

“You can’t make me!”

## Building a Healthy Classroom Community

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## Table of Contents

	Page number:
Background Information .....	3
Description of Teaching Context .....	3
Wonderings and Questions .....	4
Main Wondering .....	5
Sub-Wonderings .....	5
Data Collection .....	5
Before .....	5
During .....	6
After .....	7
Data Analysis .....	7
Explanation of Findings .....	10
Claim #1 .....	10
Claim #2 .....	11
Claim #3 .....	14
Reflection and Implications for Future Practice .....	16
Works Cited .....	19
Appendices .....	20

## **Background Information**

### **Description of Teaching Context**

I am currently an intern at Ferguson Township Elementary in the State College Area School District. Ferguson Township Elementary provides instruction for students from kindergarten through the fifth grade. I am completing my internship in a self-contained, third grade classroom

There are now twenty-two third grade students in our class; we have recently been assigned a new female student. Thirteen of our students are boys and nine are girls. It is a young group of students. They are 8-9 years old, but many have not yet turned nine. Aside from the differing maturity levels, we also have a wide range of needs in our classroom. These needs extend from learning support all the way to learning enrichment. There are three students that receive learning support in reading/writing and math. Another student receives learning support in writing and attends book club throughout the week. Two of our students attend Title I reading classes and another two receive Title I math services. Two of these students also receive IST writing instruction once a week. There are three students in our class that participate in both math and reading enrichment. In addition to these students, one more child attends math enrichment, while another attends reading enrichment. Five of our students, four boys and one girl, benefit from in-school counseling services. Two of these children also receive Emotional Support services. One of these students is autistic and receives Autistic/Emotional Support services.

At the beginning of the year our students' social relationships were growing and the majority of our students could cooperate with any classroom friend they were assigned to work with. However, as the year progresses, I notice many unhealthy student interactions. There is a group of 3-4 boys that seem to be constantly picking and poking at each other. Two of the boys pick on one another and other boys and girls in the classroom on a daily basis. This causes a lot of conflict and undesirable feelings for a lot of our students. Many of the students in our class are very impulsive and have trouble taking initiative to work out a problem before bringing it to an adult. Conversely, many of our students are very quick to help others in need. I do notice on a regular basis that four of our students are excellent leaders. They are almost always on task and get along well with their peers. Our new student appears to be a good role model for her classmates.

### **Wonderings and Questions**

#### **Rational**

At the beginning of my inquiry process, I found myself frustrated with the lack of respect my students gave to one another. "He wouldn't let go of me," "They won't stop..." and "I didn't start it," were complaints that I heard regularly. This is not something that I saw often in the beginning months of school, but I noticed inappropriate interactions more frequently as the year progressed. This caused me to reflect on the decrease of community building activities that were a large part of our schedule the first weeks of school, and to wonder if this decrease could have something to do with these unhealthy interactions. Furthermore, I wondered if

providing more community building opportunities would have a positive impact on my students' relationships with their peers. My students have been at the heart of my inquiry. I long to help them build happy, healthy relationships with one another.

### **Main Wondering**

*What effects do community-building activities have on student interactions and relationships in my classroom?*

### **Sub-Wonderings**

- *How can I have a positive influence on my students' daily interactions?*
- *Can community-building activities help build healthy, positive relationships in my classroom?*
- *Can compliment buckets help build students' interpersonal relationships in my classroom?*
- *How can community-building activities be successfully integrated into our daily classroom routines?*

### **Data Collection**

#### **Before**

At the start of my inquiry process, I surveyed all of the students in my class. I gave students a series of surveys based the Resilient Classroom, ClassMaps Surveys (Doll, Zucker, & Brehm, 2004). The questions pertained to following classroom rules, believing in themselves, and their feelings about relationships with their classmates and teachers (**appendix B**). I was curious to see if my students'

perceptions of their interactions would match my own observations of their behaviors and peer relationships.

I also began to take anecdotal notes of student interactions in a notebook. It has been convenient to have all of my observations in one place. In addition, I gathered information about the number of undesirable interactions between students on a tally chart.

I videotaped my first community-building intervention. It was a peer interview activity for morning meeting in which I allowed students the opportunity to pick their own partners.

### **During**

During my inquiry, I implemented compliment buckets in our classroom as my core intervention. Each week, I recorded the number of bucket filling slips the children gave and to whom the slips were given (**appendix C**). I also gave each child a bucket filling checklist so they could keep track of the buckets they filled as well.

I began to take anecdotal notes of positive student interactions as well as undesirable interactions. I soon decided that tallying the number of undesirable interactions each day might not be a successful way to illustrate changes in students' behaviors toward each other. I hadn't gathered appropriate baseline data of positive interactions to see if there was an inverse relationship between the decrease of one and its effect on the other.

I also gave students a self-reflection survey. The questions prompted them to evaluate their bucket filling behaviors and allowed them the opportunity to further explain their responses. **(appendix D)**

### **After**

After I introduced the compliment buckets, read alouds, and various community-building activities in our classroom, I surveyed students about their feelings towards the activities and whether or not they were helpful in building friendships. In order to analyze any changes in feelings about classmates and our classroom community, I administered a post intervention survey that mirrored questions from the survey completed at the beginning of my inquiry (appendix F). I chose to use the survey questions associated with classmates and peer relationships for this post intervention survey. I also included a few open-ended responses relevant to our bucket filling intervention. **(appendix E)**

I planned to interview students throughout my inquiry process, but my students survey answers provided me with a wealth of valuable information. I will continue to take note of conversations with students and observations of student interactions in my anecdotal notebook.

### **Data Analysis**

Throughout my inquiry, I gathered the majority of my data from student surveys. I wanted to gather information that would allow me to be able to answer

my wonderings: Did the implementation of more community building activities have a positive effect on my students' interactions with one another? Could a class wide compliment intervention encourage interpersonal relationships? Could community building activities be successfully integrated into our daily classroom routines.

Because it is difficult to measure the quality of peer relationships through assessment and other forms of objective data, I relied heavily on student ratings through surveys as powerful measures of peer relationships (Doll, Zucker, & Brehm, 2004).

The first surveys I distributed to the class were designed to determine how students felt about following class rules, themselves, and their relationships with their classmates and myself. **(appendix B)** These surveys were each comprised of "yes," "sometimes," or "no" questions. I was most curious to see how my students felt about their relationships with their peers. I read each of my students' surveys and recorded the responses that were given for each question. I found similar trends among some of the questions. Many of my students responded with "sometimes" to the prompts, "I get along with everyone most of the time," "I know other kids care about my feelings," and "I know other kids will not argue with me." I used these answers to plan and provide opportunities for activities and discussion in order to encourage and practice kindness toward one another.

I wondered if it would be possible and beneficial to integrate community building into our daily routines. I took anecdotal notes after lessons that I implemented community building in to see if they were beneficial. My mentor and I worked together to plan appropriate times for community building into our



schedule. I was able to plan activities during morning meeting and particularly on Tuesdays. I also incorporated community building into my spelling lessons. Toward the “end” of my project, we played an introduction to homographs, jeopardy game. The students were split into two teams, and each teammate was required to be the speaker for their team at least once. This meant they were able to choose the category and point value, but they had to work as a team to decide the correct answer. I was happy to see how well the students worked together and communicated during this activity. I used read alouds to facilitate community-building discussions too. I read aloud “The Sneetches” during Dr. Seuss Week and “Have You Filled a Bucket Today,” by Carol McCoud before implementing our bucket filling intervention. I was surprised by my students’ ability and willingness to relate to the characters in both of these read alouds. They were aware of the social injustice presented in both of these stories, as well as, the importance of being kind. The later story served as a basis for my bucket filling intervention. Following the read aloud, we had discussions about kind, “bucket filling” behaviors. I enjoyed hearing all of their ideas and was pleased to see my students begin to think about simple acts of kindness, such as holding the door for the next person in line. We also rotated around the room in an activity to compliment each student in our class. I noted how thoughtful most of our students were being.

After reading these read alouds and discussing the benefits of being bucket fillers, each of my students was given a compliment bucket on our bucket filling poster. I asked my students to notice acts of kindness throughout the day and to try to be kind as well. During any free time, students are allowed to write compliments

to classmates in order to fill each other's buckets. I have tallied the number of bucket filling slips each child has given, as well as the buckets they have filled. In the first week of my intervention, students only seemed to compliment their close friends. Since then however, they have begun to compliment classmates that they normally would not. After this intervention was in place for a few weeks, I presented students with a self-reflection survey (**appendix D**). I reviewed each of their responses and found that most of my students did not compliment the same people they did the week before, that they thoughtfully considered who was in need of kind words, and that many were surprised by at least one bucket filling slip they received.

The post intervention survey was very similar to the ClassMaps survey I distributed at the beginning of my inquiry (Doll, Zucker, & Brehm, 2004)(**appendix E**). I used questions from the original that I noticed similar response patterns from. I also added open-ended questions that became relevant after the introduction of our bucket filling intervention. After recording their responses to this post intervention survey, I compared the answers to their original survey responses. I found that more students said they get along with their classmates most of the time. I was very pleased to see this positive increase, but I did not find a significant change in any of the other questions. However, with the addition of the bucket filling questions and open-ended response, I did gather useful information applicable to my wonderings.

### **Explanation of Findings**

**Claim #1: Providing a designated place in the classroom for compliments encourages kindness and helps build healthy, positive peer relationships.**

During the first week of my intervention, I found that the majority of my students only complimented their close friends. As the weeks progress, I have found that students are truly looking for acts of kindness and complimenting classmates that are not their close friends. In a self reflection survey, fourteen of my twenty-two students said they were surprised by a compliment they received from one of their peers (appendix E). Furthermore, on their individual bucket filling checklists, fifteen of my students complimented some different friends in our classroom each week, and seventeen of my students could think of a classmate who could use a compliment (appendix E). I have been very pleased with the enthusiasm the majority of my students have for bucket filling. All of my students responded with “Yes,” I liked reading the compliments from my bucket last Friday and seventeen of my students said that bucket filling is helping build friendships in some ways (appendix E). Many of my students said bucket filling is helping build friendships because “If you are nice to others you will make new friends,” “whenever I give a person a bucket filling slip, they say something nice to me and then we become friends,” and “If you give a compliment it will show that you are a good friend to have.” The majority of the open ended responses showed that our compliment buckets are encouraging kindness and motivating students to make new friends.

**Claim #2: In order to build a caring and respectful community of learners, students need many encouraging opportunities to get to know one another.**

At the beginning of my inquiry process, I was frustrated by the number of undesirable interactions I witnessed almost daily. I longed to see my students treat each other with the kindness and respect I knew they were capable of showing. Research has shown that “Children’s empathy, their orientation toward interpersonal relationships, and their ability to regulate behavior are processes that develop over time in the context of frequent and satisfying interactions with peers” (Doll, Zucker, & Brehm, 2004). This is essentially the professional statement that guided and supports the information I have found to be true in my classroom.

After I implemented and video recorded my first community building activity, I noticed that some of our students became upset when they were unable to choose the friend they had in mind. I also noticed a few of our students had difficulty choosing a partner on their own. By the end of my peer interview activity, all of the students had partners and were able to find something they had in common with their partner, even the students that paired with someone they normally did not get along with. Furthermore, toward the end of my inquiry, after many community-building opportunities, I observed my students choose partners during a peer-editing activity. They were able to choose partners and work at ease with classmates they originally would not have worked with. This showed me that all of our students could communicate and work together when given the opportunity.

My surveys have shown me that all of my students care about their classmates' feelings and enjoy being bucket fillers (**appendix E**). I have noticed through observation that our compliment buckets and self-reflection survey have created more opportunities for students to demonstrate empathy for students whose buckets may be less than full. When asked if they could think of one classmate who could use a friend, most of my students were able to think of someone and an action plan they could take to help (**appendix D**). I was surprised to see the variety of students that were listed for this question and could tell my students were thoughtfully responding to their self-reflection survey. Another instance in particular stands out in my mind. Because of the short week before conferences, the students received their compliments from their buckets during their conference times. At this time, one of our students was very aware of the buckets that were empty. Before he even looked at his bucket, he asked if he should fill the buckets that didn't have any compliments yet. In actuality, the empty buckets had already been collected at earlier conferences, but I was overjoyed by the kindness and consideration this student showed for his peers. Many of our students are naturally very thoughtful and considerate of others, but I do believe that this intervention has encouraged students and provided them with many opportunities to think about their classmates' feelings and their relationships with one another.

The post intervention survey I administered after many community-building opportunities also showed some change in students' perceptions of their relationships with peers. When asked if they got along with everyone most of the time on the ClassMap, pre-intervention survey, eight students gave a response of

sometimes. This number dropped to three responses of sometimes to that same question on the post intervention survey (appendix F). My observations and anecdotal notes have also shown that many students are recently having more desirable interactions with their peers. On the contrary, I did not yet find a change in responses to the questions pertaining to arguing and teasing. I wonder if this is something that can continue to be influenced over time by frequent opportunities for positive interactions with peers.

**Claim #3: Integrating community-building activities into daily routines is beneficial and does not detract from instructional time.**

This became a wondering of mine because I was very interested in community building but was unsure if we would be able to find time in our schedule to organize and implement more of these types of activities. Third grade is a very busy year for students, not only because of PSSA testing, but also because it is the first year they receive letter grades in all subject areas. During my inquiry, I found that it is absolutely possible and quite easy to bring community building into the classroom on a regular basis. I was able to integrate community-building activities into our daily routines, morning meetings, and lessons.

Our compliment buckets serve as a great way to build relationships and classroom community without taking away from any instructional time. Students are encouraged to notice random acts of kindness and are able to fill out bucket filling slips for their classmates during any free time they have throughout the day. I have observed all of my students take advantage of some amount of free time to

compliment a peer since the beginning of this intervention. Students use morning work time, lunch prep time, independent work time before math, free time during the transition for recess, and dismissal time to give compliments to their peers. These have proven to be wonderful times during our daily routine for students to think of one another. Giving students the opportunity to gather their compliments from their filled buckets at the end of each Friday has not taken away from any instructional time either.

We have held a short morning meeting in our classroom each day since the very beginning of the school year. This starts our day off together as a class and assures each child the chance to be greeted in the morning by a classmate. Before our morning meetings, most students have between fifteen to twenty minutes to work independently on various morning work assignments. During my inquiry, my mentor allowed opportunities for me to shorten this morning work time by five minutes. This alteration in our daily routine was so minute that our students never questioned the loss of independent work time, but it provided me with enough time to incorporate quick and fun morning meeting activities. I made note of the interactions these activities provided and found that the more time students spent learning about each other and working together, the better they became at teamwork and ultimately respecting one another.

We also found that it was simple to sacrifice small portions of our Tuesday morning schedule for community building mini-lessons and activities because this is our day without a special.

I was most curious to find ways to incorporate community building into the context of my lessons. I hoped that it would be possible and beneficial to do so. After reviewing the video of my first implemented community building activity, I decided that I would like to provide my students with opportunities to work with classmates that they normally would not. I thoughtfully planned for partner and small group activities and found this to be a great way to provide students with opportunities for positive interactions with one another. It was easy and fun to incorporate community building during spelling instruction. I often required students to cooperate in small groups to complete tasks. I found that students enjoyed working in groups better when each member of the group was given a specific job or task. During our explorer's unit in social studies, we broke the students up into "crews." After reading *Pedro's Journal*, the students were introduced to weekly explorer's journal writing prompts. The students created alias names for themselves and were given scenarios to discuss as a "crew" before writing their independent journal entries. In one particular scenario, students were required to work together to select the items they would bring on their ship. They were not allowed to write any item down unless all of their crewmembers agreed upon it. Throughout my inquiry, I observed and took note of cooperative interactions during community building activities. I have found that students in general, those that get along well and those that do not, can work well together in class when they are focused on completing a common task.



### **Reflections and Implications for Future Practice**

I was passionate about building my students relationships with one another at the beginning of my inquiry process, but my interest in the matter has grown remarkably through this journey. I recently read a quote from Haim Ginott that fits perfectly with my research: “You already make a difference. It is a matter of choosing the kind of difference you want to make.” Through my inquiry process, I did find that my actions have an influence on my students’ daily interactions with one another. With this knowledge and a growing classroom community in place, I will strive to be a positive role model and to provide more opportunities for positive interactions with peers throughout the school day.

At the start of my inquiry, I was curious to implement cooperative learning activities and to find which type of cooperative learning experiences work best for my students. This was a sub-wondering that I was unable to fully address to date, however, I do plan to implement a variety of cooperative learning activities in the future. I still wonder which organized cooperative learning activities will work best for my class and hope to find effective ways to integrate them into instruction. I’d also like to use the original surveys that I distributed at the beginning of my project to see if my students’ ideas about themselves and following rules have changed.

To an extent, I wish my interventions would have had an unbelievable effect on my student’s interpersonal relationships and interactions with one another, but I am pleased we have made the progress that we have so far this year. My students post intervention survey responses showed that we need to address teasing and arguing, and work on communication and kindness still. I plan to discuss these

things with my students and to continue to provide opportunities for students to talk about and practice kindness.

This inquiry project has also given me much to look forward to in the future. I have seen the benefits of implementing community-building activities throughout the entire school year and am eager to use what I have learned in my own classroom. I am very happy with the results of my bucket filling intervention and will read *"Have You Filled a Bucket Today,"* by Carol McCloud to all of my future students. I believe that this book teaches a wonderful life lesson and would be beneficial at any grade level. I also learned that students in this age range are generally interested in finding and discussing social justice issues and discussing similar topics, but that they often need guidance in solving problems and communicating effectively. I found that read alouds are wonderful tools for encouraging and facilitating discussions on social issues, and that the more opportunities students are given to work together, the better they will get at working together.

### Works Cited

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

Inquiry Brief

#### **Main wondering -**

*What effects do community-building activities have on student interactions and relationships in my classroom?*

#### **Sub-questions**

- *How can I have a positive influence on my students' daily interactions?*
- *What can I do to influence their behavior toward one another?*
- *What types of cooperative learning activities work best with my students?*
- *-Would a co-constructed community building intervention be successful in my classroom?*
- *Can community-building activities help build healthy/positive relationships in my classroom?*
- *Can community building activities be easily integrated into our daily classroom routines (morning meetings and throughout instruction)?*

#### **Timeline**

*Week of February 13, 2012*

- Collect baseline data of undesirable interactions brought to my attention each day, record anecdotal notes of interactions in notebook. Tally on Chart.
- Send out survey for students about
- Make graph and analyze survey data
- Decide what community building activity I will implement first

*Week of February 20, 2012*

- Continue to collect baseline data of number of undesirable interactions brought to my attention each day on my interactions chart.
- Show students survey data
- Video record first community building activity

*Week of February 27, 2012*

- Continue to note number of undesirable interactions brought to my attention each day on my interactions chart.
- Continue to incorporate community building activities into at least one extra morning meeting each week
- Read aloud *The Sneetches* in honor of Dr. Seuss week in order to discuss survey data and kindness.
- Create, share, and display class bio poems.
- Decide any observations I could ask Julie to make over my spring break.
- Survey smaller group of students/Discuss possible ways to promote respect/build interpersonal relationships
- **February 29, 2012**, Revised Brief Due

*Week of March 5, 2012*

- \*Spring Break
- Ask Julie to continue to note number of conflicts brought to her attention each day
- Analyze Survey Data
- Type Anecdotal Notes
- Organize Findings/Ideas

*Week of March 12, 2012*

- Continue to note number of undesirable interactions brought to my attention each day on my chart.
- Week of PSSA's
- Implement a collaboratively chosen community building intervention
- Survey whole class about the chosen community building intervention
- Community Building Games
- Read Alouds
- Classroom Meetings and Discussion
- Survey whole class about chosen intervention

*Week of March 19, 2012*

- Continue to note number of undesirable interactions brought to my attention each day on chart.

- Continue collaboratively chosen intervention.
- Gather Data
- Analyze Findings
- March 23, 2012 Final Whole Class/Small Group Survey

*Week of March 26, 2012*

- Continue to note number of undesirable interactions brought to my attention each day in my notebook.
- Continue to use collaboratively chosen intervention.
- Evaluate/Analyze Data
- March 30 & 31<sup>st</sup>, work on Draft Paper

*Week of April 2, 2012*

- Finish Data collection
- Analyze Data
- Write Inquiry Paper
- Draft Due: **April 7, 2012**

*Week of April 9, 2012*

- Gather Evidence to begin building Presentation
- Edit Draft

*Week of April 16, 2012*

- Analyze Evidence
- Create Presentation
- Practice for Inquiry Conference

*Week of April 23, 2012*

- Edit presentation
- Practice for Inquiry Conference

*April 28, 2012*

- Inquiry Conference!

*May 1, 2012*

- Final Inquiry Paper Due to Marion

*May 20, 2012*

- Inquiry Paper Due to Bern

## **Data collection ideas**

### **Before:**

-I plan to survey each of my twenty-one students and ask them questions about their relationships with other students in our class and their relationships with their teachers/with me.

-I will keep a notebook for anecdotal notes. I will tally/jot down baseline data, number of conflicts brought to my attention each day.

-I plan to videotape the implementation of my first community building activity.

### **During:**

-I will jot down/tally number of conflicts brought to my attention each day.

-I will hold small group meetings to discuss a class community building intervention, take notes and ultimately decide which to implement.

-I will videotape community-building activities and cooperative learning activities.

-I will interview students to see how they feel about their relationships with other students and if the community building activities are helpful.

-I will survey the smaller group of students for feedback about the types of cooperative learning activities.

-I will gather data on class community building intervention

### **After:**

-I plan to analyze students' feelings towards each other now that some community-building interventions have been tried and observed. I will distribute the same survey that I gave at the beginning of my inquiry and analyze any changes in students' feelings.

-I will also interview the same group of students from the beginning of my inquiry and ask them similar kinds of questions.

## **Appendix B**

### **Annotated Bibliography**

Brainbridge, Christina. Welcome to Mrs. Brainbridge's Class: We Are Bucket Fillers!

<http://www.bainbridgeclass.com/bucket.htm>

This teacher website was a wonderful resource for me throughout my inquiry. Brainbridge has so many great ideas and I will refer to her site often (even after inquiry is over). I used her teacher friendly documents for my bucket filling intervention. This is where I found the bucket filling slips and outlines of the buckets for my bucket filling poster.

Bucket Fillers Inc. Bucket Fillers. (2006-2012) <http://www.bucketfillers101.com/>

Bucket Fillers Incorporated was also a great resource for me throughout my inquiry. I used the free downloadables and referred to information on the website often. I love being a bucket filler and my students have enjoyed it too. I also found a new read aloud called *Will You Fill My Bucket* that I plan to buy for use in the future, if not with my students, with a younger group.

Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S. (2009). *Developmentally Appropriate Practice: In Early Childhood Programs: Serving Children from Birth through Age 8*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

In this text, Copple and Bredekamp lay the foundation for practice that is developmentally appropriate. They believe that excellent teachers are aware of practice that is developmentally appropriate, and are purposeful and thoughtful in every instructional decision they make. One of the many areas that they believe excellent teachers must be intentional in is creating a caring community of learners. They have studied how children develop and have found that they learn best when they are part of a community of learners. They believe that excellent teachers make learning opportunities out of conflict and “misbehavior” in order to help students find ways to make better decisions in the future. This text will be helpful because it provides examples of developmentally appropriate practice to reference and consider throughout the inquiry process. More specifically, it provides examples and non-examples of DAP that can foster positive relationships and help build classroom community.

DelMastro, E. (2010). *Community Building: Forming a Classroom-Community Within the Context of Lessons and in Everyday Routines*. PDS Inquiry.

In her inquiry paper, DelMastro provides information on the context of her classroom, a description of her data collection and analysis, the claims she was able to make about her main wondering and sub-questions, as well as a reflection on her inquiry process and the implications she found for future practice as an elementary school teacher. In her inquiry, she researched the effects of community-building activities in the context of her lessons, daily routines, and interventions for improving her students’ interpersonal relationships. She wondered if community-building activities would help



improve her students' relationships; how she could decrease bullying in her 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom; if community building activities were more effective during morning meeting or throughout the context of academic lessons; if a compliment jar would help students' relationships with one another; and if there would be time in their busy schedule to fit community building into their daily routines. Through her data and analysis, she was able to conclude three main things for her particular class at that particular time. First, she found that "Implementing a designated place in the classroom to encourage kindness and compliments helps build a better classroom community." She found that "Encouraging students to get to know each other better builds positive relationships." And finally, that "Implementing community building into the context of lessons and everyday routines is easy and fun!" Because of my passions and wonderings, I was drawn to DelMastro's inquiry. I am excited that she gained so much from the inquiry topic she chose and I hope I can make a positive difference in the lives of my students, just as she has done. I understand that each group of learners is unique and that my inquiry experience may be much different than hers. However, I believe that DelMastro's expertise on her inquiry topic will help me in the planning, data collection, and analysis of my own inquiry.

Denton, P., & Kriete, R. (2000). *The First Six Weeks of School*. (pp. 52-56). Turners Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc.

In this text, Denton and Kriete discuss their four broad intentions that they use as a foundation for their first six weeks of school curriculum. Although it is no longer the beginning weeks of school, I think that their ideas for community building and tone setting are still applicable for my classroom thus far in the year. I am particularly fond of the morning message and morning meeting ideas that are laid out in this brief section and in Appendix C of the text. They will aid in the development of my community building interventions throughout my inquiry process.

Doll, B., Zucker, S., & Brehm, K. (2004). *Resilient Classrooms: Creating Healthy Environments for Learning*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

In this text, Doll, Zucker, and Brehm define resilient classrooms as places where all students can be successful emotionally, academically, and socially. Unlike traditional models that implement "change-the-kid" strategies to address individual and whole group needs, Doll, Zucker, and Brehm argue the importance of building effective classroom environments to foster the characteristics of a resilient classroom. These characteristics include academic efficacy, behavioral self-control, academic self-determination, and effective teacher-student relationships, peer relationships, and home-school relationships. Much like Bronfenbrenner's ecological, "child-in-classroom" perspective, they believe that "neither the child nor the classroom can change without changing the other." Their research shows that providing support,

guidance, and a caring community for each learner can impact each of the characteristics of a resilient classroom. Their ideas and suggestions, particularly on peer relationships, will be helpful in my research because I plan to study the effects of community building on student relationships. This text also provides ClassMaps surveys and example assessments that will help me collect and analyze my own data. *Resilient Classrooms: Creating Healthy Environments for Learning* will serve as a guiding light for my inquiry project.

Levin, J., & Nolan, J. (2010). *Principles of Classroom Management: A Professional Decision-Making Model*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). (pp. 119-121). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

This text will be useful in my inquiry because I plan to implement cooperative learning activities throughout instruction to promote student relationships and strengthen our classroom community. This section of chapter five defines cooperative learning activities and characterizes the elements that are important for their success. Levin and Nolan analyze Johnson and Slavin's theories on the elements conducive to successful cooperative learning and conclude that there are definitely three critical components: face-to-face interaction, a feeling of positive interdependence, and a feeling of individual accountability. There are several types of interdependence that I can work to create. The importance and organization of these three elements for creating a community of learners is laid out in these pages. They will serve as a great resource for me as I plan community building activities that will take place during instruction.

McCloud, Carol. (2006). *Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness*.

Once I found this book, it served as the foundation for my interventions. The story is based on Dr. Donald O. Clifton's "Dipper and Bucket" story and infant/childhood psychology, mental and emotional health research. It encourages positive, bucket filling behaviors and teaches children that it is easy and rewarding to regularly express kindness, thankfulness, and love. From this book, I learned that students not only have a need for their buckets to be filled, but they also need to be taught how to love and express kindness to others. I wondered how I could influence my students' relationships with one another and found this resource to be incredibly useful.

Warner, Kerri. Personal Communication. March 19, 2012.

I interviewed Kerri Warner, the Emotional and Behavioral Support instructor, and had a great conversation with her. She showed me her superhero lesson resources and offered to visit my classroom for a small superhero lesson. We spoke about the Space Invader when she came to visit and

my students were able to think about personal space. She also provided me with a binder full of resources she has gathered over the years. Some of the cooperative learning ideas were useful in planning my community building activities.

Wood, Chip. (2007). *Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.)*. (pp.97-117). Turners Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc.

*Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14* by Chip Wood was recommended to me by my Professional Development Associate. This text gives an overview of developmentally appropriate growth patterns, classroom ability, and curriculum for children of each age group. I found that this text helped me to understand some of the things that I am seeing in my classroom on a regular basis. I am interested to observe and reflect on the interactions the younger students in my class as compared to those who have already turned nine. I believe that this text will be a good resource to refer to as I build my community building and cooperative learning activities. It has already given me some ideas for my reading group and possible suggestions for whole-class activities. I was happy to find that students of age 8-9 generally care about fairness and justice, and that they like stories that concern these things, but may need guidance in how to promote and ensure them. I took notes and plan to refer back to these pages in order to gain a deeper understanding of my students' development and interactions with one another.

### Appendix C

#### **My Classmates (Pre intervention survey)**

1. I have fun with my friends in this class.

Yes

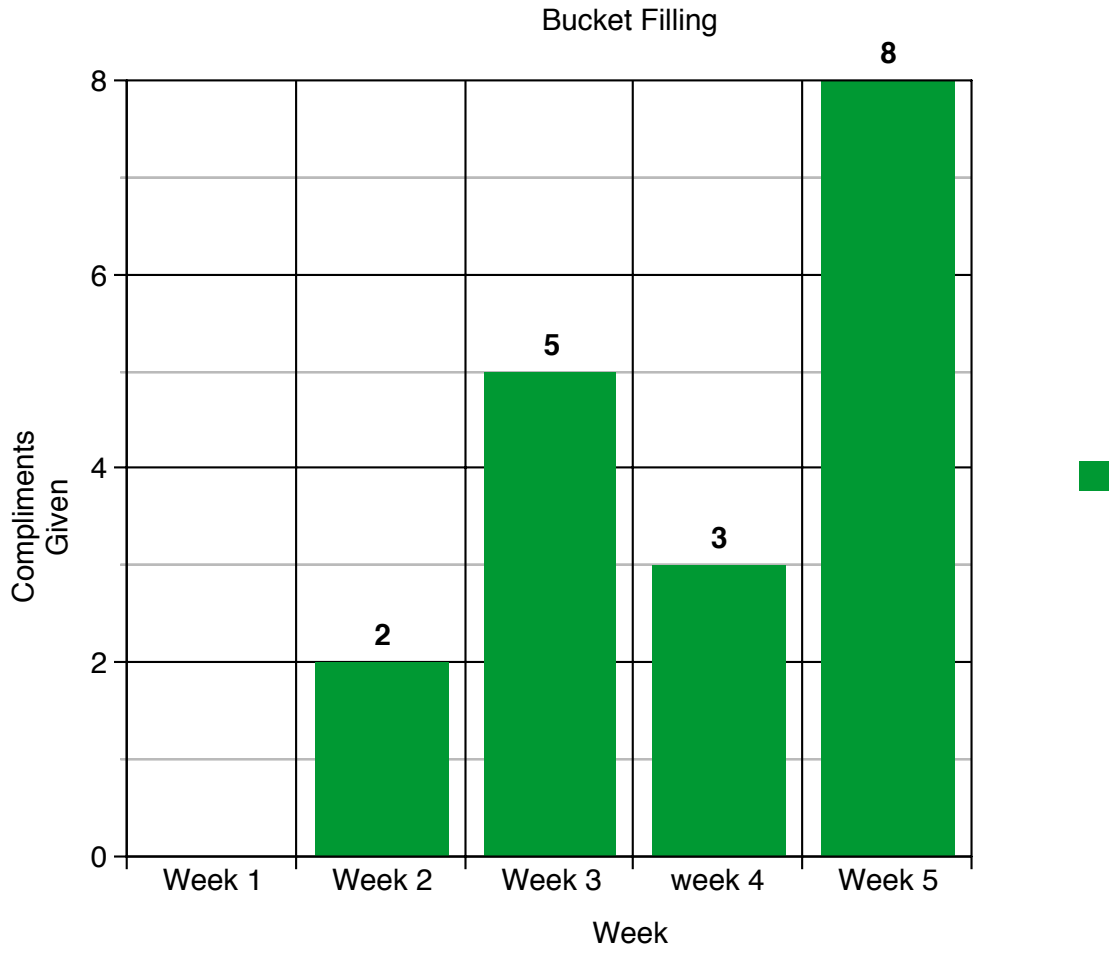
Sometimes

No

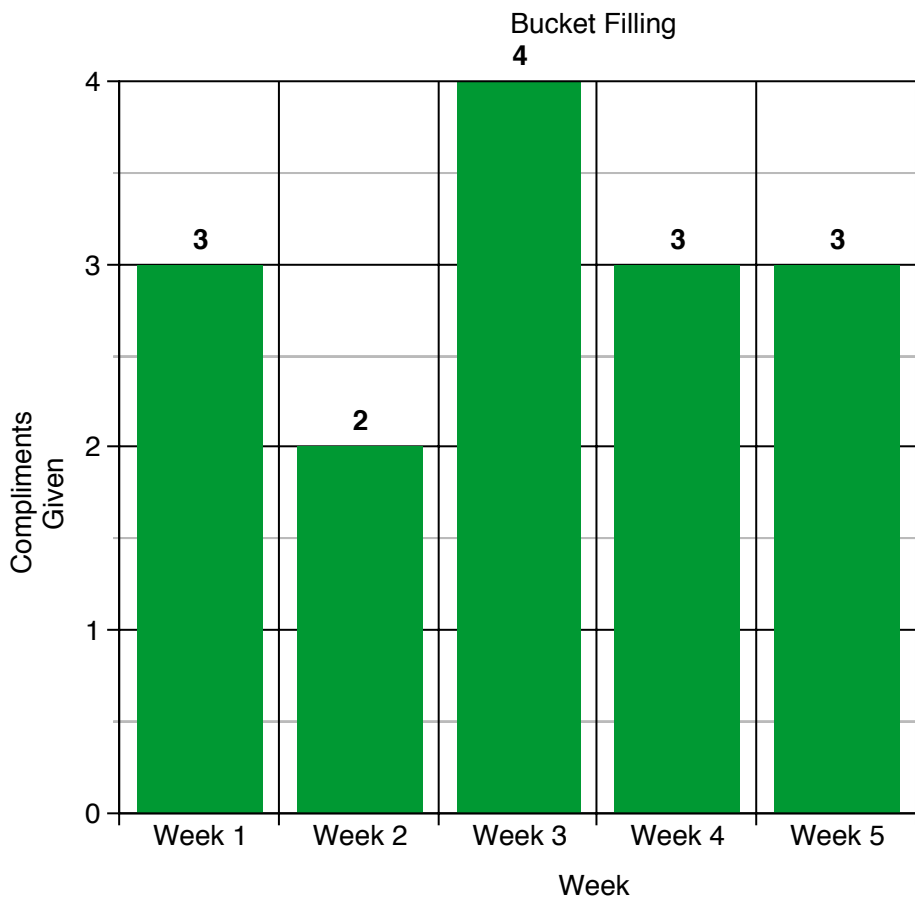


Megan D																			
Eneya																			
Alex H																			
Daniel																			
Ben																			
Evie																			
Caleb M																			
Liam																			
John																			
Isaiah																			
Gabi																			
Sruthi																			
Evelyn																			
Harrison																			
Marshall																			
Dorothy																			
Alex V																			
McKenzie																			
Megan Y																			

**Student #1, Weekly Bucket Filling:**



**Student #2, Weekly Bucket Filling:**



**Appendix E**

Ask yourself these questions.

**Circle "Yes" or "No" and fill in the blanks.**

1. Did you fill someone else's bucket this morning by being thoughtful, helpful, or kind? **Yes** **No**

If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

What could you do to fill someone's bucket today? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Look at your bucket filling checklist. Did you fill the same buckets that you filled last week? **Yes** **No**

Whose buckets have you filled? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Is there anyone you know whose bucket is less than full and could really use a friend or kind words right now? **Yes** **No**

If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think you could do to help? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Did you like reading the compliments from your bucket last Friday?

**Yes** **No**

Did you receive a bucket filling slip from someone that surprised you?

**Yes** **No**

If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for filling my bucket daily! ☺**

**Happy bucket filling,  
Miss Lincoln**

**Appendix F**



**My Classmates (Post intervention survey)**

10. I have fun with my friends in this class.

Yes                      Sometimes                      No

11. I know other kids will not argue with me.

Yes                      Sometimes                      No

12. I get along with everyone most of the time.

Yes                      Sometimes                      No

13. I know other kids will not tease me, call me names, or make fun of me.

Yes                      Sometimes                      No

14. I know other kids care about my feelings.

Yes                      Sometimes                      No

15. Do you care about your classmates' feelings?

Yes                      Sometimes                      No

16. Do you like being a bucket filler?

Yes                      Sometimes                      No

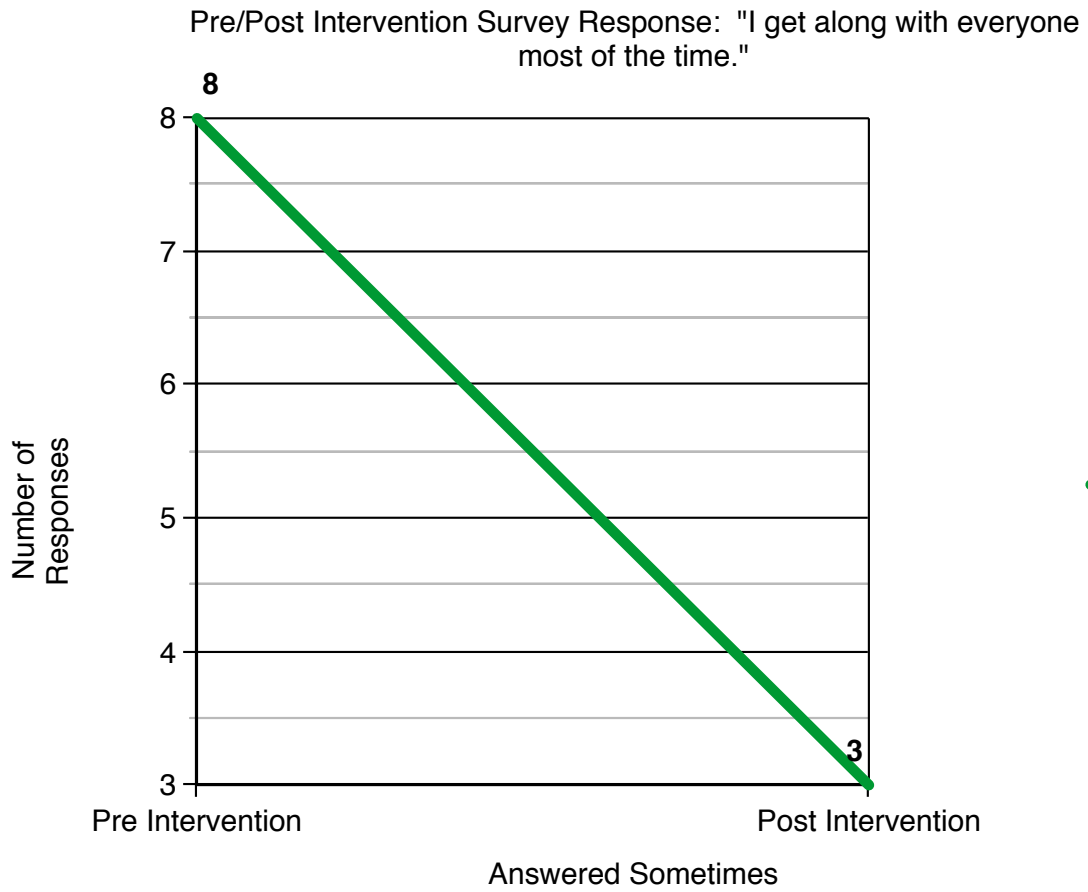
17. Do you think our bucket filling is helping build friendships?

Yes                      Sometimes                      No

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix G**

### Pre/Post Intervention Survey, Data Comparison



Pre and Post intervention Survey Data

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