

The Three Cs: Capability, Connection, & Contribution

Kristine Grovet, Teacher, Deer Lake SDA School, Burnaby, BC

In education we often think that everything revolves around the three Rs: reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic. But I would like to suggest that perhaps in today's classroom, the three Rs are replaced with the **Three Cs**. Teaching today is not just about teaching content, but helping each student experience success. An easy guide for assuring each student to experience success would be the three Cs: helping students feel *capable*, helping students *connect*, and helping students *contribute*.

First, each child needs to feel capable. They need to feel successful in their learning, and in any endeavors that they may undertake. One way that I have tried to help my students feel capable is through teaching them about Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. At the beginning of the year I have the students fill out a checklist of habits, likes, and dislikes. They then record their top three multiple intelligences, and reference this list on occasion throughout the year. It is incredible to see their faces light up when they see and understand why they do certain things; this also helps them to recognize areas in which they are very capable. Throughout the year, I reference these discoveries by using 'Experts' from each intelligence group as my teacher's assistants for different classes. I also have the students each prepare a home project using one of their multiple intelligences. They present this project to the class and it really builds up their self esteem as they share. It also helps the student to experience success when they see that they have important identifiable skills and talents, and they have an opportunity to use them in this way.

After each child feels that they are capable, we want them to unify with each other and to feel connected. They need to feel that they belong to a group, and they need to feel that they are an important unit within that group. I do a lot of community building with my students throughout the year; we play games together, as well as various "get to know you" activities. I also use many aspects of cooperative learning that help to build community within my classroom. www.usscouts.org/games/game_t.html, Energizers produced by TRIBES, and The Encyclopedia of Bible Games produced by Group are some resources I have found for good community-building games. As the sense of community builds, the small petty disagreements and fights slowly disappear. This feeling of "*I belong here!*" also really helps them to develop their friendship skills.

Lastly, students need to feel that they can contribute something of value. I just finished a mission trip with the gymnastics team and concert band from Deer Lake School. On this trip we went to Kamloops and Salmon Arm. We did four shows, as well as worked in the Salmon Arm community. We upgraded the floor of their playground by removing mulch and replacing it with pea gravel; we went into town, helped with yard work at a nursing home, distributed food, and helped with painting. The feeling of power and success when those children saw the positive impact that resulted from their efforts could not have been achieved in any other way. They felt that they could contribute, and their contribution was very well-received and recognized.

Helping our students to feel capable, connected, and contributing is something that they will carry with them when they have left our classrooms. If we can make our students feel these three Cs, then they will be empowered to do God's will and will answer His call. Matthew 10:42 tells us "if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward" (NIV). Perhaps these three Cs might be the cup of cold water that we can give.