

Inclusion Play Day

By Melissa Mast

Best Practice 1: What recognized community need was met by your project (e.g. health, education, environmental or public safety need)?

Pine Grove Middle School is a cluster school for students in the Functional Academic Learning Support Class and the Communication and Learning Support Classes. These classes contain students that have severe/profound disabilities and will earn a certificate of attendance. Inclusion Play Day increased disability awareness within the school and the community. This service-learning project was originally established by a former physical education teacher and has been ongoing for 11 years. She created this opportunity for the students based on her experience working with regular education and special education students.

Best Practice 2: How was the project connected to school curriculum (e.g. what course outcomes were met and/or how did the project reinforce or enhance student academic learning)?

Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum Objectives:

Reading

2A1. Apply and refine comprehension skills by selecting, reading, and analyzing a variety of print and non-print informational texts, including electronic media.
2A2 Analyze text features to facilitate and extend understanding of informational texts.
2A4 Analyze important ideas and messages in informational texts

Writing

4A2 Compose oral, written and visual presentations that express personal ideas, inform, and persuade
4A3 Compose texts using the revising and editing strategies of effective writers and speakers

Health

A4a. Investigate the benefits of physical activity.
A2a. Work effectively with others in a variety of physical settings.
A3a. Employ strategies to resolve conflict and make healthy decisions that promote a sense of community and respect for others.

Math

4A1. Organize and display data.
6C1. Analyze number relations and compute.

Visual Arts

32a. Communicate ideas and concepts by manipulating elements of art and principals of design to achieve specific visual effects.

Technology

Utilizing technology (PowerPoint Presentations)

Best Practice 3: How did you reflect on your experience throughout the project?

The students met with the advisor during the planning process, as well as after the event. During the meetings the students documented ideas and anecdotal notes regarding planning the event. After the event the students met with the advisor to discuss both the positive and negative aspects of Inclusion Play Day. This information will be used in planning the next annual event.

Best Practice 4: How did students take leadership roles and take responsibility for the success of the project?

The students were responsible for all aspects of Inclusion Play Day by planning the entire day. The students planned adapted physical recreation activities for students with physical and cognitive disabilities. Each group of students functioned as the station leaders for the various activities. The station leaders gave the participants clear directions and were responsible for ensuring that the activity ran smoothly. The students located the necessary equipment and set-up the activity. Finally, they cleaned the activity area once the event was complete.

Best Practice 5: What community partners did you work with on this project (e.g. non-profits, civic organizations, business that provided donations, etc.)?

The students made connections with other middle school students in Baltimore County who are part of the FALS (Functional Academic Learning Support) and CALS (Communication and Learning Support) classes. Students from the following schools attended Inclusion Play Day: Cockeysville Middle, Perry Hall Middle, White Oak School, Ridge Ruxton School, and Oakleigh Elementary. The 8th graders at Pine Grove Middle School's National Junior Honor Society worked with the advisor to contact schools and teachers prior to the event.

Best Practice 6: How did you prepare and plan ahead for the project?

The students planned this project in conjunction with the advisors of the National Junior Honor Society, the Physical Education teachers, and the administrators. This project was planned over the course of the school year. Monthly meetings were scheduled in order to discuss progress and plan the event.

Best Practice 7: What knowledge and skills did students develop through this project?

The students were prepared for this service-learning experience by participating in disabilities awareness training. This project increased disability awareness through interacting with students with special needs. The students learned the various aspects of planning a large event. Our school PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports) program focuses on respect and responsibility. The students learned to be respectful of other people, especially students with severe disabilities. Through this process they formed friendships with students in the self-contained classes in the school. By planning the event, the students were completely responsible for all of the aspects of the Inclusion Play Day.