



NYSUT is looking for students in grades 5-8 who may be interested in helping us with an inclusion project for students with and without disabilities.

Our project is called *Connect-Ability* and has been around since 1995.

We bring students with and without disabilities together several times a year to learn more about how we can make our schools and communities more inclusive. Students participate in workshops to learn more about disabilities and raise awareness of the similarities between students with and without disabilities. Our name – Connect-Ability – is our guide in every workshop activity. We try to connect with one another's abilities.

We start out by debunking the myths around disability.

Then we add to our knowledge of disabilities by learning from our friends and other experts who share what they know with us. Our goal is to go back to our schools and communities with a better awareness of people with disabilities and how we can model inclusive behavior. The workshops help us develop our writing and speaking skills and make us more active participants in our schools. Talking about disability in a positive, fact based way will help us better communicate with one another.

Our workshops take place at NYSUT Headquarters in Latham NY.

They're held four times a year on Saturdays. We've included a variety of activities in the past designed to help us learn more about disability and the many students affected by them. Puppet shows, art projects, plays, therapeutic riding, drum circles, movie making and IEP writing are just a few of the activities we have used to learn about disability. Each workshop has a goal of engaging students in active participation and addressing the individual needs of each student member.

We share what we learn through our Connect-Ability blog which is written by the students at the end of each workshop. Check it out at connect-ability.blogspot.com.

Contact Catharine McHugh at cmchugh@nysutmail.org or 518-213-6000 X6522 if you know a student who might be interested in joining us.