

ESTIMATED TIME

2 class periods

PREREQUISITES

Because this is one of the first lessons of the school year, there are no specific prerequisites. It is important, though, to be consistent with the ground rules established by the class during this lesson. Consistency in respecting the ground rules and the students will ensure a healthy community in the classroom.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- *Community Building Rubric*
- *Reflection on Community*

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

No matter what academic discipline, building a healthy learning community in the classroom is critical to student success. Students need to feel safe, valued, and respected by all in the classroom in order to grow effectively as learners.

LESSON GOAL

Reflect on and discuss the broad term *community* and begin building community as a class.

Essential Question

What is community?

Student Expectations

1. Complete a thoughtful written reflection on personal definition of community.
2. Participate in discussion on what community is and what kind of community should be established in the classroom.
3. Complete a personal shield that reveals important things about yourself.
4. Present shield to the class.
5. Reflect on personal understanding of building community.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Explore various definitions of community within the group.
2. Creatively introduce students to each other.
3. Begin establishing a culture of respect and safety in the classroom.

RATIONALE

In order to build authentic community within a classroom, the students and the teacher must begin to know one another in a safe environment. When students feel safe and respected, they are more comfortable sharing their feelings and thoughts. Reflection and discussion are critical components to experiential education. Learning occurs when students process what happened in a situation by sharing what they struggled with or what they discovered. Getting insight and thoughtful questions from the teacher and the other students as they process brings deeper reflection and learning. Most students will not share these personal thoughts unless they know those in the class and feel cared for and respected by them.



Community Building Rubric



Reflection on Community

PROCEDURES: WHAT TO DO

- 1. WHOLE GROUP** Distribute the *Community Building Rubric* to provide an overview of the lesson and how students will be evaluated. Then begin this lesson with a discussion about the word *community* and how it is used often in our society. Explain that it has many meanings depending on who is using it. Explain that students will reflect on their own definitions of community and then decide as a class what kind of community they want to have in this class.

ASSESSMENT

Community Discussion Participate in a discussion about community.

- 2. INDIVIDUAL** Pass out the *Reflection on Community* handout. Encourage students to think through all the different areas of their lives and their experiences with their various communities as they complete the activity.



ASSIGNMENT 1

- 3. WHOLE GROUP** Discuss the *Reflection on Community*. Talk about the various definitions of community and how the definitions differ. List all the different kinds of communities on the board (i.e. neighborhood, school, team, youth group, work place, United States, the globe, etc.). Explore ideas about building community and destroying community. After all the ideas of community are discussed, ask students what they want this classroom community to be like. Decide as a group what they want their community to be about in this class.

Have students use the *Sakai* Assignments Tool to submit their work for evaluation.

ASSESSMENT

Reflection on Community Complete the reflection on communities.

- 4. WHOLE GROUP** Explain that the first step to building healthy com-



ASSIGNMENT 2

munity within a group of people is knowing one another. Explain the shield project, which is fully explained in the Student Lesson. Students will design a shield that represents their personal **strengths, hope, love, and goals**. Draw an example shield on the board. Share a personal example of the shield to introduce yourself to the class and break the ice by disclosing personal information to an unfamiliar group. Choose which categories would fit best for this group of students. More personal categories could include goals and dreams, a person the student admires, an inspiration motto, or what the student likes about him or herself. More superficial categories could include favorite food, family members, hobbies, or favorite movies. The selection of categories depends on the dynamics of the group.



Student Pages

If students seem open to discussion with one another, choose more personal categories. If the students seem reticent and guarded, choose more superficial categories that would be safer for the students to share. Inform students that they will be presenting their shield to the class.

Note: Because this is the first time students will share about themselves with the group, explain boundaries of sharing information. It would be inappropriate for a student to share something incredibly personal with the group at this stage, such as a traumatic experience. Encourage students to share what they are comfortable with, but it would be inappropriate to share their life stories with the group.

5. INDIVIDUAL: Students create their shields. Provide paper and markers or colored pencils for the students.

Have students use the *Sakai* Assignments Tool to submit their shields for evaluation.

ASSESSMENT

Shield Create a neat and colorful personal shield.

6. WHOLE GROUP Have students share shields with each other. Before beginning presentations, remind students of the ground rules that apply to their classroom's community. Remind them that respect of one another is critical as they share a piece of themselves represented in their shields. Demonstrating respect for one another means that they will listen intently and ask thoughtful questions when the presenter is finished. Have students write down one question for each presenter. Do not move on to the next presenter until one question is asked from the audience.

ASSESSMENT

Shield Presentation Present personal shield to the class.

7. WHOLE GROUP Review what *community* is and how the class can build community with one another through knowing each other better. Develop a vision for building community in this class over the course of the school year. Review the ground rules often in future classes as a reminder for the students.

REFLECTION

Have students reflect on the following questions. Have students use the *Sakai* Assignments Tool to submit their reflections for evaluation.



1. How has your definition of community deepened or changed?
2. What do you hope this classroom community will be like?
3. What was difficult about sharing your shield with the class?
4. What did you have in common with your classmates? What was different?

INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY

ANNOUNCEMENT

- Use Announcements to remind students of assignments and due dates.
- Announcements should be coordinated with Assignments and Schedule.

SCHEDULE

- Add Assignments to the Schedule.

EVALUATE/REVIEW

- Student Assignments
- Student Portfolio
- Add a test or quiz if desired.

LESSONS

- Review Lessons.
- Add Resources if desired.
- Change a Lesson if desired.
- Schedule a Lesson.
- Unschedule a Lesson.

COMMUNICATE IF DESIRED

- Blogger
- Chat Room
- Drop box
- Mailtool
- Roster

Ohio Academic Content Standards

Grade 10 English Language Arts

Listening and Viewing

1. Apply active listening strategies (e.g., monitoring message for clarity, selecting and organizing essential information, noting cues such as changes in pace) in a variety of settings.

Speaking Skills and Strategies

6. Adjust volume, phrasing, enunciation, voice modulation and inflection to stress important ideas and impact audience response.
8. Deliver informational presentations (e.g., expository, research) that:
- a. demonstrate an understanding of the topic and present events or ideas in a logical sequence;
 - b. support the controlling idea or thesis with well-chosen and relevant facts, details, examples, quotations, statistics, stories and anecdotes;
 - d. use appropriate visual materials (e.g., diagrams, charts, illustrations) and available technology to enhance presentation; and
9. Deliver formal and informal descriptive presentations that convey relevant information and descriptive details.

5. What did you learn about your classmates?
6. Why is it important to share who you are with your classmates? Is this a necessary step to build community in your classroom? Why or why not?

ASSESSMENT

Reflection Demonstrate understanding community in a written reflection.

ASSESSMENT

Use the *Community Building Rubric* to evaluate student engagement and performance in this lesson.

DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION

SPECIAL NEEDS

Students with IEPs may have extra time to complete the shield. Be prepared to lend assistance.

GIFTED AND TALENTED

Gifted students can write down the ground rules discussed verbally as a group and create a group contract for the class that all students can sign and commit to. Students could also write an essay about why the nebulous term *community* is used so often in our society in a positive way. Students can explore the roots of the word *community* and the ways the definitions for community have changed over time. Students could also write a comparative analysis paper comparing the nature of communities in the United States (an individualistic culture) and collective cultures that are communally oriented.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WEBSITE SOURCES

Preview sites for appropriateness before recommending them to students. If links are broken, search for similar information.

Community Building Activities

- Use National School Reform Faculty site in Bloomington, Indiana for additional resources and protocols related to community building. <http://www.nsrfharmony.org/protocol/index.html>
- Use this Tolerance.org site for additional resources, video, public service announcements related to tolerance and community building. <http://www.tolerance.org/teach/activities/activity.jsp?ar=676>

PRINT SOURCES

Community Building

- Jehl, Jeanne, Martin J. Blank, and Barbara McCloud. *Education and Community Building: Connecting Two Worlds*. Institute for Educational Leadership, 2001.
- Kagan, Spencer. "Teaching for Character and Community." *Educational Leadership*, October 2001: 50-55.