**Class Average Person**

**One of the most bonding and community-building exercises you can do is to have the students merge their individual statistics into a big composite “class average person”poster.**

**It has many applications. If you are in math, you can teach about the three ways of averaging: true average, midpoint, and median, because you can use any or all of these methods in each decision needed to create your average person.**

**If you are working on group consensus skills, you can teach students language like, “Can you live with this decision?” when the averaging is very close, or the most votes on an issue are fewer than the total of the losing votes.**

**In history, you can introduce the Social Contract which says that when you join a community, you gain some security by belonging in that group and agreeing to some rules of the group. It can beat going it alone. And you can be part of something bigger than yourself.**

**If you are teaching writing, you can have the students create a name and even follow a format for creating a poetic description of a person. (Email me if you need a poem frame.)**

**If you** **make** **a Class Average Person in the fall, you can later contrast the changes over a school year. You can also use the poster on Parent Conferences/Open House, for parents to see what a “typical” child at that grade level might be like**, **to compare with their own individual child.**

**Materials and Procedures:  
Have ready a large, long strip of butcher paper, longer than the height of any of your students, and fold over the top of the paper so it will be able to hang on a wall.**

**Sentence strips to label each average fact. (If you don’t have them, choose a good student to print labels on the poster, and, perhaps, have a ruler to make straight lines to print on.**

**Dark marker for printing the sentence strips.**

**Options: Colored pencils to color in the details. (Sometimes a student or group of students take that on if it is important to them. But that can be dangerous! Once labeled, if the coloring job goes bad, the students want to disown the image! Some eighth- grade boys eventually colored a brown paper bag over the face when the coloring went bad….)**

**To start, you will be the leader who asks for information and shows the averaging process. Start with Height in Inches (or metric?)**

**If you are doing this in the fall, many kids don’t know their height since last measured. A fun way to do this is to stand at the lintel of the door in your room with a ruler to place on their heads to mark where they stand and have them find out how tall they are. It also gives you a chance to talk and help them with something personally interesting to them.**

**Announce you will average the class height. The front students in each row write down their heights and pass the paper backwards, so each student can add their personal inches and subtotal. The last student in the row gives you the inches for that row, and you add the rows and average for the class, showing the averaging process.**

**Then find out who in the class is closest to this height. If the class is split almost evenly, girls and boys, you have your first chance to practice compromise or suggest a composite figure. If a composite, half boy, half girl, the boy and/or girl who is closest to the class average becomes the silhouette. That means the chosen models will take the large paper where it can be laid flat, and a friend goes with them, and traces around, clothes and all, with a light pencil. If you are having half boy and half girl, the friend traces one side of the figure, and the other friend traces the other person of the other half.**

**Next, try determining the eye color choice. Here is the time when you can determine the winner: by majority or plurality? Each eye the same color? Each eye different? Let the artist(s) who have done the silhouette outlines add the eyes (and maybe, a mouth)**

**Bring back the outline of the class average person and attach it to the wall for mounting, so the student(s) doing the tracing can re-do the clothing to look natural instead of flat from tracing a prone person.**

**Now each question on the rest of the average person can be done, one-at-a-time, and the sentence strip added as you go.**

**Here are some useful questions:**

* **Favorite food (ask for a full list, then have student each vote 3 times from the big list until a number is small enough to get a majority for one item)**
* **Number of siblings (fun when it comes out a fraction)**
* **Shoe size (can have student line up in order of shoe size, smallest to largest)**
* **Number of pets**
* **Favorite Superhero**
* **Favorite fast-food restaurant**
* **Birthday (Do a line-up by months from Jan to Dec and decide (Midpoint birthday of the whole year? Month with the most birthdays? Midpoint of that month for day?)**
* **Favorite cereal**

**Caution: You can let the kids suggest some other categories, but be sure they don’t use clothing brands, shoe brands, OR something divisive.**

**When finished, you can point out that while everyone is part of the average class “person,” each student is still the individual you are, so you are unique, and also a part of the special class group.**