



# Creating a Classroom Learning Community

Note: The artifacts needed for this micro-credential require you to have classroom students. This micro-credential is best suited for a practicing or student teacher.

## Competency

Educators understand the importance of fostering positive relationships among students and with families to establish a thriving classroom community.

## Key Method

The educator fosters a welcoming classroom environment where students feel connected, valued as individuals, and belong to the learning community.

## Method Components

### Why It's Critical to Create a Classroom Learning Community

When students are connected, valued, and safe, they are more likely to succeed academically and be vested in the learning environment. Connecting with others and using social-emotional skills to solve problems also results in real-world applications for career readiness. The rationale for creating a positive, collaborative environment includes:

- Improved student engagement and motivation
- Enhanced social and emotional development
- Increased academic achievement

## Creating a Classroom Community

- Reduced behavioral issues
- Overall well-being

Prioritize building relationships with families and the community, which creates a united front where everyone works together to support student growth and learning success. This collaboration can improve communication, increase involvement, foster respect for the educational system and teachers, and, most importantly, help students feel valued.

### How to Create a Community

Building a positive classroom culture starts with understanding what has worked for you and your students in the past and what already works in your school. Ask colleagues and students to provide their input, reflect on your practice, and devise a plan that fits your current needs in the classroom.

The classroom community values cultural diversity. Everyone brings a unique culture to the classroom, and when educators acknowledge these differences, the learning environment is stronger.

**Culture** refers to the shared set of beliefs, values, practices, behaviors, symbols, and norms that characterize a particular group of people. It encompasses both tangible and intangible aspects of a society or community. It shapes how individuals within that group perceive the world, interact with each other, and make sense of their experiences.

Ways to foster a culturally inclusive classroom community include:

- **Utilize norms:** Establish and honor cultural norms in the classroom and set clear expectations for students to follow.
- **Create a welcoming structure:** Provide social structure and honor cultural norms.
- **Be aware of bias:** Recognize your biases and those of your colleagues and students.
- **Engage in conversations:** Communicate with families and students regularly about all topics, not academics.
- **Continually learn:** Stay informed about cultural happenings in the community and with the population of your student body.
- **Actively listen:** Practice active listening and teach students to do the same.

Building strong family and community relationships is also crucial to the well-being of the classroom community.

- **Use digital communication:** Use online platforms to communicate with families.
- **Create a welcoming environment:** Make school and classroom environments more inviting: leverage community partnerships, host family workshops, and make the space culturally inviting.
- **Seek opportunities:** Volunteer opportunities and cultural celebrations help individuals to feel engaged and that giving their talents and time to the school community is valued.
- **Use feedback:** Request regular feedback from families, community members, and students.

Building an inclusive and supportive classroom community takes time, reflection, and iteration. Continually ask your learners and families what works best for them while you focus on how to make changes in the limited time you have. Discuss with your colleagues what works for them and how these efforts can be implemented school-wide to envelope families into the school culture.

### Relationships are the Foundation of Effective Learning

A positive classroom culture recognizes that students and teachers alike thrive in an environment where they feel valued, respected, and connected. Research shows that strong, positive relationships between teachers and students and among students create supportive and effective classroom management. To foster this growth and learning mindset, educators should prioritize building positive relationships among all classroom community members.

Strategies to achieve positive relationships start with valuing diverse cultures and setting classroom expectations. These strategies depend, however, on the content, age of students, and the teacher's personality. These are some other ideas that can be used to build and promote relationships among those in the learning community:

- **Create a shared space:** Designate an area in the classroom where students and teachers can share pictures of hobbies and interests. This helps to promote a sense of belonging and awareness

## Creating a Classroom Community

- **Use get-to-know-you activities:** Create time to learn names, backgrounds, cultures, and unique qualities.
- **Foster collaboration:** Incorporate team-building exercises to encourage cooperation and mutual support.
- **Promote cooperative learning strategies:** Encourage students to share ideas and perspectives respectfully, building a classroom where everyone's voice is valued. These efforts may include using sentence starters, restorative circles, and modalities such as think-pair-share, fast friends, and collaborative digital spaces strategically and consistently.

Using the strategies above while researching and learning from others will allow you to create relationships that value all.

## Supporting Rationale and Research

Drewery, W., & Winslade, J. (2003) "Developing Restorative Practices in Schools: Flavour of the month or saviour of the system?" Presented at AARE/NZARE Conference, Auckland, Australia. Retrieved on July 27, 2018 from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.214.7827&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Evertson, C.M., & Weinstein, C.S. (2013). Handbook of classroom management: Research, Practice, and Contemporary Issues. New York, NY: Routledge. [\(PDF\) Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues | Faith Kamoto—Academia.edu](#)

Marzano, R., & Marzano, J. (2021, June 29). The Key to Classroom Management. ASCD. <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/the-key-to-classroom-management>

Wang, Xue. (2023, November 29). "Exploring positive teacher-student relationships: the synergy of teacher mindfulness and emotional intelligence." *Frontiers in Psychology*, National Library of Medicine, [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10716249/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10716249/).

## Resources

Creating a Classroom Community

[8 Ways to Make Students Feel Welcome on First Day of School](#)

## Creating a Classroom Community

[A Classroom Where Everyone Feels Welcome](#)

[Building Community to Take You That Extra Mile](#)

[8 Cooperative Learning Strategies to Use in the Classroom](#)

[Creating a Classroom Culture of Shared Ownership](#)

[How to Create a Classroom Culture Wall](#)

[Making Schools a Welcoming Place for Immigrant Students](#)

[Sixty Ways to Build Community at School](#)

[The Importance of Setting Purposeful Goals with Students](#)

[Three Tips for a Welcoming Classroom | NEA](#)

[Three Ways to Welcome Students to a New School Year | Responsive Classroom](#)

[What is Cooperative Learning? Benefits and Examples in 2023](#)

[What is restorative practices?](#)

Family Engagement

[Dual Capacity-Building Framework](#) for Family-School Partnerships

[Family Engagement: Resource Roundup](#)

[Family Engagement Playbook](#)

[Family Engagement in Schools: A Comprehensive Guide](#)

[10 Ways to Improve Family Engagement in Schools](#)

## Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

*To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3 and be proficient in all components in Part 2.*

### Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

#### **Suggested word count: 350–500**

*Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to reviewers.*

Describe essential background information about your classroom to help the reviewer understand the learning environment. Please include the following:

- Grade level
- Subject area
- Cultural influences:
  - What are the cultural groups, languages, or community aspects to consider?
- Relevant characteristics of the learners
- How are families a vital part of your classroom community?

Describe your current classroom community or one you have witnessed. Describe how you achieved this or how you think your colleague achieved this.

#### **Passing:**

The response addresses all required components as outlined in the overview section. The writing is organized and easy to understand.

### Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

*To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following three artifacts to prove your learning.*

\*Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.

These artifacts are a part of one learning activity. Please read all of them before starting Artifact 1.

### **Artifact 1:** Create (or write) and Teach Lesson Plan

Design a lesson that shows the elements of classroom community being used or practiced in your classroom setting. Use strategies discussed in the Method Components or Resources sections, including at least one cooperative learning strategy or method. The following elements should be demonstrated and in bold in your lesson plan.

- **Academic connection:** Create opportunities for students to learn that cultivating relationships among all learners is necessary for academic growth. *A way to demonstrate this is by combining lessons with community building and academics.*
- **Student product:** A student produces and submits something to show they understand their role within the classroom community.
- **Family engagement:** A description of how the content or product from the lesson is shared with the family.
- **Strategies learned from method components or resources:** Use what you are learning in this micro-credential and include at least one cooperative learning strategy.

*Lesson Plan Format:* While you have flexibility in designing your lesson plan, it should include standard elements such as objectives, hook, standards, resources, procedures, accommodations for students with special needs, and assessment strategies.

### **Artifact 2:** Lesson Plan Reflection

**Choose one** of the following two options to show evidence of the learning opportunity and activity you created in Artifact 1.

1. **Self-reflection and analysis (300–500words).** Reflect on the lesson and share:
  - How has creating a classroom community contributed to the lesson's learning goals?
  - What aspects of a classroom community were present?
  - What barriers to classroom community were present?
  - What cooperative learning strategies were used? Why were those chosen?

- How was feedback solicited from students?
- 2. **Student work samples (300–500 words).** Provide two student work samples from Artifact 1.
  - For each work sample, briefly describe the student who created the work and why you chose this example to share about this micro-credential (*please remember not to reveal anything confidential about a student*).
  - How the students met the learning objectives.
  - Based on the student artifacts, what will be your next steps in supporting the classroom community?

**Artifact 3:** Family Engagement Commitment

**Suggested word count: 350–500**

Consider your content, grade level, and school and community environment, and then create a plan of commitment to engage family members in your classroom. Your family engagement plan of commitment should include the following, and these sections should be in bold:

- **Description:** Develop a description of your family engagement plan.
- **Why:** Describe why you have chosen the family engagement plan, tactic, or system.
- **Weekly Commitment:** A realistic amount of time you will spend on the commitment per week.
- **Culture:** Provide an example of how the plan reflects the diversity of cultures of families represented in the classroom.
- **Input:** Explain how your students helped you develop or iterate the plan.

# Creating a Classroom Community

## Part 2. Rubric

	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>Artifact 1:</b> Lesson Plan	<p>The lesson plan has all four elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Academic connection</li> <li>● Student product</li> <li>● Family engagement</li> <li>● Strategies from method components or resources</li> </ul> <p>The lesson plan format has the elements above bolded, is easy to follow, and includes standard elements such as objectives, hook, standards, resources, procedures, accommodations for students with special needs, and assessment strategies.</p>	<p>The lesson plan has all four elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Academic connection</li> <li>● Student product</li> <li>● Family engagement</li> <li>● Strategies from method components or resources</li> </ul> <p>The lesson plan format has the elements above bolded, is easy to follow but is missing some standard lesson plan elements such as objectives, hook, standards, resources, procedures, accommodations for students with special needs, and assessment strategies.</p>	<p>The lesson plan does not have all four elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Academic connection</li> <li>● Student product</li> <li>● Family engagement</li> <li>● Strategies from method components or resources</li> </ul>
<b>Artifact 2:</b> Lesson Plan Reflection	<p>Self-reflection and analysis answer all five requirements. The writing is clear and focuses on growth in the classroom community.</p> <p>OR</p>	<p>Self-reflection and analysis answer all five requirements. The writing is not clear or does not focus on growth in the classroom community.</p> <p>OR</p>	<p>Self-reflection does not answer all five requirements.</p> <p>OR</p>

## Creating a Classroom Community

	Two student work samples are submitted, and all three requirements answered.	Two student work samples were submitted, but only two requirements were clearly answered.	Fewer than two student work samples are submitted.
<b>Artifact 3:</b> Family Engagement Commitment	The Family Engagement Commitment includes all six elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description</li> <li>• Why</li> <li>• Weekly commitment</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Input</li> </ul> The writing is clearly written.	The Family Engagement Commitment includes all six elements of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description</li> <li>• Why</li> <li>• Weekly commitment</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Input</li> </ul> The writing is not clearly written.	The Family Engagement Commitment is missing one or more of the six elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description</li> <li>• Why</li> <li>• Weekly commitment</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Input</li> </ul>

### Part 3 Reflection

**450–500 words**

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential.

*Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*

1. After reflecting on Artifact 2 (Lesson Plan Reflection), what steps will you take to improve classroom community?
2. How might you share your discoveries with your professional colleagues?
3. Through your learning in this micro-credential, how has your knowledge about the effect of culture on classroom community changed your practice?

**Passing:**

Reflection proves that this activity has positively impacted educator practice and student success. Specific examples are cited directly from personal or work-related experiences to support claims. Also included are specific, actionable steps that demonstrate how new learning will be integrated into future practices.