

## 2008 UF COE Writing Contest Entry

*(This is one of 27 entries submitted in the College's recent writing contest on the topic of "What's Good in Education?". Visit the [Writing Contest home page](#) for links to other entries, including the winner.)*

# WHAT'S GOOD IN EDUCATION?

## *Students and the school's extended family...*

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No matter what media outlet reports it, the evaluation of education sounds less than perfect, if not downright flawed. However, I know differently. There are numerous "good things" in education, and I'd like to share a view from my own classroom and school.

I teach an inclusive fourth-grade class. My students range in abilities from globally impaired, ESOL, SLD, and gifted to those who have no label. I am energized by my teaching because I know that when I walk into my classroom each day, it will be different from the day before. Why? Because we are an extended family. For the precious 36 weeks that make up the school year, we share our attributes and our warts. My students share with me and each other their thoughts, desires, and needs. They learn to depend on me and one another for guidance, coaching, and support. Sometimes they push me away and assume the role of teacher.

Each student has something to contribute to the class, and they learn what that is as we bond. The peer-to-peer coaching I witness succeeds because they trust each other. They know their achievements will be celebrated just as their stumbles are cushioned with a safety net. I know a year has been successful when I am saddened by my loss. However, I know my loss is their gain. Together we have grown, matured, developed, and learned. I've conducted something "good" in education and temper my sadness with the joy of our accomplishments.

Now let's examine the often overlooked "technicians" and their wonderful contributions that make education "good." The cafeteria personnel are on site preparing the school for the day long before my alarm goes off. They feed our students so that they may have the energy learning requires. The custodian, who all the students know by name, unlocks the doors and turns on the lights. He keeps our environment safe and operational so that our quest for knowledge proceeds without interruption. Answering phones, greeting parents, and handling the myriad

of daily district requirements may sound menial, but the office staff expertly handles details for parents, students, volunteers, visitors, and teachers—with a smile and kind words to boot. Their extra mile means that the rest of us can concentrate on the business of education. These technicians are, quite simply, the examples and guardians of countless 'good' things that happen at my school.

I am lucky to be part of a positively-functioning system whose mission is to help our students achieve and progress. I choose to look clearly at what surrounds me, and when I do, I see so much that is GOOD in education!

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