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Celebrate INTERdependence

July 2013 Newsletter

Parents rejoice when their child takes his first step alone, when he can tie his shoes by himself, or when he can read his favorite book without any help. Teachers praise and reward students when they can complete a project without any assistance, correctly solve a difficult math problem, or independently write a well constructed essay. Parents and educators often set goals for students to perform certain skills independently. While there is value in becoming more independent, what do we lose when we don't also recognize the value of INTERdependence?

Archbishop Desmond Tutu defines interdependence as "a person is a person through other people." As humans we can't exist in isolation, we thrive through interconnectedness. In southern Africa, this is known as ubuntu, I am who I am because of what we all are. I am not because I think, I am because I belong, I participate, I share, I work with others.

This definition of interdependence goes beyond what is typically thought of. It is more than relying on others such as doctors, mechanics, grocery store clerks, and first responders. Yes, we all need other people in our lives to share their skills that we don't have. But interdependence goes deeper than that. It is that real connectedness that makes us a human family. It is about the genuine relationships we have with each other, the realization that each of us possess strengths, gifts and talents that add so much richness to each others' lives. And when we separate, marginalize or merely tolerate people based on differences we lose opportunities to become the most that each of us can.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once declared, "I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be." Do our classrooms and communities reflect this sense of interconnectedness? Do all students belong, participate and share? Or are some students disenfranchised, excluded, and uninvolved?

When we only emphasize students performing tasks independently we lose sight of the interconnectedness that gives us the ability to learn and grow with each other. We all achieve more together than we ever could alone.

Separating students diminishes the balance with each other. We lose the opportunity to recognize we have our own gifts that make us unique, while others have gifts that we don't. This wide range of gifts and perspectives bring richness to our classrooms and communities that cannot be duplicated by one person.

When students are excluded and work in isolation the chance to develop a sense of belonging and community in our classrooms is lost. When one person is dehumanized, we all are. Just as when one person's humanity is enhanced, ours is also enhanced.

As we recently celebrated America's Independence day, let us also commit to valuing our INTERdependence!

- Identify your vision:** In order to reorient ourselves away from disability issues, to relationship strategies.
- Use your voice:** To help others understand the diversity of people promotes an openness that is healthy for all of us.
- Work together:** Form alliances with other people and groups that value relationships.



Resources



Building Community with Al Condeluci - 4 Critical Steps

Learn the difference between being “in the community” and being “of the community” and how to get there. Click here [to watch this 7 minute video.](#)



Websites



Interested in organizations that promote Interdependence? [Click here](#) to learn more.

The children’s book, *Two Eggs Please*, by Sarah Weeks teaches it is what is inside of each of us that counts. [Click here](#) to order the book from Scholastic.

Please let me know if you’re interested in one of my presentations and/or customized consulting and coaching.

Remember, what we anticipate, determines what we find!

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As a parent and an educator, I bring 35+ years of experience and enthusiasm to create positive change for students, families, and educators!

How may I support you? Click the links below to learn more.

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