
Buddy System

PURPOSE

To build empathy and community.

MATERIALS

1. Index cards
2. Pencils
3. Box or shopping bag
4. A "Buddy Post Office" (a drawer, cupboard, or other large container where students can place gifts, notes, or cards for their buddies whenever they like)

PROCEDURE

Have the students list on cards 15 things they like to do, have, own, or surround themselves with. Tell the students to write their names and birthdates at the top of the cards and then fold the cards and place them in a box. Each student then picks a card, and the person named on the card becomes his or her "secret buddy."

Tell the students that throughout the course everyone should do helpful and friendly things for their secret buddies without revealing their own identities. At the end of the course there will be a class party at which the students will find out their secret buddies' identities.

Caution: To prevent unkind notes or other junk mail, we suggest the teacher serve as the keeper of the "Buddy Post Office" and hold mail call on a regular basis—for example, during a few minutes at the end of a class once or twice a week.