

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?

Classroom offers a safe haven

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One of the most rewarding aspects of education is the opportunity to build a positive culture. Public schools offer children a safe haven where they can return each day as a member of a vitally important family of educators and peers. The classroom provides students with a chance to develop social skills, embrace diversity, and build critical bonds—some of which will last forever!

Factors such as class size amendments and inclusion further enhance classroom culture by enabling deeper and more meaningful relationships among peers, as well as the opportunity for students to become peer mentors. Based on my own observations, these relationships often prove to be invaluable for the success of all children involved. Struggling students gain a new perspective and understanding from their peers that I, as an adult, am sometimes unable to see or connect to. I think that both students gain self-esteem, and a confidence that will carry them far in school and in life. There is no sweeter sound to me than hearing one of my first graders offer assistance to a fellow learner.

I see my students as flowers that unfold a new petal with each positive social interaction. Watching them slowly "bloom" is what keeps me so excited about education and drives me forward each and every day. It warms me to see the sometimes unexpected friendships and bonds built between these students. I feel so proud of the community we have created.

Being part of such a positive environment brings a sense of peace to my day when other areas of life may not. I can only imagine, then, the comfort it must bring to some of my students, for whom school is their only source of stability. At my school, all adults work as a team to ensure student success. There is not a staff member on campus who wouldn't pitch in to make things run a little more smoothly. Whether it's chaperoning a field trip at the last minute, reading with a student, eating lunch with a class, or just taking a moment to listen to a child's

story, everyone is in it together. It's a culture that I hope will take root within each of my students so that they may carry on in the same way.

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