

Cultivating a Foundation for Positive Well-being



EDUCATOR RESOURCE

Foundational Module

THE ROAD TO POSITIVE WELL-BEING IN EVERY CLASSROOM STARTS HERE

WELL~ BEING CANADA



Well-being Canada is an educational program that uses evidence-based tools, resources and everyday actions to nurture and promote positive well-being in students of all ages.

This resource offers valuable and essential tools to help students navigate uncertain times and embrace their expanding futures, enabling them to take proactive steps towards improved well-being.

The Well-being Canada Foundational Module provides educators with a sequenced approach to develop supportive instructional practices, build positive relationships and create safe and caring environments that foster student engagement and learning.

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Welcome

Thank you for implementing the Well-being Canada Foundational Module in your classroom. By taking part, you are showing the world that building caring and supportive learning environments enables students of all ages to create positive change and promote well-being.

The purpose of this module is to provide educators with a sequenced approach to develop supportive instructional practices, build positive relationships and create safe and caring environments that foster student engagement and learning. This module helps to set a strong base from which students can engage meaningfully in experiential learning to explore problems in their school and community, develop plans to solve them, take action and reflect upon their impact.

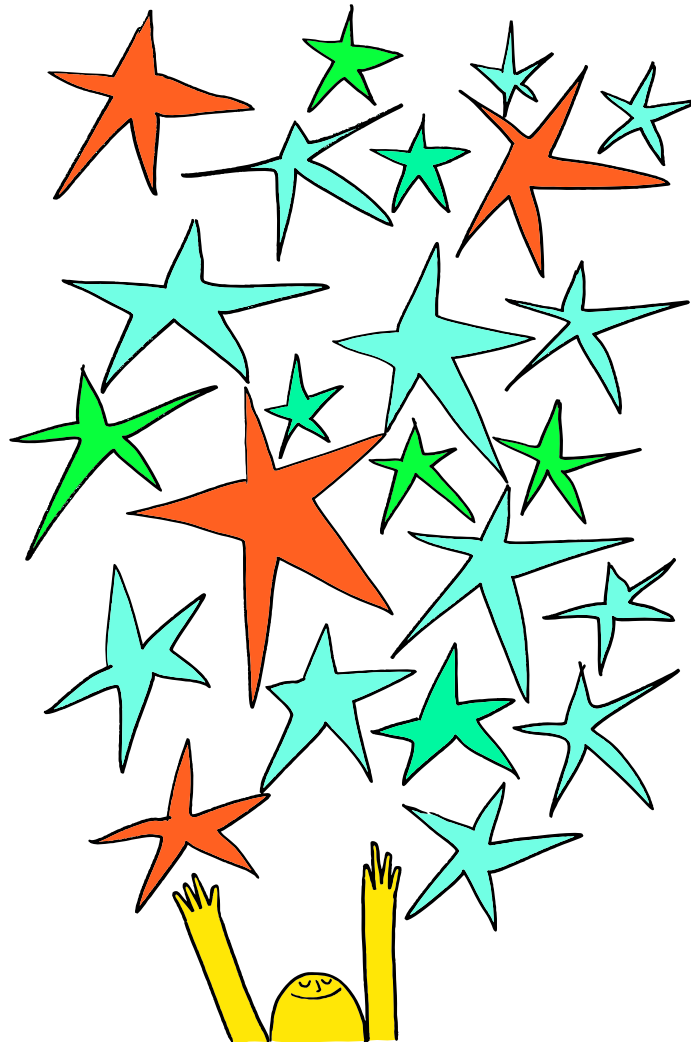
Research has shown that when students feel that they belong at school and in their community, they are better engaged, are better able to achieve their learning goals and can nurture their well-being. This research highlighting the importance of student connection informed the development of the Foundational Module in order to help educators create caring classroom communities that foster students' sense of belonging. We believe that the best learning experiences come from a place of safety, care and support, and we recommend implementing this module at the beginning of the school year to kick off your Well-Being Canada journey on the right foot.

Thank you for your dedication and passion to empowering students to create positive change.

Well-being Canada Foundational Module

The Well-being Canada Foundational Module helps teachers create an inclusive and supportive environment that will help nurture students' sense of belonging, fostering a caring classroom community for student engagement and learning. It sets the stage for students to engage with their surroundings through experiential learning, giving them the space and opportunity to explore issues, develop plans for solving those issues and take action.

In four foundational lessons that use a student-directed approach, this module follows a four-step experiential learning framework: Investigate and Learn, Action Plan, Take Action and Reflect and Celebrate. The Foundational Module serves as a catalyst for students' development and growth.



Building a Foundation Together

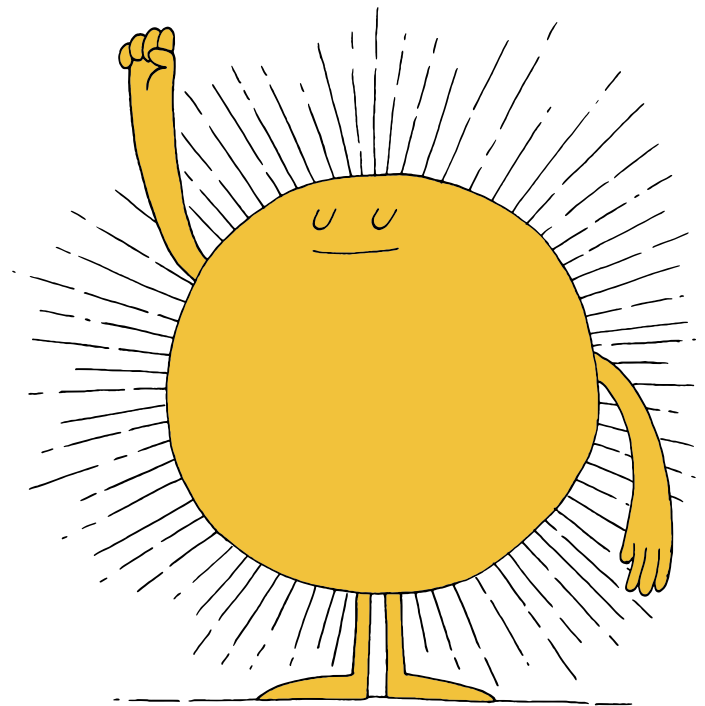
This module is built on social-emotional learning and experiential learning, providing students with the skills to become caring, respectful and responsible citizens and the opportunities to apply those skills and values. When students have the foundation and support they need to become active agents of change, anything is possible for them.

Social-emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning is a way of learning through which individuals gain the skills and knowledge to identify and manage their emotions, understand different perspectives, show empathy for others, set and achieve positive goals, develop and sustain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Social-emotional skills include relationship-building, self-awareness, self-recognition, self-management, social awareness and decision-making. To address the changing needs of today's and tomorrow's students, social-emotional learning is becoming increasingly important since it supports academic learning and promotes well-being.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is an approach to learning that engages students to address the needs of their community while meeting their learning objectives. Teachers guide classrooms through broader academic discussions and enable students to learn about local, national and global issues and become agents of change. When classroom learning and meaningful experience intersect, students are able to develop a stronger understanding of issues, while engaging in actions that help make a difference, each reinforcing the other.



Tips for Nurturing a Supportive Space

By creating a positive and trusting classroom environment, teachers can provide their students the safety and support they need for academic, personal and professional development. As a teacher, you have the responsibility to nurture a supportive space for your

students to succeed. Part of this responsibility is setting the tone, creating a physical space that welcomes them, inspires curiosity, empowers participation and supports the pursuit of knowledge. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Greet students individually at the beginning of the day and say goodbye at the end of the day.

Use restorative practices for discipline.

Offer students choices in their learning activities.

Consider the physical set up of the room, such as grouping students together rather than rows of desks.

Offer opportunities for students to voice their opinions.

Partner with another class to offer students leadership and mentoring opportunities.

Creating a Caring Classroom

There are five lessons in this module with a concluding reflection lesson to help students recap what they've learned.



Lesson 1: Get Started

Engage students in discussion on what “community” means and how to create a caring, supportive learning environment.



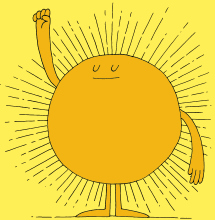
Lesson 2: Investigate and Learn

Students explore ideas about what makes a caring classroom environment.



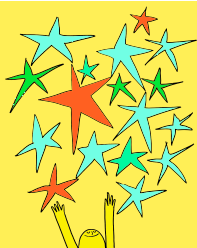
Lesson 3: Action Plan

Help students plan initiatives to create their own caring classroom structure.



Lesson 4: Take Action

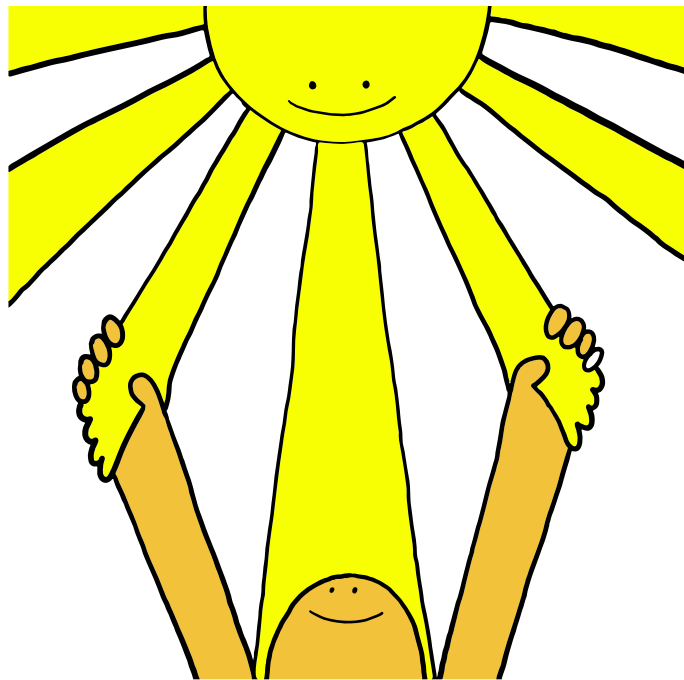
Support students as they put their plans into action.



Lesson 5: Reflect and Celebrate

Guide students in reflecting on their work and celebrating their actions.

Get Started: The Road to Learning About Community



LESSON 1



Purpose

Engage students in an active discussion on what they feel is required to create a caring, supportive learning environment. This will help set your classroom up as a safe place and ensure all students feel included and empowered to succeed in class.

Objectives:

Students will investigate and learn about the meaning of “community,” reflect on what a caring community looks like for themselves and hear each other’s perspective on what contributes to a caring classroom community.

Skills Learned:



CRITICAL THINKING



COMMUNICATION SKILLS



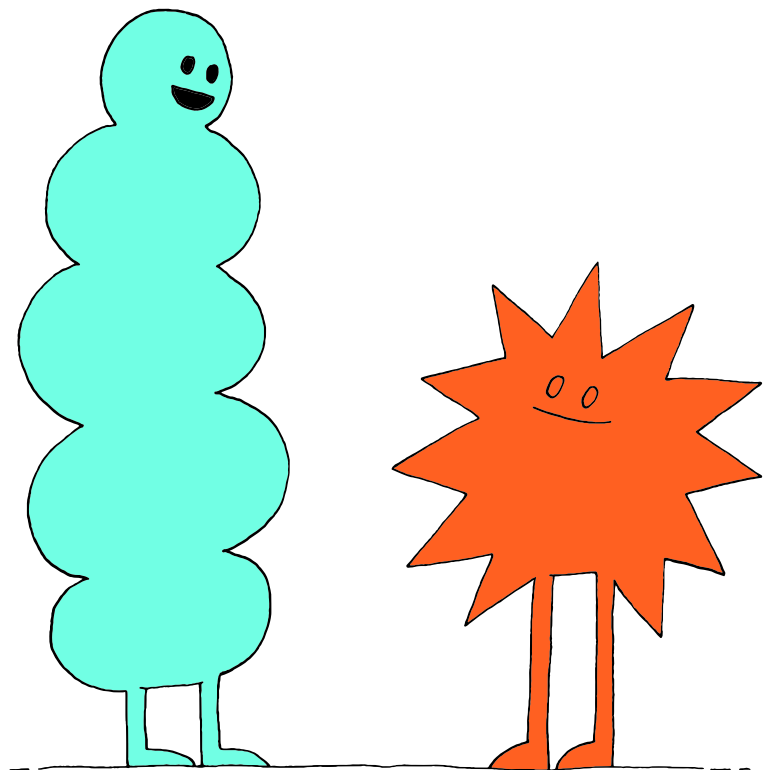
REFLECTION SKILLS

Estimated Time:

30 to 40 minutes

Materials:

Dice (1 per pair of students), chart paper, markers, SMARTboard or white/chalkboard and cue cards.



Part 1: Introduction

Explain to your students that as a class, you'll be working together to create a classroom where we all feel we belong. They will all have a chance to share their ideas

and take action to create the kind of classroom they can all enjoy and feel safe in.

Part 2: Ice-Breaker Activity (optional)

The purpose of this group activity is to encourage students to relate to one another and build stronger bonds between them. They will identify similarities

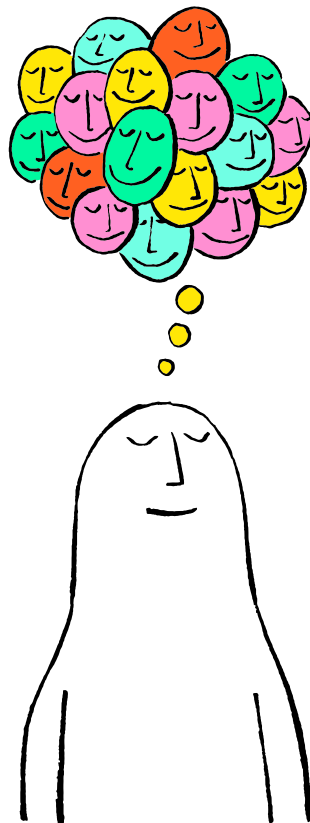
with each other and improve group cohesion in the classroom. Choose one of the following warm-up activities:

Activity: Pleased to Meet You

1. Pair up students (if possible, pair students who do not usually work together).
2. Write six get-to-know-you questions on the board. Here are some examples, but feel free to come up with your own questions and tailor them to the group you are working with:
 - What's your favourite _____ (e.g., food, game, book, etc.)?
 - What's something that makes you laugh?
 - What's something you like to do outside of school?
 - What's something that makes you frustrated?
 - Who lives in your house (pets included)?
 - What school subject is easiest/hardest for you?
3. Ask students to introduce themselves and take turns rolling a die. Then, they will answer the question that corresponds to the number they rolled, answering two to three questions in total.
4. Bring the class back together and have each student introduce the other by sharing one interesting fact about them.

Activity: Would You Rather

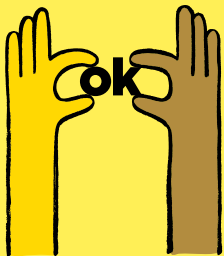
1. Ask students a “would you rather” question (either read aloud or written on the board) and designate two sides of the room for each answer. Feel free to come up with your own questions and tailor them to the group or use the following examples:
 - Would you rather be able to fly or be invisible?
 - Would you rather only eat your two favourite foods for the rest of your life or never eat them again?
 - Would you rather be the teacher or the student?
 - Would you rather make lots of money or love your job?
 - Would you rather live in a cave or a treehouse?
 - Check out [conversationstartersworld.com/would-you-rather-questions](https://www.conversationstartersworld.com/would-you-rather-questions) for more examples.
2. Once students have chosen their answer, they will move to the designated side of the room and discuss with their peers who have chosen the same option.
3. After a brief discussion, invite students to share their opinion with the class and facilitate a friendly debate between the two sides.



Part 3: What Is a Community Discussion

Using the following guiding questions, lead the class in a discussion about the concept of community. Invite students to share their ideas and write them on the board or post sticky notes on a piece of chart paper. Through this exercise, students can access and share their previous knowledge about the subject while expanding their understanding of it.

1. Ask students the following questions:
 - What is a community?
 - What are some examples of communities we see in our lives? (school, neighbourhoods, racial and ethnic groups, religious institutions, fan groups/online communities who connect over common themes and ideas, etc.)
 - What are common characteristics of some of the communities we listed?
 - How are they similar or different from one another?
 - What are the tools and practices that you think communities use in order to succeed?
2. Invite students to write down their ideas using words, phrases or images.
3. After two to three minutes of quiet time, ask students to turn to someone around them to share their ideas.
4. Write the word "community" on the board or chart paper and have students add their ideas. Make sure to give an option for students to opt out of sharing. Then group ideas into themes.
5. Provide the following definition of the word "community" on the board:
 - The Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes a community as "a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society."
6. Ask students the following questions using the Popcorn Strategy/Share, a collaborative way to engage all students to share their ideas with each other by going around the class:
 - How does this definition relate to our classroom?
 - What do we have in common?
 - Why are we all here?
 - What is our purpose as a community?



Eventually, the class will work toward the goal of agreeing that, **"We are here to learn together!"**

Part 4: Caring Community Brainstorm

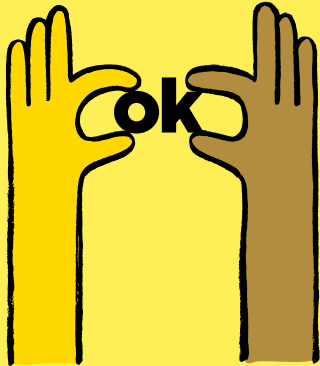
1. As a class, brainstorm what a “caring classroom” would look and sound like. Invite students to share their ideas through the Popcorn Strategy/Share and record answers on chart paper or another medium they can refer back to in the next lesson.
 2. Ask students what the word “caring” means. Have students share their ideas. After a brief discussion, explain that it means “to show kindness and concern for others.”
 3. Ask students what some examples of caring words and actions are that we might hear and see, such as: students helping each other, strategies for solving disagreements, daily greetings and goodbyes, being inclusive.
- Invite students to consider specific attitudes, actions and ways of being they would like to foster in the classroom. Ask students to think about the type of community they would like to learn in and what some things are that they should include in that community. Ensure the following topics are included if they do not come up:
 - How we speak to each other
 - How we solve problems or disagreements
 - How we want to feel in class (calm, connected, belonging)

Part 5: Community Think-Pair-Share

1. Ask students to take a moment to write down their initial thoughts on the characteristics they would like to see in their classroom community:
 - What would we like our community to be like?
 - Write down some key things that are important to you.
2. Give students a few minutes to write down some of their ideas on their own.
3. Invite them to share with a partner, giving each student one minute to share.

Part 6: Reflection

As a class, reflect on the lesson and offer students information about next steps for building a caring community:



"Today, we began thinking about what a caring community might look like in our classroom. Next time, we'll build our ideas out further and begin to make a plan to put into action, to create the community where we feel we all belong."

Part 7: Culminating Activity

Reflect and Celebrate

Distribute cue cards and instruct students to reflect and write or draw about one new connection they made a similarity they discovered and are grateful for. Collect, review and share with the class at the start of next class.

You could also create a bunting style banner or make a people paper chain with the student reflections and then display it in the classroom as a symbol of the ongoing conversation about community.



Calibrations (optional)

These optional ideas may help you adjust this lesson to your particular group of students.

Suggestions

- During partnered activities, try and pair stronger students with students who have more difficulties.
- For independent activities (e.g., writing tasks), check in with students and make sure they processed and understood the directions by having them recite them back to you.
- Allow students who struggle with overstimulation to go to different parts of the room during partnered activities to achieve calmer/quieter working spaces.

Differentiation

- Add symbols/images to any written directions to help developing readers.
- Instead of having students write down their ideas about what they would like their community to be like, have them discuss with a partner.

Challengers

- When introducing “community,” explore the different levels of community and where the school community fits into those layers. Placing the idea of community in the greater context may help students better internalize its impact. E.g., Home as a nuclear community, extended family as a community, your neighbourhood/town/province/country as a community.



Investigate and Learn: Creating a Caring Classroom Community



LESSON 2



Purpose

Help students explore ideas about what makes a caring classroom environment. Through this exercise, students will have the opportunity to build on their previous knowledge and deepen their understanding of the concepts of caring and community.

Objectives:

Students will engage in collaborative learning, reflect on what a caring community looks like for themselves and hear each other's perspective on what contributes to a caring classroom community.

Skills Learned:



CRITICAL
THINKING



COMMUNICATION
SKILLS



COLLABORATION
SKILLS



CREATIVE
THINKING



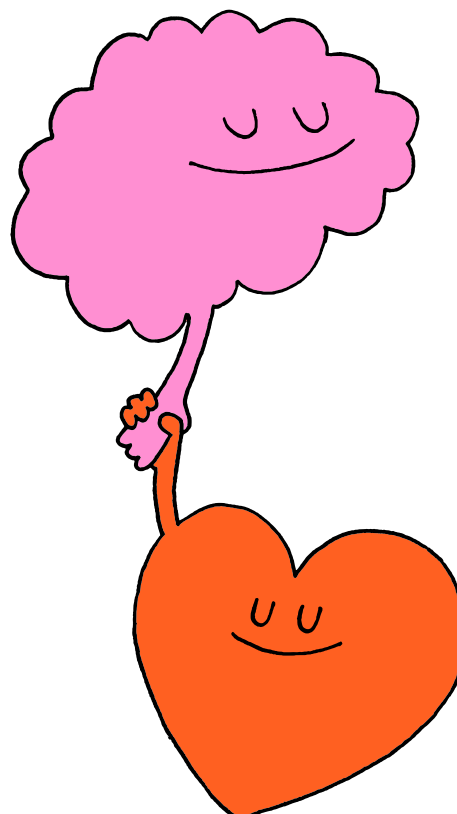
REFLECTION
SKILLS

Estimated Time:

30 to 40 minutes

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, sticky notes, SMARTboard or white/chalkboard



Part 1: Introduction

Invite students to reflect and share any comments they made on the cue cards from the previous lesson, where appropriate. The intention is to reinforce similarities and challenge students to reflect on what we

see as differences and how we honour those differences. You can also choose to use one of the community building activities from the previous lesson.

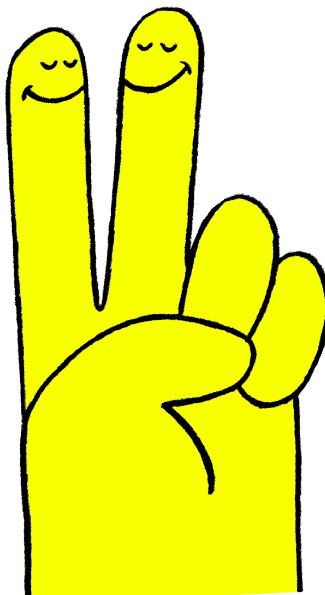
Part 2: Review

Refer to the “caring classroom” brainstorm as a reminder of the collaboration from Lesson 1. Remember, creating a caring classroom is a classroom practice that values diversity, invites collaboration and fosters social-emotional development.

1. Invite students to review their initial thoughts from the previous lesson about the type of community they would like to learn in.

Ask students to identify any other ideas on characteristics, conditions or values that are important to their classroom community. Record their ideas on the board. Include the following topics if they do not come up:

- How we speak to each other
 - How we solve problems or disagreements
 - How we want to feel in class (calm, connected, belonging)
2. Reflect on the ideas on the board to see if any themes or key values emerge. Ask students if they think anything is missing.
 3. Prompt students to remember these themes as you begin to move into creating a plan for cultivating your classroom community.

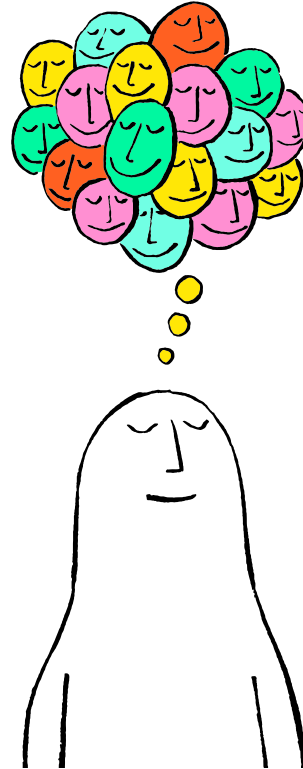


Part 3: Looks Like, Sounds Like, Feels Like

The purpose of the following activity is to collect students' ideas about what a caring classroom looks, sounds like and feels like.

1. Place three large pieces of chart paper around the room with the following headers:
 - **What does a caring classroom look like?**
How is the room organized? With desks, chairs, etc.
 - **What does a caring classroom sound like?**
What do the voices, language and communication sound like?
 - **What does a caring classroom feel like?**
How do you want to feel in our classroom: calm, happy, engaged, interested?

2. For each of the three categories, invite the class to brainstorm ideas to build a caring classroom (or school) community. Examples of ideas:



<p>A caring classroom looks like:</p>	<p>A caring classroom sounds like:</p>	<p>A caring classroom feels like:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desks are organized in working groups, rather than rows • Student art is displayed throughout the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of friendly, solution-oriented language is posted • Create communication agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A class charter is created to ensure inclusion and peaceful problem-solving • Students regularly move desks to have an opportunity to work with each member of the class

Optional

Invite students to move around the room in small groups to add their ideas to each of the three pieces of chart paper. This could look like three groups rotating together with three to five minutes at each poster.

Invite students to design a “sky’s the limit” caring classroom, independently or working in groups, to make a list of creative options or present their own classroom design. For example, if anything was possible with no limitations, what would the ultimate caring classroom look like?

- Nap/chill time
- Unlimited snacks
- Feel good music playing

- Comfort items
- Opportunities to socialize and connect
- Conflict resolution tactics

The idea is to tap into their initial thoughts/desires and notice what students seem most responsive to. Then segue into the looks/feels/sounds of a caring classroom community, keeping in mind how they can make their “sky’s the limit” vision possible within the realistic context of the classroom.

Notice what students seem most responsive to and build upon the feeling or intention of those ideas, not the actual action. For example, if it isn’t realistic to listen to music all class, what feeling does listening to music elicit?



Part 4: Reflecting on Community

You can choose to have either a class discussion or a small group reflection to help students reflect on the three categories.

Class Discussion

1. Ask students to take a moment to read each category's list and find common themes.
2. Have a concluding discussion as a class. Use the following guiding questions:
 - What do you notice about our lists?
 - Are there common themes?
 - Is there anything missing?
3. Working together, synthesize three to five core values or themes that emerge from these discussions. Record them for use in the next step of action planning.

Small Group Reflection

1. Reorganize the groups and assign each one to a chart paper. Instruct the groups to review the ideas on the paper and be prepared to share out loud with the class. Use the following guiding questions:
 - What do you notice about the list?
 - Are there common themes?
 - Is there anything missing?
2. Ask each group to share the most common conditions or themes that emerged. Prompt them that these will be the conditions that we will be creating an action plan for next.
3. As a group, work to synthesize three to five core values or themes that emerge from these discussions. Record these for use in the next step of action planning.

Part 5: Culminating Activity

Show the following quote and give students time to reflect based on the work they have done to build class community. Depending on the needs of the class, you could choose to have a class discussion, partner talk or encourage a quiet write or draw activity.

Be here. Be you. Belong.
This classroom belongs
to all of us.
– Brené Brown

Additional resources on student-led learning

- edutopia.org/discussion/how-put-self-directed-learning-work-your-classroom
- ferndaleschools.org/academics/elementary/self-directed-learning
- study.com/academy/lesson/self-direct-learning-definition-strategies.html

Calibrations (optional)

These optional ideas may help you adjust this lesson to your particular group of students.

Suggestions

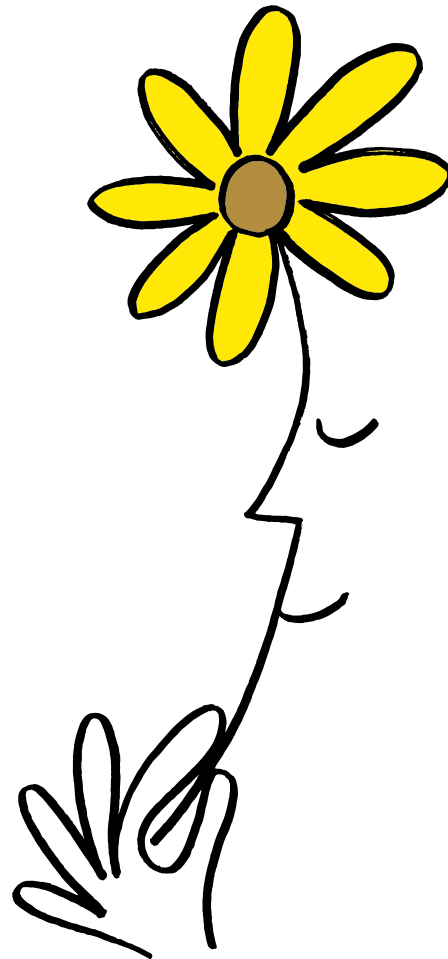
- Be mindful of groups; try and diversify (this includes gender, ethnicity, skill ability, etc.).
- For students who struggle with writing, a voice recorder that they can use to go back and re-listen to the planning session may be helpful.

Differentiation

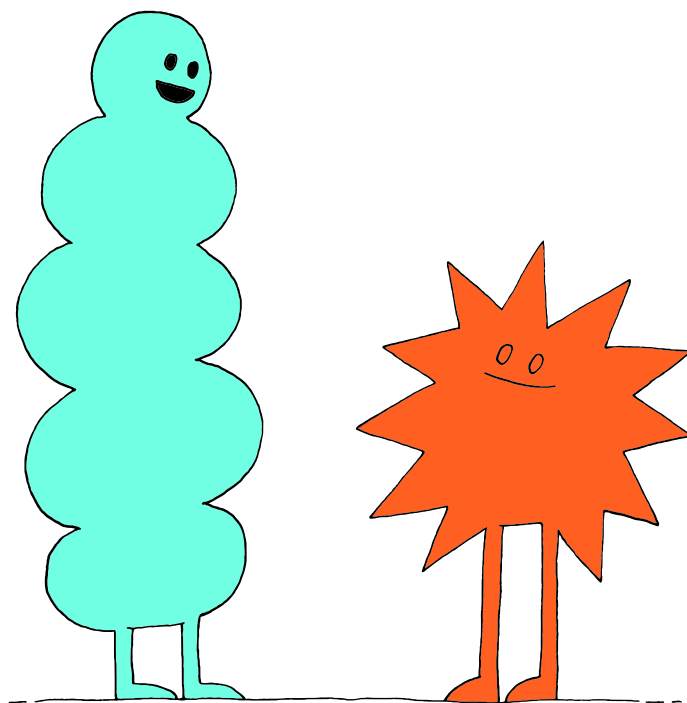
- For students who have difficulty organizing their thinking, it may be useful to provide them with copies of the chart paper lists and/or themes developed in Lesson 1 for them to write on directly.
- Offer concrete examples for them to build out (e.g., class meetings, a class charter, games for relationship building, etc.).
- Draw pictures to capture ideas instead of writing.
- Split up this lesson into three separate activities: How does our classroom look? How does our classroom sound? How does our classroom feel?

Challengers

- When reflecting on the themes developed on the chart paper, specifically guide them toward the concepts of safety, trust, engagement and support. Why are these four qualities important in a classroom? What may happen if they're missing?



Action Plan: Planning Our Caring Classroom Community



LESSON 3



Purpose

Through collaborative learning, this lesson encourages students to work together to plan their initiatives for creating a caring classroom structure. The activities included in this lesson helps students plan actions and address the topic of inclusion.

Objectives:

Students will engage in collaborative learning, create a plan of action to create a caring classroom community and consider how to support actions to increase inclusion and belonging in their classroom.

Skills Learned:



CRITICAL THINKING



COMMUNICATION SKILLS



COLLABORATION SKILLS



CREATIVE THINKING



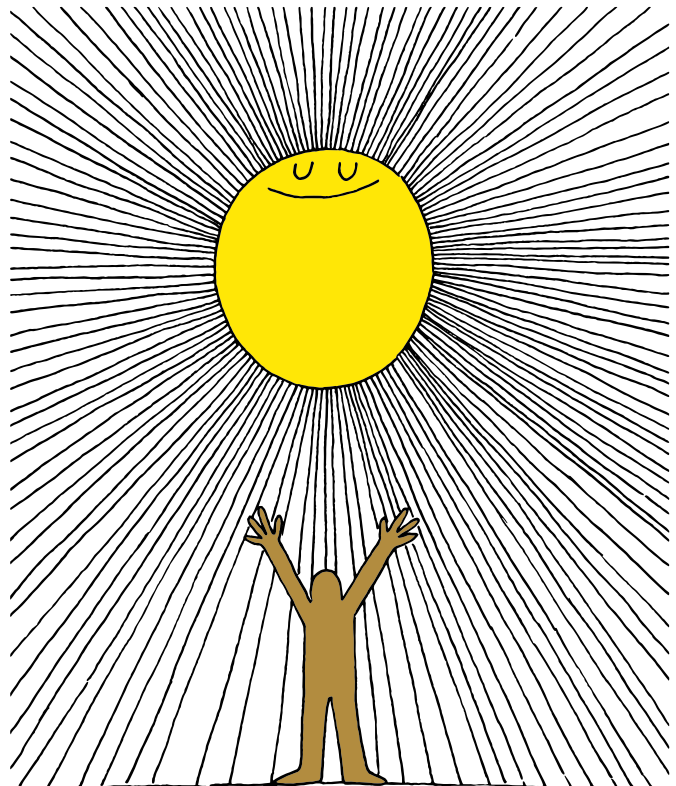
REFLECTION SKILLS

Estimated Time:

40 minutes
May take more than one session.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, SMARTboard or white/chalkboard



Part 1: Review Student-Generated Ideas

1. Display the three pieces of chart paper and have a short class discussion to review the key themes established in Lesson 2 on page 20.
 - What does a caring classroom look like?
 - What does a caring classroom sound like?
 - What does a caring classroom feel like?
2. After reviewing the key themes, ask students:
What core values did we identify that are important to us?

Part 2: Overview of Skills for Collaboration

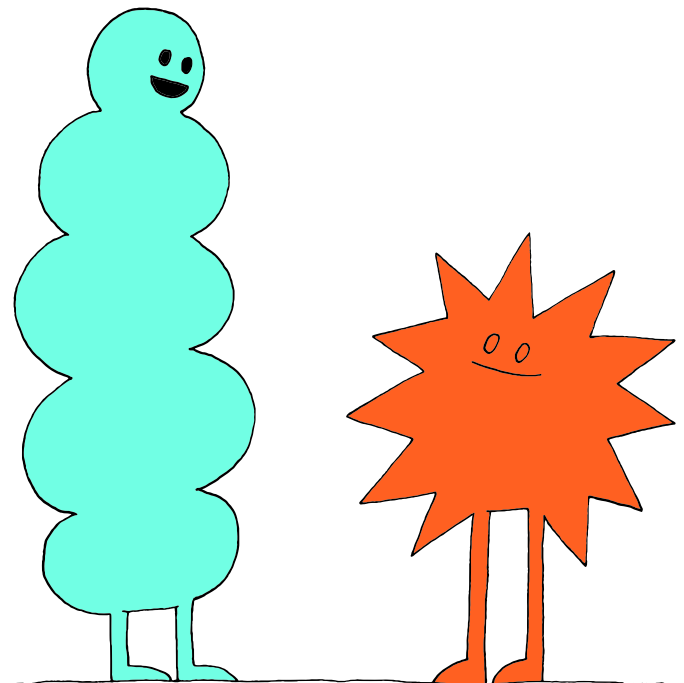
This step will help students collaborate by providing them with guidelines for collaboration.

1. Foreshadow the next activity and ask students what skills they might need. You can say something like: "Next, we are going to make a plan to create our classroom community together. To do this, we are going to work collaboratively."
2. Ensure that students understand the term "collaboration." Provide them with the following definition: collaboration means to work together with others to make or produce something.
3. Ask students: "What skills would you need to collaborate?" Invite them to write their ideas on the board. Examples:
 - Listen to one another's ideas and perspectives
 - Be willing to compromise
 - Ensure everyone has equal chance to participate
4. Find additional resources about collaborative learning on page 31.

Part 3: Planning Session

The objective of the planning session is for students to develop actionable plans to create a caring class community. In Step 1, it might be helpful to create groups based on the three brainstorming questions from Lesson 2 (Look Like, Sound Like, Feel Like). Then, in Part 4, invite each group to share their ideas and plan with the rest of class. Make sure to document the planning process by taking pictures or video. This documentation will be shown to students during their reflection and celebration in Lesson 5.

1. Arrange students in three groups to outline their action plan to create a caring classroom environment and encourage them to consider ideas that are simple and achievable.
 - Ask students to brainstorm potential ideas for how to cultivate this type of environment in their classroom. This could look like simple actions that can happen in class, guidelines for how treat each other or classroom routines/practices. Remind them to refer back to the notes they created on what a caring classroom looks like, feels like and sounds like.
 - Many of these ideas may have come up in the initial class brainstorm. Instruct students to think through each idea with regard to the steps and resources they will need to make it achievable.
 2. Invite each of the three groups to add their ideas to their accompanying chart paper (Looks Like, Sounds Like, Feels Like).
 3. If students are struggling to come up with ideas independently, follow the suggestions on the following page for ways to scaffold their thinking to reach the goal.
- Remind students that these ideas must be achievable by the group. So while they are encouraged to be creative and innovative, they must be realistic. For example, if they want to share food together as a celebration, what is a reasonable possibility?



Use prompting questions:

- “It sounds like you think _____ and _____ are important qualities to have in a caring classroom. Can you think of an activity or classroom alteration that reminds everyone or allows the class to practice them?”
- “Can you think of any challenges or boundaries that would make completing this activity difficult or not possible?”

Encourage students to use their prior knowledge:

- “What have you done in previous classrooms or years that you found useful?”
- “Are there any models you’ve seen outside of school (e.g., religious institution, sports practice) where a caring environment was established?” Try working backward: “Have you had experiences where you didn’t feel as comfortable? Can you identify why? What could have made it feel better?”

Provide the opportunity for exploration

- Offer a chance for students to do web searches for ideas (encourage them to come up with their own appropriate or helpful search terms).

Guide students to manage their resources

- Time. E.g., “We will have one class period to enact our action plans, do you think we will have enough time for your activity?”
- Materials. Set limits based on what you feel is appropriate. E.g., what is only in the classroom or already in your home that you can bring in.
- Identifying strengths and preferences for task assignments.

Support disagreements by providing resolution-centred language

- Offer communication repair prompts such as, “I hear you saying _____. Is that correct?”
- Encourage students to identify how they’re feeling so they can name it and move on. E.g., “I see that your arms are crossed and your body is turned away. It looks to me like you’re frustrated, is that right?”

Part 4: Sharing

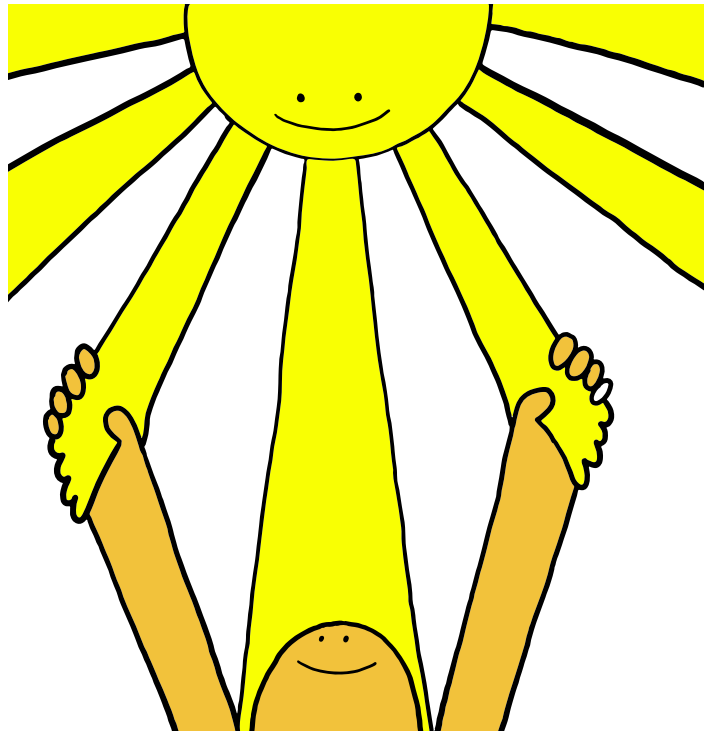
Invite each group to share their ideas and plans with the rest of the class.

1. Give each group time to present their ideas with the rest of the class. At this time, encourage students to ask questions and request clarification to ensure that each description is clear and each idea has an implementation plan.
2. As the facilitator, ensure that any potential challenges are brought up and resolved. For example, consider resources, space, time and accountability.
3. Ensure that all ideas are clearly articulated as the next step will be to vote on practices and actions, not core values or themes.

Part 5: Vote on Ideas (optional)

Use this step if you feel that there are more ideas than would be feasible to implement.

1. Let the class know that the next step is to come to a class decision on which ideas you will implement.
2. Distribute three small stickers to each student and allow them to vote for the ideas they would like to see by placing a sticker by that idea. You may decide that students must vote for three different ideas or can place all three on an idea they really like.



Part 6: Culminating Activity or Reflection

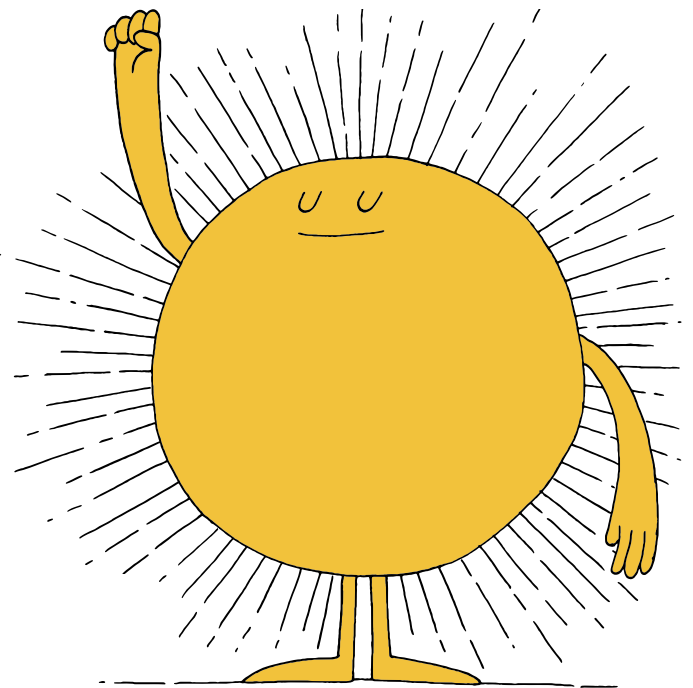
If you implemented the voting activity in Part 5, follow these steps with students:

1. Hang posters and invite initial feedback around voting results. Ask students: "What trends do we see? Are there any surprises or questions that the votes raise?"
2. Invite students to reflect on how they feel when seeing how the class votes. Remind them that we are not voting for individuals but for ideas. Validate that they may be feeling a variety of feelings (frustration, anger, sadness, happiness) when they see how their peers have voted.
3. Remind the class that we are working to create a kind and caring classroom where everyone belongs. As such we want to make sure that our practices and actions reflect the needs of the entire class.
4. Express your gratitude to the class and recognize that this is hard work. This can also be an opportunity to model how to express gratitude and you may want to invite students to express gratitude if appropriate.

5. Tell the class that the next step will be to put all of these wonderful ideas into action!

If you did not have students vote on ideas, close the lesson with the following steps:

1. Remind the class that we are working to create a kind and caring classroom where everyone belongs. As such we want to make sure that our practices and actions reflect the needs of the entire class.
2. Express your gratitude to the class and recognize that this is hard work. This can also be an opportunity to model how to express gratitude, and you may want to invite students to express gratitude if appropriate.
3. Tell the class that the next step will be to put all of these wonderful ideas into action!



Calibrations (optional)

These optional ideas may help you adjust this lesson to your particular group of students.

Suggestions

- Keep the three pieces of chart paper (Looks Like, Sounds Like, Feels Like) visible for the entire implementation of the Foundation Module.

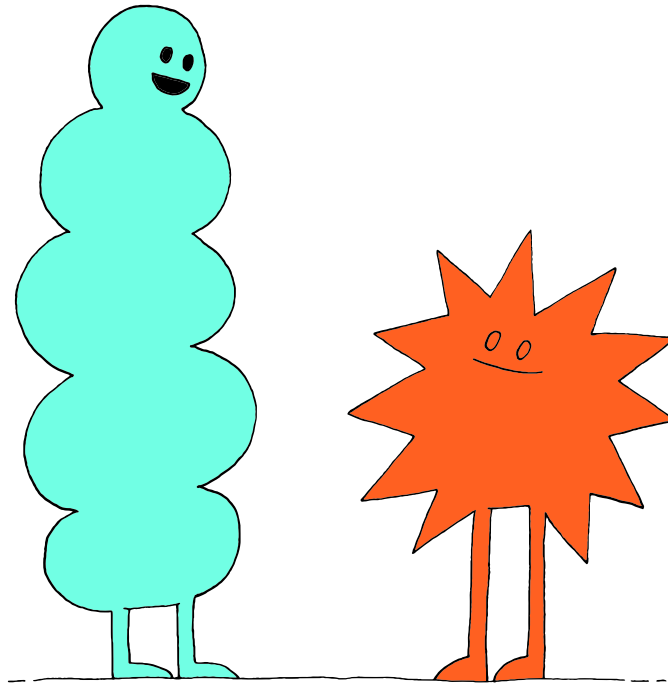
Differentiation

- Provide a visual organizer that helps students identify what information they need to create, such as the attached example of a Caring Community Action Plan Organizer.

- Offer concrete examples for them to build out (e.g., class meetings, a class charter).

Challengers

- Have students provide a written rationale for their action plan.
- Have students consider how their plan could be extrapolated to the other rings of community (assuming they did the challenge in Lesson 2).



Additional resources on collaborative learning

- edutopia.org/topic/collaborative-learning
- <https://owis.org/sg/blog/the-importance-of-collaborative-learning-spaces-in-primary-schools/>
- teachthought.com/pedagogy/20-collaborative-learning-tips-and-strategies

Caring Community Action Plan Organizer

Action Steps:

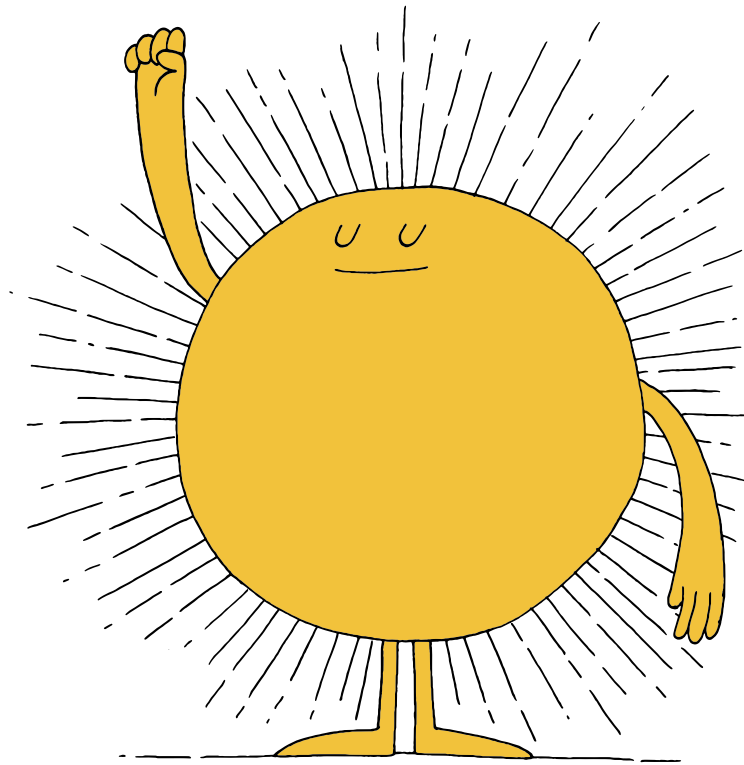
Person(s) Responsible:

Materials Needed:

Time It Will Take:

Potential Challenges:

Take Action: The Road to Creating a Caring Classroom Community



LESSON 4



Purpose

Through this lesson, students will work together to advance their plan to create a caring classroom structure into action. At this stage, students will start acting on their ideas and plans to achieve their goal of developing a classroom environment they want.

Objectives:

Students will engage in active learning and work together to take action to create a caring classroom community.

Skills Learned:



CRITICAL
THINKING



COMMUNICATION
SKILLS



COLLABORATION
SKILLS



CREATIVE
THINKING



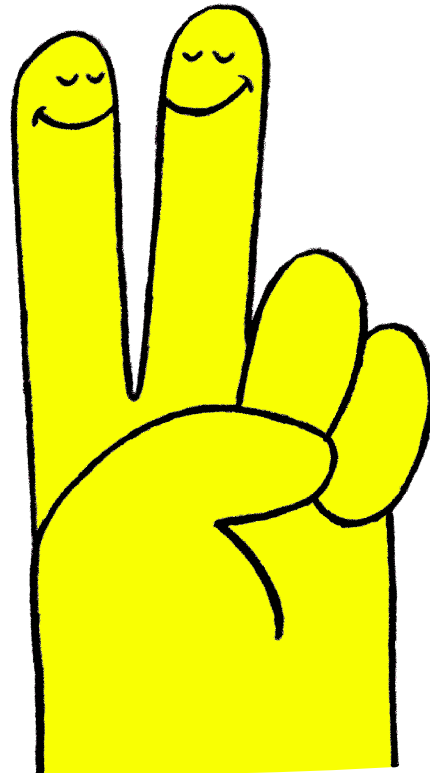
REFLECTION
SKILLS

Estimated Time:

30 to 40 minutes (for initial activity)
Suggest regular check-ins (e.g., monthly)
to monitor progress.

Materials:

Materials may vary depending on the students' action plan.



Part 1: Activation or Community Builder

1. Ask for students to reflect on the process so far of creating a caring classroom environment: Have they felt connected to each other and the process? Have they been able to be themselves in the process and been able to communicate their thoughts, feeling and ideas?
 - Visual representation such as sculpting, building or drawing using a variety of mediums: playdough, building blocks or paper.
 - Inside or outside circles
 - Partner talk
2. Choose a method of reflection that suits the needs of your class. Some ideas include:
 - Think-Pair-Share
 - Quiet write
3. Give students the opportunity to share their reflection with the whole class.

Part 2: Preparing to Take Action

1. Review student-generated ideas by displaying the three chart papers (Looks Like, Sounds Like, Feels Like) and have a short class discussion to review the key themes and action plans created in Lessons 2 and 3, and establish the key ideas that will be the focus of action, based on the voting results (if used) from the previous lesson. Include the following topics if they do not come up (encourage students to share specific examples):
 - Any key learnings so far?
 - How do we measure our success?
 - What does it mean to **maintain** a caring community?
 - What could we change or adapt to continue to grow our caring classroom community?
2. Review collaboration skills and guidelines. Have students' break up into their action-plan groups from Lesson 3.
3. Remind students of the main goal: creating a caring, safe classroom environment.
4. Allow students the chance to review their plans and remind themselves what they will need to do to create their caring community and maintain it.
5. Be available for questions and keep an eye out for a lack of engagement or participation to offer support and reminders.
6. Have one representative from each group share with the class—this is the opportunity to address any overlapping ideas.
 - If there are significant overlaps, have the groups merge. Students will manage reviewing the similarities and differences of their plans and combine them into one. Encourage flexible thinking and compromise as maintaining a caring community means growing and adapting in real time.

Part 3: Taking Action

Provide time for students to put their plan into action. Make sure to document students' actions by taking pictures or video to show the class during their reflection and celebration in Lesson 5. If students are struggling to complete the assignment, here are suggestions for ways to scaffold their thinking to reach the goal:

Use prompting questions:

- "What should you do, first, next, last?"
- "It looks like you're stuck, can you identify the problem? Is it an issue of time or material?"
- "It sounds like you've identified the problem. What element can you change to try and find a solution?"

Encourage students to use their prior knowledge:

- "Have you done an activity like this before? Can you remember any issues that came up that could be avoided by doing something differently?"

Guide students to manage their resources:

- Time reminders
- Flexibility about materials
- Task assignment reminders

Support disagreements by providing resolution-centred language:

- Offer communication repair prompts such as, "I hear you saying _____. Is that correct?"
- Encourage children to identify how they're feeling so they can name it and move on. E.g., "I see that your arms are crossed and your body is turned away, it looks to me like you're frustrated. Is that right?"

Part 4: Culminating Activity

1. Distribute a cue card and envelope to each student.
2. Lead the following reflection by instructing the students to imagine that it is now the end of the semester or year. Tell students:
 - Imagine how it feels to be at the end of the school year. Now reflect on the experiences that we shared together as a community of learners. How did you feel? What did you learn about yourself and classmates? What did you enjoy?

What were some of the challenges? Write down these reflections imagining that it is the last day of this class.

3. Invite students to include the things that they have personally done well this year.
4. Once finished, have students seal the card in their envelope and address it to themselves. Collect them and let them know that you will distribute them back on the last day of class.

Calibrations (optional)

Use the following ideas to help you to calibrate the lesson to your particular group of students.

Suggestions

- Provide a visual reminder such as writing steps on the board: First, Next, Last.
- Ask students to refer to their Caring Community Action Plan Organizer from Lesson 3.

Differentiation

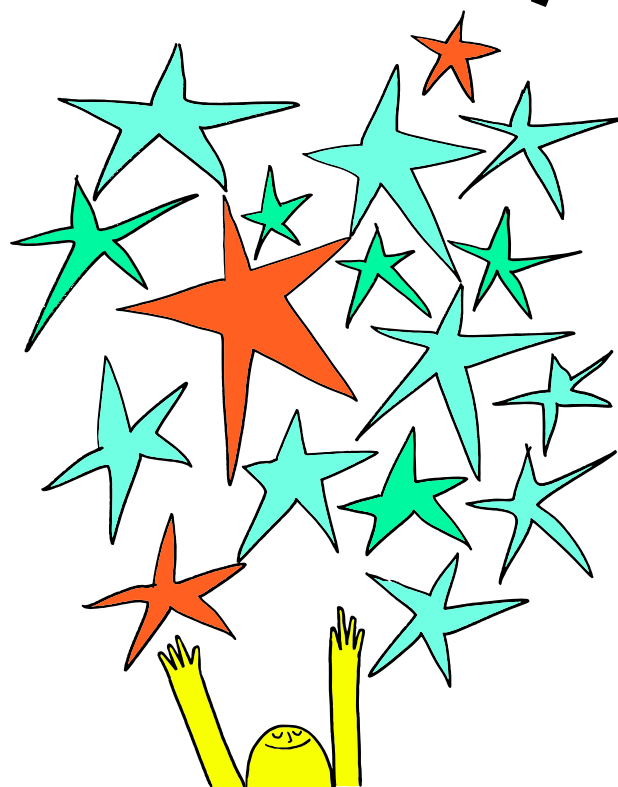
- Provide students with a “First, Next, Last” handout for them to fill out to stay organized before embarking on the tasks.

Challengers

- Have students write their projections for how their action plan will make a positive difference in the classroom.



Reflect and Celebrate: Reflecting on Our Community



LESSON 5



Purpose

Together, students will reflect on their work to create a caring classroom through this lesson. Reflection is an important part of this process as it encourages students to use their critical thinking and communication skills. Students will have the opportunity to look back on what they've achieved and prepare for future lessons and activities.

Objectives:

Students will engage in self-reflection and listen to one another's reflections on their shared experience building community.

Skills Learned:



CRITICAL
THINKING



COMMUNICATION
SKILLS



REFLECTION
SKILLS

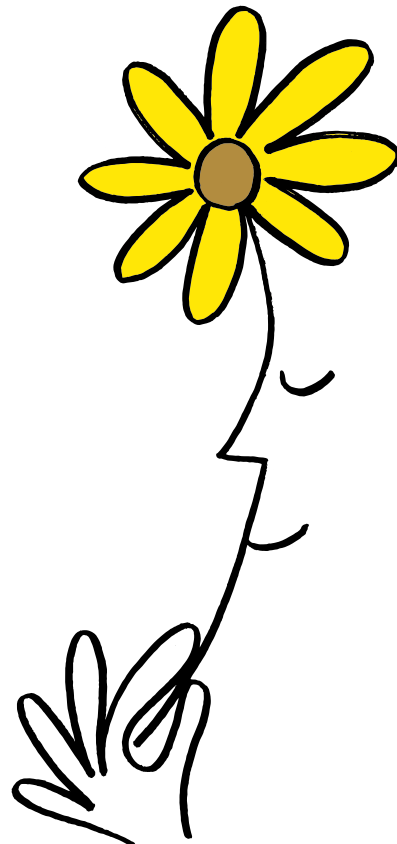
Estimated Time:

30 to 40 minutes

May take more than one session.

Materials:

Photos or video from the planning and action steps of this module, SMARTboard or white/chalkboard, note cards with envelopes

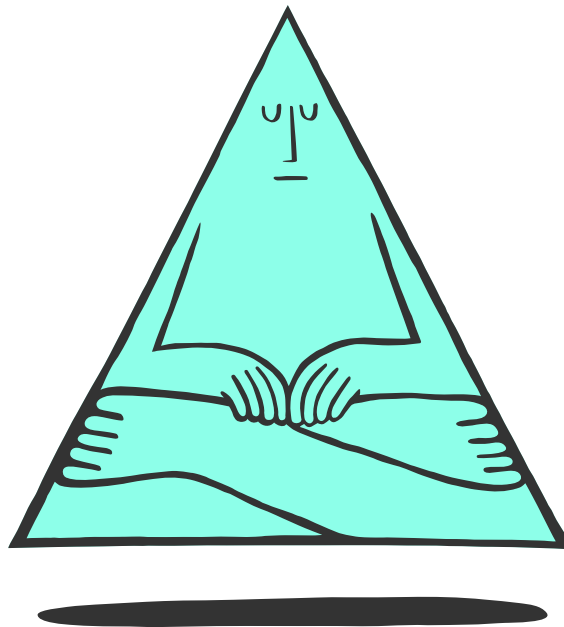


Part 1: A Walk Down Memory Lane

1. Display the photos or videos to help students remember their work fostering their community connection. This can be accomplished with a slideshow, video or photos displayed around the room for students to view as a gallery.
2. Instruct students to look at the pictures or video and notice how they feel as they remember their work building their community connection.

Part 2: Reflect

1. Invite students to take a few minutes to reflect on their own personal experience working with their classmates to build connection and care in their classroom.
2. Instruct students to take a few minutes to write down their reflections about their own experience building their classroom community. Here are some ideas to get them started:
 - How did it feel to work together?
 - How are you feeling now, after our work together?
 - What are some key learnings you want to take with you into the summer, next year, etc.?
 - How do you think our year together may have been different if we didn't do this activity?
 - Have you noticed yourself integrating our caring classroom community principles into other parts of your life? What are some examples?
 - What more would you like to contribute to our community?



Part 3: Connect

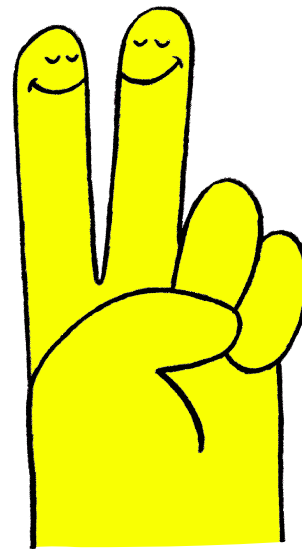
In a Think-Pair-Share activity, invite students to share with a partner their reflection on their community building experience. Instructions to students:

- With your partner, share a reflection. It can be something that you noticed, something more you would like to do or something you felt during our work together.

Part 4: Shared Reflection

Facilitate a class discussion focused on sharing students' reflections with one another. Ensure students engage in respectful, active listening for one another. Refer to the suggestions for introducing guidelines for effective communication.

1. Instructions to students:
 - Now, we'll share out loud as a community. Please share your reflections about our work
2. Facilitate a student discussion (Popcorn Strategy/ Share) and write student responses on the board.
3. After students have had an opportunity to share, facilitate a class discussion on next steps with the prompting questions:



Now that we have worked together to build the community we would like to be a part of, what would be some next steps to keep our classroom community strong?

- How do we ensure accountability on our actions and ideas?
- What happens if we stray away from our core values we established as a class?
- Do we check in our action plans as a group? How often? How?
- What happens if one of our members does not feel connected to our community?

4. Facilitate a student discussion (Popcorn Strategy/ Share) and write student responses on the board.

Part 5: Making Connections

Invite students to reflect once more and write down some connections they see between their initial reflection and those from their classmates.

Provide the following instructions to students:

- Take a few minutes to add to your reflections the connections you see between your initial reflections

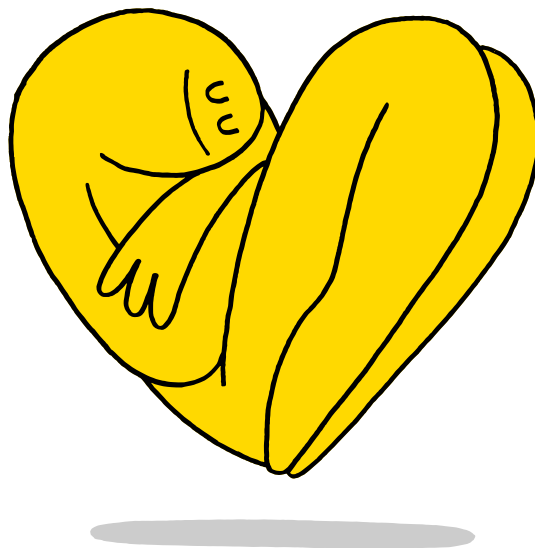
and your classmates' experiences of our community building.

- Also note any next steps you think you could take to continue building care and connection in our classroom.

Part 6: Simple Actions

Introduce Simple Actions to Strengthen Community (on the next page), a set of simple actions designed to promote transferable learning, that will follow this lesson. You can tell students that over the next few weeks, the class will be taking some simple actions to continue to build their community and strengthen their connection to the larger community around them.

These simple actions are designed to promote transferable learning by inviting students to explore the module topics across four life domains: Self, School, Community and Home. After completing this module, students should be provided time to explore each of the following simple actions and write a personal reflection of their experience applying them.



Simple Actions to Build Community

Self

Students explore what community means to them.

- Example: Students write reflections or create an art portfolio identifying aspects of community that foster their sense of connection.

School

Find ways to foster a sense of belonging across the school community.

- Example: Organize partner classroom activities for older and younger grades to help foster connection, leadership skills and community.

Community

Invite students to use the four steps of experiential learning (Investigate, Action Plan, Take Action, Reflect and Celebrate) to organize an initiative to build connections to the larger community.

- Example: Connect with a local high school to help build a bridge for students during the transition from elementary to high school.

Home

Build a bridge from classroom to home, asking students to think of creative ways to build and extend the classroom community to home.

- Example: Create a student-led newspaper that shares classroom and school news with families, inviting families to contribute.

Calibrations (optional)

Use the following ideas to help you to calibrate the lesson to your particular group of students.

Suggestions

- During partnered activities, try and pair stronger students with students who have more difficulties.
- For independent activities (e.g., writing tasks), check in with students and make sure they processed and understand the directions by having them recite them back to you.
- Allow students who struggle with overstimulation to go to different parts of the room during partnered activities to achieve calmer or quieter working spaces.

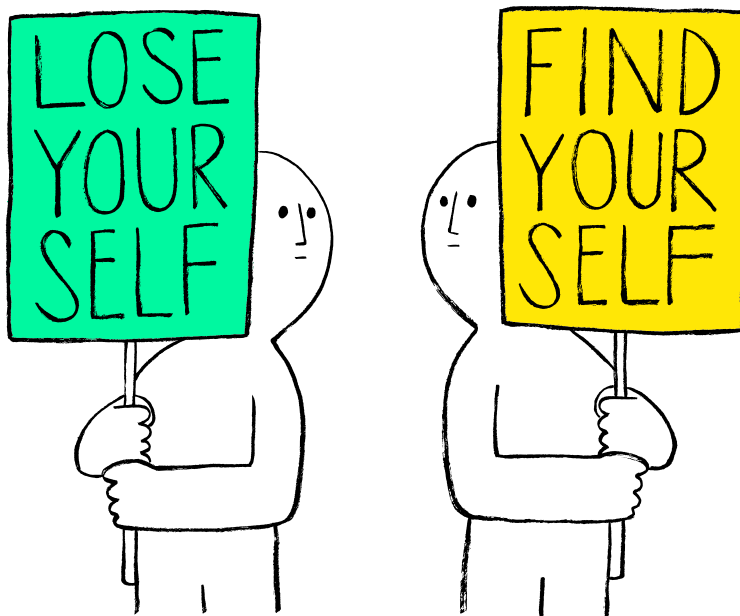
Differentiation

- For writing reflections, offer the option to list adjectives or a single sentence for each adjective.

- Remove the writing components and reflect as a class or in small groups through a discussion with the prompts written out and read aloud.
- In Part 4: Shared Reflection, offer an alternative drawing activity or spoken word recorded reflection.

Challengers

- Have students reflect on ways to extrapolate their action plans to the greater communities initially outlined in Lesson 1. What may work? What wouldn't work when scaled? Why?
- Have students find examples of other schools' "creating a caring environment plans" and compare and contrast.



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