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Creating a Caring Classroom Culture

Nancy M. Doda, Ph.D.
Teacher to Teacher,

+ Why classroom culture?

“The biggest achievement gap is between what a student can do and what a student will do.”

Eric Cooper, National Urban Alliance

~~NO TALKING~~ ~~NO SMILING~~ ~~NO WEARING WEIRD CLOTHES~~
~~NO RUNNING~~ ~~NO EATING~~ ~~NO DUMB QUESTIONS~~
~~NO KICKING~~ ~~NO SWEATING~~ ~~NO COMING IN LATE~~
~~NO BITING~~ ~~NO SWEARING~~ ~~NO COMING IN EARLY~~
~~NO LAUGHING~~ ~~NO BURPING~~ ~~NO LOOKING AT THE CLOCK~~
~~NO TICKING~~ ~~NO SNEEZING~~ ~~NO LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW~~
~~NO HOODS~~ ~~NO COUGHING~~ ~~NO SMART-ALECKY REMARKS~~
~~NO SPOONING~~ ~~NO CRYING~~ ~~NO MAKING STUPID FACES~~
~~NO SCREAMING~~ ~~NO CRYING DURING TESTS~~
~~NO GIGGLING~~ ~~NO DORKY HAIRSTYLES~~



Mrs. Mutner liked to go over a few of her rules on the first day of class

“Middle school teachers should know that the kids in middle are very stressed. From classes to social status to expectations, the school can be a very strenuous place. A lot of kids worry about popularity. The way other kids act towards others can be very harsh on someone’s self-esteem. That will affect the quality of the work the kids do.”

+ Quality Relationships

“The key to being a good teacher is knowing the kids. You have to know every single one and have a relationship with every single one. I think that one thing that really allows me to work hard is knowing that my teacher knows where I am in life at that moment. If they don’t know me, I will tend not to work as hard for them.”

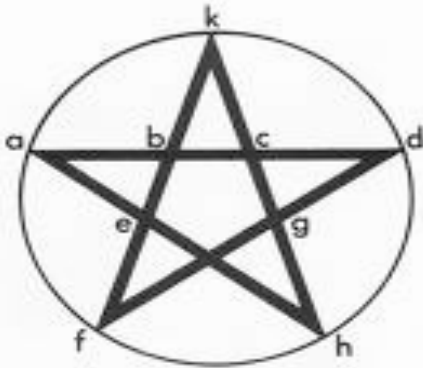
+ Our Findings

1. We long to be known and trusted.
2. We learn best when we feel safe.
3. We want to be treated as if we are all different but all equally special.
4. We want to learn important stuff that matters in the world and in life.
5. We learn best when we are actively engaged.
6. We respect adults who are human and tender.

+ School Connectedness

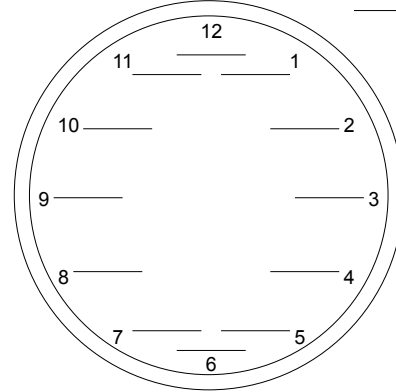
“Students are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and succeed academically when they feel connected to school....School connectedness was found to be among the strongest protective factors for both boys and girls,and was directly linked to the quality of peer relationships in school. (CDC, 2009)

+ Five Point Star



Clock Appointments

Name



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+ Read and Say Something

- 1. Sit with your Clock Appointment.
- 2. Make a Plan: Mark Reading Stopping Points.
- 3. Each reads silently for 5 minutes or stops at agreed spot. Say something about what you have just read. Continue....
- 4. Read on to next stopping place and repeat.
- 5. Make one list of take aways to share.



+ Why Address Classroom Culture:
Powerful Facts

1. Students who don't feel accepted by peers are 8 times more likely to drop-out.
2. Students who feel ignored or poorly understood by teachers are likely to perform poorly in school.
3. Deficient emotional skills may be the primary reason more than 50% of marriages end in divorce.
4. Social skills and dispositions can be taught and learned.
5. In the work world, IQ gets you hired, but Emotional & Social Intelligence gets you promoted.



+ The Goals

- Eliminate Strangers & Dispel Stereotypes
- Help Students Understand Differences
- Establish and Practice Community Norms
- Teach and Practice Social Skills
- Coach Class and Self Assessment

**+
Eliminate Strangers**

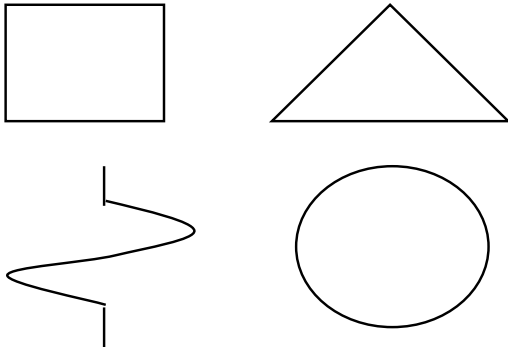
+ Knowing Students Well

- ✓ Inventories
- ✓ Student Observations
- ✓ Students Letters to Teachers
- ✓ Parents Letters to Us
- ✓ Questions and Concerns from Students
- ✓ Self-Assessment

+ Building Trust

- Speed Dating
- Rain Dance
- Balloon Toss
- CPR
- Check-In

WHAT IS YOUR PREFERENCE??



+ Teach Multiple Intelligence

- Verbal
- Mathematical
- Spatial
- Kinesthetic
- Musical
- Interpersonal
- Intrapersonal
- Naturalist

+ Heart Map Interviews




+ Sample Favorites

- Who Am I? Who are We?
- Multiple Intelligence Surveys
- Life Lines
- Heart Maps and Peer Interviews
- The Community
 - Our Agreements
 - CPR; Protocols for Listening and Sharing
 - Service Projects
- SEL
 - Read Alouds
 - Goal Setting Tools
 - Monthly Meetings

+
Create a Community

Through the Cracks



Carolyn Sollman
Barbara Emmons Judith Paolini

+ Establishing Working
+ Agreements

**MEET CHRIS OPITZ,
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
(SEE EDUTOPIA.ORG)**

+ **Working Agreements:** *When we are doing
this well, what does it look like?*

- Listening
- Speaking
- Behavior
- Thinking

Teacher-Chris Opitz

+ Decisions for Students to Consider

- How to Share Materials
- How to Share the Load
- How to Encourage a Peer
- How to Get a Good Discussion Going
- How to Get Help when Needed
- How to Organize the Classroom Space
- How to Disagree Respectfully
- How to Keep Ourselves Motivated and Focused

+ How Will We Live Together This Year?

Our Class Affirmations

CARING CAUTIOUS
COOPERATIVE
COURAGEOUS CREATIVE
FRIENDLY
RESPONSIBLE

+ Sample Constitution

Preamble

We, the students of Watershed, in order to form a more perfect classroom, establish justice, insure tranquility, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of learning, do approve and establish this Bill of Rights for the Watershed Class of Radnor Middle School.

+ *Everyone in Watershed has the right:*

- ✓ to be treated with respect;
- ✓ to be equal with everyone else;
- ✓ to have fun;
- ✓ to be heard;
- ✓ to have their own ideas;
- ✓ to share their ideas;
- ✓ to speak freely;
- ✓ to feel that their materials are safe;
- ✓ and to expect everyone to do his or her share of the work.

+ **Clock Appointments**

Name _____

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+ Coaching the Caring Culture

SOUNDINGS MID-YEAR ASSESSMENT YEAR _____

Name: _____

Please give an example to illustrate how you have lived up to each of our affirmations:

1. Confident:
2. Responsible:
3. Curious:
4. Independent:
5. Motivated:

LITERATURE CIRCLE EVALUATION SHEET

Names				
Came prepared to share job				
Participated in discussions				
Gave constructive feedback				
Stayed on task				

+ Class Developed Rubric

We're looking for:

- Equal Participation
- Friendliness and Encouragement
- Asking Follow-Up Questions
- Using First Names
- Eye-to-Eye and Knee-to-Knee

(Developed by 9th graders)



+ Responsibility Through Roles

- Discussion Director
- Group Guru
- Connector
- Passage Master
- Keeper of the Book/Notes
- Desks and Space
- Tech Trouble Shooter



+ Protocols to Support The Culture

- Check-In
- Circle of Power & Respect
- Paraphrase Passport
- Dialogue Journals
- Self-Assessment
- Class Debrief



+ Resources

- Teaching Tolerance
- Center for 4th & 5th R's
- Don't Laugh at Me; No Name Calling
- Responsive Classroom
- CASEL
- Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR)



+ Web Resources

- <http://www.teachablemoment.org/elementary/problemsolving.html>
- www.esrmetro.org
- www.teachingtolerance.org
- www.Randomkids.org
- www.karmatube.org
- www.ascd/wholechild.org

For added resources and
+ power point, go to:
www.teacher-to-teacher.com

Username=SDE
Passcode=summer