

UTILISATION OF VOLUNTEER RESOURCES IN the EAL/D classroom

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT via RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Coming from a sales and marketing background, with limited experience with children I looked at how I could become a useful resource in the classroom utilising my business and life experiences. I recognised that the main attribute that I could bring to the classroom was strongly developed relationship building skills.

I felt that if I was able to establish trust and respect while assisting students with a wide range of ethnic, educational and English language skills I could make a positive contribution. My goal was to establish ENGAGEMENT via RELATIONSHIP BUILDING.

What has helped me to build relationships with Milpera students

- Taking an interest in them without being intrusive – I find that talking about travel to their country, food and sport is a good way to get them to open up and show that you are interested in them as a person
- Taking opportunities to join activities outside the classroom eg free breakfast, cooking programs, excursions. Talking to them in the playground or while waiting to enter the classroom. If you know children before you start volunteering in their classroom it is easier for them to ask you to assist and to trust what you are telling them
- Being a warm, supportive and happy presence in the classroom

What has worked for me in the classroom:-

- Recognising that children learn differently and thinking of different ways to convey information, solve a problem
- Asking the students questions, listening to their answers
- Utilising everyday examples to explain words/concepts
- Seeing difficulties as a challenge, not a problem
- Realising that sometimes you will not succeed

What qualities I think are important:-

- Positivity
- Empathy
- Proactivity
- Adaptability
- Sense of fun
- Determination

Two other important aspects for successful volunteering:-

- Recognising your jurisdiction and adhering to it at all times
- Interacting with teachers and other volunteers who have a variety of teaching styles and personalities