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Creating a Community Within the Classroom

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Creating a Classroom Community

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Defining a Classroom Community

A classroom community is a classroom in which students cultivate supportive friendships, feel safe to share, are respectful, value honesty, and above all care about each other and their teacher.

Research Questions

1. How can I create a community environment within the classroom?
2. What does a classroom community look like within a fourth grade classroom?
3. What are the positive impacts that a classroom community has upon students and teachers?



Strategies for Creating a Classroom Community

Modeling

- Modeled Specific Behaviors and Values: respect for others, responsibility, honesty, and showing support for fellow classmates
- Modeled methods of communication
- Lesson that incorporated and modeled specific behaviors and values
- Created and implemented classroom bonding activities after school
- Had open dialogue with students that involved active listening
- Genuinely cared about each student in the classroom and supported them each day academically, socially, and emotionally
- Treated mistakes as a part of the learning process
- Promoted social problem solving skills. Helped students to talk through and solve problems
- Conducted classroom discussions about behaviors and exceptions almost daily
- Greetings and Goodbyes each day
- Fostered expectations that students were to do their best and were to be proud of the work they turn in
- Made a "Meet Miss Porter" scrapbook. I continually shared appropriate aspects of my life with students
- Bag About Me: students brought in five objects that were important to them and helped describe them as a person (I also participated in the activity)

Differentiating Instruction

- Tailored curriculum to meet needs of all students to ensure all students were able to participate and understand lessons and concepts.
- Connected curriculum to students lives and interests

Collaborative learning

- Created "Follow Through Friends." Students paired by ability level in order for them to learn how to help one another, make new friendships and work together towards a common goal.
- Also worked on how to effectively work with others in the classroom.

Methodology

Data for this inquiry was drawn from the following sources:

- Personal reflections
- Field notes
- Lesson plans
- Activities

My study involved modeling specific behaviors and values, such as respect for others, responsibility, valuing honesty, and showing support for fellow classmates, all of which I expected of my students in the classroom. I also developed lessons to further discuss these behaviors and values and authentically incorporated them into the class's everyday routines to increase the likelihood of internalization by students. During the study, I also created a program called "Follow Through Friends." This program was designed to pair students who could benefit from working together. By pairing students, I was allowed to closely observe their interactions and the changes in their behaviors as result of my modeling, teaching, and authentic integrations.

Results

- Implementation of strategies for creating classroom community were successful. Students cultivated supportive friendships, felt safe to share, demonstrated respect, honesty, and care for each other and their teacher.
- Promoting and modeling caring behaviors and respect towards others led students engage in caring and respectful acts
- Differentiating instruction-promoted a caring environment within the classroom in which students felt their needs were met.
- The "Follow Through Friend" program helped students learn how to work cooperatively and created a sense of togetherness within the classroom.
- Students work together towards a common goal of education. They feel supported and encouraged by one another and cared for by their teacher.
- Students felt more confident to take educational risks within the classroom, and treated their peers and teachers with kindness and respect.
- Less class time spent on classroom management

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As a teacher I feel I have a moral obligation to help the children in my classroom grow toward becoming full human beings and to feel successful. Teaching cognitive skills is not enough...