Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

Structure Classrooms Based on Student Interest/Need

Classroom Quilt
After students have completed their individual quilt squares, they can cooperatively combine them and form a classroom quilt on a wall bulletin board. This quilt will represent both the unique individuals contained in the class and the community of learners the students form when they come together. The teacher can refer back to this quilt throughout the school year to reinforce student collaboration and cooperation, to stress equality and uniqueness, and to remind students how important it is to accept others when working together.

Vacation Time
After students have presented their holiday home videos, they can design posters to represent their vacation/vacation video. This could take many forms such as a photo album, an advertisement for their video, a storyboard that represents something that happened on their trip, etc. Have each group show their poster to the class and briefly explain how it represents their vacation. Hanging these posters around the classroom could serve as a brightening reminder of the fun activity and display the creativity that results from students bringing their ideas together.

It's All About Me
While the students are walking around the room asking and answering questions, the teacher can take pictures of the students interacting. These pictures can be used on a bulletin board or poster that is themed, “Who is in Our Class?” After asking the students what they found out about each other, the teacher can make a list and include facts about students on the display. This sends a message to students that the teacher and school cares about students as individuals and is supportive of the diversity among students. Having this display in the classroom can also remind students that everybody is unique and it is important to respect others' differences.

Classroom Quilt

Objective:
This is an engaging, hands-on method for students to share who they are with both the teacher and classmates. It is a great alternative for students who can more easily express themselves through artistic outlets rather than writing. It allows students more choice in what they disclose and focuses on positive aspects of their lives. The creation of the quilt and its presence in the classroom enables students to display their work and is a constant reminder that they are all individuals who come together to form a community of learners. Choose a piece of colored construction paper that you think best represents who you are as a person.
**What We Will Need:**

1) Construction Paper
2) Markers

**Activity:**

- Divide the paper into four sections, and in each square draw a picture to represent the following:
  1) Something that is unique about you.
  2) Something you've done in your life that you're proud of.
  3) Something you really want to do or accomplish in your lifetime.
  4) Something you're good at.
- After drawing your quilt square, write a short reflection that explains each of your pictures and why the color of the paper you chose is representative of who you are.
- You will turn the reflection in, but the squares will be put on the bulletin board to form a quilt made up of all class members.

[Image: www.kusd.edu/schools/jeffery/classroom_projects/rover/rov_images/rov_quilt.gif]
**Objective:**
This activity gets students to circulate around the room and is a great way to learn new things about the class. It helps the teacher and the students familiarize names and faces with interesting facts about the student. This activity will help the students see themselves as unique in a classroom filled with many faces.

**What We Will Need:**
1) Sheets of Paper
2) Ball point pens or pencils.
3) A few suggestions for questions.

**Activity:**
- Give each person in your group a sheet of paper and a pen.
- Ask them to put down a maximum of four questions that they would ask someone they just met in an atypical situation. Tell them to steer way clear of the most obvious question i.e. "What's your name?"
- After a few minutes for the above, ask your group to start moving around in no particular order while exchanging answers and questions with as many new people as possible.
- Ten minutes later, get each member of your group to stand up and say his or her name aloud. When this happens, everyone else shouts out something they found about him/her during question time.
- Allow as many as five facts to surface about each person.
- Encourage every member of the group to chip in with 'facts' while ensuring that every member of the group gets a turn at saying his/her name.
Vacation Time!

Objective:
This activity gets everyone involved in the classroom and gives each individual a chance to contribute. It will make students interact with one another and help them understand their classmate’s ideas. Students will be able to relate this activity to their own experiences with vacations and holidays and give students insight into what other holidays or vacations other students in the classroom celebrate. It will also help the teacher and the students get to know one another better by listening and telling each other about themselves.

What We Will Need:
A variety of vacation and holiday props such as umbrellas, lanterns, hats, swimming suits, goggles, remote controls, and stuffed animals, basically anything. The group can also be imaginative and come up with unique props.

Activity:
• Divide your group into sub groups of not more than 10 members each.
• Tell each group that they are going on a vacation or holiday together with their group.
• Ask the groups to meet for a short while and decide how they are going to use each of the props for where they plan on going.
• Each group has to present their holiday as if they are all part of a home video.