

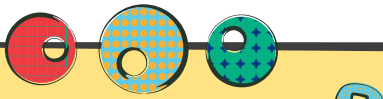


Ideas for Educators

42 Ready-to-Use Newsletters for School Success

8. YOUTH AS RESOURCES

Young people are given useful roles in the community.



What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed.

Youth as resources is one of four empowerment assets.

26% of youth surveyed have this asset in their lives.*

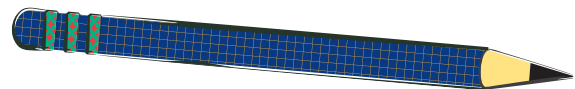
*Based on Search Institute surveys of 148,189 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States in 2003.

- Start or maintain a youth advisor and/or student leaders program in your school.
- Help students create extracurricular programs that suit their interests.
- Allow student participation in decisions about school life and culture.

Being Resourceful

In order to fully engage students in their daily school life, they must feel empowered by it. If we give students meaningful and useful roles in school, they'll come to feel invested in the welfare of their school. They will care more about its success and be more willing to make good decisions regarding its long-term survival.

- Start young with room leaders who complete certain daily tasks.
- Allow older students to participate in the creation of certain class rules.
- Research and institute a peer mediation program for solving classroom conflicts.
- Ask for suggestions when trying to improve certain activities or solve a problem.



Remember that young people are learning how to be useful members of the community. Check in with the students frequently to let them discuss successes or failures or ways to improve their level of involvement. Make sure the students' roles are actually useful and not meaningless. Take all of that useful youthful energy and harness it—your daily teaching experience will be richer for it.

What's the Use of Feeling Useful?

What is the long-term cost to you if you have days that leave you wondering, "What did I *do* today? Who did I help? Did my showing up today even matter?" Mark Twain once said, "No one is truly useless in this world who lightens the burdens of

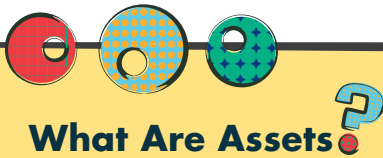


IDEAS for Educators

42 Ready-to-Use Newsletters for School Success

23. HOMEWORK

Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.



What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed.

Homework is one of five commitment-to-learning assets.

47% of youth surveyed have this asset in their lives.*

*Based on Search Institute surveys of 148,189 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States in 2003.

- Define what is necessary about the homework.
- Remember that nightly homework is good, but try not to overload kids on a regular basis.
- Provide a range of activities to ensure greater participation.

Making Homework Appealing

Homework can be both the saving grace and the great ruination of a student's life. For most, homework serves to give them a chance to practice skills learned in class and demonstrate their capabilities. As students progress in their schooling, homework must be balanced with work, sports, activities, and

other responsibilities that often threaten to take over. In order for students to not only do homework, but also be *willing* to do it, a teacher needs to carefully consider what it is he is asking them to do.

The first thing to consider is the essential function of the homework. Make the expected outcome clear to the students. Without any idea of why they are being asked to jump through certain hoops, they may reasonably refuse.

Next, consider the means by which a student must complete their work. If the student needs to practice a new skill, exercises are typically best. But if a student is being asked to simply demonstrate retention of information, perhaps a set of creative assignments would be better:

- If a student is preparing for a test, engage him on multiple levels. Create review games, mnemonic songs, huge flash cards, and other fun ways to review.
- Research and implement some basic learning-styles methods into your homework assignments.

