Building a Positive Community Through Reflection
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Teacher

Reflection is a process of reviewing and interpreting experiences to find new understanding. It only takes a few minutes after community-building activities such as greetings, energizers, and acknowledgments to invite students to share their perspectives. Use a reflection question that is based on your observations during the activity. Students can reflect with a partner or aloud to the whole group. Some examples of reflection questions to ask are:

How did that go for you?
How did it feel to participate in that activity?
What's hard about this? Why?
What's easy about this? Why?
Do you think this activity met the goal we wanted it to?
On a scale of zero to five, five being the best, how did we do as a group?

What could we try differently?
How could we challenge ourselves?
Reflecting as a class on behavior, both positive and negative, can also lead to a stronger sense of positive community. When things go well and the class is successful together, try asking reflection questions such as:

What went well for us today?
How does it feel to be successful? Why?
I saw lots of smiles. What made that fun?
What are some ways you worked together?
When an activity doesn't go well, try asking reflection questions such as:

What made that difficult to accomplish?
What could we do or try next time?
What are some areas for growth?
Finally, don't forget about academic reflections. Reflecting together for a few minutes after a lesson can also strengthen community bonds. Invite students to share about their experiences, successes, and challenges working with the content. This will lead to a greater appreciation of the various feelings and perspectives of everyone in the class who is working to learn the content.

When we reflect together as a community, we strengthen our individual abilities to listen and understand others. It's important to note that group reflections on activities or events do not have to lead to consensus, where everyone views the experience as good or fun. Reflecting together on shared experiences helps us all to recognize that someone's positive experience may turn out to be a negative experience for someone else. When students share what they liked or disliked, enjoyed or found frustrating, they find pathways to connect with each other. This is an important building block for developing empathy, an essential component of a strong, positive community.