Transforming Learning from Routine to Exciting

For over thirty years the Chicago Teachers’ Center has been a leader in professional development for educators and direct support to schools throughout the region. We provide models and strategies for learning and enhance motivation. The use of ropes courses creates trust among the students, preparing them for the hands-on, inquiry-based learning.

How does CTC’s Teambuilding Work?

Students are presented with sets of concrete challenges that are new to them. In the process, they learn to trust one another as they lead each other with blindfolds or hold on to one another to accomplish a group challenge. A sense of accomplishment engages students as they develop solutions to thought-provoking or physically demanding challenges, all in a spirit of cooperation and individual choice.

Such physical and mental challenges involve the whole person in a social context. But just as crucial is the debriefing that occurs at the end of each task. Together each team processes how effective they were in meeting their challenge and how they might have worked more effectively as a group. Based on this reflection, students then are prepared to face even more complex sets of endeavors.

Such reflection provokes intensive brainstorming and "out of the box thinking" that has the potential to be transferred to team academic inquiries in social studies, English, or science. Use of such adventure-based teambuilding can have a dramatic effect on the atmosphere of the typical classroom, transforming learning from a rather routine activity to one full of intellectual excitement, which has critical carry over to day-to-day classroom learning.

Motivational Interviewing

The use of Motivational Interviewing (MI) in schools is an effort that the CTC has spearheaded since 2005 to help students choose to change detrimental behaviors. Through this one-on-one interviewing process, trained facilitators from the Chicago Teachers’ Center employ a non-confrontational and evidence-based approach to motivation in which students talk openly about their lives and changes they wish to undertake. Employing Bem's self-perception theory, Motivational Interviewing enables students to develop an authentic voice as they think through things that are interfering with their success in school. It is an intensive interviewing process of non-judgmental guided conversation that honors student autonomy, assisting each student to explore possible changes in their behavior.

Need a program specifically tailored for your school? Contracts or packages are designed to address your needs and requests. Contact us to schedule a meeting and explore the possibilities or join our e-mail list.

Richard Rutschman, Ed.D.  David Stephens  
(312) 563-7156  (312) 563-7168  
R-Rutschman@neiu.edu  D-Stephens@neiu.edu  
Ellen Zipprich  
(312) 563-7132  
E-Zipprich@neiu.edu
Creating a Cohesive and Peaceful School Environment

The Chicago Teachers’ Center (CTC) is one of the few organizations in the Midwest that provides a comprehensive approach to team-building, one which models for schools how intellectual activity can be an integral part of group-focused challenges. CTC is also at the forefront of introducing Motivational Interviewing which can counter violence and other negative behavior while improving retention.

The following teambuilding options can be tailored and priced according to the needs of your school.

- Leadership Development
- Experiential Education
- Adventure-Based Teambuilding
- Self-Efficacy Development
- Inquiry Based Learning
- Social & Emotional Learning
- Restorative Discipline Practices
- Intellectual Engagement
- Peaceful School Culture
- Motivational Interviewing to Enhance Engagement and Positive Conduct

**Professional Development Options for Educators**

**Teacher’s Bag of Tricks for Classroom Cohesion**
Expand teachers’ capacity for classroom-based teambuilding. Includes cooperative games, portable communication and trust-building initiatives, and group problem-solving challenges focused on creating a caring classroom.

**Motivational Interviewing**
Learn how to use the evidence-based behavior change strategy of Motivational Interviewing to help students improve their success and counter negative behaviors.

**Brain-Based Teaching and Learning**
Understanding the latest research on the developing brain and how best to apply this research to your teaching. Includes a focus on learning and the adolescent’s brain.

**The Caring Classroom Summer Institute**
A 3-day summer institute led by Laurie Frank, author of *The Caring Classroom: Using Adventure to Create Community*. CPDUs can be arranged.

**Inquiry Based Instruction**
Challenging students to ask real questions, find relevant resources, construct meaning and report new understandings is key to engaged learning. Institutes and conferences focusing on young adult literature, math and writing are available.

**Direct Service Options for Students**

**Portable Teambuilding Courses**
Cooperative, trust-building, communication and problem-solving activities for up to 2 class periods (100 minutes) at your school or at NEIU’s campus as part of a field trip.

**Outdoor Adventure Teams Courses (off-site)**
Adventure-based teambuilding activities where a variety of low ropes challenges are set up in a natural wooded area.

**NEIU Campus High Challenge Course or Climbing Tower at Broadway Armory**
A high ropes course or climbing experience provides students with a metaphor for challenges faced by transition or change.

**Two or Three Day Leadership Camp**
This outdoor camping experience includes lodging and meals, a full schedule of experiential interdisciplinary activities, and adventure courses.

**Motivational Interviewing & Experiential Learning**
Students are referred to this activity as the result of their behavior or academic issues. Trained CTC staff members conduct one-on-one motivational interviews as well as motivational enhancement activities.

**Youth Leadership Development**
This high school student leadership development initiative works to improve relationships between students from different backgrounds and enhance cultural understanding.

Focus

[Image of a student with a map and the text: “Acquaintance activities bring diverse groups together.”]