

The Morning Meeting

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The Responsive Classroom

1. The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
2. How children learn is as important as what children learn.
3. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
4. There is a set of social skills that children need to learn and practice in order to be successful. They form the acronym CARES—cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, self-control.
5. We must know our children individually, culturally, and developmentally.
6. Knowing the families of the children we teach is as important as knowing the children.
7. Teachers and administrators must model the social and academic skills that they wish to teach their students.

Purposes of Morning Meeting

1. Morning meeting sets the tone for respectful learning and establishes a climate of trust.
2. The tone and climate of Morning Meeting extend beyond the Meeting.
3. Morning Meeting motivates children by addressing two human needs: the need to feel a sense of significance and belonging and the need to have fun.
4. The repetition of many ordinary moments of respectful interaction in Morning Meeting enables some extraordinary moments.
5. Morning meeting merges social, emotional, and intellectual learning.

Teachers' Responsibilities

- To make sure the space is adequate and appropriate for the component. Can a circle form? Can all be seen? Can a particular game be safely played?
- To act as timekeeper, keeping things moving
- To facilitate the Meeting, making sure that all children are greeted, that a variety of children are responding to sharing, that the tone is respectful, ect.
- To observe students' skills—both social and academic
- To notice behaviors and to reinforce, remind, and redirect using positive language
- To make sure that there is equal opportunity to participate, that gender or personality traits aren't dictating participation patterns
- To make sure everyone in the classroom (paraprofessionals, visitors, parents, etc.) is included in the Meeting

Students' Responsibilities

- To get to a Meeting promptly and to form the circle safely and efficiently
- To participate fully—contributing actively, listening well, and responding appropriately
- To interact with a variety of classmates in the good spirit of Morning Meeting
- To move smoothly from Meeting to the next activity

Purposes of Greeting

- Sets a positive tone
- Provides a sense of recognition and belonging
- Helps children learn names
- Gives practice in offering hospitality

Highlights of Greeting

- Ensures that every child names and notices others at the outset of the day
- Allows the teacher to observe and “take the pulse” of the group that day
- Provides practice in elements of greeting such as making eye contact and shaking hands
- Requires students to extend the range of classmates they spontaneously notice and greet
- Helps students to reach across gender, clique, and friendship lines that form at particular ages
- Can employ strategies which challenge the intellect (patterns, acquisition of foreign language phrases, set making)
- Encourages clear and audible speech

Purposes of Sharing

- Helps develop the skills of caring communication and involvement with one another
- Extends the knowing and being known that is essential for the development of community and for individuals' sense of significance
- Encourages habits of inquiry and thought important for cognitive growth
- Provides practice in speaking to a group in a strong and individual voice
- Strengthens vocabulary development and reading success

Highlights of Sharing

- Provides an arena for students to share news
- Helps students develop the ability to gauge the appropriateness of sharing various kinds of news with different audiences
- Allows students to practice framing constructive, purposeful questions
- Helps students develop a repertoire of responses to different kinds of news
- Develops good oral communication skills—both presentation skills and listening skills
- Lets students learn information about each other
- Enhances vocabulary development and reading success
- Offers practice in speaking to a group
- Gives practice in considering others' perspectives, developing empathy and social consciousness
- Empowers students by letting them run their sharing

Purposes of Group Activity

- Contributes to the sense of community culture by building a class repertoire of common material—songs, games, chants, and poems
- Fosters active and engaged participation
- Heightens the class's sense of group identity
- Encourages cooperation and inclusion

Highlights of Group Activity

- Provides a way for all class members to learn a common set of songs, chants, games, poems, etc.
- Lets the group experience working together to produce an outcome impossible as individuals or a small group
- Demands cooperation
- Encourages inclusion
- Fosters active and engaged participation
- Allows students to see each others' differing strengths
- Provides experience in having fun together as a group
- Gives an opportunity to reinforce and extend social and academic skills
- Allows for the integration and practice of curriculum content

Purposes of News and Announcements

- Eases the transition into the classroom day and makes children feel excited about what they'll be learning.
- Develops and reinforces language, math, and other skills in a meaningful and interactive way.
- Build community through shared written information.

Highlights of News and Announcements

- Features a written message which welcomes and greets students as they enter the room.
- Gets children excited about what they'll be learning that day.
- Adds predictability and structure to entering the classroom
- Contributes to students' sense of safety and being cared for by letting them know that the teacher is prepared for the day and is ready for them.
- Affords a fun and interactive way to teach written language, math, and other skills
- Conveys that reading is a valuable way to get information you need.
- Builds community through shared written information.
- Builds a "warm-up" for the day's activities
- Eases the transition from Morning Meeting to the rest of the day.

Teacher's Responsibilities

- Prepare the message chart before students arrive.
- Model good printing or cursive writing and correct usage in the written message
- Use predictable language patterns
- Incorporate ongoing curriculum into the message and the activity
- Select the best format for reading eh chart in the Meeting
- Choose individual students to unscramble, decode, find errors etc., while still keeping the whole group involved
- Vary the kinds of skills featured in the chart activity
- End with announcements to help students make a transition to the rest of the day

Students' Responsibilities

- Read the message upon entering the room
- Follow any directions in the message
- Read or follow along with the reading of the chart during the Meeting
- Participate in activities based upon the chart before or during the Meeting.
- Listen to announcements presented

Settle Time

- Video Clip

Lyric's Voice

- Video clips of Betty Brown's second grade class morning meeting segment, news and announcements.