Transcript- Episode 53

10 Quick Inclusion Wins: Reset and Refresh

Okay, today is all about inclusion wins.

In fact, we're going to give you 10 quick inclusion wins, and they're really good for the start of the year, or actually any time you feel like you need a reset. Now, Kristie, you know that I'm nearly obsessed with the word reset right now, and that I've been doing all kinds of resets in my life. And today is an inclusion reset.

And why this one is kind of weird or different is that we have filled it with resources for you. And I keep arguing it's not weird or different for us. Probably need to explain or dig into this reset word, but let's go to the handout first, right? Sure.

So today's download, which is at inclusiveschooling.com/download53, you're going to find these 10 wins that Julie and I are going to walk you through. Then of course, because I love language, is if there's one handout that's good with 10 ideas, how about 10 ideas with five more embedded in there? So you're going to find hundreds probably when you do all the math of ways to really not just reset, but kind of refresh, maybe as another R word, your work around inclusion, as Julie said, at any time of the year, we can get feeling a little bit despondent or a little bit beat down.

I'm certain listeners are like, what, what are you talking about? We go in every day, energized, more energized, and loves it and loves us.

Oh yeah. Yeah.

So let's just jump right in. So you said though, we should probably talk about the word reset or refresh that concept. And we are really going to ask you to think about each and every one of these reset ideas or quick wins as a way to make your classroom or your school even more inclusive.

So the first, I'm just going to jump right in with the first reset, it is going to be about relationships. And Kristie and I always use the phrase *relationships are the active ingredient in learning*. And when you feel you're in need of a reset, it often means that it's time to reset relationships with each student.

I was just thinking about relationships and I got on my own little tangent that's like, you know, I think this is an important one, maybe midway through the year, or maybe even in October, you know, Julie and I often call it Rocktober. That's from my friend Libby in Colorado, but it's like the honeymoon period is over. The end of the, you know, the beginning of the year feels like the end of the year already.

And so I love this idea of resetting relationships, especially if it's been a challenging couple of days or a week. And I guess that could be also for administrators. If you've had a couple of difficult IEP meetings or conversations or emails with families and staff, how can you consciously take a minute to reset your relationships? Yes, I love that.

So we're going to give a couple ideas, some ideas about, so how do you do this? Now all of you could just pause and ask yourself the question, how could I reset my relationship with each student or each teacher if you're an administrator?

Two quick ideas. One is, just have an intention to have a positive interaction with every student this week. That kind of data is data that I can really get behind.

Meaning you take a data sheet with a class list and you put a check mark by every kid that you've had a, you know, longer than a couple of sentence conversation with. And you go ahead and, and I know it seems kind of scientific or a little bit cold, but essentially it's making sure that you're getting every student and having a warm interaction with them. Another that's my favorite is a personal note to students or having kind of moments of shared joy.

And so when I was co-teaching with my good friend, Kathy Crandall, she and I would divide up sticky notes and divide up the class list. And we'd write a personal note to every kid. And when they came in, there was a note on their desk that was written by one of us about something positive related to them.

So it's just this moment to get reconnected to kids. And in another episode, we'll be talking more about culture. And I think that setting this as a routine or a habit, and it could even be how we communicate with families that we break that mold of writing only when there's a problem or when it's a certain time of year, but creating time and space to connect with families, to let them know how things are going or things that we're excited about.

Yes, I love that. So Kristie already shared with you where you can get all of this information. So we've got these 10 big, they're called 10 quick inclusion wins.

And so we just talked about number one, and I'm going to jump to number four. And this one has an additional resource. And so what number four says is reset participation norms, meaning sometimes when we get really tired, we fall back on the raise and respond.

Raise your hand if you have the answer to this. Raise your hand if you have an idea for this. Raise your hand if you're ready to discuss.

And what we know about inclusive classrooms is when we're thinking about the range of learners, we've got to have many, many, many different ways for humans to engage that falls far beyond the raise and respond. So we have an additional resource for you. It's going to be called bonus resources, and it's called *Beyond the Raise and Respond*.

And it gives 19 alternatives to the raise and respond. But just off the top of my head, you're thinking about think-pair-share, chat box, nonverbal signals, sign

language, visual organizers. You're just thinking about other ways that people can respond that are not the old raise and respond.

And I want to keep drawing parallels to working with staff. So sometimes we have a staff meeting or we send out an email and it feels like crickets. So think about strategically, how can we use some of those same ways to engage folks that are a wide variety? You know, we always talk, Julie, about the ways that you and I participate differently.

And I'm like the worst participator in group activities or group settings. Like I'll make people do it, but I don't do it. So creating space for pig grouping, even with your staff, partner, individual, or group, encouraging people to respond to agenda items before the meeting, during the meeting, and after the meeting.

So that it's not just that I have to get my thoughts together in the moment and I have 30 seconds to vote on something or respond, but maybe I could tell my thoughts before the meeting or after I've heard everyone's, I can share after the meeting. So just thinking about different ways to ensure that we reset what we mean by participation. Well, Kristie, I'm going to jump to number six, because you really covered a lot of cool ideas.

And you said, all right, so you might change up the grouping, you might change up the timing. So some people don't want to respond on the spot, raising their hand, right? So timing. So I'm jumping to number six, which is adding brand new choices to assignments that have been going on forever and ever.

So you might have this way that kids walk in the door and respond to 10 questions. Let's say that's how you have it set up in your classroom. All right, mix it up.

They can draw the answer, they can dance the answer, they can sing the answer, you're adding choices. And now you're making the classroom feel more exciting and alive. And then, of course, you're meeting the needs of more diverse students that don't do well in that verbal, visual, or written way.

And so if you're just fading back in, you're like, hey, where are getting this list? Because I think I just faded back in- inclusiveschooling.com/download53, and you'll get all 10 of our ideas. And I think, Julie, we have time for one more.

I think number five, I don't think we can do a podcast without doing some sort of homage or nod to the work that paras provide. And that we have been really working towards people understanding that support is the action that we provide. So let's unpack number five a little bit.

Okay, so in number five, we say let's reset our roles with paraprofessionals and support staff. So you might use the word paraprofessional or educational assistant or instructional assistant, but essentially anybody who's not a teacher on a teacher contract, but is there to support individual students or groups of students, you're going to want to check in with those folks, you're going to want to ask questions like what's working? What can we make better? How can I utilize your talents better in this classroom? How can we clarify any roles for you? How can we celebrate the success of our relationship or our students?

And so just by pausing and asking kind of the questions that you think really will help improve your classroom, you're going to get to some really cool ideas that might make this next month of school even more exciting. And I think that what's really interesting about number five, Julie, is it's really related to what you said in the opening, that these resets, these wins, can be used at the beginning of the year, but they're also designed to become part of our ongoing practice.

And so, you know, we might have talked to, you know, the central office or the people that answer the phone in the office at the beginning of the year, but we haven't checked in with them as well. Or maybe we have aides that are helping during lunchtime or during recess, or on the bus. Let's take a minute, even every quarter, just to check in and ask those same questions.

I love it. And the 10th one is celebrate our inclusion progress so far. And what I want to do, Kristie, is ask you a hard question on the spot because you love that. How would you celebrate our podcast that we are just finishing right now?

I would tell you, honestly, yay, let's move to the next one.

Okay, that is a good celebration. You're just, you're celebrating that we're complete. This one is done. And we're going to move on to recording another one.

Yeah, I'll give you a virtual high five.

Okay, here we go. Ready? We just did it. And then I'm going to say, I'm so excited for people to get this podcast and to go into the handouts and be stunned with all these cool ideas.

And all we want to do is inspire you to make your classrooms more inclusive, more exciting, and just to have more and more ideas. So do go check out the handout and do let us know how you're using them and how they're landing with your students. Yeah, so go to inclusiveschooling.com/download53.

And then don't forget that there are at least five bonuses hyperlinked into that one download. So there you go. Thank you for tuning in.

And don't forget to subscribe and catch up on past episodes, where we share valuable insights, straight talk, and practical steps to challenge outdated special education practices. You can find every episode with the show notes at inclusiveschooling.com/inclusion-podcast to build more inclusive schools together.

SHOW NOTES

Key Takeaways

- Inclusion resets aren't just for the beginning of the year— they work anytime energy is low or routines feel stale.

- Small shifts, like reconnecting with students or refreshing participation norms, can create a big impact on belonging and access.
- Paraprofessionals and support staff are essential partners; resetting roles with them strengthens collaboration and improves student support.

Episode Download / Handout

Inclusion Reset: 10 Quick Moves to Refresh Your Classroom — Anytime

This free handout includes 10 practical, ready-to-use ideas to help you reset your inclusive practices at any point in the year. Each move comes with a clear goal and a simple "try this" action step.

- Reconnect with each student through intentional positive interactions.
- Revisit classroom agreements to reinforce respect and belonging.
- Add new choices to learning tasks to honor variability and increase engagement.

Highlights from the Handout

- **Julie's Favorite:** Resetting relationships by writing personal notes or sharing joyful moments with students— small actions that rebuild trust and connection.
- **Kristie's Favorite:** Resetting participation norms by moving beyond "raise and respond." With 19 alternatives provided, students of all styles and needs have new ways to engage.

Practical Tips

- Use resets with staff too— check in with paras, refresh meeting norms, or celebrate team successes.
- Choose 1–2 resets to try each month rather than attempting all 10 at once.
- Celebrate progress: recognize small wins with your students and colleagues to build momentum and motivation.