

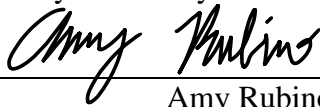
Master Capstone Project

**Fostering Growth Through Student Self-Image Development and Classroom Engagement
to Create an Effective Team;
A Classroom Action Research Study**

Amy Rubino

Submitted to the
Graduate School of Education
City University of Seattle
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master in Teaching

I give permission to City University to store and use this MIT Project for teaching purposes.

Submitted by  9-4-24
Amy Rubino Date

Approved by  9/04/2024
Advisor's Name, Abbreviated Degree(s) Date

Approved by  9/8/2024
Vicki Butler, Ed.D. Date

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Introduction	3
Inspiration	4
Questions	4
Rationale	5
Literature Review	5
Theory of Change	13
Methodology	13
Context and Participants	14
Intervention	14
Assessments	15
Results	18
Limitations	18
Recommendations	19
References	20
Dedications	26

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

Abstract

This was a classroom action research study focused on unifying student growth, beliefs, and abilities by uniting students, encouraging them to take part in building classroom community, and increase student engagement to create an effective team. The participants were a 2nd grade classroom of 22 students. 17 students' primary language was Spanish, 2 students primary language was Arabic, 1 student's primary language was Russian, 1 student's primary language was Ukrainian, and 1 student's primary language was English. A question that arose during this investigation was how I build student confidence and allow them to grow individually as well as a larger community of learners. My goal was to ensure that students of all backgrounds and personality types were able to bond, trust each other, grow as individuals, and learn in a collaborative environment to become an effective team. By collecting qualitative data spanning 9 weeks of the school year, I implemented videos, affirmations, mindfulness practices, and group lessons with games week to week in order to promote student self-confidence, foster growth, belief in their own learning abilities, develop classroom engagement, and build community to create an inclusive team environment. Results showed correlation between whole group learning through games and team building with positive inclusive outlooks. As well as positive reflections with the mindfulness applications and an improvement in students reporting positive school day outlooks.

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

During the first month of my student teaching school year I was able to meet each of my students during start of the year conferences. Each student that arrived to their conference time with a family member seemed shy and reserved but also excited. Many students acted as their own translators for their parents to bridge the language gap between teacher and family. Yet the majority of parents mentioned their worries about their students falling behind academically, as well as their student's nerves about making friends while entering the 2nd grade as most were new to the school. I knew I wanted to build student confidence and connection immediately after meeting my internship students, as I would be starting off the school year with them. After researching and investigating ways in which to bond with my students I settled on three areas to contribute to building confidence and community. By incorporating self-affirmation practices, I could foster positive self-development and introduce positive language to the classroom. Mindfulness practices to help students recenter themselves, regulate their moods, and taking time to focus on themselves as individuals. Building community was the third aspect I wanted to incorporate into the classroom. By practicing whole class learning through games, as well as small group learning and building comradery I was hopeful to build community through my entire classroom, so the students see themselves as a strong group of individuals, but also a team that celebrates each other's successes. I am aware that my background and experiences may influence my teaching, investigation, and the interpretation of results. I continue to welcome feedback to broaden my perspective and deepen my learning.

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

Inspiration

Throughout my K-12 educational experience I felt connected to my classmates only at the end of the year. The final weeks of the school year always felt like more than a group of individual students; It felt like a team. I knew I wanted to replicate that experience so I set out to investigate ways in which I could speed up the bonding process between my students and create a learning environment more akin to a team earlier in the school year. I was inspired to aid in student growth by creating a learning environment in which my students were confident in themselves, believed in their abilities, and were able to work together as an effective team.

Question

- How do I ensure that students of all backgrounds and personality types are able to bond, trust each other, grow as individuals, and learn in a collaborative environment to become an effective team.
- How do I build student confidence and allow them to grow individually as well as a larger community of learners?
- Does a student's self-image and the perception of themselves factor into student achievement?
- Do the factors that contribute to student growth and development change in different environments?
- How would a multifaceted approach to improving overall student experience factor into building community?
- Would developing a classroom culture where students celebrate their successes on both individual and whole group levels be an effective way to aid community development?

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

Rationale

During the first month of their school year the students were slow to befriend each other, they were very individually centered and would not show interest in group activities or academic free time. The students in my investigation lacked self-confidence as well as classroom community. The students were hesitant to raise hands and offer potential answers during lessons and quite fearful of getting something wrong. When prompted during 1:1 work checks students would confide in me that they thought they had an answer, but didn't want to get it wrong in front of their peers. They were also slow to engage with each other during lessons, carpet time, free play, specialist, and during recess. After observing this repeated trend week after week I set out to change our routine in order to help build classroom community and confidence.

Literature Review

Does a student's self-image have a direct, indirect, or inverse relationship to student participation and achievement in school? A student's progress and success in school can be attributed to many outside factors. A stable home life, reliable mentors, accessible pathways for education, but how does a student's self-image and the perception of themselves factor into student achievement? How would creating a cohesive classroom community in which all students benefit from their individual presence and inclusion in a positive self-affirming learning environment factor into student achievement? How do the variables that contribute to student growth and development change when these practices are implemented and classrooms become more accessible.

Self-Affirmation and Student Achievement

A number of positive effects have been found when the practice of self-affirmations is introduced into the classroom. Sherman et al. (2013) investigated middle school classrooms in

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

grades 6th to 8th to see if stereotypes that affect academic performance can be reversed by implementing self-affirmation practices. Investigation discovered a link between implementation of self-affirmation practices throughout the school year and a decrease in the achievement gap. Lokhande and Muller (2019) examined the intervention of positive affirmations to improve academic achievement, the investigation spanned 11 schools and included 820 7th grade students with varying minority backgrounds. Students belonged to two potentially disadvantaged groups at the same time, such as girls, with a minority background. This multi-leveled linear model study required students to complete a brief writing assignment in class listing their personal values before completing a standardized test. The control group was tasked with completing a writing assignment of their choice. Researchers found a link between students who performed significantly better after the affirmation writing than those tasked with completing the control writing. Binning et al. (2019) researched the act of reducing discipline incidents by implementing the use of self-affirmations. Spanning 3 years of investigating 163 middle school students at an ethnically diverse school, researchers tested the hypothesis that periodic implementation of self-affirmation exercises improves student behavior as well as student trust. Self-affirmation exercises implemented by classroom teachers was a writing prompt for students to identify personally important values. Investigators were able to identify a link between the affirmations group and a 69% lower rate of discipline.

Mindfulness

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines Mindfulness as the awareness of one's internal states and surroundings. Mindfulness practices help one to learn how to observe their thoughts, emotions, and experiences. The practice of mindfulness has been investigated as another contributing factor for students' self-image growth and development.

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

Self-Regulation

There is evidence that shows a connection between mindfulness practices and student self-regulation. Portele and Jansen (2023) investigated the effectiveness of mindfulness by conducting a study spanning 6 weeks that focused on mindfulness practice with 3rd grade elementary school students with an average age of 9 years old. In all 91 students were sorted into 3 groups throughout the experiment. Group A received standard school day instruction. Group B received standard school day instruction as well as biweekly mindfulness intervention, Group C received standard school day instruction as well as daily mindfulness intervention. Researchers discovered a significant effect in mood regulation in both mindfulness intervention groups regardless of the frequency at which the mindfulness intervention occurred. National Institute of Health (NIH) researchers Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) investigated the claim that introducing mindfulness would enhance the regulation of students. Researchers followed 4 classes of combined 4th and 5th elementary school students divided into an intervention of regular curriculum lessons or SEL with mindfulness lessons. The investigation suggested promising effects of combining SEL with mindfulness resulting in greater cognitive control and behavioral self regulation. Durlak et al. (2011) reported students in 213 school-based mindfulness SEL programs in K-12 grades that participated in their SEL interventions had significantly improved academic performance, social and emotional skills, as well as behaviors.

Building Community

Collaboration

While it is widely accepted that classroom collaboration can help students feel valued and engaged, but how are students expected to improve their self-image without a sustainable community environment in which to continue their growth? There is evidence of a connection between classroom collaboration in which students collaborate by taking ownership of their

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

classroom and building classroom community. Morcom (2014) investigated 57 students aged 9-11 in 2 different classrooms. Both classrooms used a student-centered approach to learning that gave students a hand in their own growth. They found that this practice promoted students' collaborative skills as well as decision making processes. Solomon et al (1996) studied the application of emphasis placed on cooperative learning and a child-centered approach to classroom management. By investigating a cooperative learning approach of a cohort of students ranging K-4th grade spanning 3 elementary schools, Solomon et al (1996) found indications the program successfully heightened students' sense of community as well as student self-direction. Turner and Kim (2005) investigated building community within 2 separate elementary school classrooms. To develop specific strategies to build community, researchers investigated 4 key practices. The 4-step process discovered were: building relationships amongst community, fostering collective responsibility, promoting ownership, and reflecting on community learning (Turner & Kim 2005)

Student Voice

There is evidence that giving students an organized say in their learning opens classroom barriers between teachers and students. The foundation of community is accessible by prioritizing a way to communicate, make meaningful connections, and allowing students to find their own voice. There is evidence of a connection between building a classroom community and allocating space for student voice. Piatt-Jaeger (2011) investigated 6th grade students at a faith based elementary school to examine if the implementation of SEL curriculum that encouraged student voice also increased positive social interactions. Data collected via classroom teacher consisting of discussions, writing samples, and informal observations indicated a positive effect in classroom unity. In a case study of 5th grade girls, Mitra and Serriere (2012) examined the development of students while engaged in student voice efforts that were measured by student

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

participation. Researchers observed a connection between student voice and the unity of working to complete a common goal of establishing classroom community. There is evidence that shows a connection between student voice opportunities and building a strong classroom community. O'Reilly (2019) Investigated a school-wide implementation of student voice and its impact on the greater school community. In a K-8 Northern California elementary, students were surveyed and interviewed Results showed a direct relationship between student voice opportunities and students' demonstration of leadership behaviors.

Inclusive Practices

Building community was defined in this study as *all students are accepted into the fold*. The underlying theory of change was that having students celebrated for their individual uniqueness as well as their commonalities allows for bonding and building of relationships. However, when a student learns differently than others, or has barriers to learning academically or socially they are often times shunned from the community. Could inclusivity practices enable participation and ensure a diverse classroom community?

There is evidence that practices developed for individual targeted populations can be applied for all in a general education classroom. Leedahl (2022) reviewed practices relating to including students with special needs elementary general education classrooms. The best practices included building classroom communities centered around respect and acceptance, building relationships among staff and students, allowing student choice, and providing training on inclusive practices resulted in students of all abilities receiving equitable access to grade level content in their classroom communities.

Students that are learning the English language may be excluded from the classroom community at no fault of their own. Lowe (2022) explored the achievement gap of students

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

whose primary language was something other than English. In a collaborated effort participant teachers refined and investigated ways to build relationships for multilingual learners in order to improve academic achievement and to establish a better understanding of their students' cultural identities. Over a 4-week academic summer program in a South Carolina elementary school, they implemented intentional lessons in a multilingual inclusive program. The study collected evidence of effectiveness for improving the multilingual learners' educational experience.

There is evidence that teachers are not uniformly prepared and confident at serving students with backgrounds different from their own. There is also evidence that teachers and their students benefit from preparation and professional development in culturally-responsive teaching. Students entering the classroom, with different lived experiences, backgrounds, family histories, cultures, traditions, and traumas enter into a community space that could differ from the lived experiences of their classroom teacher. Clark and Andreasen (2019) investigated how education programs were training student teachers about cultural diversity. 523 preservice teachers from 6 higher education schools in the U.S. took part in a questionnaire about teaching culturally diverse students before their first year of teaching and again at the end of their first year of teaching. Results showed a positive correlation between diversity work done at the teacher training stage, and a higher level of teacher self-efficacy. Marbley et al. (2007) investigated ways to prepare educators to teach culturally diverse students using a pedagogical counseling model. The counseling model aimed to increase the comfort level of educators interacting with students from diverse cultures and backgrounds. The training model pairs instructional strategies with sensitivities to cultural and traditional differences, ensuring the preservice teachers have the ability to use these skills to better serve their classroom communities. Results signified the method of incorporating the counseling model when paired

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

with training of historical movements, traditions, cultures, Black pedagogy theories, sensitivity training, philosophy, and teacher preparation encouraged the development of background knowledge in order to better prepare preservice teachers for diversity trainings and instructing a diverse classroom community. Terry (2015) investigated the cultural diversity increase in public schools, and the achievement gap between white students and students of color. They investigated the role of culturally responsive pedagogy as a way to close the learning gap and increase cultural diversity in public school. Using a qualitative research study, investigators explored veteran teachers in a southern middle school who developed their own cultural responsiveness when their students had different backgrounds to their own. Results suggested the need for specific training that emphasizes culturally responsive teaching methods and classroom implementation.

Policy

To ensure a more equal opportunity for learners across the country the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed into law in 1975 and has been revised regularly since then. The IDEA ensures that state to state schools are in compliance with the policies of providing early intervention, special education, and additional services to youth with disabilities. The IDEA is constantly evolving, more recent changes and provisions are parent participation, placement justification, discipline, transition services, and disproportionate representation. (Penovich Friend, & Bursuck 2019) There are 13 disability eligibility categories under IDEA that a student could qualify for: autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional/behavior disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, such as ADHD, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairments including blindness. If a student qualifies for one or more of these categories, they will fall under the umbrella of IDEA.

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

Another piece of Federal Legislation falls under Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 protects students from discrimination based on disability, which is defined by "A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity." (Penovich-Friend, & Bursuck 2019) Eligible students could have a wide range of needs different from the 13 qualifying categories under IDEA. A 504 plan could be used for a student's temporary injury, a learning disability, chronic health condition such as asthma, allergies, or even a McKinney-Vento case. (U.S. Department of Education 2017)

"Schools must provide students with disabilities the accommodations, aids, and services they need to access and benefit from education equally with their peers" (WA OSPI 2019)

Multilingual learners are students that are learning English while in a school environment. A student's language proficiency can sometimes be dismissed as a learning disability. However, speaking different languages is not a disability, which is why ML students do not qualify for IDEA or 504 plans. They do, however, qualify for assistance both in their general education classroom, as well as services in multilingual educational programs. The National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) is an advocacy organization specializing in fighting for change and representation, as well as protection for multilingual learners across the country. One of the Federal Laws protecting MLs is called The Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974 which prohibits discrimination against students. It also requires school districts and states' departments of education to ensure equal participation for everyone, including removing language barriers for ELL students. (NABE 2022)

The Office of Special Education (OSEP) is a nation-wide department that strives to ensure access to fair, equitable, and high-quality education and services for children and families with disabilities. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law in 2015. It is a

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

reauthorization of the 50-year-old civil rights policy originally titled Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which ensures commitment to educational opportunity for all students.

Federal laws that protect the rights of students of backgrounds and abilities to learn is a significant practice of inclusion. Students entering a classroom with varying degrees of barriers to learning and being accepted into the community through accommodations and modifications can benefit all in a classroom setting. General education students may benefit from large visuals incorporated into the classroom to help assist a multilingual learner. A calm down corner accessible by all students may offer assistance to students that need help with self regulation, as well as their neurotypical peers. Building a community of learners leading with inclusivity allows all students to practice equity within the school environment.

Theory of Change

The theory of change for this study is that once students are provided with accessible opportunities to build community and confidence, students of all backgrounds and personality types will be able to bond, trust each other, grow as individuals, and learn in a collaborative environment to become an effective team.

Methodology

This study was designed as an action research study using both qualitative and quantitative data from participants as well as notes and observations made by the researcher collected throughout this study. Students of all backgrounds and personality types were able to bond, trust each other, grow as individuals, and learn in a collaborative environment to become an effective team. By collecting qualitative data spanning 9 weeks of the school year, I implemented videos, affirmations, mindfulness practices, and group lessons with games week to week in order to promote student self-confidence, foster growth, belief in their own learning

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

abilities, develop classroom engagement, and build community to create an inclusive team environment. Assessments were listed as follows: whole group interview conducted at the start and end of the study to get a baseline of student understanding as well as introducing new routines. Individual self-reflection check in was conducted daily from the beginning of the investigation and lasting through the end of the study to see how students were feeling as well as allowing them to practice self-reflection and report on their own how they were feeling. To ensure inclusivity English translations as well as visual modifications and accommodations were made to ensure all students in class including the non-English speaking students were able to understand and contribute their self-reflections along with their English speaking peers. Other informal check-ins and verbal feedback were documented throughout the study.

Context

This study was conducted within a 2nd grade classroom with 22 students. Every day at 2:30pm (or directly after the afternoon recess during half days) students would return to the classroom and answer the question “How do you feel at school today?” After writing name on a ticket they would place their ticket inside of a large envelope with the emoji face that best describes their current feeling at school that day.

Intervention

During the first week of intervention students were asked to simply answer the question “How do you feel at school today?” by dropping a ticket with their name on it into an envelope with a corresponding emoji face on the cover that best reflects their mood. Cycle 1: Weeks 2 and 3 interventions began during our morning meeting and calendar routine where students would watch a positive self-affirmations video to jump start the morning and students continued to place a ticket in their corresponding envelope. Cycle 2: Weeks 4 and 5 consisted of students

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

receiving team building activities with group table colors and games to compete as a table group. Students provided verbal feedback throughout the weeks as well as continuing to answer the question “How do you feel at school today?” Cycle 3: Weeks 6 and 7 students continued to practice activities that encourage community. In addition to affirmation work, and lesson-based table group games students also began working on mindfulness practices. The incorporation of games and exercises based on centering oneself and assisting others. Students continued the daily practice of answering the question “How do you feel at school today?” Cycle 4: Weeks 8 and 9 included an expanded classroom incentive program. Classroom dollars were distributed to students as a reward for good behavior and turning in work. Students who were able to bank money had the opportunity to buy rewards for themselves from the newly developed classroom store. Students were able to purchase items for themselves or for large whole class rewards such as pizza parties or popsicle parties. Students continued to share feedback verbally throughout these new routines, as well as continuing to answer our original question of “How do you feel at school today?” by using our answering system.

Data Gathering Instruments/Assessments

Assessment #1: “How do you feel at school today?” Student Survey

The assessment used throughout all action research cycles was the initial question of “How do you feel at school today? Students would take a ticket, write their name and the date on it then turn the ticket into 1 of 3 envelope options that best fit their mood. The envelopes had an emoji expression on the front with corresponding words to describe potential moods in connection with the specific envelope emoji. The neutral emoji (I refer to this as neutral) envelope was purple with corresponding words of “okay”, “unsure”, “alright”, “so-so”, and “fine” and positioned in the center of the whiteboard display. The excited emoji (I refer to this as

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

positive) envelope was green and had corresponding words of “good”, “great”, “ready to learn”, “confident”, “kind”, “accepted”, “excited”, and “nice”. This envelope was positioned on the right side of the whiteboard display. The worried emoji (I refer to this as negative) envelope was blue and contained words such as “nervous”, “sad”, “bored”, “tired”, “afraid”, “scared”, and positioned on the left side of the whiteboard display.

Assessment #2: Observation Running Records

Observational data was collected throughout the study. After implementing self-affirmation videos, as well as developing the learning games and team building exercises, I was able to establish an overall consensus of students and view bonds beginning to form. The mentor teacher was also able to view the progress of classroom community throughout the development of activities and offered feedback of her own through informal conversations.

Assessment #3: Informal student feedback 1:1 and small group feedback

Through informal student interviews and feedback I was able to gather the 1:1 mindset as well as small group opinions during the action research cycles. By approaching small groups and individual students with brief check-ins. I would open the informal conversation with asking the students how they were doing, if anything was on their minds, and then once they would share what they felt, or how they were feeling I would ask about the current circumstances of the day. Whether or not they were looking forward to anything specific that day, how their morning was, if they had any concerns, we would speak about that. I would also ask about our new routines, and if they had questions, thoughts, or concerns.

Action Research Cycles

Week 1 of the action research cycle I introduced to the class the system we would be moving forward with to collect data and feedback. Since the majority of students had limited

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

English skills and 2 students spoke no English at all I was able to present visual aids to help assist, as well as translate my instructions and explanations with the help of a bilingual translator. For the first few weeks I continued to explain the process of writing names and dates on tickets and then dropping the tickets into whichever envelope the participants felt best described their experience or outlook of the day. I attempted to cut down on students dropping their tickets into the same envelope as their friends or filling the tickets out with peers by always passing tickets out in a different pattern. Different table groups would receive tickets in different orders. Once one table group had submitted their tickets the next table group would be called to submit their tickets. After the first few weeks of introducing the ticket process students did not need the explanation and were able to efficiently take ticket and drop it into the envelope in an efficient way. From then on I only reminded students to write their name and date and to do a self-check in to determine how they were feeling before submitting their ticket. Other modifications consisted of shifting our daily check-in times for early release days. However, check ins would always follow afternoon recess. After collecting daily tickets, I would enter results into my notebook and then log data into a spreadsheet. To keep student anonymity, I tracked the number of tickets in each envelope versus every individual student's ticket placement over the 9 weeks. Upon reflection, I would have preferred to survey students before lunchtime instead of after their final recess as I believe time of day may have impacted quantitative results. Qualitative data collection guided my cycles through student feedback, 1:1 check-ins and my observations. My participants' main piece of feedback was the request for additional group work and team building lessons, as they developed into strong teams and grew out of their shells immensely after working together to solve challenges. My last preference would have been to change seating

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

assignments one more time in order to complete one additional rotation of student table groups and team colors.

Results

After the first cycle of my ticket system implementation and students reported similar results to the observational data. The majority of students reported that they felt mostly neutral or worried about their experiences of being at school, even with the implementation of positive affirmation videos. At the end of cycle 2 with the implementation of both affirmation videos as well as team building lessons within classroom games had an increase of students reporting they were neutral and excited about school, and less students reporting they were worried about their day at school. The end of cycle 3 concluded with the implementations of positive affirmation videos, activities that encourage community, and some mindfulness and meditation practices. The results showed at the end of this third cycle students reported that they had positive as well as neutral feelings about being at school, with only a few students reporting they had a negative feeling about school.

Conclusions

The data both observational as well as student led seemed to support the evidence of my action research cycle implementations, however the effectiveness of my interventions need further research as my entire investigation hinged on students gaining confidence and working together as a team. How much of the self confidence and team bonding was due to my intervention versus the natural progression of the school year and students maturing is not clear.

Limitations

The following things are clearly related to this topic but they were outside the scope of this study.

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

- Student empathy and compassion
- Students who do not spend all day in Gen Ed setting
- Laws on inclusivity in classrooms
- Longstanding results of distance learning

Recommendations

Interventions earlier in the school year would ensure that the results of the investigation are not due to the natural progression of the school year. The length of the study should span months instead of weeks to better grasp the influence of each cycle. Further research may determine if the time of student led data collection had an effect on student reported answers.

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

References

- About IDEA. (n.d.). *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. Retrieved August 7, 2024, from <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/about-idea/>
- Alarcón, J. D., & Bettez, S. C. (2021). Critical community building in teacher education: Rethinking Classroom Management. *School Community Journal, 31*(2), 267–291.
- Arnot, M., & Reay, D. (2007). A Sociology of pedagogic voice: power, inequality and pupil consultation. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 28*(3), 311–325. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596300701458814>
- Ball, C. L. (2016). Sparking Passion: Engaging student voice through project-based learning in Learning Communities. *Learning Communities: Research & Practice, 4*(1). <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1112791>
- Biddulph, M. (2011). Articulating student voice and facilitating curriculum agency. *The Curriculum Journal, 22*(3), 381–399. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585176.2011.601669>
- Binning, K. R., Cook, J. E., Purdie-Greenaway, V., Garcia, J., Chen, S., Apfel, N., Sherman, D. K., & Cohen, G. L. (2019). Bolstering trust and reducing discipline incidents at a diverse middle school: How self-affirmation affects behavioral conduct during the transition to adolescence. *Journal of School Psychology, 75*, 74–88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2019.07.007>
- Borman, G. D., Grigg, J., Rozek, C. S., Hanselman, P., & Dewey, N. A. (2018). Self-Affirmation effects are produced by school context, student engagement with the intervention, and time: lessons from a district-wide implementation. *Psychological Science, 29*(11), 1773–1784. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797618784016>
- Bryant, C. J. (1999). Classroom community building as framework and practice in an elementary

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

- humanities methods class: an instructor's reflections. *Action in teacher education*, 20(4), 70–76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.1999.10462936>
- Building the Legacy: IDEA 2004. (n.d.). *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. Retrieved August 7, 2024, from <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/building-the-legacy-idea-2004/>
- Clark, S. K., & Andreasen, L. (2021). Exploring elementary teacher self-efficacy and teacher beliefs: Are we preparing teachers to teach culturally diverse students? *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 49(1), 128–142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2020.1777528>
- Dee, T. S. (2015). Social identity and achievement gaps: evidence from an affirmation intervention. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 8(2), 149–168. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19345747.2014.906009>
- Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405–432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x>
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) | U.S. Department of Education*. (n.d.). Retrieved August 7, 2024, from <https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn>
- Grand Canyon University, & Sharp, L. (2012). Stealth learning: unexpected learning opportunities through games. *Journal of Instructional Research*, 1, 42–48. <https://doi.org/10.9743/JIR.2013.6>
- Harpin, S. B., Rossi, A., Kim, A. K., & Swanson, L. M. (2016). Behavioral impacts of a mindfulness pilot intervention for elementary school students. *Education*, 137(2), 149–156.

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

- Harris, P. S., Harris, P. R., & Miles, E. (2017). Self-affirmation improves performance on tasks related to executive functioning. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 70*, 281–285. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2016.11.011>
- Kamann, M. P., & Wong, B. Y. L. (1993). Inducing adaptive coping self-statements in children with learning disabilities through self-instruction training. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 26*(9), 630–638. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002221949302600913>
- Kovalainen, M., & Kumpulainen, K. (2005). The discursive practice of participation in an elementary classroom community. *Instructional Science, 33*(3), 213–250. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11251-005-2810-1>
- Kovalainen, M., & Kumpulainen, K. (2007). The social construction of participation in an elementary classroom community. *International Journal of Educational Research, 46*(3), 141–158. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2007.09.011>
- Leedahl, S. (2022). Best practices for inclusion of special education students in elementary classrooms. *Graduate Teacher Education*. https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/teacher-education_masters/68
- Lloyd, M. H., Kolodziej, N. J., & Brashears, K. M. (2016). Classroom discourse: an essential component in building a classroom community. *School Community Journal, 26*(2), 291–304.
- Lokhande, M., & Müller, T. (2019). Double jeopardy – Double remedy? The effectiveness of self-affirmation for improving doubly disadvantaged students’ mathematical performance. *Journal of School Psychology, 75*, 58–73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2019.07.006>
- Lowe, K. (2022). The impact of funds of knowledge on elementary multilingual learners’

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

- perceptions of their connection to their teacher and the classroom. *All Dissertations*.
https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/all_dissertations/3195
- Marbley, A. F., Bonner, F. A., McKisick, S., Henfield, M. S., & Watts, L. M. (2007). Interfacing culture specific pedagogy with counseling: A proposed diversity training model for preparing preservice teachers for diverse learners. *Multicultural Education, 14*(3), 8–16.
- McCabe, D. S. (2001). *The Role of Teacher in the Classroom Community*.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED453178>
- Mitra, D. L., & Serriere, S. C. (2012). Student voice in elementary school reform: examining youth development in fifth graders. *American Educational Research Journal, 49*(4), 743–774. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831212443079>
- Morcom, V. (2014). Scaffolding social and emotional learning in an elementary classroom community: A sociocultural perspective. *International Journal of Educational Research, 67*, 18–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2014.04.002>
- Mosher, D. A., & Sia, A. P. (1993). *Culturally Responsive Classrooms*.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED355216>
- NABE – NABE. (n.d.). Retrieved August 22, 2024, from <https://nabe.org/>
- O'Reilly, D. (2019). Student voice: how the presence of school-wide student voice initiatives at the elementary level impact the school community. *Education | Master's Theses*.
<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2019.EDU.11>
- Parker, A. E., Kupersmidt, J. B., Mathis, E. T., Scull, T. M., & Sims, C. (2014). The impact of mindfulness education on elementary school students: evaluation of the master mind program. *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion, 7*(3), 184–204.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1754730X.2014.916497>

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

- Penovich Friend, M., & Bursuck, W. D. (n.d.). *Including Students with Special Needs: A Practical Guide for Classroom Teachers. Eighth Edition., 2019*. Retrieved August 22, 2024
- Piatt-Jaeger, S. (2011). Unity in the elementary school classroom: building community through increasing positive social interactions between and among students. In *Online Submission*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED519323>
- Portele, C., & Jansen, P. (2023). The effects of a mindfulness-based training in an elementary school in germany. *Mindfulness, 14*(4), 830–840. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-023-02084-w>
- Rizzo, P., Steinhausen, H.-C., & Drechsler, R. (2010). Self-perceptions of self-regulatory skills in children aged eight to 10 years: development and evaluation of a new self-rating scale. *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology, 10*, 123–142.
- Schonert-Reichl, K. A., Oberle, E., Lawlor, M. S., Abbott, D., Thomson, K., Oberlander, T. F., & Diamond, A. (2015). Enhancing cognitive and social–emotional development through a simple-to-administer mindfulness-based school program for elementary school children: A randomized controlled trial. *Developmental Psychology, 51*(1), 52–66. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038454>
- Sherman, D. K., & Cohen, G. L. (2006). The psychology of self-defense: self-affirmation theory. In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 38, pp. 183–242). Academic Press. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(06\)38004-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(06)38004-5)
- Sherman, D. K., Hartson, K. A., Binning, K. R., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Garcia, J., Taborsky-Barba, S., Tomassetti, S., Nussbaum, A. D., & Cohen, G. L. (2013). Deflecting the trajectory and changing the narrative: How self-affirmation affects academic performance and

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

- motivation under identity threat. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 104(4), 591–618. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031495>
- Solomon, D., Watson, M., Battistich, V., Schaps, E., & Delucchi, K. (1996). Creating classrooms that students experience as communities. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 24(6), 719–748. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02511032>
- Special Education WAC and Federal IDEA*. (n.d.). Retrieved August 7, 2024, from <https://ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/special-education/laws-and-procedures/special-education-wac-and-federal-idea>
- Spoede, J. T., Fontenot, C., & Simpson, C. (2016). The role of the special educator in the inclusive classroom. In *General and Special Education Inclusion in an Age of Change: Roles of Professionals Involved* (Vol. 32, pp. 39–54). Emerald Group Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S0270-401320160000032004>
- Terry, S. R. (2015). *Knowing your who: A qualitative field research on how teachers develop culturally responsive teaching practices in an effort to close the academic achievement gap of students of color* [Northeastern University]. <https://doi.org/10.17760/D20198367>
- Turner, J. D., & Kim, Y. (2005). Learning about building literacy communities in multicultural and multilingual classrooms from effective elementary teachers. *Literacy Teaching and Learning*, 10(1), 21–42.
- van de Weijer-Bergsma, E., Langenberg, G., Brandsma, R., Oort, F. J., & Bögels, S. M. (2014). The effectiveness of a school-based mindfulness training as a program to prevent stress in elementary school children. *Mindfulness*, 5(3), 238–248. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-012-0171-9>

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

Dedication

I dedicate this to my family who are the absolute loves of my life, my Sister Allie Nicole, my Mom Tammie Sue, and my Dad Bryan Joseph. Without your lifelong love and support I would never have been able to accomplish this degree. To my heart, Brady Shaffer, it's been an amazing 4 years- but where is my engagement ring? Thank you for the many Saturdays you spent with me in Renton, and the weekends you spent sitting next to me while I was on zoom. I would like to acknowledge the family members I have lost during this process, Kathy Yates, Michael Yates, and Terry Schade; I know you all would have been proud of this accomplishment, and I thank you for your love. Ella and Beau, thank you for staying up with me during the long nights of studying after work. You never complained and were always excited when it was finally time to put my homework away. Rhonda, Sasha, Brian, Tucker, Delilah, and Achilles thank you for the much-needed Saturday afternoon study breaks. Time away from homework is always a good time.

I would also like to acknowledge my CityU of Seattle advisors, instructors, and cohort of Summer '22 for their support and laughs throughout the years of this program. Susan Gray and Corll Miller Morrissey Thank you for allowing me the grace of time to complete this study as well as the help I have received throughout the process.