

## **Working with Diverse Learners** **Part 2**

Hi, thanks for being a Junior Achievement volunteer and welcome to Working with Diverse Learners.

### **Socioeconomic Backgrounds**

It's important to help students learn the concepts taught, regardless of their socioeconomic background. Remember that the conditions and circumstances in which students live will vary from school to school and student to student. Help students relate the session's topic to their knowledge and experiences. This allows each student the opportunity to be an active learner with the concept at hand. Each student comes from a different background so be prepared that the same age group may not necessarily be at the same learning level. You may need to be adapted to your lessons to fit their needs. Reinforce the role that education has had in your life. Share how developing specific skills such as public speaking, writing and team work have played in your personal and professional development and ways that furthering one's education can create opportunities.

### **Varying Cultures**

Valuing diversity and appreciating the similarities and differences that exist establish a positive and purposeful learning experience for both you and the class. By recognizing students' various cultures and languages you create a learning environment that is conducive to all of the students. The students should feel comfortable and respected for their differences in culture. Acknowledge the diverse cultural groups in your classroom by telling them how diversity enhances learning opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom. One way to do this is to discuss ways in which diversity benefits the work place, such as increased productivity and creativity. While planning your sessions be open to experiencing cultural diversity recognizing that different cultures may have a different view of some topics.

### **Language Barriers**

As classrooms become more linguistically diverse it may be helpful to identify the multilingual students by asking the class questions about themselves such as, "Does anyone know more than one language?" and "If so, what languages do you know?" Then affirm how fortunate they are to be multilingual. Explain how this skill can lead to exciting career opportunities, as well as cultural and social advantages. Be careful, however, not to assume that all students know a second language!

During the lesson, encourage discussions that promote respectful interaction in the classroom. Use natural tones and language with all the students. Avoid using any slang terms and encourage all the students to ask questions during the lesson. When checking for understanding, the tendency may be to focus on multilingual students but feel confident that you've created an environment in which students are comfortable asking for help.

## Special Education Needs

Students with disabilities who receive special education instruction and related services vary greatly in their needs and backgrounds.

It's important to be sensitive to the needs of students in a respectful way. Every student is unique and has value and talents that can contribute to the learning environment. Be sure to share your questions and observations about student engagement with the teacher. He or she can suggest ways to modify the session to meet the needs of all students. Your Guide for Volunteers and Teachers also provides suggestions such as writing key phrases on the board.

It is important to give every student the opportunity to learn and participate in the lessons.

For additional guidelines on working with students, please review the Volunteer Conduct Standards document you signed with your JA Area representative.

## Conclusion

Thanks for watching Working with Diverse Learners. If you have additional questions, you can always reach out to your local JA Area representative.

As a Junior Achievement volunteer, you're part of a network of hundreds of thousands of volunteers and you play an integral part in empowering over 10 million students globally to own their economic success—including more than 4 million in the United States. You are truly making a difference in the lives of young people and we hope to have you in the classroom again and again.

## Acknowledgements

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