

COMMUNITY BUILDING IN THE GRADE 2 CLASSROOM

by

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ABSTRACT

The construction of an elementary classroom community is an intentional practice specific to each teacher and class. Knowing which activities will help build the ideal community environment can be challenging. I conducted a three-month autoethnography of my experiences and reflections as I attempted to build and maintain community in my Grade 2 classroom. I intended to look at my community building practice against the markers of a positive classroom community, and how it evolved. Central to my community building practice were individualized and inclusive practices, social-emotional learning, and greetings. Routines, sense of belonging, and responsive practice were the community markers most present. Finally, my practice changed in the routines and the prioritization of lessons. It is my hope that this study contributes the unique perspective of teacher-as-facilitator to this area of research. It was my goal to learn about my practice and if it aligns with key community markers.

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Community Building in the Grade 2 Classroom

Classroom communities are groups of children and teachers, each individually created from their own families, experiences, and with their interests (Ambrose et al., 2010). According to teacher-educator and author Margaret Golden, out of the Greater Good Science Center, the markers of a positive classroom community are, but not limited to, rapport, tradition, pride of place, a sense of belonging, a standard of personal best, academic engagement, and support of independence (Hannay, 2023, p. 4-5). The Greater Good Science Center, at the University of California, Berkeley, is an umbrella organization that studies psychology and sociology motivated towards supporting positive skills for a stronger society.

The way those seven markers of community are built into the primary elementary classroom can involve any number of activities and is a personalized and specific act for each individual classroom teacher to decide on (Shields-Lysiak et al., 2020). It can be distilled into the understanding that *community* is the people, connections, conversations, and shared spaces. Today the “one-room schoolhouses have been replaced by a large network of teachers, administrators, psychologists, and support staff, as well as partnerships with volunteers from the community and students’ families” (Grover et al., 2021, p. 332). Therefore, the classroom community begins, grows, and ends each year as a new group of students is enrolled because of the individuals brought together in that shared space. Only the physical structure of a classroom remains the same.

As a primary elementary school teacher, I have worked with well over fifty classroom communities in my time as a teacher on-call, a job share teacher, and now in charge of my classroom. I have also worked in more than a dozen school communities in my six total years of teaching. Despite these experiences, when I began this Master’s thesis dissertation I classified myself as an educator in the category of emerging teacher because I had only been full-time in charge of my own classroom for three years. This is now my fifth year of teaching. The next section explains my experiences and reflections about classroom community, including a problem statement of the areas of my practice I intend to explore.

Chapter 1 Problem Statement

Classroom community, its connection to a successful learning environment and how to build it has been an established area of study for researchers, focusing on the elementary, high school, and even the university level (Boyd et al., 2018; Garnett et al., 2022; Wang & Lee, 2019; Algharabali et al., 2019). There has been a rise in research being published in this area of study after the COVID-19 pandemic (Shields-Lysiak et al., 2020; Boyd et al., 2020; Grover et al., 2021). Researchers have

argued the importance of focusing on the classroom community and the classroom environment from the perspective of positive learning environments and fostering positive community values through powerful classroom routines. Classroom environment is the look and feel of the physical classroom meaning the lighting, aesthetics, organization of materials, and layout of the room (Cobb, 2014). In other words, classroom environment encompasses “the physical, social, psychological, and intellectual conditions that characterize an instructional setting” (American Psychological Association, 2018, p. 1).

Teachers spend copious amounts of time each year creating the optimal conditions for their students. Whether through the design and organization of the physical classroom space or the differentiation of access points to the curriculum to ensure all students are learning to read, write, and do arithmetic. Teachers’ work to create classroom community is vital to the heartbeat of classroom life (Grover et al., 2021). Beginner or emerging teachers have the extra task of learning to do all of this while also solidifying their teaching practice, knowledge of the curriculum, and settling into their staff community too.

Building a classroom community with a diverse group of learners is an area I intend to explore and uncover throughout the written body of this paper. I have found in my teaching practice that when putting a group of diverse learners together in a classroom for the school year, conflict can arise, difficult behaviours and emotions can occur, and in general, classroom communities can be quite dysfunctional and even fall apart. In the same week, students can also be supported by a classroom teacher to learn a variety of subject areas, learn from each other, and develop personal connections that last a lifetime. The next problem is that there are not many professional resources available on how to build and maintain a classroom community based on real classroom experiences of working with elementary-level students in a typical Canadian public school context.

The COVID-19 pandemic did not do teachers, students, or the physical classroom space any favours in terms of building a positive classroom community. The act of and experience of community is integral to creating a positive and productive space within which our students will grow and develop each school year (Grover et al., 2021). The global pandemic caused a lot of changes in schools worldwide, such as how students and their families interact with the school building and staff. For most children born in the 2014-2015 time frame that attended public school, their Kindergarten school year was completed via distance learning, and once they resumed in-person learning, schools did not offer many of the activities and events that were once foundational to our communities. Key activities and routines, like field trips and small-group learning, were not

able to be implemented. As was explained above, these classroom experiences that were once standard in an elementary school classroom are less likely to occur, and therefore, students are not receiving the opportunities for connections, conversations, and memories that they once were before the COVID-19 pandemic. Canadian teachers felt a similar experience of change and loss during the pandemic (Trudel & Sokal, 2023). Schooling was moved from in-person classroom learning to online schooling, where teachers were given a wide range of autonomy to connect and teach our students the best we could, technology was thrown from the sidelines, and support staff were stretched as thin as the teachers were.

The personal conversations, connections, and learning opportunities became so lacking when the students and staff were forced into online learning during the pandemic in schools across Canada. Our daily routines made way for daily moments of impromptu conversations, teachable moments, and the high-yield classroom routines. Evidence of the emphasis on community building in our school curriculum can be seen through the district's focus on Social-Emotional Learning and teaching. The CASEL framework states that social and emotional learning (or SEL) "can help address various forms of inequity and empower young people and adults to co-create thriving schools and contribute to safe, healthy, and just communities" (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2020, p. 1). The CASEL framework for SEL practices includes five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, which sits in the middle of the framework for the classroom climate.

I intend to study my experience of facilitating the building of classroom community from my perspective as an emerging teacher. I want to use this research opportunity to examine my teaching practice, reflect, grow, and directly apply my studies to my personal practice. I intend to observe and look out for what markers of community exist in the daily practices I incorporate in my practice, such as rapport, tradition, pride of place, a sense of belonging, a standard of personal best, academic engagement, and support of independence (Hannay, 2023). Which to me is what graduate studies for a teacher is all about. I enrolled in my Bachelor of Education program about ten years ago and committed to being a lifelong learner. I vowed that I would not become a teacher that teaches the same way every year and prescribe to one pedagogy or way of teaching. I challenged myself to keep learning, to try new techniques or strategies, and to improve my practice to meet the needs of the many students I will teach.

At the beginning of the observation period of this study, my students returned back after the two-week winter break in a way that I was truly surprised to see. They returned to being louder

and more disruptive, just as they had been back in September when we first began forming our classroom expectations and routines. September through to the beginning of November is that formative part of the school year where routines and expectations take the majority of the focus. I believe that this is because so much of September is settling each student into their classroom for the year and class placements are not finalized in my district until the end of the second week of school, not to mention the holidays and teacher professional development that takes up part of September as well. Therefore, all we are left with at the beginning is October and the first week of November to set the tone for the rest of the school year. I know for certain that I was not the only teacher who noticed a significant deficit in the classroom culture come January; it seems that between Christmas break and Spring break, a lot of teachers across British Columbia were struggling in this way (Lloyd, 2023).

Through the data analysis process, I will uncover insights into the process and results of my community-building process from the perspective of the classroom teacher. I hope common themes will illustrate a classroom community of care, connection, and conversation. I also hope the common themes will include new insights into classroom community and community building that I have not considered. Most of all I hope to come away from the process of autoethnography inspired and equipped with new information about my practice and building classroom community, whatever comes from this reflective exercise. Confirmation bias is a concern within this reflective, autoethnographic research study. Confirmation bias is “the tendency to interpret new evidence as confirmation of one’s existing beliefs or theories” (Oxford Languages, n.d.). Using a thorough data analysis process of coding and recoding, as well as the keen eye of my supervisors I hope to mitigate this risk.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

In this chapter I outline the existing literature and research looking at community building in the primary elementary classroom as a way of illustrating what areas of elementary classroom community have been researched previously, and I hope to show that the perspective of the Canadian Grade 2 classroom teacher as the facilitator of classroom community is a gap in the existing body of literature that I can add to. For the purposes of this literature review, I began by setting my search criteria on search terms such as “classroom community”, “elementary school”, and “morning meeting”. Then, as I read the research papers and journal articles that surfaced from the original search terms, I began to narrow my search with terms based on the various community building practices I was learning about such as “community circles”, “restorative circles,” “Maria

Montessori” and “Student Etiquette”. The literature review is categorized into three sections: historical perspectives of classroom community, classroom community in Western culture, and classroom community practices.

Historical Perspective of Classroom Community

Research on building and maintaining classroom community occurred before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic, and has looked at a wonderful depth of understanding. In our post-pandemic world researchers and educators have provided evidence of how important community with peers is to the well-being of all. For example, one research team conducted a series of highly focused ethnographic case studies of one teacher’s practices and experiences in building and maintaining community with Grade 2 students (Boyd et al., 2018; 2019; 2021). They use the ethnographic case study methodology to explore the wide variety of community-building activities built into the routines, structure, and dialogue of one Grade 2 teacher in the United States of America. In a recent 2021 article about their research, Boyd and Edmiston responded to the arguments of another researcher on how American schools (and perhaps this could include both Canada and the United States) have lost sight of the true value of Morning Meeting as a community building experience (Tilhou 2020, in Boyd & Edmiston, 2021). Morning Meeting is a fairly well-known structure and practice where students are greeted each day, greet each other, they check in on how they are feeling, and sometimes community housekeeping or restorative justice are weaved into the conversation (Kriete, 2003; Garnett, 2020). Tilhou (2020) argues that Morning Meeting used to be the foundation on which democratic skills were built in the classroom community. However, with the uprising of standardized testing there has been an overall push for academic prowess in students as young as Grade 1. The research data from two ethnographic case studies of Grade 2 and Grade 3 classrooms shows that the teachers they studied could skillfully weave in some academic skills into their morning meeting without taking away from the community building aspects of the routine (Boyd & Edmiston, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic had quite an impact on the classroom community, particularly on teachers, educators, and school staff members (Sokal et al., 2020). The results of this study of Canadian teachers indicated that negative attitudes towards the changes the pandemic brought to moving to online teaching, negative attitudes to technology, and to the support of administrators resulted in an increase in teacher burnout and a decrease in resilience (Sokal et al., 2020). Another study of Canadian teachers by the same research team looked at how to help teachers recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and continue their teaching career in a good way by looking

at survey results pre and post-workshop against variable such as connectedness, recovery, resilience, and organizational commitment (Sokal & Trudel, 2023). The same researchers referenced another body of research they authored about the perspectives and experiences of Canadian teachers during the pandemic, stating that several teachers interviewed left the teaching profession post-pandemic due to factors leading to burnout, such as being over worked and under-supported (Trudel & Sokal, 2023).

Classroom Community in Western Culture

Themes of community building occur from and within classroom discourse (Lloyd et al., 2016). Facilitation of community conversation where the value is in every voice being heard, creates a sense of value and belonging (Shields-Lysiak et al., 2020). Many other community-building activities also fall under the category of classroom discourse. For example, Boyd et al. (2020) notes how we-for-us dialogic values were fostered in a weekly song of the week routine and were an important part of the community markers observed in an American Grade 2 classroom. In the same Grade 2 classroom, another research team Shields-Lysiak and colleagues used an ethnographic case study methodology to look at a variety of greeting activities performed by this Grade 2 teacher (2020). This included greetings at the door in the morning, written greetings presented to students each morning during their morning meeting, and how students were taught to greet each other and guests that came to their classroom.

Community building can be a physical action, not just a conversation or feeling. In their ethnographic case study on a Grade 2 classroom in New York City, researchers focused on how the teacher and students co-authored a class handshake as part of their weekly community routine (Boyd et al., 2018). What the research realized was that the students physically evoked feelings of community into their classroom through the co-authoring of the class handshake because every voice was heard and valued in a fun and unique activity.

Other researchers have examined different perspectives on morning meetings and community-building terminology I have adopted (Boyd et al., 2018, 2020; Follestad & Wroldsen, 2018; Garnett et al., 2020). After discovering these perspectives on classroom community-building, I widened my search terms which allowed me to see that there is a more significant and researched understanding of the community building and maintaining process. For example, Garnett et al's., (2020) research is centred on the terminology of *restorative practices* and refers to the practice called *classroom circles*. Within their references, you can see that restorative practice is frequently referenced in other research. It does not just refer to restorative justice but also to the "community

building” concept which is of interest to my autoethnographic look at classroom community (Garnett et al., 2020, p. 113; p. 117).

Classroom Community in the Montessori Pedagogy:

Maria Montessori is widely considered as the great inventor of the pedagogy and belief that play is the work of children (Black & Davis, 2015). Therefore children can learn life skills and academic skills through play. I believe it is important to touch on the Montessori pedagogy and its philosophies associated with classroom community because it informs part of the core of my personal teacher’s philosophy. Growing up, I attended a Montessori school program in a multi-aged classroom from Kindergarten to Grade 5. My teachers taught me to greet them as I walked into the classroom each morning, to shake hands and give eye contact as I said “good morning” to my teacher. The tenets of grace, courtesy, respect, and peace influenced much of our classroom life (Cobb, 2014). It was the reciprocating action of greeting, the feeling of my teacher shaking my hand and greeting me by name that I remember so fondly. Teams of researchers have explored this idea of greeting by name and its place and impact in various age-grade classroom communities (Shields-Lysiak et al., 2020; Algharabali et al., 2019; Jibreen, 2010).

Community Building Practices:

In a 2020 publication, researchers interested in community-building practices sought to explore the perspective of students and staff enrolled in an elementary school (Garnett et al., 2020). They posed the following research question, “What are the experiences and perceptions of school staff and students participating in classroom-based, restorative practice community building circles?” (Garnett et al., 2020, p. 114). This case study took place in a Grade three classroom in the northeastern United States, within a partnership between a university conducting a community-based participatory research project and a local school district. The Tier 1 Restorative Practices Classroom Circles appears to be much like the morning meeting structure mentioned earlier. It really excited me to read this recent publication because it provided the perspective of both teacher and student on community building practices in a much smaller scale.

In their published textbook on implementing restorative practice, authors Follestad and Wroldsen guide readers on how to successfully implement the practice of restorative circles for the purposes of community building and positive conflict resolution (2018). The purpose of a restorative circle is to build community among students and between the teachers and students to create a positive learning atmosphere in which to grow and develop. Instead of just dialoguing in a traditional sense of teacher talks, students listening, and then the responding; restorative circles

allow for a much more democratic and student-centred approach. “A restorative circle is a way of talking with others where: all are equal and respected” and “All are given a voice and no participant is more important than any other” (Follestad & Wroldsen, 2018, p. 41). The restorative circles approach is a lot like the traditional morning meeting framework where students check in with each other by taking turns going around the circle, and whoever holds the talking piece is their turn to speak while everyone else listens. This gives the opportunity for everyone’s voice to be heard and valued equally.

The teaching practices of an American elementary school teacher highlighted in Boyd and colleagues (2018; 2020) and Shields-Lysiak and colleagues (2020) provide a look at some more varied approaches to community building. They highlight a variety of daily routines with the purpose of building community values, common language, and the feeling of community in a Grade 2 classroom in the United States of America. The various community building activities included ‘Song of the Week’ (Boyd et al., 2020), a coauthored class handshake (Boyd et al., 2018), student greeting practices (Shields-Lysiak et al., 2020), and teacher-to-class written daily greetings (Shields-Lysiak et al., 2020).

The Zones of Regulation curriculum program could be considered dated in relation to restorative circles but it is an effective and highly-used community-building and life skills-centred program (The Zones of Regulation, 2023). This program teaches students to name their emotions and identify their feelings based on four zones: red, blue, green, and yellow. The green zone is the optimal zone for students to be in when entering a learning task. The program encourages the teaching and understanding of self-regulation strategies for students to identify what zone they are in and then use a strategy to self-regulate and get back to the green zone. Furthermore, as students learn to be in touch with their emotions and share how they are doing with others, through daily routines such as morning check-ins with the classroom teacher or more structured routines like Morning Meeting, students practice listening to each other’s emotions and build empathy for each other (Kriete & Davis, 2014). Upon a quick internet search, a local school in one of the largest districts in British Columbia made the Zones of Regulation program part of their action plan to support students for the 2017-2018 school year (Surrey Schools, 2017) which is seven years ago now.

As classroom communities grow and change throughout the school year, and over time so should the teacher’s practice of community building (Lloyd, 2023). I don’t believe that community building ends in October once classes are settled into the new school year, nor should it end in

February. Therefore, I aim to explore more varied and responsive approaches to selecting community-building activities. Greeting students by name as they arrive in the morning, having a Monday and Friday community circle to open and close the week, and using a variety of activities on the days in between could help to build and maintain feelings of community.

Chapter 3 Methodology

I chose to use a qualitative research methodology, namely an autoethnography. I will be grounding the research and data analysis within a constructivist paradigm. My hope is to capture the construction and experience of community in my Grade 2 classroom from the perspective of myself as the teacher and facilitator. In qualitative research, the methodology needs to be described in detail because there is no one correct or required way to conduct such a study (Mertens, 2020). Furthermore, the choice to ground this research in a qualitative, constructivist paradigm is backed up by the notion that qualitative researchers consider truth to be an entity specific to the person or group (much like the constructivist paradigm). In contrast, quantitative researchers believe that truth is something to be learned, and it is solid and inflexible (Smith, 1983 in McGregor, 2018).

The method of qualitative research employed here is autoethnography. Autoethnography is a type of ethnographic study – Ethnography is a methodology whereby the researcher utilizes on-sight observation of a particular group or organization (Buscatto, 2018). The researcher's goal in an ethnography, in general, is to gather observational data of the group's daily lives, their perspectives, and make sense of the group. Autoethnography is an in-depth, focused, and context-specific ethnography where observation and artifacts are used to create a data set of experiences and reflections of the self. This quote captures why I chose to use autoethnography:

In general, qualitative research texts recognize the importance of researchers' reflecting on their own values assumptions, beliefs, and biases and monitoring those as they progress through the study (perhaps through journaling or peer debriefing) to determine their impact on the study's data and interpretations (Mertens, 2020, p. 272)

My main research question towards understanding the community building experience in the Grade 2 classroom is:

1. How do I facilitate community construction in my Grade 2 classroom?

My additional research questions are:

2. What community markers do I observe within my practice?
3. How does my facilitation of "community" grow and change over time?

I chose to conduct an autoethnographic study that was both reflective and analytical. This methodology lends itself well to an observer lens to highlight my experiences planning and

facilitating community-building activities (Buscatto, 2018). I wrote observations on twenty-five school days, detailing my experiences, reflections, and observations of this specific facet of my teaching practice over a 3-month time span. The data I am analyzing comes from looking for common themes, terms, and findings from the field notes, lesson plans, and artifacts I gathered while observing my practice. I applied an open coding data analysis method that involved reading the field notes I collected over my observation period and then reading them again to begin identifying themes among ideas that connected (Williams & Moser, 2019). Then, I utilized the coding tool, Dedoose, to refine the connected ideas down into themes. Upon analyzing the themes, I paired down the common themes into groupings from six themes to four based on common characteristics. All of the field notes and observations were about my experiences and, therefore, only highlight my perspective, not that of my students or colleagues. I also created supplemental data by compiling lessons and artifacts that provided more information about my experiences.

The constructivist paradigm lends itself well to this autoethnographic study because as the researcher and passionate participant I am directly involved. However, that means my personal bias and life experiences are also involved (Pitard, 2017). It is imperative I understand my position towards the research. The constructivist paradigm holds the ontological assumption that reality is not fixed within constructivism and is related directly to a specific time and context (Mertens, 2020). Constructivism, therefore, is a philosophical paradigm that holds true the idea that reality is socially constructed. There are multiple realities, and that these realities are rooted in context and, therefore, should be viewed that way.

The sample population related to this autoethnography is myself, a Grade 2 public school teacher from the lower mainland of British Columbia, Canada. The data set of field notes, lessons, and artifacts are of my experiences and perspectives of facilitating community building in my Grade 2 classroom over a three-month period in the 2022 school year. The sample population is entirely my teaching experience in this time frame and only represents my individual perspective, not that of my students or colleagues. Any students mentioned in my field notes are only mentioned in reflections or thoughts about the activities I facilitated, and were assigned a pseudonym such as “Student A” or “Student B.”

I first learned about the autoethnographic research method when I first read the work of researcher John Taylor at the University of British Columbia (2000). In his doctoral thesis dissertation, he comments on the value of autoethnography to the teaching profession and the education of teachers, stating, “The more we are aware of the discourses around us, and in us, the

more able we are to resist and negotiate those discourses allowing us a role in becoming the teacher we feel we want to be” (Taylor, 2000, p. 11). I feel compelled that I need to reflect and understand my practice as a teacher at a deeper level because I do not feel that I am the teacher I want to be yet.

The idea of ‘discourses in us’ resonates deeply with me (Taylor, 2000, p.11). I believe that the conversations, indirect teaching, and direct teaching that occurs in classrooms every day are informed greatly by the individual teachers’ personal and pedagogical values. The work of Boyd et al. (2018; 2020; 2021) speaks to this idea of community-building and the impacts this has on the students in the class. Therefore, I believe that this area of classroom teaching that I have chosen to focus on is a valuable area of study. I remember being in elementary school and feeling at different times a valued member of my classroom community. I am curious about what activities, lessons, and even small thoughts or conversations highlight markers of community in my field notes. I am curious if I will be able to see the community-building process and how it changes over time.

For the analysis portion of my autoethnography experience, I compiled all my notes, lesson plans, and artifacts that relate to my experience as a teacher and facilitator of community building in my Grade 2 classroom. I then analyzed this data set by looking for common themes using thematic analysis. This allows me to make sense of the data collected and look at my experiences constructing and facilitating community building, how these activities and routines are built, and how they evolve over time. In the data analysis portion of the autoethnographic research method the researcher must acknowledge there are two components to field notes, the observations of what is seen, heard, and experienced, and then additionally the observers’ feelings and reflections of what has been observed (Ary et al., 2010 in McGregor, 2018). It is essential then that I acknowledge in the data analysis process my feelings and reflections of what I observe, and how I feel, because it impacts how I reflect on my practice.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis

This study aimed to examine my experience of facilitating the building of classroom community from my perspective as a Grade 2 classroom teacher. The main research question (RQ1) was supported by two sub-questions: (2) What community markers do I observe within my practice and classroom environment? (3) How does my facilitation of “community” grow and change over time? The data collected from field notes written on twenty-five school days over a 3-month time span detailing my lessons, prompts, and reflections were rich in detail and allowed me to extract themes. An illustration of the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis process

is available below. The findings that emerged from the data are reflected in themes. They focus on my perspective, experiences, and teaching processes as a classroom teacher.

Figure 1.0

Code Cloud of Themes



Note: Code cloud was computer generated using the Dedoose thematic coding software. It includes all themes and sub-themes coded during the data analysis process. The themes with the highest frequency of codes were listed in the largest font, and the themes with the lowest frequency of codes were listed in the smallest font.

RQ1: How do I facilitate community construction in my Grade 2 classroom?

Theme 1: Individualized Student Interaction and Inclusive Classroom Practices

Individualized student interaction is when I as the teacher and facilitator interact with each student, in planned activities such as during morning meetings. For the purpose of my research, I defined Morning Meeting as a whole-class activity where we meet at the carpet, in a circle, and each student gets a voluntary opportunity to share aloud and participate in a greeting (Kriete & Davis, 2014). Lastly, inclusive classroom practices are any teaching skill, assessment practice, and planning or organizational technique that teachers employ in their practice to support the learning of all students in their class in an inclusive classroom setting (Finkelstein et al., 2021). My role during morning meeting was ensuring each student and adult in the classroom received a turn, and to keep the 'flow' or momentum going around the circle to ensure maximum student engagement (Follestad & Wroldsen, 2019). Individualized student interactions and inclusive classroom practices, and its many sub-themes, was the most coded theme with 101 applications of that code. For more

information on the themes and sub-themes for this research question, and the coding frequency of each, please see Table 1.0 below.

Table 1.0

Research Question #1: Theme & Sub-Theme Code Frequency

RQ1 THEME & SUB-THEMES	# OF CODES APPLIED	QUOTE
Individualized student interactions & inclusive classroom practices	101	
Morning meeting prompts	55	"Share how you are doing today, what zone you are in, and greet the person beside you so that everyone is welcomed into our class this Monday morning" (6 February, 2023)
Other community building activities	29	"After each presentation, the class got to ask the presenter [student] three questions. It could be a question, a comment, or a compliment" (28 February, 2023).
Class event	17	"The kids were all busy with excitement because today we were walking to the skating rink down the road from our school" (28 February, 2023).
Explicit instruction (guiding questions & teacher modelling)	27	
Social-emotional learning	10	"We've been teaching about reading someone's body language, nonverbal cues, verbal cues, respecting boundaries, and no-means-no" (3 May, 2023).
Guiding questions	13	"We then brainstormed as a class what ways a person could respond to that question. Do they have to tell if they'd had a bad weekend and why? Can there be different ways to say you had a good weekend?" (17 April, 2023).
Priming for learning	4	"I showed this to the class because I wanted to prep them before the Powwow dancing because I knew the music and dancing would be new information for many of them" (25 April, 2023).
Promotion of greeting acts	11	
Greeting a peer by name	6	"We did a quick morning meeting this morning and students did a quick zones check-in and greeted the person beside them" (16 February, 2023).

Greeting with a friendly phrase	1	"They could choose between: 'I am happy to see you today', or 'I am glad you are here'" (5 March, 2023).
Greeting with a question	1	"Then to greet the person beside them, they could ask the person 'Hi ____! How was your weekend?'" (17 April, 2023).
Fist-bump or high-five	3	"Our morning meeting today was short and sweet again. But we included a 'fist-bump' greeting. I reiterated that you can skip on how you are doing but please don't skip on greeting each other" (3 May, 2023).

My first individualized student interaction I wish to highlight is, *"What zone are you in? How are you today?"* (Gandouin, 2 February, 2023). In this excerpt, I am prompting the class to think about how they were doing that morning, taking a moment to look inwards as a practice in mindfulness (Garnett et al., 2022). Then, I gave them the opportunity if they would like to share out loud with the class, they could share what "zone" they were in – either red, green, yellow, or blue, and if they choose to, a few describing words about why they think they are feeling that way (The Zones of Regulation, 2023). An example of this could be, *I am in the green zone because I am happy to be here. I feel calm and ready to learn.* Students all chose to participate, and *"Many students chose to share what zone they are in. They all seemed happy to be at school indicating that they are in the green zone ready to learn and happy to be here"* (Gandouin, 2 February, 2023). Their individual responses informed me with clues about how the students were feeling that day, who had a good sleep, who had exciting news, and who was quiet and might need to be checked in with later that day. *"Many students chose to share what zone they are in despite lots of bickering and hands-on behaviour in the cloak room at drop off time"* (Gandouin, 2 February 2023).

Furthermore, this prompt was inclusive because I welcomed everyone, including adults working in our classroom, to participate. In the same breath I provided the choice to participate or not, without consequence. I noted how *"I reminded everyone that they are always welcome to skip sharing how they are feeling if they don't feel comfortable."* (Gandouin, 14 April, 2023). This matches the philosophy of other education researchers and authors who also speak on building classroom community and Morning Meeting (Follestad & Wroldsen, 2019; Kriete & Davis, 2014). They state that it important when establishing the routine and expectations of your morning meeting to give students the choice to not share. This provides autonomy and respect of the individual's choice, which further contributes to a safe and welcoming classroom community.

My second example of individualized student interaction is *“Name, Zone, A highlight of your weekend or something you are looking forward to”* (Gandouin, 1 May, 2023). In this example of one morning meeting prompt, it was a Monday morning and students returned to the classroom after the weekend. I found in my experience that many times, students come back from the weekend and have had things happen, special events or personal news that they held in their hearts, excited to share with me and the class. So, I chose sometimes to provide this intentional moment for students to share these important pieces of news with myself and their peers before beginning any focused academic work. As the facilitator of the meeting, I acknowledged and honoured the students’ needs to share and be heard. I believe this is evidence towards building *sense of belonging* in our class community.

Again, I attempted to keep this as an inclusive classroom practice by providing a secondary prompt where if students did not want to share about their weekend, they could share something they were looking forward to this week or in the future. I provided many examples of things my students might be looking forward to when, *“I filled in the new calendar for the new month with information about upcoming events such as Aquarium Field Trip, The Fun Fair, Star Wars Day, and a PAC movie Day”* (Gandouin, 1 May 2023). I know that for some students, home life is not a positive, joyful, or exciting space. Asking every Monday ‘What is a highlight from your weekend?’ is not inclusive and does not result in full class participation and creating *sense of belonging* for all students.

Knowing this, on a Monday, I would sometimes change up the prompt to something unrelated to the weekend that was inclusive and had a wide net to catch the attention and experiences of most of my students. For example, one Monday morning I asked students *“For Morning Meeting we talked about activities we enjoy doing when it is sunny outside”* (Gandouin, 8 May, 2023). I adjusted the prompt to create a more diverse access point where students can speak about something they have experienced and may have formed an opinion about. It also eliminates the risk of comparison and hard feelings, creating a safe and welcoming classroom community.

I was able to extend and elaborate on these individualized interactions by saying to the students, *“if you can, please share ‘why’ you like that activity”* (Gandouin, 8 May, 2023). I noted in my field notes that *“every student shared”* but I recall that only a few students took the challenge to explain why they liked that activity. I intended for this to help me gain more insight into their likes and dislikes and to continue knowing them better. Also, I felt this was an opportunity for students to practice their communication skills of answering questions and explaining their thinking. One time

when an individualized interaction backfired on me, I commented on a student's answer to me by saying, *"Wow, good example!"* and then the next five students after them all said the same sunny day activity (Gandouin, 8 May, 2023). I know that the only reason they said this was because I gave such a positive reaction. I reflected afterward on this experience, and I stated, *"I need to stop giving comments like that because then all of the students repeat it because they think that is what I want to hear"* (Gandouin, 8 May, 2023).

My third example towards my theme of individualized student interaction is, *"I told the class that they can share what they are grateful for and that might entail something they are looking forward to that they are grateful for. Positive anticipation can also be something to be grateful for"* (Gandouin, 14 April 2023). This is a good example of an individualized student interaction because this is yet another way I got to check in with each student at the beginning of the day and to allow them to respond in an open-ended way with no one answer. It was also another way for students to share verbally with me and their peers. In my notes, I observed how *"I responded to a few kids saying things like, 'Wow, I think that it's lovely you chose to be thankful for a friend'; 'or your sports team'; or 'for your family'"* (Gandouin, 14 April 2023). This allowed me to get to know them better, to know people or things they value, and for students to hear their peers sharing with each other, too. On this particular day, the class was having a difficult time sitting on the carpet and attending respectfully to the morning meeting routine. *"I reiterated how it is important that they listen intently when others are speaking because we all listened while they were speaking"* (Gandouin, 14 April 2023). This was a teachable moment, which is part of the value of morning meeting because it allowed me to address issues that affect our class community in the moment, such as respectful listening skills.

Morning meeting was my main way of promoting individualized student interaction in my community-building practice. Morning meeting was also time to talk to the students, to get them talking to each other, and to address issues impacting the classroom community directly in the moment with the whole group present. In my second and third themes of facilitating class community, I plan to speak further on the teaching practices I used to build class community, such as intentional questions and lesson, and student-to-student greeting to further work towards classroom community.

Theme 2: Explicit Instruction – Guiding Questions & Teacher Modelling

Facilitating classroom community requires direct teaching of both curricular and social-emotional learning content. This theme captures the ways I facilitated building the skills and

competencies I felt we needed to work on, and the lessons and guiding questions I used to get there. Explicit instruction and guiding questions are two different teaching strategies well known in the elementary school classroom. Explicit instruction is simply when the teacher plans, speaks direct instructions, facilitates conversations, and checks for understanding as the sole facilitator of the lesson (Archer & Hughes, n.d.). The teaching strategy of using guiding questions is to get the students thinking about and talking about certain concepts learned by asking open ended questions.

Most of our regular classroom routines, such as morning meetings, were negatively impacted by a lack of respectful communication skills in my class. For example, in my fieldnotes on April 12 and 13, I stated, *“And I attempted three times to begin our morning meeting but some just couldn’t get it together to stop laughing and listen respectfully”* (Gandouin, 12 April & 13 April, 2023). This gap in their learning sparked me to begin planning intentional lessons on respectful communication.

I had the opportunity to work alongside the Speech and Language Pathologist at our school to teach the class respectful communication skills. We facilitated lessons from a curriculum called The Communication Lab (Dodge, 1991). This was an essential step towards continuing to grow our sense of classroom community because our learning environment was negatively impacted every day without addressing the issue.

We’ve been teaching about reading someone’s body language, nonverbal cues, verbal cues, respecting boundaries, and no-means-no (Gandouin, 3 May, 2023).

I reflected that sometimes we could not get through a lesson or activity because of the need to reset, take a break, or constant reminders to promote respectful listening skills (Gandouin, 3 May, 2023). These lessons involved us as facilitators modelling body language and dialogue in conversations to show examples of respectful and disrespectful communication. For example, one lesson involved one person telling the person something and another suddenly interrupting them. When we asked the students how that must have made that person feel, they all exclaimed that was so rude!

“We taught students about the three ways we can show respect to each other at Morning Meeting: Quiet body, closed mouth, and open mind” (Gandouin, 3 May 2023). These explicit instructions were sometimes small teaching moments like this one, where I provided reminders and guiding words for how I expected students to be at the meeting. I was priming students before beginning the meeting, so the instructions were short but effective. I spoke the instructions verbally to them and pointed to the note I had made about respectful listening on the whiteboard similar to this one (Primary Buzz, 2013 in Appendix B).

Other times they were lengthier lessons, with explicit instructions, guiding questions, and examples like a traditional academic lesson. This is an example of a longer, more drawn-out lesson. It was the first time I had the students ask each other the question, *“How was your weekend?”* during morning meeting (Gandouin, 17 April, 2023). I utilized this meeting intentionally to build the capacity to ask and answer questions respectfully. First, the students were instructed on how to ask respectfully by stating the person’s name and then the question: *“Hi (students name)! How was your weekend?”* (Gandouin, 17 April, 2023). Then, in the second part of the lesson, I taught about how there can be different ways to respond to that question and that even if you don’t want to answer the question, there can still be a respectful response. *“We then brainstormed as a class what ways a person could respond to that question. Do they have to tell if they’d had a bad weekend and why? Can there be different ways to say you had a good weekend?”* (Gandouin, 17 April, 2023). This lesson felt important to our community building because students were not speaking to each other kindly, interrupting one another, and often using inappropriate volumes. I utilized intentional lesson planning, explicit instruction, and guiding questions to teach about respectful asking and answering. Modeling, as the facilitator of the lesson, and then having the students practice during our circle sharing time was a perfect opportunity for my explicit instructions to be then taken into practice. Allowing the students to practice asking the question and to also be asked with an opportunity to answer.

In an elaborated activity the next day, I taught a shorter lesson using explicit instruction on the skill of giving a compliment (Gandouin, 18 April, 2023). I noticed in my class a lot of interpersonal conflicts and students not treating each other very well. This added to my endeavour to build a welcoming and friendly classroom community. This mini-lesson and act of giving a compliment were centred on the idea of looking for things we like, appreciate, or admire about another. Recognizing things we appreciate in others is essential for working well, learning, and building empathy in the classroom setting (Tominey, 2019).

I began by modelling an example to students saying, *“Hi (students name) I like how you helped (students name) with cleaning up the cloakroom when it was messy”* (Gandouin, 18 April, 2023). I modelled a second compliment, saying, *“One thing you do that I like is you tell great jokes, (student name)”* (Gandouin, 18 April, 2023). At first when we took turns going around the circle and complimenting the person beside us, students looked noticeably uncomfortable. However, I noticed that there were also a lot of smiles. They seemed to enjoy receiving compliments too.

On a different day, I asked students to *“share one thing they appreciated about their substitute teacher from yesterday”* (Gandouin, 25 April, 2023). I had been absent from school, and a part-time teacher from a different classroom covered me. This was another practice opportunity for students to think about things they appreciate or admire about someone. Students commented how *“they appreciated the teacher took them outside to play; she took them outside to read a story in the afternoon... they appreciated how she was kind and sweet”* (Gandouin, 25 April, 2023). It seemed it was very easy for them to think of aspects of things the substitute did and how she made them feel. Although this teacher was not in the classroom during this activity, this was another opportunity for students to practice giving thoughtful, genuine compliments. It was a time to hone their skills in appreciating what others do and how they make us feel.

A final instructional technique I wish to highlight from my practice is the strategy of *priming* or *preparing* students when we have a change in schedule or an important event. This teaching strategy is part of the teaching philosophy behind Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2014). Many educator-authors who teach us about morning meeting structures state that part of the morning meeting routine should include explicit instructions about special events that acknowledge and teach important information or what students need to know (Roser, 2012). For example, *“Yesterday was a holiday for Martin Luther King, Jr. He wanted to make life in our country fair for all. That was his dream”* (Roser, 2012, p. 58). Not only is this an example of a special event and a possible curriculum connection, but it is also an example of acknowledging a change in schedule as it was a holiday and schools were closed on that day. For some students this acknowledgement of change is important to ease into the change and prepare them ahead to not shock them.

In my own teaching practice, I noted how one day I began morning meeting by saying, *“We have a lot of new activities on the shape of the day today, so let’s get right to it. We will have Library book exchange and then snack right after because we have Powwow dance instruction in the gym right after recess”* (Gandouin, 25 April 2023). In this excerpt I acknowledge that there was a change in our usual daily schedule because I had to move snack time to an earlier slot to make room for a special activity. The greater acknowledgment I was making to my class was that participating in an Indigenous traditional dance lesson was not something that many settler (non-Indigenous) students in my class would have experienced before. To prime their brains and hearts for receiving this new and unexpected activity I showed them an instructional video on Canadian Indigenous Powwow traditions (CBC News, 2018). *“I showed this to the class because I wanted to prep them before the Powwow dancing because I knew the music and dancing would be new information for many of*

them” (Gandouin, 25 April, 2023). Moreover, *“Sometimes some Powwow music can be quite loud and high-pitched so I wanted to prime their brains for the learning opportunity.”* (Gandouin, 25 April, 2023).

The strategy of priming students ahead of change is important for community building because it provides predictability in an unpredictable situation. In this situation, I provided some predictability and comfort by giving the students the necessary information on what to expect (Kriete, 2003). Priming ahead of change also acknowledges students’ needs and feelings. At the end of this particular school day I reflected that *“This choice had dividends because the dancing lessons went very well. Almost all of them participated fully in the dance instruction and listened intently as the instructor talked...”* (Gandouin, 25 April, 2023). In an activity that was high-energy and students that were going to potentially act out, I intentionally scheduled time to teach about the activity, and set the tone and expectations needed for the whole class to have a successful experience. Creating successful and positive learning experiences supports building *rapport, a standard of personal best, and academic engagement* (Hannay, 2023).

Theme 3: Promotion of Greeting Acts

In the case of current literature and this teacher’s facilitation of greetings in the classroom, greetings are a ritual act that occurs between two students or a teacher-to-student, often beyond just saying hello (Shields-Lysiak et al., 2020). Greetings involve a verbal acknowledgement, using each other’s names, and sometimes include a friendly gesture such as a high-five, a fist-bump, an elaborated question-answer, or friendly phrase. In the Montessori pedagogy, greeting is part of the teaching practice of fostering courteous global citizenship (Cobb, 2014). In the Morning Meeting teaching context, greeting is one of the steps students do during their circle sharing time (Kriete & Davis, 2014). In the current section I look closely at the greeting acts I employ during morning meeting and how that acted to facilitate community building in this Grade 2 classroom.

“Good morning, (student name)” is the greeting phrase at the core of our peer-to-peer greeting routine. It was used almost every day during morning meeting (Gandouin, 2 February, 2023). This greeting is essential for community building because it allowed the students to practice each other’s names and to hear each other’s names repeated over time. Further, I believe it functioned as an act of welcoming each other into the school day and into the sharing space. *“Greet the person beside you so that everyone is welcomed into our class this Monday morning”* (Gandouin, 6 February 2023). Each greeting marked the next person’s turn to share in the circle. Our greeting

practices served as a talking piece for morning meeting so that the conversation could flow around the circle and each person knew when it was their turn (Follestad & Wroldsen, 2019).

Our greeting practice of greeting the person beside you by name were further contributors to a safe and welcoming classroom community in how *“I reiterated that you can skip on how you are doing but please don’t skip on greeting each other”* (Gandouin, 3 May 2023). This maintained the act of greeting as a community building activity because each person in the classroom participated in greeting a peer and being greeted by a peer. Receiving a greeting from a peer was not contingent upon participating in the sharing activity at the morning meeting. This eliminated the unnecessary and perhaps harmful pressure for each person to participate in sharing about how they are feeling while maintaining the greeting tradition.

Our greeting practices were elaborated by adding choice additions to the greeting routine, such as greeting the person by name and then choosing to give them a fist-bump or a high-five (Gandouin, 5 April 2023). Other times I gave students the choice of greeting the person beside them by name and then adding a choice phrase such as *“I am happy to see you today”* or *“I am glad you are here”* (Gandouin, 5 April 2023). These voluntary additions were intentional opportunities for furthering the greeting act tradition and adding depth to the greeting. It gave the choice to the individual to decide how they added a friendly and playful gesture to their greeting, much like how adults wave to each other or hug when greeting a familiar person.

Regardless of the choice in gesture, everyone in the room was always acknowledged, named, and welcomed at the start of the day (Kriete & Davis, 2014). I noted how *“Although none of the students had any visible or verbal reactions to this positive greeting, to me, it really invoked a feeling of community in that everyone greeted a peer and everyone was greeted by a peer”* (Gandouin, 5 April 2023). Moreover, the feeling of community came from how some students said one of the friendly phrases along with their greeting. Despite all of the difficulties a class of students can face, such as how I explained in above sections about the respectful listening lessons I needed to teach the class, these positive greetings and friendly phrases shine light over our class. This contributes to building the community markers of a sense of belonging and rapport (Hannay, 2023).

A more complex elaboration to the greeting act was the option to give the person you are greeting a compliment (Gandouin, 18 April 2023). This was a greeting prompt added once during the observation period. It began with a mini-lesson on compliments in which I modelled two ways of giving a compliment. I modelled how to greet and say a compliment like, *“Hi _____. I like how you _____.”* In my example I modelled I said, *“Hi _____, I like how you helped _____ with*

cleaning up the cloakroom when it was messy" (Gandouin, 18 April 2023). I modelled a second option saying, *"One thing you do that I like is you tell great jokes"* (Gandouin, 18 April 2023). I felt this elaborated on our community practice of morning meetings and greetings. This added to my endeavour to build classroom community in that this greeting act was centred on looking for things we like, appreciate, or admire about another. Recognizing things that we like and appreciate in others is an essential skill for working well and learning in groups (Tominey, 2019).

Our greeting practices of greeting the person next to you by name, using a friendly gesture such as a fist bump or high-five, using a friendly greeting phrase, asking a question, or giving a compliment are all pieces to the community puzzle I was trying to build. I utilized these different prompts and strategies to add to our greeting practice and provide various opportunities for students to participate in the act of greeting. One particular function of the greeting prompts and the variety of greeting prompts was to keep up student engagement during the morning meetings by providing variety. Greetings were always prompted to come from a place of welcoming each other to the day as well as building students skills of empathy and care for others (Shields-Lysiak et al., 2020).

RQ2 – What community markers do I observe within my practice?

Theme 1: A Welcoming Approach to Routines

It is stated that one of the main markers of a positive classroom community are classroom traditions, also called routines (Hannay, 2023). "Classroom traditions can provide time for students to learn about and celebrate one another, to value and appreciate differences, and develop empathy for each other's life experiences" (Hannay, 2023, p. 5). Some common examples of classroom routines are reading aloud to your students, morning meetings (Kriete & Davis, 2014), singing together (Boyd et al., 2020); and a class handshake (Boyd et al., 2018). In this section, I explain how I facilitate a variety of routines and how this contributes to building community in my classroom. Below, in Table 1.1 is a list of themes and sub-themes, and their frequency from the fieldnotes data.

Table 1.1

Research Question #2: Theme & Sub-theme Code Frequency

RQ2 THEME & SUB-THEMES	# OF APPLICATIONS	QUOTE
A welcoming approach to routines	18	
Morning routine	3	"At 8:45am I let the students in and we got started on our morning routines – Hang up stuff, get a chair, and a quiet activity for about 15 minutes" (21 February, 2023).
Monday morning routine	2	"We started our day off with Morning Sunshine and then we moved into a Monday morning meeting...We talked about some things that we had to look forward to this Monday such as Music class" (17 April, 2023).
Class calendar to post upcoming events	1	"I filled in the new calendar for the new month with information about our upcoming events, such as: "Aquarium field trip, the Fun Fair, Star Wars Day, and a PAC movie day" (1 May, 2023).
Building a learning community	31	
Academic engagement	20	"We were able to get some math stations done where each group rotates between activities of 'math by yourself', 'with a partner', 'with technology', and 'with teacher'" (7 February, 2023).
Expert project	1	"In the afternoon the whole class went to the library for collaboration time and we worked on our experts projects" (17 February, 2023).
Teaching literacy	6	"We skipped morning meeting.. we went right into completing our literacy jobs block because sometimes if the students sit for morning meeting then we have to do some kind of body break which ruins the flow" (17 February, 2023).
Teaching Math	1	"Brief lesson of two and three-digit place value" (2 February, 2023).
Celebrating the individual & supporting student connections	18	
Sense of belonging	12	"I ended the lesson by connecting that to our classroom...We are all individually unique on the inside and it is those things that make us awesome" (20 April, 2023).
Expert for the day	3	"They got to choose 1 artifact [to bring from home] to share during

Teaching 'unique'	2	their presentation" (28 February, 2023). "The lesson is all about how each person is a wonderful, unique individual, but together we make up the class family or the class community" (20 April, 2023).
Positive student connection	1	"It really invoked a feeling of community in that everyone greeted a peer and everyone was greeted by a peer. Rather than just being greeted by me or Teacher Assistant A" (5 March, 2023).

Each day begins with a predictable and calm routine. *"We started our day off with morning sunshine and then we moved into a Monday morning meeting"* (Gandouin, 17 April, 2023). Morning sunshine is the name I gave to the work my students do in the morning when they first walk in the room. Morning Sunshine begins *"At 8:45, I let the students in, and we got started on our morning routines – Hang up stuff, get a chair, and a quiet activity for about 15 minutes"* (Gandouin, 21 February, 2023). Many educators believe that morning work is a useful routine because the time between the bell ringing and the beginning of academic instruction can include a lot of factors that you cannot control, such as students arriving late, how students are feeling each morning, morning announcements, and the list goes on (Mrs. Beattie's Classroom, n.d.). Students had a choice of what to do for those 15 minutes. While Morning Sunshine occurred, I quickly did attendance and walked around checking in with students (Appendix A, Table 1.3). Whether it was reading, a colouring page, playdoh, or a word search, the point was to create a calm environment to start the day on the right foot. Moreover, every student had an activity they could do independently and every student knew what to expect at the start of each school day.

We *"decided to have a morning meeting to get the class in the zone and ready for the day"* (Gandouin, 2 February 2023). After the "morning sunshine" routine, morning meeting was the next activity in our typical day and another example of a welcoming routine. *"What zone are you in?; How are you today?"* was a common prompt I asked the group (Gandouin, 2 February 2023). I intended it to be a calm environment and a chance for everyone to let go of anything negative they brought into the classroom in the morning (Kriete & Davis, 2014). This allowed me to get a feeling for how the students were doing and what the group's energy was like that morning. Sometimes, when I felt rushed for time, *"We did have a quick morning meeting this morning, and students did a quick zones check-in and greeted the person beside them"* (Gandouin, 16 February, 2023). I did my best to adhere to this routine, despite the curriculum and academic pressures of the elementary

classroom because it was important for me to check in with the students and for the students to have the chance to hear from each other. In the beginning of the observation period rarely, *“we skipped morning meeting today in favour of getting started on literacy right away”* (Gandouin, 7 February 2023). The nature of the morning meeting circle time was about three things: checking in, greeting one another, and giving everyone a turn to share. However, every so often *“I reminded everyone that they are always welcome to skip on sharing how they are feeling if they don’t feel comfortable”* (Gandouin, 14 April 2023). Due to the nature of the morning meeting and sharing routine, I felt it was important to remind the class that they don’t ever have to share how they are doing or what they did on the weekend if they don’t feel comfortable.

The routine of meeting on the carpet, student sharing, and student greeting was intended as a centering point or a base from which we launched into the rest of our day. Students were invited to share with the class based on a prompt and then greet the person beside them *“Greet the person beside you so that everyone is welcomed into our class this Monday”* (Gandouin, 6 February, 2023). The routine of greeting each other by name was a welcoming activity because it meant knowing each other by name, and it promoted courteous and respectful greeting practices that I argue are essential life skills (Cobb, 2014). In addition, greeting each other by name made sure that every person in the classroom was greeted into the new school day by a peer, *“Rather than just being greeted by me and Teacher Assistant A”* (Gandouin, 5 March 2023).

Along with an opportunity to share aloud to the group based on the prompt and greet each other by name, morning meeting also includes other traditions. These include activities such as reviewing the shape of the day before the meeting ends. *“We talked about some things that we had to look forward to this Monday, such as it being music [music class] on Monday and some centre choosing time in the afternoon”* (Gandouin, 14 April, 2023). This was part of the preparing and priming activities I often did to set expectations and prepare students for the rest of the day. At the beginning of a new month, I would schedule time at morning meeting to prepare and prime students for upcoming events and holidays. For example, in May *“I filled in the new calendar for the new month with information about our upcoming events, such as: Aquarium field trip, the Fun Fair, Star Wars Day, and PAC Movie day”* (Gandouin, 1 May 2023). Lastly, people ended their turn by greeting each other by name, which acted as our talking piece that travelled around the circle (Follestad & Wroldsen, 2019). Setting morning meeting in circle was inspired by the importance of circle in Indigenous culture, used in community decision making and conflict resolution.

A routine we set for after morning meeting was a movement break (Appendix A, Table 1.2). *“Go Noodle and Danny Go videos have come a hit in our class. Most, if not all, students participate in some way, including dancing and singing along with the tunes”* (Gandouin, 2 February 2023). The movement break functioned primarily to help students to release energy after sitting during morning meeting. Its secondary function was as a last step of the centering and readying process for beginning the day’s work. In other words, it was the final welcoming and priming activity to prepare students for the learning and focusing they would do next. The morning sunshine and morning meeting routines were not academically demanding, but that of course does not mean there wasn’t important learning occurring.

Theme 2: Building a Learning Community

The second marker of a positive classroom community I wish to highlight in my practice is academic engagement (Hannay 2023). This means “helping students take charge of their own learning by giving them many opportunities to reflect on their work, make changes to improve, and set goals for themselves provides the necessary scaffolding for them to achieve higher and higher levels, both academically and socially” (Hannay, 2023, p. 5). In my practice as a Grade 2 classroom teacher I observed two sub-themes of academic engagement. These two themes are: (1) Modelling reflection and making changes to improve myself, (2) Prioritizing & efficiency in the school day.

Sub-theme 1: Reflective practice and making changes to improve

Reflection is an important facet of my work. As I facilitated activities, discussions, and routines, I took notice what engaged students and got them talking and, of course, what didn’t. Reflection also informed my moment-to-moment decision-making as I learned to observe and adjust how I was doing things. For example, a few times *“we skipped morning meeting for the sake of efficiency and we went right into completing our literacy block because sometimes if I have the students sit for morning meeting then we have to do some kind of a body break in between which can ruin the flow”* (Gandouin, 17 February 2023). I decided to skip morning meetings sometimes because otherwise, time for academic lessons and activities was jeopardized. Additionally, workflow was an important facet of our learning environment because it signified focus and ease of transition as students moved from one activity to the next. To create flow, I think that the students need to know what to expect, and I believe one way you get to a place of flow and predictability is by establishing a routine. On days where I felt the flow of our schedule was at risk, I often considered whether or not to go forth and meet anyways. For example, *“The morning went fairly routine. I did choose last minute to forgo doing a morning meeting because we were running short on time”*

(Gandouin, 3 March, 2023). In this example, I felt time was a constraint on our flow because morning meeting can take time to complete, and on that particular day, I felt an academic subject area took priority over that precious block of time.

On a different occasion, I intended to begin the day with a morning meeting *“And I attempted three times to begin our morning meeting”* (Gandouin, 12 April, 2023). Then, I had to decide to forgo the meeting, try to reset, and move into an academic activity or instructions of some kind. It was not a positive start to the morning and did not bridge nicely into the next activity. When done right, morning meeting can act as the bridge into our school day. For example, *“We did have a quick morning meeting this morning, and students did a quick zones check-in and greeted the person beside them”* (Gandouin, 16 February, 2023). Since it was planned to be a shorter meeting, with a quick check-in, and ended with greeting the person beside them, this was the perfect example of how a meeting can nicely bridge the class into the rest of the school day. The students would still have enough energy to listen to the instructions for the next activity and enough time to get at least one activity done before recess.

Earlier in the observation period, *“We skipped morning meeting today in favour of getting started on literacy right away”* (Gandouin, 7 February 2023). Literacy, which includes reading, writing, and spelling, most often follows morning meeting because of its academic importance and the need for focus and attention (Burkins & Yates, 2021). The block after morning meeting occurred before recess which was students most focused time of day. Some days required me to plan for lack of focus and attention, and therefore, cancel morning meeting altogether. Such as on Valentine’s Day when the students were so excited that it is if they were buzzing with joy to hand out their Valentine’s cards, so *“I quickly detoured us away from morning meeting and we got started on decorating our Valentine’s treat bags instead... with little success”* (Gandouin, 14 February, 2023). As the facilitator I observed in the moment and adjusted my expectations. On special days such as Valentine’s Day, it is sometimes necessary to adjust the expectations and meet the students where they are.

I worked to understand my students and to use that understanding to inform activities and lessons I taught to work towards a positive classroom community. For example, I noticed that my students needed practice with communication skills. I scheduled time into our weekly routines to work on these skills. For example, *“We’ve been teaching about reading someone’s body language, nonverbal cues, verbal cues, respecting boundaries, and no-means-no”* (Gandouin, 3 May, 2023). Many of the lessons provided real-life scenarios and role-playing scripts for how to behave when

two people are having a conversation – such as listening when someone is speaking to you, waiting your turn to speak, and speaking at an appropriate cadence and volume (Dodge, 1991). I feel it was important to the growth of our classroom community that I facilitated targeted lessons, provided modelled examples, and time for students to practice. Interruption and misbehaviour were directly affecting our classroom environment. The term classroom environment refers to the physical space, social-emotional wellness, psychological, and intellectual conditions of each classroom (American Psychological Association, 2018). It is hard for students to complete their work and feel confident in their workspace if it is not a positive and peaceful environment (Hannay, 2023).

In another example, when our school brought in an Indigenous Powwow dancing instructor to work with our students, I knew this would be a new and unfamiliar experience for many of them. I also knew that *“Some Indigenous Powwow music can be quite loud and high-pitched so I wanted to prime their brains for the learning opportunity”* (Gandouin, 25 April, 2023). To mitigate this, I taught a lesson to the class about the tradition of Powwow dance in Indigenous cultures, on the morning prior to the dance class through an informational video (CBC News, 2018). I provided context from the history of Canadian Indigenous Powwow traditions and explained thoroughly what would happen during the lesson and the expectations for participation. Canadian Powwow dancing traditions have been part of many Canadian Indigenous traditions since time immemorial (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2006). “Time immemorial” is both a legal term referring to a time long ago in a distant past, and a term used in Indigenous discourses to refer to the Indigenous people’s ancestral and traditional connection to the land that originates from a time so long ago it is beyond memory (Weir, 2013). However, in the past the tradition of Powwow dancing was illegal in Canada due to a series of laws against Indigenous cultural traditions, including dances and gatherings such as Potlatches (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2006). Due to this difficult history and its being an important cultural tradition in many Indigenous histories, it felt important that my students were prepared to participate. I reflected afterwards, *“The choice had dividends because the dancing lessons went very well. Almost all of them participated fully in the dance instruction and listened intently as the instructor talked about her personal regalia outfits she brought to dance in”* (Gandouin, 25 April, 2023). This act of reflective practice was important because I was supporting the students by priming their minds before a new activity (Kriete & Davis, 2014). I was thinking that the unfamiliarity of this activity could cause nervousness and misbehavior that I hoped to avoid, and to create a positive learning experience instead.

Sub-theme 2: Prioritizing & Efficiency in the school day

The total school day was just under six hours in length. With that in mind, take away 15 minutes for recess, 30 minutes for afternoon recess, and another 45 minutes for snack and lunch. Suddenly, you are not left with much teaching time. In mathematics we used a teaching strategy to help maximize our time. *“We were able to get some math stations done where each group rotates between activities of: Math by yourself, math with a partner, math with technology, and math with teacher”* (Gandouin, 7 February 2023). The teaching strategies of small group instruction and practice was valuable to my particular classroom context because it ensured 30 to 40 minutes where all students were engaged in math practice, which alleviated time for me to meet with small groups of students for specific instruction. I utilized a similar structure for literacy except rather than divide the students into small groups, students would be tasked to complete certain jobs in a literacy block through which they could work at their own pace (Appendix A, Table 1.2). For example, *‘We completed literacy jobs. We also continued our conversation about Family Day’* (Gandouin, 16 February 2023). So on that particular day I would have given a brief lesson and instruction to students about the upcoming Family Day holiday which is a provincial holiday in British Columbia. Then, I would have given students a list of two or three activities to work on while I met with a small group of students for reading or writing individualized instruction. This was the most efficient way for me to meet the academic needs of my students.

I often relied on a few efficient teaching strategies to help me meet the academic and social-emotional needs of my students. For example, I gave a *“brief review lesson of two and three-digit place value”* or *“I did a quick lesson reading a journal entry I wrote about what it is like going skiing, talking about Memory Pocket writing for journal”* (Gandouin, 2 February 2023 and Gandouin, 7 February, 2023). Brief instructions followed by time for students to practice or demonstrate their learning with an activity was essential in my practice. This maximized student attention span while allowing for practice time. Other times rather than relying on quick instructions, for longer activities like morning meeting, sometimes *“we skipped morning meeting for the sake of efficiency and we went right into completing our literacy jobs block”* (Gandouin, 17 February, 2023). When quick instructions were not appropriate to the activity, like morning meeting for example, because it involves extended periods of listening, I would sometimes choose to forgo the activity for that moment. This does not always work, such as when there are deadlines at the end of a term or it is a whole school activity.

Academic engagement supported my efforts in building a classroom community because the tactics I was using to promote academic engagement also promoted positive classroom community. I was modelling how to be a reflective practitioner and the pursuit of continuous improvement. As Hannay reports in her article on positive classroom community, we need classrooms to promote skills such as goal setting, reflection, and trial-and-error (2023). I also did my best to model prioritization and time management so we could fit all of our routines, academic tasks, and scheduled recess breaks into the school day hours. Through the skills of prioritizing and time management, I was intending to prioritize time for academic and social-emotional learning. In order to do that I sought out efficient ways to complete instructions and get students working as soon as possible (Gandouin, 7 February 2023; Gandouin, 17 February 2023).

Theme 3: Celebrating the Individual & Supporting Student Connections

The third and final marker of classroom community to highlight is sense of belonging. “A *sense of belonging is created when we cultivate positive relationships between students, and share control of and responsibility for the care of the classroom*” (Hannay, 2023). I worked hard to create a sense of belonging by creating opportunities to celebrate the individuality of the students in my class and also opportunities for supporting student connection through intentional activities. In this next section, I intend to provide evidence of this marker in my practice.

First, I implemented a class project where the students got to be an ‘expert for the day’ in a topic of their choice (Kirk, 2022, *personal communication*). I encouraged students to choose a topic they had experience in or already knew something about, and then present their topic to the class by describing four things people need to know about the topic. During their presentations, “*They got to choose 1 artifact to share during their presentation. Student A brought a taekwondo trophy they achieved during taekwondo. Student B had a family member film them while skateboarding and then sent me the video*” (Gandouin, 28 February 2023). This was a strong piece of evidence towards the classroom community marker *sense of belonging* because the teaching behind the project was about celebrating their individual strengths and interests, and furthermore it allowed students to get to know each other on a deeper level. I think the project formalized the celebration and made it official and intentional.

Further along in the observation period, I facilitated a lesson based on the children’s picture book “*Welcome to Bobville, City of Bobs*” (Winter, 2020). The intention of this lesson was to celebrate the individuality of each person in our class. In the story, all of the people in the pretend city of Bobville were all the same. They all did the same things, wore the same clothes, and every

single citizen of the city was named Bob. It made for a difficult and uncertain moment when a new person came into the city and that person didn't look like and act like everyone else. So, I used this as a teaching opportunity when *"I ended the lesson by connecting that to our classroom. We are all individually unique on the inside and it is those things that make us awesome. We bring all of us together in one community, that is truly a special thing"* (Gandouin, 20 April 2023). This lesson was a necessary step in building our classroom community because up until this point it felt like we were not working together well as a group. For example, *"We talked about how the way they were acting was super disrespectful towards me because I had put all that time and effort into the lessons and teaching"* (Gandouin, 6 February 2023). On another occasion, *"I attempted three times to begin our morning meeting"* (Gandouin, 12 April, 2023). In another instance *"So, when the class, again, did not clean up lunch, grab their agendas, and do a quiet activity at their desk, I decided to stand at the back counter and keep time and safety of the classroom and waited"* (Gandouin, 8 February 2023). I needed for the students to see that there were many wonderful people in our class and that we could learn from each other and with each other if we could cooperate as a learning community. Most importantly, I wanted the class to see that they all deserved to have positive learning experiences in our classroom and for that to happen we needed to make a change.

The lesson I outlined above ended with a follow-up activity where *"On each quilt, the students' names will be displayed, and they will draw something that is a strength or something unique about them. All those pieces will then be constructed together into a quilt and displayed on the wall"* (Gandouin, 20 April, 2023). We made the quilt together at the carpet and it unfortunately never made it up on to the wall because some students were missing that day, and was never fully completed. *"The activity is that we are going to make a class puzzle that demonstrates all of our individualness and all of our special qualities coming together to make one class quilt"* (Gandouin, 20 April 2023). Even though that the quilt was never finished, the act of making the pieces of the quilt meant something. By facilitating the activity, I was acknowledging and celebrating each individual *piece* of our class, and that each *piece* belonged to make up the whole. Each *piece* or each student in our class mattered in the same way, even though they were unique to each other. This is what it means to be a community, not all being "Bobs" like in the children's story book from the beginning of the activity (Winter, 2020).

In addition to specific classroom activities, I also participated in school events and planned field trips that further encouraged student and family connections that I feel contributed to a better overall sense of belonging. For example, on a few Fridays throughout the school year our school

planned themed days with a variety of high-engagement and easily accessible themes. One particular Friday, *“Today was ‘Backwards Day’ at school. So I had all the desks, the chairs, and even the shape of the shape of the day put backwards”* (Gandouin, 28 April 2023). As a classroom teacher, we are often asked and expected to participate in extra activities surrounding back to school, the holiday seasons, and end of school. Sometimes adding these extra activities just feels *extra*, but often times I reflected afterwards it is worth the extra effort for the students’ reactions. This particular morning, I remember the students walked into the classroom, and they cheered when they saw the classroom was set up backwards. *“The students did a variety of ‘backward’ things such as having their clothes on backward and hats on backward,”* and I followed up with a question of the day for morning meeting that was ‘backward’ themed (Gandouin, 28 April 2023). Looking back on this day, I knew it mattered that I showed up and participated in this day because students were looking forward to it and had been hearing about it on the school announcements. It was a very accessible theme day because all students had to do to participate was put their shirt, hat, or backpack on backwards. Having the chance to participate along with everyone, with little barriers to participation, created a sense of belonging because we did it as a class (Hannay, 2023).

Supporting student connection was a second facet of my overall effort to create an environment where students felt they belonged. Of course, this is all from my perspective as the facilitator and classroom teacher. *“Hi (students name) How was your weekend?”* is a greeting prompt performed from one student to another (Gandouin, 17 April 2023). The greeting practices I taught and facilitated in my classroom symbolized welcoming and friendly rapport. We began most weeks with this greeting prompt to honour the start of the new week. Student greetings were one way I hoped to encourage student connections. Friendly greeting prompts such as *“I am happy to see you today”* or *“I am glad you are here”* are another example of welcome and friendly greetings that I taught my students (Gandouin, 5 March 2023). I also modelled this type of friendly greeting when I greeted each student at the door at the start of a new school day.

RQ3 How does my facilitation of “community” grow and change over time?

Theme 1: Change of Routine

The ways I facilitated community building in my Grade 2 classroom changed over time in how I changed up the routine activities. Routines are any activities or processes that you instruct your students to do that are repeated on a daily or weekly basis, much like how a tradition is a repeated, meaningful activity that a person or group of people do (Hannay, 2023). I chose to use the

terminology routines and traditions interchangeably. Some examples of classroom routines are reading aloud to your students and morning meeting.

In my practice it seems that my facilitation of community building changed over time through how I changed the classroom routines. For example, *"We skipped morning meeting today in favour of getting started on literacy right away"* (Gandouin, 7 February 2023). When I knew that an activity or lesson I planned was going to take a significant amount of time, I would cancel or rearrange the timing for our morning meeting to make time for the other activity. Such as when, *"The morning went fairly routine. I did choose last minute to forgo doing a morning meeting because we were running short on time"* (Gandouin, 3 March 2023). I often skipped morning meeting in favour of providing more for academic engagement, which is one of the markers of a positive classroom community (Hannay, 2023).

Further to my point of my facilitation of classroom community, I noticed that if *"I have the students sit for morning meeting then we have to do some kind of a body break in between which can ruin the flow"* (Gandouin, 17 February 2023). Some days I would cancel morning meeting or another community building activity because then it would cause a timing issue with the combined time of instructional time and breaks. In this way, I noticed that morning meeting was not meeting our needs in the same way as it did at the beginning of the school year. In my experience, students needed frequent breaks from academic focused work to move around and then refocus. With the amount of time morning meeting took, around 15 minutes, then students needed to participate in some kind of physical break where they could get up and move their body before sitting and re-focusing again. Two examples of movement break activities, *"Go Noodle and Danny Go video have become a big hit in our class"* (Gandouin, 6 February 2023). Go Noodle and Danny Go are two popular YouTube channels where paid actors and dancers instruct the students through movements, dances, and sometimes songs in a short video format (Go Noodle, n.d.; Danny Go, n.d.). In the end, movement breaks became just as important to our classroom community as morning meeting because it allowed the students a chance to reset and refocus when sustaining focus was necessary.

I noticed during the observation period that there wasn't such a need for having morning meeting every day and I chose instead to only have morning meeting on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. To my point, *"Today as a class we did not do a morning meeting because it's a Thursday"* (Gandouin, 20 April 2023). However, I noted that day I had begun the day with a community building activity because I started it the day before and I felt it had not gone well. Even the act of gathering in

circle for a community building lesson is positively impactful (Garnett et al., 2022). I opted to restart the lesson that day in place of that regular morning meeting time because I felt it was important to try to get the activity right, *“The activity is that we are going to make a class puzzle that demonstrates all of our individualness and all of our special qualities coming together to make one class quilt”* (Gandouin, 20 April 2023). Although we were not participating in a formal meeting, we began our day in circle with a community building activity which included a read aloud story and a facilitated discussion about what it means to be a community (Garnett et al., 2022).

Theme 2: Change through Reflection

The second theme of how my facilitation of community building changed over time is reflection. My reflective practice or self-reflection is evidenced in my fieldnotes as being instrumental in the efforts I was putting towards building a classroom community. Below I highlight a few instances of how self-reflection and reflective practice, as in being a lifelong learner and seeking to learn and improve in my own teaching practice, sparked these changes.

Self-reflection sparked a change in several areas in my practice. One area was our afternoon procedures for after lunch eating time. One afternoon, I noticed that *“the students were not well-adjusted and motorized through these routines”* (Gandouin, 8 February 2023). I was frustrated because this seemingly simple independent, quiet time was not have the positive effect I hoped it would. So in response to what I was noticing I *“decided to stand at the back counter and keep time and safety of the classroom and waited... They finally came together and did the routine. They finished their agendas and either read-to-self or coloured quietly at their desk”* (Gandouin, 8 February 2023). I changed my practice of giving reminders and providing consistent structure to the routines. What has ended up working the best was giving wait time and allowing the students to take responsibility and complete the routines they had been taught since the beginning of the school year, rather than just cancelling an activity or moving on. For example, on Valentine’s Day, I tried to have a morning meeting, but *“I quickly detoured us away from morning meeting and we got started on decorating our Valentine’s treat bags instead... with little success”* (Gandouin, 14 February 2023). Giving wait time and having expectations for students to complete routines can have a positive impact (Kriete, 2003). Other times, it was necessary to *detour* or have flexibility in my plans to meet students where they are at and facilitate a positive experience.

Self-reflection and flexibility led me towards other notable changes. For one, I took the class on a skating field trip even though I myself cannot ice skate. However, I am so thankful I took my class skating because I had many hockey players in my class that love to skate and benefitted from

the opportunity to do something they are good at. So on February 28 *"Today we were walking to the skating rink down the road from our school"* (Gandouin, 2023). I was terrified because I knew I would need to go on the ice and supervise at least part of the time. Luckily, many parents showed up who were also hockey players or ice skaters themselves. This field trip ended up solidifying community in two ways. First, *"The students quickly figured out they could pair up, and one person sits on the cart and one person pushes and skate. They seemed to really enjoy the freedom of being able to skate around in a big space"* (Gandouin, 28 February 2023). By planning and facilitating this field trip, I was providing an experiential learning opportunity for those that do not go skating often (including myself) and a chance for the ones who are hockey players or go ice skating often to feel successful and take leadership. *"This gave many an opportunity just to enjoy being outside, being in our local community, and doing an activity that was accessible to all in our class"* (Gandouin, 28 February 2023). Second, *"It was also awesome because the parent community in my classroom got to connect a little bit. There were parents there who didn't know each other outside of school and the kids played together"* (Gandouin, 28 February 2023). This was an opportunity for the class to build a community beyond our classroom walls and to form connections with each other that go beyond too possibly. *"So for those families it was a nice time to reconnect and to exchange contact information for playdates or simply to get to know each other"* (Gandouin, 28 February 2023). If I had not built the capacity or the courage to take my class on a field trip, or if I had not recognized that although skating was not great for me, it was something where many students could be successful and at the very least have fun, then this community building opportunity would have never occurred.

I also did a lot of reflecting while writing these field notes in order to think through how lessons and activities went. For example, after a morning meeting where I made a qualifying comment when a student shared and I exclaimed *"Wow, good example!"* but then I reflected, *"Maybe I need to stop giving comments like that because then all of the students repeat it because they think that is what I want to hear"* (Gandouin, 8 May 2023). This is an example of why teachers and facilitators should be concerned about the comments we give during lessons because it can skew the results. Rather than allowing each student to consider and answer the question of the day on their own, I essentially shut their thinking off. I unintentionally communicated that *this is the right answer*.

Additionally, I also reflected with a teacher colleague and friend after a difficult day of teaching how *"You can't be off your game for a minute"* (Gandouin, 8 February 2023). I was having

difficulty getting my students into a positive routine filled with growing independence and fulsome, worth-while instructional time. It seems many teachers in British Columbia felt the same way and that they could not teach (Lloyd, 2023). The truth of the matter was I wished so badly that the students would listen to the instructions I was giving, complete the activities to the best of their ability, and get along with each other. I reflected at the end of each day, *"Maybe I should have done a movement break after snack?"* because the next block of instructional time had not gone well (Gandouin, 6 February 2023). Additionally, *"I did not feel in the right headspace to support my students, plan my lessons, and be fully present. This has been a difficulty as the behaviours in the classroom have been getting worse"* (Gandouin, 16 February 2023). An example of this was when, *"I had to stop the class and wait for them to stop talking and listen"* (Gandouin, 6 February 2023). It seems like February was a difficult month. Then, the pattern began to change. In May *"I have been teaching about communication life skills alongside our Speech and Language pathologist"* (Gandouin, 3 May 2023). This is evidence of when I noticed the difficulties I was having in my practice so I asked my school team for help. Even before February was through I began making changes *"We skipped morning meeting for the sake of efficiency and we went right into completing our literacy jobs because sometimes if I have the students sit for morning meeting then we have to do some kind of body break which can ruin the flow"* (Gandouin, 17 February 2023).

In addition to asking for help and making changes in response to my difficulties, I also taught specific lessons on facets of classroom life that negatively impacted our sense of community. For example, in one morning meeting I taught a lesson on respect, including respecting our classroom. So after the lesson, we began morning meeting, and *"we went around the circle, and students offered ideas of how they show respect to the school and our community"* (Gandouin, 5 May 2023). I also taught lessons on two separate days about teamwork and *celebrating* our classroom community. For example, *"The activity is that we are going to make a class puzzle that demonstrates all of our individualness and special qualities coming together to make one class quilt. On each quilt piece of the students' names will be displayed and then they will draw something that is a strength or something unique about them"* (Gandouin, 20 April 2023).

These examples, as I listed above evidence the power of self-reflection and reflective practice on my growth as the facilitator attempting to build up my Grade 2 classroom community. Through writing down the activities, lessons, and conversations I was facilitating each day, I also began writing down my frustrations and concerns that ultimately led me to make changes. I reflect now that my turning point day was February 15, 2023 when I wrote *"I think overall the feelings to*

describe this day were helpless, hopeless, and fearful” and despite the clear evidence of how difficult this day was, I continued to attempt to correct the trajectory of our sense of community by trial and error (Gandouin, 15 February 2023). Interestingly, I was not the only teacher that felt this way as evidenced in the City News article *“The kids are not alright: Growing concerns in BC elementary classrooms”* (Lloyd, 2023). Throughout this time, I had moments of great frustration, such as when *“I had to stop the whole lesson, have them move to their desks, and I sat down in my desk until the room was quiet”* (Gandouin, 6 February 2023). In my practice I also found success such as when we made it through a morning meeting where everyone participated so, *“it invoked a feeling of community in that everyone greeted a peer and everyone was greeted by a peer. Rather than just being greeted by me and Teacher Assistant A”* (Gandouin, 5 March 2023). It was through reflective practice and plenty of trial and error that evidenced change in my practice to set out clear expectations from which to work and create an environment where effective academic and social-emotional learning occurs.

Theme 3: Change of priorities

Throughout the three-month observation period, I changed which facets of classroom life I was prioritizing (such as academic, routine, or social-emotional learning) to meet the needs of the students and the class as a whole to build a positive classroom community (Hannay, 2023). I changed my prioritization of getting morning meeting done every day to allow that time for academic and social-emotional learning. In September, the priority was building and automating the routine so that students knew what to expect and to build their social-emotional learning capacities. After the New Year, my priorities changed with what I wanted and needed to spend time doing. I evidenced this by saying, *“Today is a class we did not do a morning meeting because it’s a Thursday”* (Gandouin, 20 April 2023). For example, *“We skipped morning meeting in favour of getting started on literacy right away”* (Gandouin, 7 February 2023). This example demonstrates that I was working to meet academic demands, as February is the middle to end of the second term. Another example tells of changing priorities toward meeting student needs, such as, *“To fill the energy of the day, we also went to the gym”* (Gandouin, 14 February). On Valentine’s Day, it seemed like the whole school was excited about giving out Valentine’s Day cards and classroom parties filled with yummy treats. With all that excitement going on, I shifted my priority away from academic tasks to providing a positive social experience and honouring their excitement levels with some extra play time or movement activities.

The priorities of meeting academic demands in an elementary school classroom and meeting the social and emotional needs of the students often occurred simultaneously. In this case, the priorities cannot be changed; rather, they can be switched in and out over time while still maintaining some of each. In another compelling example of shifting priorities, I stated in reflection after school one day, *“One of my thoughts for next week for community building is to add some team building exercises to our community building time. This could include...”* (Gandouin, 14 April 2023). I noticed that we were lacking cooperation, care for others, and positive communication, so I made a note to address this during our next morning meeting. I intended to implement what I felt were effective and worthwhile activities that could provide an opportunity to practice. This would often occur within morning meeting and would extend the meeting time to include follow-up activities to check for students understanding. In this example, I was brainstorming follow up activities, *“This could include building a block tower one kid at a time; completing some kind of puzzle or riddle challenge; working on a community art project,”* and my list went on (Gandouin, 14 April 2023). I had to contend with academic demands and other school-wide activities that occurred simultaneously and were equally worthy of our time because of their importance and the impending end-of-year deadline. However, my reflections on the daily ups and downs of building our classroom community highlighted that, from my perspective, it felt necessary we address these community issues, even if it did take up part of the morning block.

Chapter 5 Discussion & Conclusion

The discussion section is the summary of the results, explanation of the data, and goes beyond the results to examine the data and implications of the study (McGregor, 2018). The discussion section is differed from the analysis section in Chapter 4 because they needed separate sections for summary and to examine specific discussion points more closely. Research experts stated that “It is also common to report themes, a case study, or narratives as separate findings, followed with their discussion (i.e., two different sections)” (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009 in McGregor, 2018). This should include the author systematically identifying the meaning of the results and findings and what each means, and then citing the related literature from the literature review. Rather than assuming readers will understand the points you are trying to make, “The discussion narrative helps readers understand *why the author* thinks the results or findings matter” (Azar, 2006 in McGregor, 2018).

Data triangulation is the use of multiple sources of data, such as using fieldnotes, interviews, and quiz scores, to answer the research question and create stronger overall validity and credibility to the findings of the research (Bhandari, 2022). It is mainly used in qualitative research, sometimes

in quantitative research, and mixed methods research is inherently built with triangulation as a methodology. In this research, data triangulation would benefit the overall research by increasing the validity, better credibility, and generalization capabilities of the findings. Most importantly, “Triangulating data, methods, investigators, or theories helps you avoid the research bias that comes with using a single perspective in your research” (Bhandari, 2022, p. 8). Data triangulation can create contradicting results and often creates the need for a higher cost and workload for researchers due to the fact that you will need more people on your team than just a single researcher. However, as was stated previously about ethnography and autoethnography as a research methodology, it is an in-depth methodology where observation and artifacts create a unique data set focused on the self and those specific experiences and reflections (Mertens, 2020, p. 272). Furthermore, I felt that due to the constraints of time and ethics concerns of using students in research, I felt that data triangulation did not fit into this autoethnographic study. In addition, the nature of autoethnography as the study of self does make space for personal experience (and therefore biases) because of the methodological focus on the self, so long as it is acknowledged as such by the researcher (Pitard, 2017). In this research I acknowledge that the results are not generalizable beyond my specific classroom setting and it is context specific, therefore decreasing the validity. However, in terms of context-specific ethnographic research the codes and overall themes coming out of the fieldnotes hold value within the specific context of this Grade 2 classroom (Mertens, 2020).

RQ1 How do I facilitate community construction in my Grade 2 classroom?

Three themes of community building were identified within this autoethnographic study of my community building practice as a Grade 2 classroom teacher. This included individual student interaction and inclusive classroom practices, explicit instruction, and the promotion of greeting acts. Individualized student interaction and inclusive classroom practices occurred around the routine of Morning Meeting and the daily question centred around the prompt “*What zone are you in? How are you today?*” (Gandouin, 2 February 2023). This additionally included highlights such as when the school Speech-Language Pathologist facilitated a series of lessons with the class, “*We’ve been teaching about reading someone’s body language, nonverbal cues, verbal cues, respecting boundaries, and no-means-no*” (Gandouin, 3 May 2023). These activities were facilitated intentionally with community building in mind to get students respectfully talking to each other, greeting, and identifying how they are feeling. It was also through intentional lessons facilitated alongside the school Speech-Language pathologist for building respectful communication in our

communication. Explicit instruction itself is the act of and scripting of instructions explaining how to do something or key knowledge of a topic typically taught to the whole class (Archer & Hughes, *n.d.*). Greeting acts are the actions and scripting of teacher-to-student and student-to-student greetings (Shields-Lysiak et al., 2020). The greeting acts all began with the main greeting, “Good morning, (student name).” This included direct teaching about the intention behind the daily greeting practice: “*Greet the person beside you so that everyone is welcomed into our class this Monday morning*” (Gandouin, 6 February 2023).

Individualized student interactions and inclusive classroom practices were the main facets of my community-building practice. This was true in much of the related research. For example, in the case study by Shields-Lysiak and colleagues (2020) and Boyd and colleagues (2018; 2020), an American Grade 2 classroom teacher’s community building practices are examined, and each activity the teacher facilitated were both inclusive and individualized to the students’ learning and individuality. These practices included co-creating a class handshake, a ‘song of the week’ to teach community values, and daily greeting practices.

The main way I created individualized interactions in my practice is through intentional classroom routines. Morning meeting is a strong example of one of those routines. “Classroom traditions can provide time for students to learn and celebrate one another, to value and appreciate differences, and develop empathy for each other’s life experiences” (Hannay, 2023). Morning meeting is only one routine, it occurs daily for about 15 to 20 minutes, but includes traditions within the routine that facilitate the goal of creating routines or traditions that celebrate each student and create an environment where everyone feels they belong.

Today we had a morning meeting. We just did ‘share your name, share your zone, and greet the person beside you.’ This time I asked them to choose between a fist bump or a high-five (Gandouin, 5 April 2023).

The excerpt above exemplifies how morning meeting allows each student an opportunity to share aloud with the group, an opportunity for me to check in with each individual, and for us as a class to hear from each other (Kriete & Davis, 2014). Within this morning meeting structure, there is also a student-to-student greeting routine whereby at the end of each student’s sharing time, they are asked to greet the person beside them and give them a fist-bump or a high-five as a friendly, welcoming gesture. In the Montessori educational philosophy, greeting is one way students practice being courteous global citizens (Cobb, 2014). It is these two routines, morning meeting and student-to-student greeting, that exemplify how I facilitate individualized student interactions that celebrate each student, create an environment of welcome, and provide opportunities to practice courteous

social skills and empathy (Hannay, 2023). Empathy, the ability to understand an other's perspective or experience and social-emotional learning were built into our morning meeting structure because each student was asked, *"What zone are you in? How are you today?"* (Gandouin, 2 February, 2023). The students not sharing were encouraged to listen to each person's sharing time and to consider how they are feeling today (Kriete & Davis, 2014; Tominey, 2019). Morning meeting was one way I facilitated the opportunity for students to share how they were feeling, identify the emotion and feeling language, and allowed me to check-in with each child. This exemplifies how key social-emotional skill learning was built in to our daily community building routines.

RQ2 What community markers do I observe within my practice?

Markers of a positive classroom community are rapport, tradition, pride of place, academic engagement, sense of belonging, a standard of personal best, and support for independence (Hannay, 2023). The coding analysis of my fieldnotes showed that the markers most evident in my practice were traditions, academic engagement, and sense of belonging. Traditions included activities like morning meeting, going over the shape of the day, and student-to-student daily greetings. In my classroom, I taught a variety of subject areas, such as literacy and math, but there were two main themes of academic engagement I observed. Sub-theme 1 was how I modelled self-reflection to improve, such as when *"we skipped morning meeting for the sake of efficiency, and we went right into completing our literacy block"* (Gandouin, 17 February 2023). Sub-theme 2 highlighted the many teaching strategies I used to maximize the hours of my school day and the moments of student focus so that I could cover academic topic areas that I needed to. For example, I utilized small group instruction to differentiate my instruction to meet individual student needs. *"We were able to get some math stations done where each group rotates between activities of: Math by yourself, math with a partner, math with technology, and math with teacher"* (Gandouin, 7 February 2023).

The sense of belonging facet of a positive classroom community is one facet I intend to elaborate more on here. In the classroom, *"A sense of belonging is created when we cultivate positive relationships between students, and share control of and responsibility for the care of the classroom"* and furthermore, *"Holding regular, structured class meetings to make decisions, solve problems, share feelings, and explicitly teach social skills goes a long way toward developing a sense of belonging in the classroom"* (Hannay, 2023, p. 5). In my classroom context, the main community-building practice we engaged in was morning meeting. Multiple traditions occurred including an opportunity for students to share with each other, checking in on how each student is doing, and a

greeting tradition. I was introduced to the greeting tradition in the Montessori elementary school I attended from Kindergarten to Grade 5. I acknowledge this personal bias in the limitations section.

Maria Montessori believed that education should strive to create thoughtful, courteous global citizens and one major teaching that stemmed from this set of beliefs was the teaching of *greeting* people we know and introducing to those we haven't met yet (Cobb, 2014). Every morning when I entered my the classroom my teacher would greet me with a friendly, "Good morning, Arden" and she would shake my hand every morning without fail. I would greet her back with a "Good morning, (teacher's name)" and we would shake hands (Cobb, 2014). Now, as I have grown my teaching practice, I choose to include greetings in my practice by greeting every student by name as they walk in the door as well as student-to-student greeting during morning meetings. I feel it has value in how greetings are backed by the intention to welcome students into the room (Kriete, 2003). It is important to acknowledge here that I do not teach in a Montessori pedagogy but rather a public school in the lower mainland of British Columbia. Although I did not teach my students to shake hands, I consider the greeting practice of greeting each other by name an important part of the day. After each student is finished their turn around the circle, they greet the person beside them by name and say "*Good morning (student's name)*" (Gandouin, 15 February 2023). That was our simple, standard greeting that followed most morning meeting prompts. This greeting practice was elaborated on over time such as when we, "*included a 'fist-bump greeting'*" (Gandouin, 3 May 2023). Additionally, we did an elaborated Monday morning greeting in which I instructed the students to greet each other to the new week by saying "*Hi (student's name), how was your weekend?*" (Gandouin, 17 April 2023). In this way, greeting one another by name contributes to satisfying the criteria for creating a sense of belonging: Each child is called by their name, there is explicit teaching around how to greet each other in a good way, and most importantly every student was welcomed into the school day by a peer every day (Hannay, 2023). They had multiple opportunities each week to practice the act of greeting.

Other researcher's findings on the impacts of greetings indicate positive social and emotional outcomes for students. For example, Shields-Lysiak and colleagues (2020) state that "Classroom greeting offer more than a simple hello. It can welcome students "in" and signal that they matter" (Shields-Lysiak et al., 2020, p. 42). Welcoming in and the idea of every person mattering is signaled as being an essential outcome of community building and morning meeting (Kriete, 2003). In Shields-Lysiak and colleagues ethnographic research study of a Grade 2 classroom, they found that greetings "evoked community values" such as promoting friendship, curiosity,

cooperation, and self-regulation (Shields-Lysiak et al., 2020, p. 46). In a different study with an almost opposite choice of subjects, an evaluation of teacher-student greetings in a Kuwait college found that *“when asked what type of greetings do students prefer, 50.3% of the students preferred those related to the time of day ‘Good morning’, yet, 60% of teachers preferred the religious greeting ‘peace be upon you’ (alsalamu alaikum) (Algharabali et al., 2019, p. 18).* Furthermore, this study found that students felt that teacher-to-student greetings were necessary and the main reason given was that it helped them feel welcomed to the classroom. Both of these examples demonstrate how, even across age and level of schooling, teacher-student and student-to-student greetings were viewed as positive and seen as opening opportunities for positive connection, building community, and welcoming each person to the day.

A second essential marker of community building in my practice were the activities I planned and facilitated and how they allowed me to celebrate the students’ individuality in my classroom. The Expert Project (Gandouin, 28 February 2023) and the strengths quilt (Gandouin, 20 April 2023) were two in-depth activities that we completed as a class during the observation period of this research. The Expert Project was a presentation project where students chose a topic of interest (they were encouraged to choose something they already knew about or had experienced before) and they were tasked with identifying the four most important things to know about that topic, along with bringing in an artifact associated with that topic (Kirk, *personal communication*). A teacher colleague provided me with this idea and helped guide me in facilitating this project. The unanticipated impact of this project was that it provided an opportunity for us to get to know each other even further as a classroom group, which strengthened connections. It was also an opportunity for students to present or perform in front of each other. I hope the presentations and opportunity to share with each other deepened their sense of belonging to the classroom and solidified the group. Sharing the students’ perspectives is beyond the scope and goes against the ethical considerations of this research.

RQ3 How does my facilitation of “community” grow and change over time?

Theme 1 was about how I changed my facilitation of community building through my daily classroom routines. Routines are any activity repeated throughout the school week, that instructs your students or provides a structure on how to be in the classroom (Hannay, 2023). Skipping morning meeting sometimes (Gandouin, 7 February 2023) to make time for academic activities (Gandouin, 3 March 2023) and body break after morning meeting (Gandouin, 17 February 2023) are examples of how I changed routines. Theme 2 was all about how I changed my practice of

community building through a practice of self-reflection. Such as, on February 28, I took my class on a skating field trip, and although I am a terrible skater, the field trip ended up being a day of strong community building (Gandouin, 28 February 2023). Theme 3 was all about how I changed my practice through an adjustment of what I prioritized in a day. I needed to prioritize academics, routines, and social-emotional learning. I changed my priorities to meet the needs of the students and the class as a whole to build a strong sense of belonging and a learning environment – a classroom community (Hannay, 2023). I changed my prioritization to academic and social-emotional learning because of the unique differentiation needs of my students – and academic and social-emotional learning are both parts of a positive classroom community.

Lifelong learning and reflective practice are notable catalysts in how I grew as a teacher and how I grew my practice as a facilitator of community building (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023). I want to delve deeper into an instance of reflective practice that occurred on February 8, 2023 when I noticed *“the students were not well-adjusted and motorized through these routines”* and furthermore I, *“decided to stand at the back counter and keep time and safety of the classroom and waited... They finally came together and did the routine. They finished their agendas and either read to self or coloured quietly at their desk”* (Gandouin, 8 February 2023). I remember this moment I struggled to know how to support my students. It was my one wish that our daily practices would become automatic routines and require less of my effort as the facilitator. I knew I needed to spend my time working with individual students to support reading or setting materials up to facilitate high-quality learning experiences. Furthermore, achieving strong routines would build up our skills to be able to complete our daily lessons well. This requires that students complete some basic tasks independently and move safely and respectfully through space. The key to getting students on track with the routines they had learned was *teaching* them to do it through explicit instruction, *expecting* that they can do it, and following through on *waiting* for them to complete these tasks properly until it became routine (Archer & Hughes, *n.d.*). I came to conclude what I had been doing wrong and figured out what to change to make improvements.

Limitations

Within my autoethnographic research study, limitations exist in how the research occurred and the thoughts shared in this research. For example, *“the exposure it implies of the researcher’s inner feelings and thoughts, which requires honesty and willingness to self-disclose”* (Méndez, 2013). Although I have done my best to disclose my experiences as the classroom teacher on the topic of community building in the classroom, that is only my subjective experience of how it went.

This is especially important considering that I was the subject of the field notes, the person recording the field notes, and the only researcher interpreting the data. Not only are my experiences shared from my subjective perspective, the lenses of my life experiences contains much personal bias (Pitard, 2017; McGregor, 2018). Personal bias and lack of academic rigor are important limitations to acknowledge here. One specific area of personal bias I wish to acknowledge is my experience of my Kindergarten to Grade 5 education at a private Montessori elementary school in the lower mainland of British Columbia. I acknowledge that although I am not trained in the Montessori pedagogy and educational philosophy, the experience of receiving that education is different than that of a public school in the lower mainland of British Columbia and, therefore, influences in some way the teacher I am today.

Due to ethical boundaries, I have intentionally excluded the perspectives of others who may have been part of the experience with me, such as support staff, administrators, and the students themselves. I also acknowledge that I cannot draw conclusions that the way I interpret the experience of the activities, lessons, and conversations I facilitated were accurate to the experiences of the people in the classroom with me, including the adult staff and the students (Mertens, 2020).

The data analysis process of this autoethnographic research resulted in several themes of classroom community emerging from my teaching practice. However, these themes are limited only to my perspective of my teaching practice in this classroom context (Mertens, 2020). Therefore, the limitation that needs to be acknowledged is that this research would be difficult to reproduce and might not produce the same results or experiences. The experiences and interpretations of teachers are always fluid and context-dependent. That is the essence of the autoethnographic research method, which is the perspective of the researcher in a context that is being examined.

Recommendations

More research should be added to this area of study on the perspectives of the teacher's constructing classroom communities, and it would be especially interesting to see research in this area in a variety of grade-levels (Kriete & Davis, 2014). There is a growing body of research sharing the perspective of students and greeting activities (Shields-Lysiak et al., 2020) and responsive circles (Wang & Lee, 2019). There is also a growing body of research centred in the perspective of students and community building activities, such as the work of Maureen Boyd and colleagues (Boyd et al., 2018; 2020). However, further research on classroom community building from the perspective of Canadian students in public schools is greatly needed. Further research could also be completed from the teacher's perspective to add to the growing body of knowledge about the experience of

facilitating community building in the diverse and complex landscape of public education in Canada. I hope more teachers completing graduate-level studies should consider autoethnography as a viable research methodology for their thesis dissertation. I found completing the autoethnography to mix well the disposition of the teacher as a practitioner and lifelong learner. The process of autoethnography was an in-depth practice of professional reflection (Mertens, 2020). Additionally, educators utilizing the autoethnography methodology for their thesis dissertation would benefit other teachers. Considering the early-career teacher's perspective getting to read and learn from the direct perspective of more experienced educators of a similar grade-level could help their practice, and provide key insight to some of the trials and triumphs of teaching. I am confident the information I gleaned from methodically and intentionally analyzing my practice continues to make me a better teacher each school year.

Conclusion

I endeavoured to examine my community-building practice from the perspective of the classroom teacher. It was an interesting experience because it brought my practice under the microscope, and I had to consider the content and value of what I was doing in an attempt to build classroom community. It is no doubt that teaching is a challenging job, and this school year was no exception. One challenging aspect of teaching is taking the students on your class roster and finding cohesion and harmony to create an environment where students can learn and grow effectively together. The six markers of a positive classroom community encompass the ideals of harmony and cohesion: Rapport, tradition, pride of place, academic engagement, sense of belonging, a standard of personal best, and support to independence (Hannay, 2023). Through various practices such as student-to-student greeting, morning meeting, and many moments of intentional explicit instruction I was able to find some success. I provided my students interesting experiences like skating, each student got to be an expert for an expert project, and each week we practiced greeting each other as they learned to identify their emotions during morning meeting. I learned that a community-building practice is never perfect and needs to be adaptable to the group's needs as that changes over time. Facilitating community building will also grow and change as the teacher grows.

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Appendix A

Table 1.2

Table of Daily Schedule

Time of Day Title	Description of Events
Morning Bell & Welcome	8:50am Welcome students into the classroom, greeting each student by name 8:55am Morning work 9:10am Morning meeting 9:20am Whole-Class Body Break <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Danny Go or Kidz Bop Dance Along Videos were played on projector to get students moving and up out of their desks.
Daily work block #1	9:30am Math work block <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mini-lesson: Explicit Instruction ○ Rotations: Students rotate in small groups to different math stations
Recess & Snack	10:20am Students go outside for recess <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Snack: Students sit at their desks for snacks
Daily work block #2	10:55am Literacy work block <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ UFLI Explicit Phonics Instruction ○ Whole-Class Body Break ○ Rotations: Literacy work tasks and meeting with the teacher for small group reading instruction 11:30am Experts Project
Recess & Lunch	12:00pm Students go outside for recess 12:30pm Lunch: Students sit at their desks for lunch
Daily work block #3	12:55pm Agenda & Read to self (students clean up their lunches, fill in their agendas, and read independently at their desks) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher reads one-on-one with Tier 2/3 students at rainbow table 1:30pm Social studies/Science/Art work block 2:15pm Prepare for dismissal

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher asks students: “What went well today?” “What made you happy today?” ○ Students raise hand to respond
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Table 1.3

Table of Morning Meeting Prompts

Morning Meeting Prompts	Date first used (MDY)	Number of times
What zone are you in? Kindly greet the person beside you by name, with either a fist bump or a high-five.	02/02/2023	4
Share how you are doing today, what zone are you in, and greet the person beside you so everyone is welcomed into our classroom this morning.	02/06/2023	3
Share how you are doing today, what zone are you in, and share one thing that you appreciated about your substitute teacher yesterday.	02/25/2023	1
You are always welcomed to share how you are feeling or to skip if you don't feel comfortable. I request please that you still share something or someone you are grateful for because it is Gratitude Friday.	04/14/2023	1
How are you doing today, what zone are you in, and greet the person beside you with a question: “Hi ____! How was your weekend?”	04/17/2023	1
How are you today, what zone are you in, and greet the person beside you with a compliment: Hi _____. I like how you _____. OR Hi _____ One thing you do that I like is _____.	04/18/2023	1
Theme: Teamwork – After sharing what zone you are in, enter the middle of the circle and add one building block to the tower. Our goal is to make the tallest tower that we can. Once a block falls down, we must leave it on the ground. You can give encouraging statements or any kindness, but we can't yell or get mad at our teammates.	04/19/2023	1
Theme: Backwards day – Today is Backwards Day at school. Name anything you would like to do backwards?	04/28/2023	1
Share your name, what zone you are in, and a highlight from your weekend or something you are looking forwards to.	05/01/2023	1

Ball roll greeting: Share your name, your zone, and how you're doing today. Then, roll the ball gently across the circle and greet the person you are passing to by saying "Good morning ____."	05/02/2023	1
Share your name and what zone you are in. Today's question of the day is, how can you show respect to the school and our community around us?	05/05/2023	1
Share your name and what zone you are in. Today's question of the day is, what activities do you enjoy most when it is sunny outside? An extra challenge is for you to explain why you like that activity.	05/08/2023	1

Table 1.4

Table of Classroom Routines

Daily Community Routines	<p>Morning Sunshine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Morning work tasks prepared on each student's desk for students to work on when they arrive. Routine, familiar tasks only. ○ A moment for students to transition from home to school. Also, allowed time for students who arrive late to join the class before instruction begins. <p>Morning meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In a circle, students take turns to share their name, identify the Zone of Regulation they are in, and other prompts focused on social-emotional learning. ○ Go over Shape of Day with students and front load any changes in the schedule. <p>Morning greeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At morning meeting, students end their turn to share by greeting the person beside them by name. Each person greets and is greeted by a peer. <p>Scheduled Body Breaks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At key moments in daily schedule (Table of Daily Schedule) teacher scheduled body breaks to get students out of chair and moving before key academic learning tasks.
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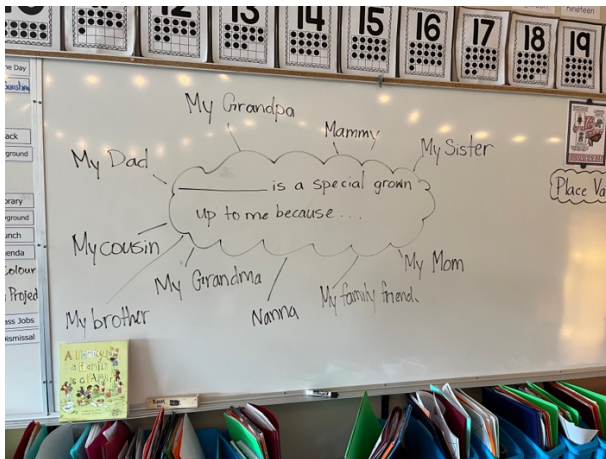
<p>Academic Engagement</p> <p>Routines</p>	<p>Expert Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students choose a focus area & identify four more important things about that topic <p>Math Station Rotations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students rotate between different activities in the classroom targeted to specific curriculum outcomes. ○ Activities included combination of: Math by yourself, with a partner, with technology, and with a teacher. <p>Literacy Station Rotations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students rotate between different activities in the classroom targeted to specific curriculum outcomes. ○ Activities included a combination of: Levelled reading, phonics practice, read-with-technology, and journal writing. <p>Get Ready / Do / Done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Executive functioning resource to provide students with a central spot in the classroom to find instructions in visual and written form of the expected activities (EF Practice, 2024, <i>Appendix B</i>).
<p>Other</p>	<p>Classroom Monthly Calendar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each month fill in class calendar with upcoming events school/class events. <p>SeeSaw Digital Classroom App</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher aimed once per week to post student's work to their individual online profiles for families to see.

Appendix B**Artifacts & Images**

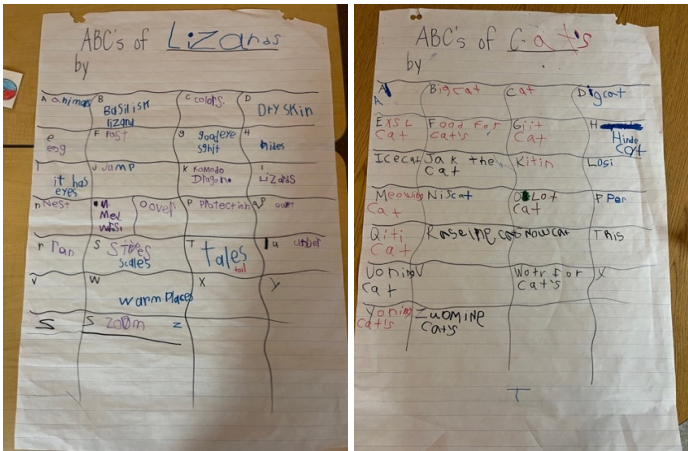
February 2, 2023

Zones of Regulation Classroom Display

February 15, 2023



February 16, 2023



March 3, 2023

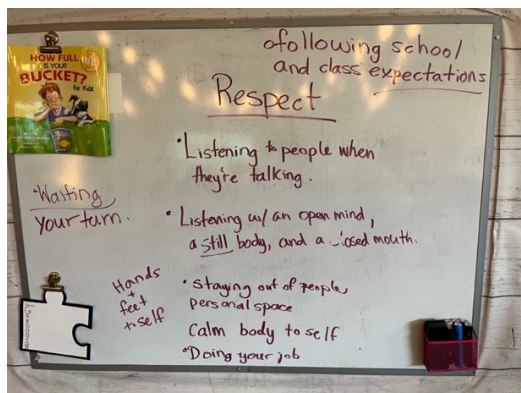
Expert Project on Lizards



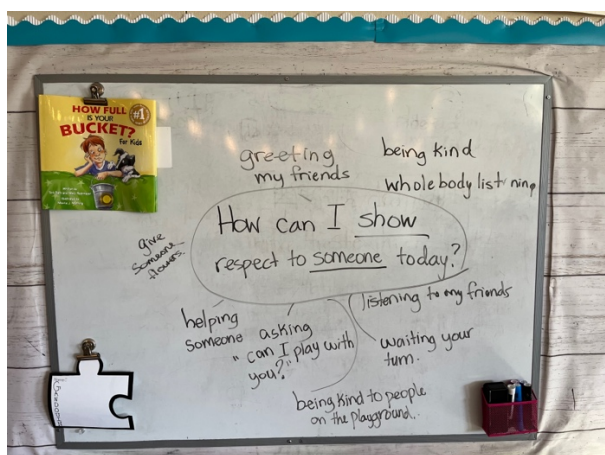
April 19, 2023



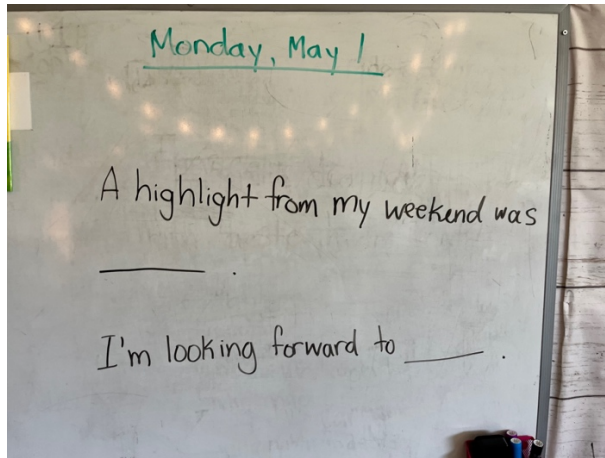
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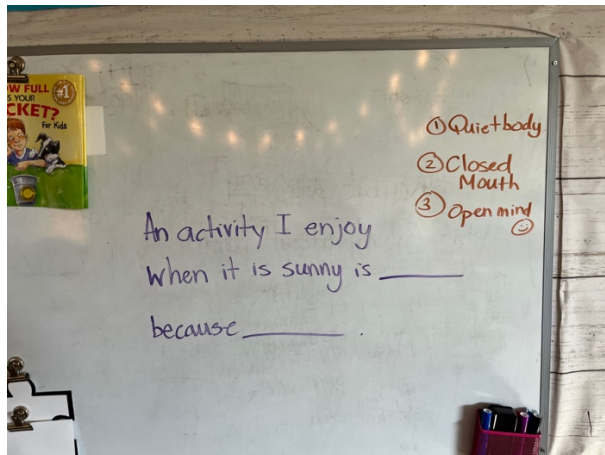
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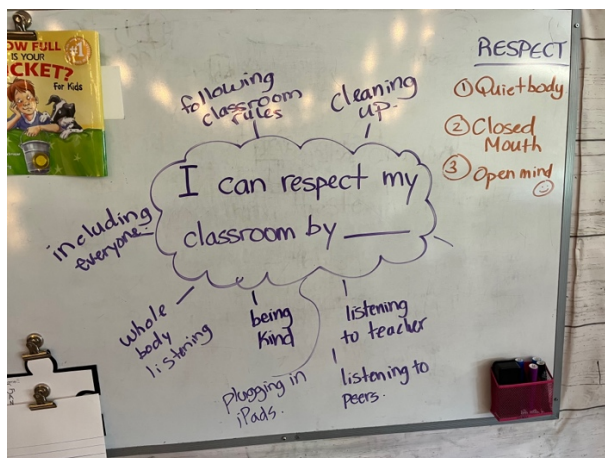
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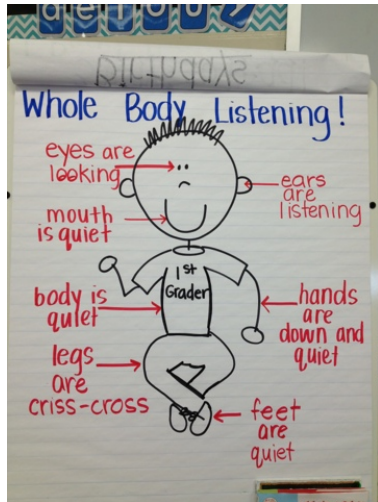
May 8, 2023



May 9, 2023



Whole-Body Listening Anchor Chart (Primary Buzz, 2013)



Get Ready / Do/ Done Resource (EF Practice, 2024)

Get Ready	Do	Done
Space		
Materials		
Mindset		
		<div>Get Done</div> <div>Clean Up Submit Charge Celebrate!</div>