



# CELEBRATORY LEARNING

## Differentiating Instruction

### Attending to the Attributes at the Heart of Celebratory Learning



- ♥ Positive Interdependence
- ♥ Individual Accountability
- ♥ Simultaneous Interaction
- ♥ Play and Humor
- ♥ Connections to Previous Learning
- ♥ Theme-Based Learning
- ♥ Need-Based Learning
- ♥ Brain-Compatible Environment
- ♥ Universal Design



#### Cooperative Learning

Celebratory Learning always contains the elements of cooperative learning as defined by David and Roger Johnson, and Spencer Kagan. These elements include positive interdependence, individual accountability, interpersonal and small group skills, group processing, simultaneous interaction, equal participation and the use of cooperative structures.

#### Play and Humor

Laughter is a light-hearted gift we can learn to model in our work. Humor is one of the skills that has been documented as adding to our students' resiliency, as well as our own. Positive humor and play promote a positive attitude in the learner and the learning environment, as well as the benefits of an increased feeling of hopefulness, pleasurable learning, promoting new insights, enhancing self-esteem, increasing retention, building rapport, pushing us to divergent thinking, relieving stress, and adding to a better attention level.

#### Connects to Previous Learning

If our brains are to make any new learning our own then the new learning must be linked to previous knowledge. Celebratory Learning looks for ways to connect what we already know to what we are learning now.

#### Theme-Based Learning

Choosing themes which encompass a topic or concept for intended study makes learning fun and inviting. Themes can be organizers that interest the learner while putting learning in context and/or creating an enriched learning environment, as well as linking a skill to the real world of living and working. Themes may be chosen as catalysts for learning, bridges

to other learning, or organizing umbrellas. Themes open up wonderful opportunities for metaphor development and push the learner to a higher level of thinking and creativity.

### **Need-Based Learning**

As learners we benefit most from learning opportunities that meet our needs both in content and process. Celebratory learning promotes choice, life-long learning, individual problem solving, independence as a learner, situations which are meaningful for the learner, and self-identified needs, as well as learning that is important for the entire community.

### **Brain-Compatible Environments**

Schools and classrooms that are re-structured according to our current knowledge of how the human brain learns will enable participants to acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are important to be successful and contributing citizens. Components of brain-compatible learning environments include absence of threat, meaningful content, choices, adequate time, enriched environments, collaboration, immediate feedback, and mastery.

### **Learning Community**

Building a collaborative learning community is the foundation of Celebratory Learning experiences. A sense of belonging, and caring for others, allows members to move along a continuum that begins with isolation, competition, winners and losers, and advances toward cooperation, equality, membership, ownership, empowerment, and responsibility.

### **Celebration**

Celebrating the individual in the learning process actively promotes understanding, acceptance, and affirmation of the individual and their perspective. The Celebratory Learning environment offers the learner opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways while promoting mutual respect and trust. Recognizing progress, and encouraging any steps in that direction, is the primary goal.

### **Universal Design**

Recognizing and celebrating that everyone has differences and preferences for learning are essential to engaging in Celebratory Learning. Some students need to have information presented to them in ways that allow them access to the materials and content of learning. A universally designed curriculum has, built into the delivery system, natural and effective ways for individuals with disabilities, language differences, and so forth to fully participate in learning. A few examples of ways to incorporate Universal Design include textbooks on CD or websites, leveled materials to scaffold the learning of concepts for all students, and graphic organizers. Universal Design benefits all learners.

