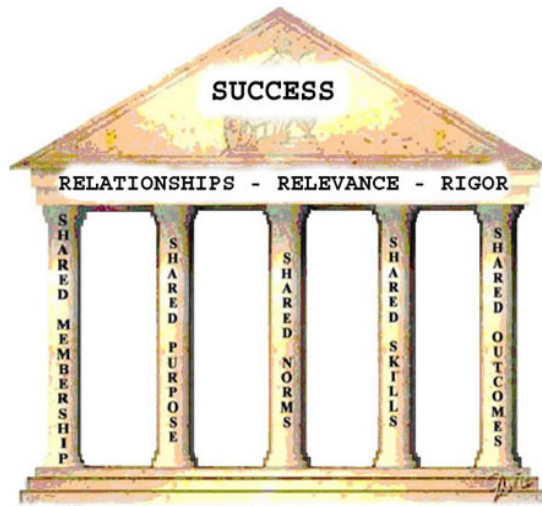
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 14



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Stephanie Grotzke

For taking the time to assemble a group sorting activity for up to 60 people using film canisters and 15 different sounds that were used for the sped para meeting this week. We will hopefully all get to take advantage of these materials here at Haller in the future

Given to the staff member who made an outstanding **LEARNING COMMUNITIES** contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOUs

"Cylinder Stacking" (the activity that we did in the staff meeting Monday) can be used for a variety of purposes. *It depends on how you frame it and how you debrief it.*

DEINHIBITIZERS

Foundation skills and sequences

We used it Monday to demonstrate the importance of earlier grade levels laying the foundation skills (in this case for teaching writing) needed so that the following grade levels can do their jobs most effectively. In much the same way, the activity can be used to show students how the sequence in which things are done is important. The earlier skills (knowing your multiplication facts) can make the following tasks (division) possible and easier.

TRUST ACTIVITIES

Working together and interdependence

The activity can also show how important interdependence can be. If we had more time Monday, some of the groups, that were not able to complete the task, would have eventually realized that if they worked together with other groups, lending and borrowing materials, they would have been able to complete the task.

This can lend itself to understanding concepts in a variety of subject areas (especially social studies) as well as just plain learning to work with others.

Today's Focus

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

There are tons of other ways to frame the activity and to use the cylinders in other ways for other purposes (like the above mentioned group sorting and other group building activities). I would be glad to lend you cylinders and help with the framing.

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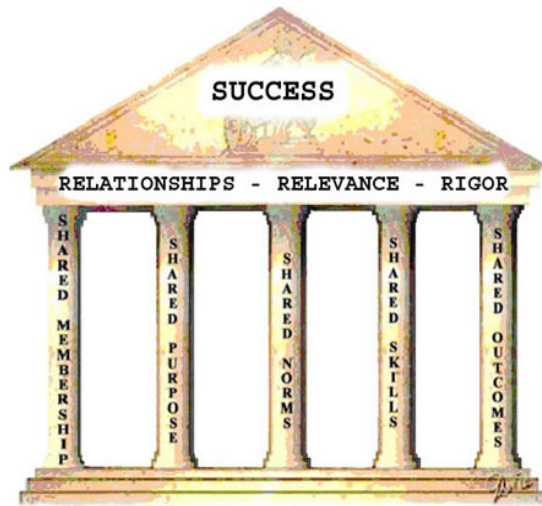
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 15



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Billy Reamer

For recommending that this newsletter be put directly into an e-mail rather than sent as an attachment because many people don't know how to, or just plain don't, read attachments.

Thanks for the enlightenment Billy.

Given for an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOUs

DEINHIBITIZERS

TRUST ACTIVITIES

Today's Focus :

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING/GOAL SETTING

"Ball Toss" (adapted from *Activities That Teach* by Tom Jackson) is a fun activity used for teaching goal setting.

Students are divided into groups of about 4 and given a piece of paper, pencil, and 3 balls. Buckets are set before each group and the groups are told that each person is to throw the balls into their group's bucket. They receive 1 point if they hit the bucket, 3 points if the ball goes into the bucket but bounces out, and 5 points if the ball goes into the bucket and stays. For the first round set the buckets 10 feet from the group and have the throwers keep their eyes shut. **Debrief** by discussing that if you don't have any goals, you won't know which direction you are heading or how to get there. Blindly throwing the balls shows how hard it is to hit a goal you can't see or haven't set.

Have the students do several more rounds with eyes open moving the buckets to a different distance from the groups each round varying from 2 feet away to so far away that they can't hit the target. On the last round have one student in each group hold the bucket helping to try to get the balls to land in it.

Processing/Debrief:

- Re-emphasize how the blind tossing shows how hard it is to reach a goal if you don't have one.
- Discuss how the far bucket is so difficult that the goal is rarely, if ever, reached.
- Discuss how the bucket 2 feet away is not much of a challenge.
- Discuss how the medium distance was about right and why.
- Discuss how having the help of the person holding the bucket in the last round made it easier to reach the goal.
- Finish by tying this learning to classroom goals.

If you would like more a list of specific debriefing questions, let me know.

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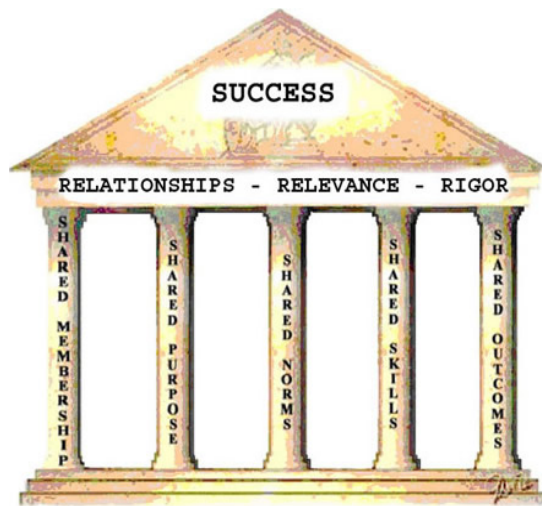
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 16



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Sarah and Shelby
from Ms. Balkan's Class

For making up a learning game for the kindergarteners in Miss Grotzke's learning community, making the equipment and then facilitating the game with the kindergarteners

Given for an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOURS

"Questioning for learning" is something that I will gladly demonstrate in your room. I would also be glad to help you develop questions for academic and other learning activities. Experiencing a learning activity, whether it is academic, physical, or social/community building) can, in and of itself, be valuable. However, when we **skillfully question/debrief** and help students process the activity, the greatest benefit is achieved. **Careful questioning helps us assess understanding and guide our adjustments to instruction**, and brings greater understanding and better future generalization of concepts. Learning how to do this effectively can be one of the most difficult things for educators to learn. This is nothing that you don't already know, but you may not be aware of a simple (but powerful with practice) method of questioning, commonly used by experiential and adventure educators called:

DEINHIBITIZERS

"What? So What? Now What?"

This method involves a progression of low risk (to help students get started) to greater risk (to push the edge and really learn and generalize) questions generating class discussion.

TRUST ACTIVITIES

I will very briefly explain the concept here (a more in depth description can be found in JTTCC pgs 237-43):

- **What?** - low risk - ask students to just state the observable facts, once they are talking about the experience you can move to the - *did they see and hear what I wanted them to see and hear?*
- **So What?** - more risk - why did things happen the way they did, what was the meaning of this, then comes the leap into the - *do they really understand the concepts taught?*
- **Now What?** - greater risk - what does this mean for the future, how are you going to use what you have learned

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

JTTCC = "Journey Toward the Caring Classroom"

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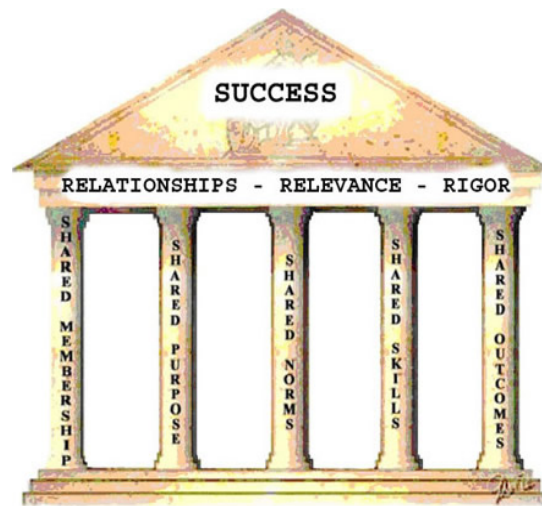
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 17



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Eric Danielson

For creating classroom community that encourages students with greater math skills to respectfully help teach those who need help with math skills within the classroom

Given for an outstanding LEARNING
COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Sequencing Activities for Greatest Effectiveness

As with anything we teach, activities used to develop classroom community must be presented in the correct sequence in order for effective learning to take place. Gotta learn how to count before you can multiply. Students are not ready to work together and solve complex group problems without a series of activities preparing them to do so. Here is how you get them to that point:

Activities should be sequenced in this order *:

1. Warm-ups and get-to-know-you activities
2. Deinhbitizer activities
3. Trust building activities
4. Group problem-solving activities

* The sequence pace and types of activities are continually framed, debriefed and adjusted using the "Do, Reflect, Apply" and "GRABBS" methods as well as understanding **Group Stages**.

*Knowing when to move from one step to the next within a sequence is important, and can be tricky. The next Learning Communities Newsletter will address **Group Stages**.*

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Today's
Focus

Group
Development
and
Sequencing

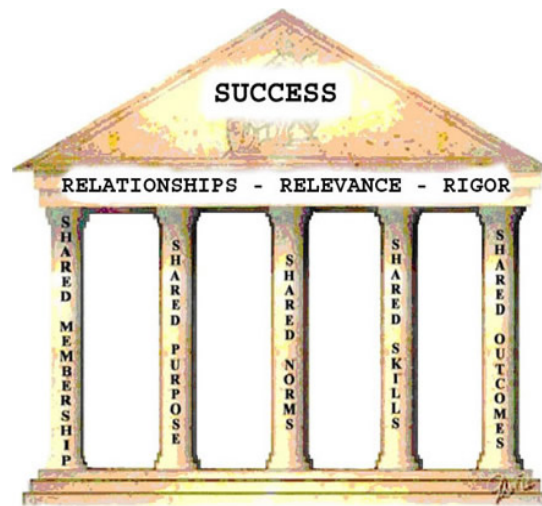
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 18



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Rachel Oden

Her class has written class affirmations that will be posted with self-portraits. They have also written whole class goals to support each other in achieving.

"They really like each other."

Given for an outstanding LEARNING
COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Considering the **stage of a group** is important when determining what activity should be presented in your sequence. The following table describes the stages a group typically goes through as it develops according to Bruce Tuckman:

Phase:	Forming	Storming	Norming	Performing
	Group Formation	Group Challenge	Group Support	Group Achievement

We can create an environment that encourages movement through the stages to move the group along toward greater achievement. All groups will go through these stages on their way to truly working well together; however, it can be difficult to recognize stages at times.

Today's Focus :

Forming is the stage when groups first come together. There is a general feeling of anxiety. Students wonder if they will be accepted. People are generally polite and unwilling to take risks. This is the time for get to know you and deinhbitizer activities eventually working into trust activities.

Group Development and Sequencing

Storming happens once the students know each other, have developed trust, and feel safe to take risks. Conflicts will arise as interactions become more complex, and differences in style, opinion and perspective become evident. Conflicts are evidence that a group is moving along. Group problem solving activities help students enter and work through this stage. Class meetings can be useful here as well.

Norming is when the class has developed common ground, goals, and developing norms for behavior. Norms will be developed whether the group actually thinks about them or not. This is a good time to revisit the full value contract and challenge by choice concept while *guiding the class into developing healthy norms* as they learn what it really means to be part of the class.

Performing happens once the students have practiced ways of working together and have arrived at a mutual understanding of what it means to be part or the class. They begin to work as a cohesive unit, people truly care about each other and will be much more comfortable taking learning risks!

JTTC = "Journey Toward the Caring Classroom"

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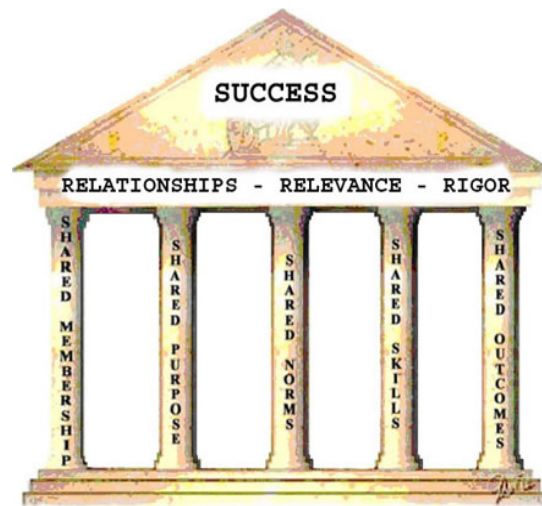
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 19



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Billy Reamer

For thinking of an innovative learning communities activity for the Winter Gala

Given for an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

We all know that being in the right place at the right time can be a great advantage in a number of ways. The “GRABBS Modality Check List” is a method that can be used to constantly monitor a group so that we can adjust our instruction to create that right time and place for learning. We might have the perfect sequence of learning activities mapped out, but if it does not meet the current needs of the students, it will not be effective. GRABBS can help us make the appropriate adjustments to our sequence and activities to meet current needs.

Goals	How does the activity relate to the group and individual goals that have been set?
Readiness	This regards levels of instruction (skills) and safety capabilities. Is the group ready to do the activity? Will they endanger themselves and others? Do they have the ability to attempt or complete?
Affect	What is the feeling of the group? What kinds of sensations are they having? What is the level of empathy or caring in the group?
Behavior	How is the group acting? Are they resistive? Disruptive? Agreeable? Are they more self involved, or group involved? Are there any interactions that are affecting the group, both positive and negative? How cooperative are they?
Body	What kind of physical shape are they in? How tired are they? Are they on medication? How do they see their own bodies?
Stage	Which developmental stage is the group at? Groups will go through levels of functioning. Having a schema to describe these levels will provide you with another means of assessment.

Source: Islands of Healing, 1988.

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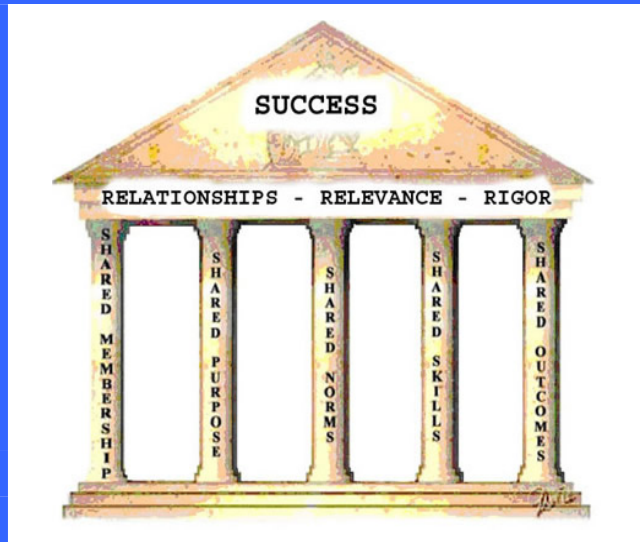
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 20



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Vince Riccobene

For being supportive of the
learning
communities/adventure
education concept and finding
money in the budget for the
plan below

Given for an outstanding LEARNING
COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Learning Communities is about experiential education. When we train people to become challenge course facilitators, we take this to heart. Every four to six day training that I have been involved in began with a one to two day participant experience. Trainees got to experience the process as a group member so they would feel what it was like and to experience just how powerful it really can be.

I remember the feeling I had at the end of my very first training. I went from entering a group that included no one that I knew at the beginning of the day to feeling like I had just made a bunch of life long friends with which I could accomplish anything by the end of the day.

I had to know how to facilitate this with my own groups of kids.

I want everyone to have that kind of experience for themselves.

Haller teachers have a chance at that sort of experience.

Part of the Medicaid Match money that we have earned will be used to pay for those of us that want to go to the challenge course at Gibbs Lake for a day. Subs, fees and transportation will be covered for those teachers who wish to go. (Teams are encouraged to go together.) It's an all day experience leaving Haller at 7:45 and returning about 3:00. If you are interested, contact Matt for more details.

IT WILL BE A FUN DAY! I PROMISE!

Gibbs Lake Challenge Course info:

http://jefferson.wsu.edu/index.php?page=challenge_course

Remember to use Matt as a resource. I have ropes, and other equipment as well as lots of books and all kinds of stuff in my head. I would love to help in your classroom too.

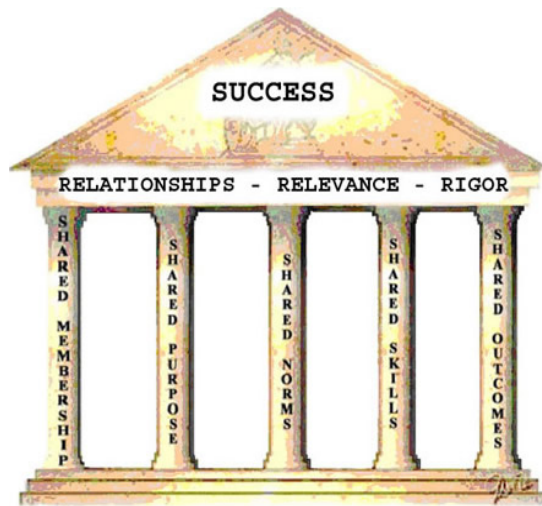
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 21



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Tami Wall

(I know this happened quite a while ago, but it has been a while since I have had a chance to do a newsletter)

For bending over backward volunteering to adjust her math schedule to accommodate the needs of others in her learning community during this time of major building schedule change

Given for an outstanding LEARNING
COMMUNITIES contribution

Vince has approved the content of this newsletter

I have had a number of people come to me during the last couple of weeks expressing great anxiety over the coming day on the challenge course. This makes me think that I have not done an adequate job of explaining the day and the concepts behind it. I have also not done an adequate job of earning your trust. This makes me even more sure that this sort of activity is truly needed. Please let me try to alleviate some fears.

First of all **VINCE WILL NOT BE THERE.**

I have 18 years of experience facilitating thousands of youth and adults, ages 5 to 70, in these sorts of activities. *No one has ever been hurt while I was facilitating.*

VINCE HAS ZERO YEARS OF EXPERIENCE FACILITATING CHALLENGE COURSE ACTIVITIES.

As hard as I have tried to remediate this, he has no real concept about how this is going to go. Please don't listen to him when he jokes about this stuff. There are no "jungle gyms" on the course.

I try to avoid the term "Ropes Course" because it is very misleading. No one will be forced to climb a rope. **VINCE WILL NOT BE THERE.** We will be adhering to the **CHALLENGE BY CHOICE** concept. See Can't Wait Newsletter #4 or JTTCC pages 28-29 for a review of challenge by choice. The plan is to challenge thinking about how to get people to work together. Using a novel setting like a challenge course helps facilitate this process.

VINCE WILL NOT BE THERE. So no one will be forced to leave the ground. No one will be forced to run. My job is to keep you safe, facilitate learning, and create an atmosphere that is FUN. Your job is to just be there for the experience. Did I mention that **VINCE WILL NOT BE THERE?**

Yup, you get to sign a waiver for the administrators and insurance folks. I'm sorry that it looks scary, but it makes those people happy. It's pretty much the same sort of thing you sign if you go on and organized 5K walk for a fund raiser. *Again, no one has ever been hurt on my watch.*

Yup, you get to wear a helmet. Another thing that makes the administrators and insurance folks happy. You even get to pick out the color you like from your choices of **red**, **white**, and **blue**.

Gibbs Lake Challenge Course info:

http://jefferson.wsu.edu/index.php?page=challenge_course

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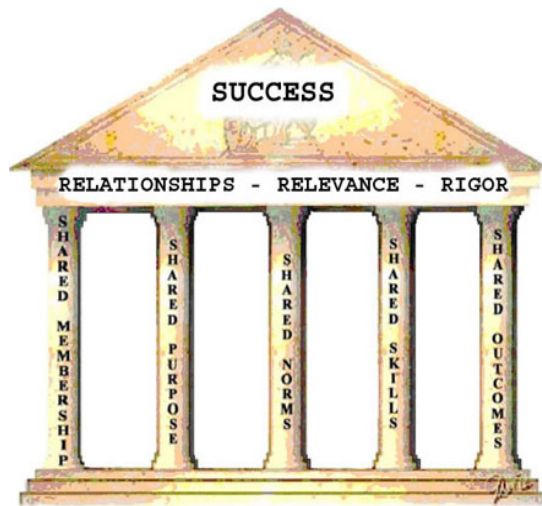
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 22



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Ann Riggs

For coming up with a way to create that important "novel setting" for her class. When her students walked into the classroom after spring break they found a Raccoon Circle on the floor ready for a group building re-entry activity.

Given for an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

Professional Development Opportunity

Announcing three classes

that will be offered to anyone interested in learning how to use the **learning communities concepts in the classroom**. The classes are designed to go beyond the introduction provided by WSU last August, and enable classroom teachers to do a much more effective job than having Matt come in and do occasional or weekly activities. My hope is that the class participants will have the base knowledge and the tools to hit the ground running on day one next fall. Classes will be three hours long so that clock hours can be made available. I am applying for there to be **6 clock hours per class** (3 hours for class participation and an option of an additional 3 hours for work/reading done outside of class). If approved, that will be **18 clock hours total!**

Class 1: Introduction to Learning Communities

Description: This class goes beyond the WSU Learning Communities presentation and the personal challenge course experience. A foundation for understanding how to develop a strong classroom learning community will be laid for the participant. The participant will leave with a stronger understanding of experiential education, academic risk-taking, challenge by choice, full value contract, group and role development in the classroom.

Date/Time: June 2, 2010 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Class 2: Building Successful Learning Communities: The Art of Facilitation in the Classroom

Description: The participant will gain an understanding of the art of facilitation of a group including the use of the adventure wave, group assessment, activity adjustment, activity sequencing, framing (briefing), processing (debriefing), and safety considerations.

Date/Time: June 7, 2010 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Class 3: Integrating Successful Learning Communities into the Classroom Curriculum

Description: Participants will design a learning communities sequence that can be used in their classrooms beginning with the first day of school. Participants will learn to integrate learning communities activities and concepts into current curriculum.

Date/Time: June 9, 2010 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

If you have questions and or want to sign up, you know where to find me.

Remember to use Matt as a resource. I have ropes, and other equipment as well as lots of books and all kinds of stuff in my head. I would love to help in your classroom too.

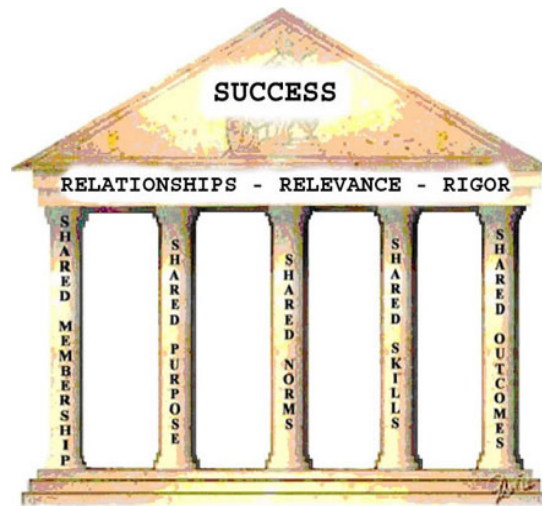
I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning Communities Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow

Volume: 1 Number: 23



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD GOES TO:

Lili Ring

For always being there for our kids, and consistently going the extra mile to help kids be successful in their leaning community.

Given for an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

WARM-UPS/GET TO KNOW YOUs

Integrity Ball is an activity that I facilitated in many of the intermediate classrooms a while back for building trust and learning about integrity. I have adapted my version from *JTTCC*.

Have a short discussion on the definition of "integrity." (*A person of integrity is someone who always tries to do the right thing. Even people of integrity make mistakes, but people of integrity hold themselves accountable by admitting their mistakes, apologizing, and trying to make it right even if no one else saw them doing something wrong.*) I usually then ask people to raise their hands if they want to be a person of integrity.

Directions: Use a soft, throwable ball. Stand in a circle.

DEINHIBITIZERS

Participants throw the ball to others in the circle following these rules:

No one can make a sound, No one may make a bad catch, No one may make a bad throw.

Each individual interprets the rules for him or herself. If an individual feels that he/she broke any of the rules, then he/she is to step back from the circle and kneel down. No one can decide for anyone else, even if they think that person should go out.

If participants want more clarification of the rules, tell them they are to decide how to interpret the rules for themselves.

TRUST ACTIVITIES

After playing for a few minutes, ask the participants to raise a hand if they observed anyone violating a rule.

Processing suggestions:

Ask the participants raise a hand if they felt they personally acted with integrity.

Ask: Without using names, what was the violation you observed anyone not following the rules. Was there a time when you weren't sure if you should pull yourself out or not? What happened? What did you end up doing?

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

Discuss people's interpretation of the rules.

Discuss how following the rules demonstrates integrity.

Play another round.

Use a similar set of processing questions/discussions.

Ask how acting with (or without) integrity affects the classroom.

JTTCC = "Journey Toward the Caring Classroom"

Remember to use Matt as a resource. I have ropes, and other equipment as well as lots of books and all kinds of stuff in my head. I would love to help in your classroom too.

I JUST CAN'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW...

Learning
Communities
Newsletter



Edited by: Matt Duchow
Volume: 1 Number: 24



THE RUBBER CHICKEN AWARD
GOES TO:

Julie Dostie

For making my life (and the lives of many others as well) easier every day by gathering breakfast for Matt's Morning Men and doing other extras to make sure kids have what they need in order to have the best chance to be successful

Given for an outstanding LEARNING COMMUNITIES contribution

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

ACTIVITY IDEAS

WARM-UPs/GET
TO KNOW YOUs

DEINHIBITIZERs

TRUST
ACTIVITIES

GROUP PROBLEM-
SOLVING

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