CREATING A CLASSROOM CULTURE

WITH ANDREW MARTINEZ

CHOOSE RESILIENCE

CENTRAL REGION EDUCATION COOPERATIVE

JUNE 3-4, 2025

CENTRAL REGION
EDUCATIONAL COOPERATIVE

Being present in the moment

- Mindfulness Breathing

- Commitment
  - …
- Breathing with commitment

- Group Commitment
  - …
- Breathing with group commitment

Questions to be answered

- Write down 1-3 questions that you have that you'd like answered by the end of our session

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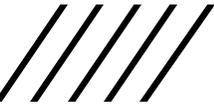
Agenda

- Ice Breaker
- Why create a culture?
- Essentials of Classroom Culture
- Questions

Ice Breaker

- Step 1: Small Group Share
  - Turn to the person next to you and tell them about your favorite classroom experience. What made it so memorable? What about your least favorite classroom experience?

- Step 2: Whole Group Share
  - 1 Example of a favorite experience
  - 1 Example of a least favorite experience

Leadership

- Lead with whys
  - Communication
  - Collaboration
  - Consistency

- Communicate your why

- What's your vision of a well-structured classroom and the roles everyone plays?

WHAT

HOW

WHY

OUSIDE-IN / CONVENTIONAL

INSIDE-OUT / REMARKABLE

Why create a culture?

Culture

- the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time

- Creating a culture ..
  - creates common goals and norms of children and classroom management
  - build relationships with all individuals in the classroom
 - provides children a sense of belonging and social involvement opportunities

Motivation & Belongingness

- 3 studies about "motivational impacts of social belonging on STEM undergrad students".
    - Classroom sense of belongingness was the highest indicator of success regardless of school, school location, school size and culture

- Interviews conducted of families with children in ECE programs in South Africa.
    - Common themes realized:

Diversity

Proud, Happy Children

Playing: Learning in loving spaces

Teachers take a more sensitive approach

"Parents perceived that their children had a strong sense of community, which enabled meaningful and happy lives in the multicultural ECE centers." (Van As, et. al, 2023
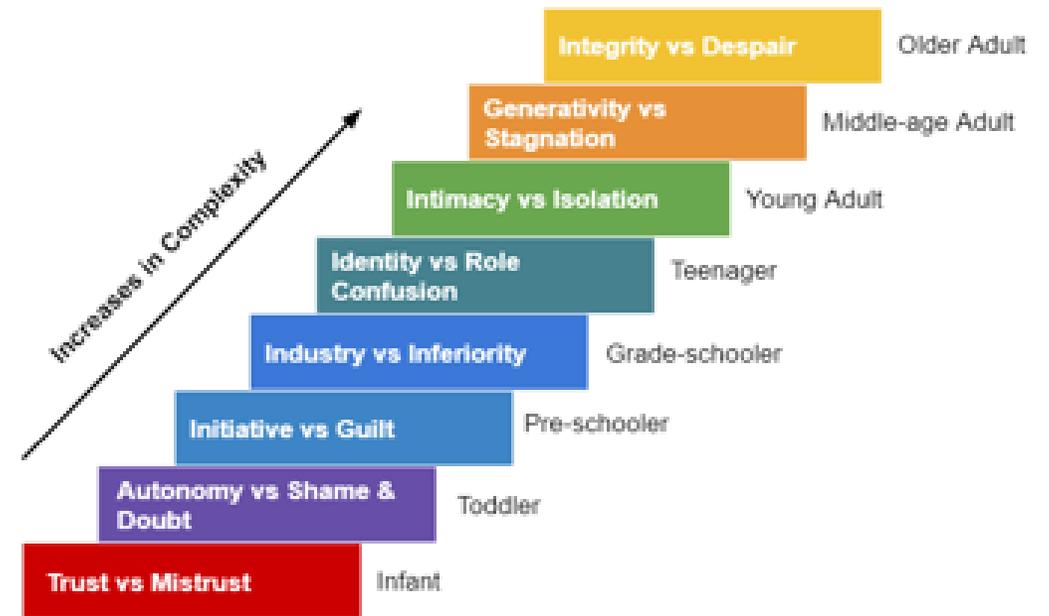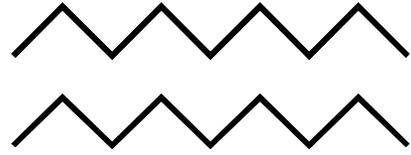
Theories of Development
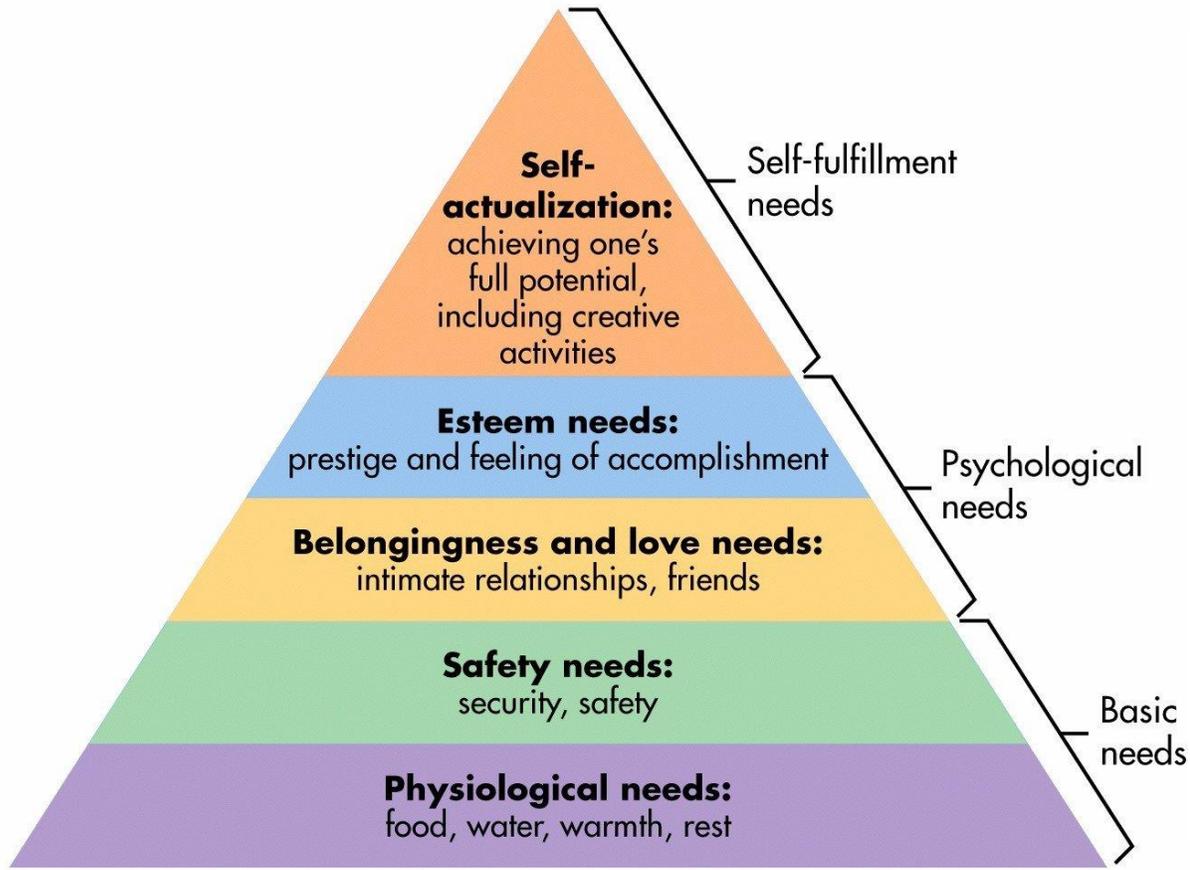
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Erickson's Theory of Psychosocial Development

Essentials

- Relationships
- Goals
- Displays
- Traditions

Relationship Building

- Building Relationships: Priority 1
  - Staff build relationships with peers
  - Staff support children building relationships with each other
  - Staff build relationships with each other

- Strategies
  - Conversations & Comments
  - Play
  - Games
  - Group work

Conversations & Comments

- Narration
- Observable Comments
- Serve & Return
- *See, Think, Wonder*

5 Steps for Brain-Building SERVE AND RETURN
#ThursdayTip
1 Share the focus
2 Support and encourage
3 Name it!
4 Take turns, back & forth
5 Practice endings and beginnings
Center on the Developing Child · HARVARD UNIVERSITY

See Think Wonder
What do you see?
What do you think is going on?
What does it make you wonder?
purpose: This routine encourages students to make careful observations and thoughtful interpretations. I helps stimulate curiosity and sets the stage for inquiry.
Introducing & Exploring Ideas

Play

- Parallel Play → Invitation
- Modeling
- Serve & Return
- Games
  - Find the toy
  - Mr. Clown
  - Team Try-Outs
  - Doggy, Doggy

Games

- Find the toy: The classic game of Hide and Seek, but hiding a toy for children to find, instead of each other. Children can alternate turns hiding the toy.

- Mr. Clown: Gather the children in a circle and sing the song *Mr. Clown*: "Mr. Clown, Mr. Clown, who's the funniest clown in town? Quick, Quick, _____, do a trick!" The child performs a trick in the middle of the circle.

- Team Tryouts: Gather the children in a circle and sing the song *Team Tryouts*: "We all tried out for the _____ team, the coach called _____ to do his/her thing! Go, Go _____, Go, Go, Go _____" Choose a child to name a team they'd like to join and encourage them to "do their thing".

- Doggy, Doggy: Gather the children in a circle and choose an object to be a "bone". Choose one child to hide and be the "dog". Sing the song *Doggy, Doggy* with the other children, while one child hides the bone: "Doggy, Doggy, where's your bone? Somebody took it from your home. Guess who, it might be you. It might a monkey from a zoo!" Then encourage the dog to come out to find the bone and rotate children between hider and dog.

Movement Chain

- How does the movement chain support community?

Group Work

- Strategically group children
  - Divide children into groups that they wouldn't usually choose to be with
  - Place more advanced children with those that need more support
  - Create cohorts for children

Goals (Social-Emotional)

- What goals do you have for the class?

- What do you hope for children to learn?

- Goals should include ..
  - Classroom expectations
  - Self- and peer-regulation
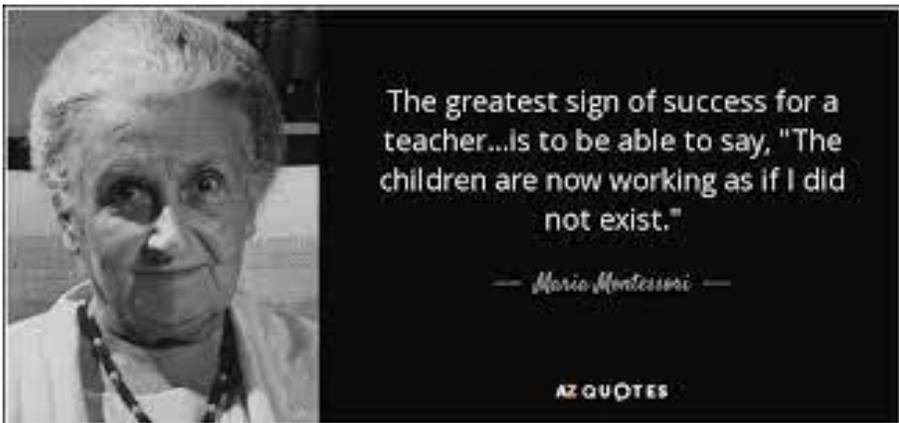 - Staff

Classroom Expectations

- Expectations for children should be short and clear
  - Ground rules should cover safety and respect for people and environment

- Expectations for staff should be clear
  - Model and monitor children's expectations (Be Involved)
  - Use language to advantage with children
  - Communicate happenings to appropriate parties

Self- and Peer-Regulation

- Expectations for children should be short and clear
  - Ground rules should cover safety and respect for people and environment
- Provide children with strategies to problem solve
- Encourage children to support one another
  - Whether asking for help, or providing redirection

The greatest sign of success for a teacher...is to be able to say, "The children are now working as if I did not exist."

— Maria Montessori —

AZ QUOTES

○ # Staff

- Remember that staff are a piece of the culture as well
- Staff should have goals for themselves, which can include..
  - Relationships with specific children
  - Relationships with specific families
  - Relationships with other staff members
  - Professional development
  - Resource collecting
  - Activity development

Displays

- Children's Portraits
- Experience & Documentation Boards
- Children's Workings
- Calendars & Schedules
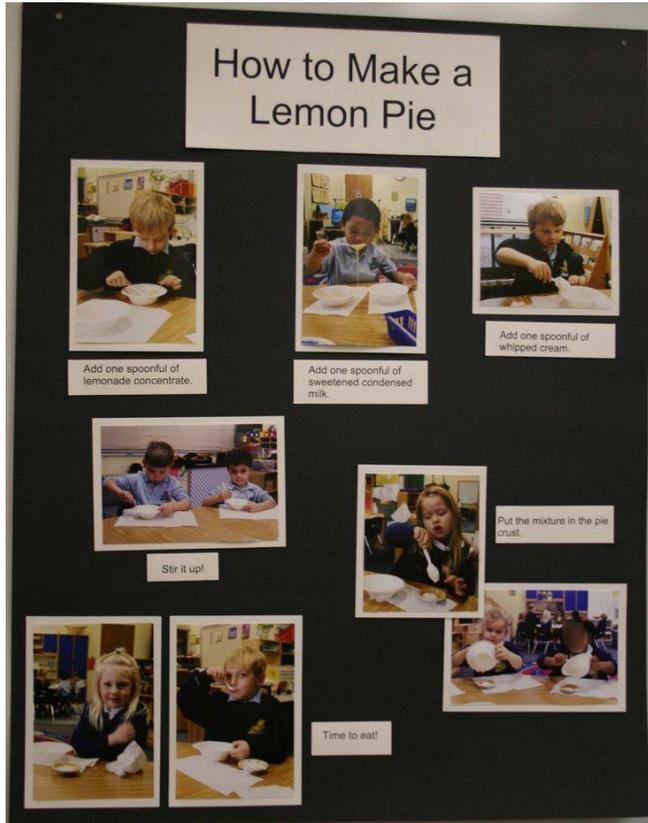
Children Portraits

- Portraits

- Photo Collection

- Family Photos

Documentation Boards

Experience Boards

How to Make a Lemon Pie

Roaring Camp
October 26, 2005

What is your favorite apple?

Children's Workings

- Gifted Art
- Accomplishment Art
- Group Projects
- Photos of children in play centers

Schedule & Calendar

Traditions

Traditions bring people together and remind them of why they are together.

- Routines
  - Consistent Daily Routines & Schedules
  - Group "Mantras"
    - Morning Songs
    - Rituals
      - "Today for lunch..": *Today for Lunch .. (class repeats)*
      We are having.. (class repeats)
      x… (class repeats)
      y… (class repeats)
      z.. (class repeats)
      And we are drinking.. (class repeats)
      Milk.. (class repeats)
      Have a _____ lunch .. (class repeats)

Traditions

- Jobs
  - Provide children with opportunities to be involved in class management

- Events
  - Birthday Celebrations
  - Cultural Celebrations
 - Family Engagement Events
  - Field Trips

The Power of Language

- Language has the ability to shape thoughts and behavior
- "Words mirror how one thinks and feels" (Alpuim & Ehrenberg, 2023)
- "Different grammar can lead to different ways of framing events — and therefore to different consequences." (Alpuim & Ehrenberg, 2023)

- Outward dialogue becomes inward dialogue
- *What's focused on grows*

Classroom Language

- Language in the classroom should be used to shape the culture and thinking patterns
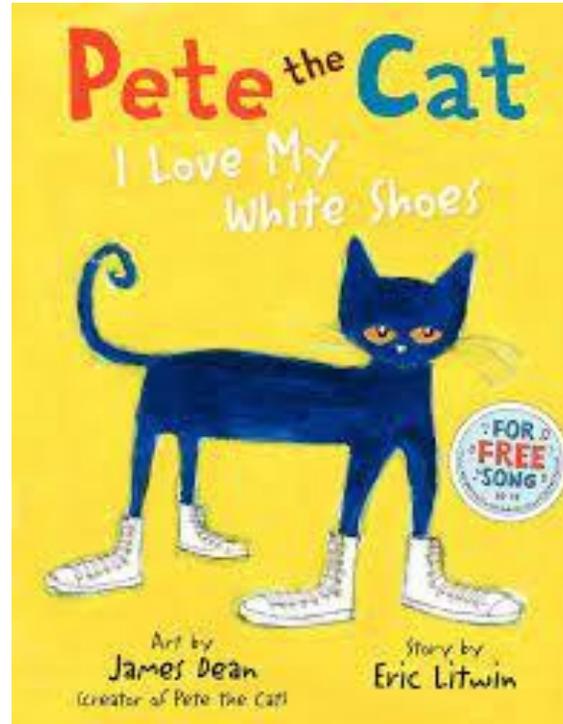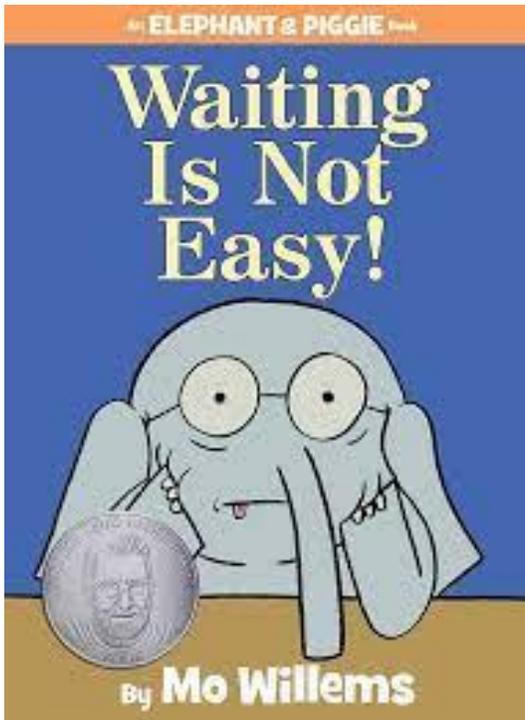
Collaboration Practice

- At your table, discuss your approach to challenging/unsafe behavior, positive behavior and rituals; make sure to highlight your why.

- Agree upon a single, consistent approach to challenging/unsafe behavior, positive behavior, and one ritual to implement.

- Share your agreements with the whole group.
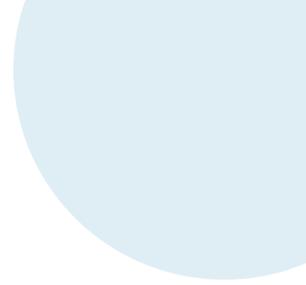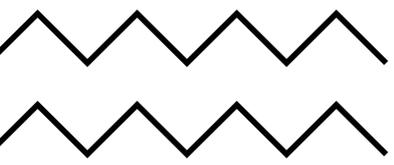
QUESTIONS

Were your questions answered?