

It's Your Community!

Month: Jan.

Week #: 17

Day: b. Tues. Time: 30 min.

What is an Ideal Community?

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Objectives/Aims

The students will: recognize the foundational building blocks of an ideal community; compare and contrast the differences between a good and bad community.

Materials

white board with markers

Picture

Here are some students that they are very happy to be part of this classroom community. What makes for a good community?



Background

Definition:

community - a unified body of people with a common characteristic and/or interest living together within a larger society at a specified location

While this definition gives the basis of what a community is, it doesn't describe the foundations of a joyful functional and effective community. In his book, *The Road Less Traveled*, M. Scott Peck lists four essential building blocks of a successful community:

Inclusive - each member is recognized, accepted, and embraced

Responsive - the community meets individual needs

Contemplative - the group continually examines and monitors progress

Safe - each member feels secure and protected

Group Activity

1. Say, "Remember, a community is a unified body of people with a common characteristic and/or interest living together within a larger society at a specified location. Today we are going to attempt to discover what makes a really good community or an 'ideal' community. Now, I want you to close your eyes and visualize with your mind's eye a time when you have been a member of a really good community. This can be a classroom, sports team, a club, a camp, a family group, a group of friends or any group that you would consider a community. Now, first try to imagine actually being at the one of these group's activities. Where are you? Who's there and what do you have in common with them? What are you doing? How do the others treat you? Think of specific things that they do and say. How do you usually feel when you're with this group? Do you feel safe both physically and emotionally? Are they an effective community, meaning are they good at what they do? (e.g. play baseball well, put on a good play) Do they periodically (now and then) think about what would make them a better community and then change things? Okay, you can open your eyes. I'm going to ask you some questions about this ideal group of yours." Ask questions listed below in 'Group Discussion Questions.'

Group Activity (continued)

(If you have time, you can continue with this additional experience.)

2. Say, “Okay, now I want you to visualize a different community, one that you didn’t enjoy, one that you would prefer to not even be a part of. First, try to imagine actually being at the one of these group’s activities. Where are you? Who’s there and what do you have in common with them? What are you doing? How do the others treat you? Think of specific things that they do and say. How do you usually feel when you’re with this group? Do you feel safe both physically and emotionally? Are they an effective community, meaning are they good at what they do? (e.g. play baseball well, put on a good play) Do they periodically (now and then) think about what would make them a better community and then change things? Okay, you can open your eyes. I’m going to ask you some questions about this undesirable group of yours.” (Ask questions listed below in ‘Group Discussion Questions’.)

Group Discussion Questions

Write Peck’s four foundational aspects of a successful community across the top of the board: Inclusive, Responsive, Contemplative and Safe. As the students answer the following questions, paraphrase the answers into their simplest forms and list them under the appropriate category. If the students don’t come up with an answer to fill every category, lead them to an appropriate answer.

Note: Be sure and leave this list on the board for the following day’s activity or copy them down.

1. What made your experience so enjoyable with your community?

A: They were kind to me, accepted me for who I am, treated me with respect, we had fun, felt safe, etc. (If the answers are general, encourage the students to be more specific. For example, how did they treat you kindly?)

2. What help make it function so well?

A: People cooperated, it was well organized, people followed the rules, etc.

3. What made it effective in meeting its purpose? (e.g. a good soccer team, a classroom where students learned, a hospital that healed people)

A: People did their best, would periodically review how the group was doing, etc.

4. What do each of these words on the board mean:

Inclusive? A: Each member is recognized, accepted, and embraced

Responsive? A: The community meets individual needs

Contemplative? A: The group continually examines and monitors progress

Safe? A: Each member feels secure and protected

(Questions for after the second, additional experience.)

1. Ask the same questions as in the first set of questions, but couch them in a negative sense.

(e.g. not enjoyable, not functional, not effective)

A: The negative answers will be in sharp contrast to the positive answers of the first set of questions. This will accentuate the difference between an ideal and less-than-ideal community.

Conclusion

Say, “Hopefully this activity helped you differentiate between a bad and a good community. We found that a good, or ideal community is... (Read from the list on the board). Tomorrow we’re going to rate our own classroom community to see if it’s good or if it needs some improvement.”

Jan. 17 b. Tues.

It's Your Community!: What is an Ideal Community?



**Here are some students that are very happy to be part of this classroom community.
What makes for a good community?**