

TCM Chapter 15: (partial) The Transformative Classroom: Implementing a One-Style Approach and Creating a classroom community

By John Shindler

In this Chapter

- The 1-Style Classroom as the “Natural State”
- Defining Community
- Stages of Development for the Transformative Classroom
 - Stage One -- Foundation
 - Management Goals -- Clarity and Intention
 - Community Development Goals -- Safety and Belonging
 - Stage Two -- Transition
 - Management Goals -- Shifting Locus of Ownership and Cultivating Intrinsic Motivation
 - Community Development Goals -- Creating Identity and Group Accomplishment
 - Stage Three -- Encouragement
 - Management Goals -- Facilitating Vision and Self Direction
 - Community Development Goals -- Fostering a Cause Beyond Self and a Sense of Tribe

Marita is beginning her second year of teaching. She had high expectations for herself and her class. She feels that by the end of the previous year she had developed a workable set of routines and did not feel as overwhelmed as she did at the beginning of the year. She has worked hard at classroom management and overall she has had fewer problems than many of her colleagues. Marita has been clear about rules and consequences and her students have responded to her clear expectations. She has avoided punishments and public shaming. Students trust and like her. However, as she considers her class, it seems too much “about her.” She feels the students respond to and depend on her direction. She enjoys the order and sanity in the class, but the long term effects of her approach concern her. It bothers her that the students continuously ask for confirmation that what they are doing is “okay.” Moreover, she feels that they make decisions tentatively and rely excessively on her to solve their conflicts. It concerns her when she overhears comments such as, “Look busy or Mrs. Juarez is going to get after us.” She appreciates that students are aware of consequences and interested in being on task, but wishes they would see the value of good listening, being responsible, treating each other well and working hard aside from being concerned about potential consequences. Marita sees other teachers who allow students to make many of the classroom decisions and use self-directed learning strategies but she worries about losing control. Some teachers who give over-significant amounts of power to students seem to spend a lot of time disappointed in their students’ irresponsibility. She does not want to spend all day lecturing about behavior or descend into a 3-Style approach like the teacher next door who gives her students a lot of freedom and gets chaos from students taking advantage. She has a sense that she could be more empowering and have a more democratic classroom but she does not want to sacrifice order.

Chapter Reflection 15-a: Do you empathize with Marita? Why or why not?

Like Marita, many teachers intuitively sense that their classroom management could be accomplishing more than mere obedience and order. They recognize that a teacher-centered 2-Style of management--what Canter (1986) refers to as “assertive discipline” --is certainly preferable to taking an authoritarian 4-Style approach (Canter labels this the “hostile teacher”). They do not see a teacher-centered approach leading to the kind of growth and motivation they want to see from students. They receive an endless supply of advice about what “works” and how to avoid a 3-Style approach (which Canter terms “passive”). They find the advice either too teacher-centered and gimmicky or too ill-defined and unrealistic.

The purpose of this chapter is to outline a step-by-step process for creating a student-centered 1-Style classroom and a functioning community: the transformative classroom. The chapter offers practical strategies for developing a more student-centered form of management as well as promoting a collective sense of responsibility and community.

Chapter Reflection 15-b: Some readers opened this book already possessing a commitment to a student-centered approach. Others may have been persuaded to adopt a 1-Style approach after some reading. For those readers, this chapter provides practical ideas to further develop an approach. Other readers may find themselves attracted to aspects of the 1-Style approach yet remain most comfortable with maintaining a 2-Style approach. For those readers this chapter should provide some academic interest. However, there are likely a good number of readers who intend to take a pragmatic approach to the management style they adopt. For those readers this chapter will offer ideas for making the shift from a 2-Style to a 1-Style management approach, as the opportunity presents itself.

EXAMINING THE 1-STYLE CLASSROOM AND THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY

1-Style Classroom -- Returning to the Natural State

The natural state of learning is one in which students feel intrinsically motivated, a sense of belonging, excited to learn and use their learning to make a difference in the group.

This natural state is a transformative state. However, few students learn in classrooms that promote this condition; in fact, over the course of their education most students become increasingly removed from this state. The 1-Style classroom endeavors to promote a natural state of learning by using management strategies that empower students and create a needs-satisfying environment. Given that this natural state may be foreign to many of our students, developing a 1-Style classroom will require some patience as we help them adjust to it by awakening aspects that may have become dormant and developing the skills necessary to function in a democratic system.

The 1-Style Classroom is possible at any grade level (Elias & Schwab, 2006). I have seen fully functional, self-directed classrooms of first graders, high school seniors, and all grades in between. I have seen 1-Style classrooms in all kinds of schools. We do need to be realistic. Some students will take to this style more readily than others. On one hand, if we have been assigned a group of students who have developed a deeply-entrenched failure psychology and a habit of externalizing their responsibility, we have a project on our hands. On the other hand, if we have a group of students who are experienced at being self-directed and eager to take on responsibility, we will be able to shape them into a 1-Style community in a short period of time. Does one of these groups need our efforts more than the other? Does one of these groups deserve to learn in an empowering environment more than the other?

Chapter Reflection 15-c: Have you heard a teacher tell you that getting their students to be self-responsible will not work? What are they saying about their students' future?

What is the 1-Style Classroom?

While a “1-Style Classroom” management approach as defined in this book and a “classroom community” are similar, each has its own distinct qualities (Figure 15.1). First let’s examine the qualities of the 1-Style Classroom.

- **Teacher as Facilitator/Leader.** The teacher in the 1-Style classroom is not the boss, the police, or the attendant. She/he is a leader. The teacher’s role is to create the conditions for students to achieve best. The 1-Style leader is neither permissive nor domineering. S/he is intentional in efforts to promote a shared vision among the members of the class and effectively facilitate and manage that vision (Brophy, 1999).
- **Self-Responsible.** Students in the 1-Style Classroom act responsibly because they recognize that it is to the benefit of the class and themselves. In contrast to a teacher-centered class in which responsibility is defined by following directions, in the student-centered class responsibility is defined by making choices that are good for the group, demonstrate accountability to the agreed-upon group goals, and contribute to higher levels of learning and function (Elias & Schwab, 2006).
- **Clear Implicit Expectations.** In the 1-Style Classroom, expectations are shared and understood on a deep level. Knowing the expectations is not simply remembering them, it is about understanding why they are valuable and why when we all buy into them, things are better.
- **Learner-Centered Instruction.** Curriculum and instruction that engage and empower learners will help promote the goals of the 1-Style Classroom more readily than more teacher-centered methods. Give students ownership of their learning and ownership for management of their class to synergistically produce the most transformative results (Watson & Battistich, 2006).
- **Self-Directed.** The goal of the 1-Style classroom is students learning to self-govern and demonstrate self-discipline. Students learn that the only true discipline is self-discipline (Elias & Schwab, 2006).
- **Intrinsic Forms of Motivation.** The 1-Style class is structured to promote intrinsic versus extrinsic forms of motivation. Bribes and gimmicks are not useful in this environment. Just as students experience the needs-satisfying effect of doing meaningful work, they recognize that being responsible, thinking about the needs of others, being given power over the decisions that affect them is needs-satisfying as well (Ryan & Deci, 2006).
- **Group Functions Collectively.** As opposed to students responding to the will of the teacher, the group considers the good of the collective when making choices. The 1-Style class works like a team with each member recognizing that s/he can only achieve their potential working cooperatively with the other members (Kohn, 1999).
- **Intentional Promotion of Success Psychology.** In the 1-Style classroom, the teacher maintains an awareness of how his/her actions are contributing to the success psychology of the students. The three sub-factors: 1) internal locus of control, 2) acceptance and belonging, and 3) mastery orientation provide a lens to guide decision making and assess the class’ progress toward greater collective health (Dweck, 2000; Shindler, 2003).
- **Social Contract.** The foundation of the governance of the 1-Style Classroom is a well-established system of social bonds, expectations, and rules (Curwin & Mendler, 1986).

What is a classroom community?

A classroom community will have many of the qualities of the 1-Style Classroom; however, it will also have the following distinct features:

- **Membership and Shared Identity.** In a community, members share a unique identity. This identity creates a sense of belonging and membership. Each community has distinctive qualities that members adopt as their own (Watson & Battistich, 2006).
- **Common Purpose and Goals.** On some level, a community is working to accomplish something collectively. It has a purpose and a reason to be that works to the benefit of its members (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).
- **Communal Bonds in Addition to Social Bonds.** In Chapter 8, we examined the differences between social and communal bonds. Communities, like any functioning body, require social bonds. What makes them a community are their communal bonds. Whereas social bonds address such questions as “What is my responsibility to the group?” and “What can I expect from others?” communal bonds answer such questions as “What can I do to make the community better?” and “When I have needs, whom can I count on?” Social bonds deal with issues of rights and responsibilities. Communal bonds deal with issues of relationship, obligation, and the greater good (Osterman, 2000).
- **Traditions, Rituals, and History.** Over time, a community develops a history and a shared story. To mark this history a community will observe traditions and collectively remember their past. Rituals and customs act to bond a community by creating a shared set of values and way of life (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

As one can see, the 1-Style classroom and the classroom community have their own unique characteristics (see Figure 15.1). Communities do not always possess efficiency and facilitative leadership and one can create a 1-Style Classroom without traditions, rituals and a strong collective identity. However, these two types of entities share much in common. For those teachers who desire either one or the other, it makes sense to create both simultaneously as they operate synergistically. For that reason this chapter will examine how to accomplish a classroom that includes the qualities of both.

**Figure 15.1: Venn Diagram -- Intersection of the Qualities of Two Entities
1) Communities and 2) 1-Style Classrooms**

Qualities of 1-Style classrooms	Qualities of both 1-Style classrooms and communities	Qualities of communities
Self-Responsibility Culture of Listening Efficiency Clear Expectations Success Psychology Self-Directed Teacher as Facilitator Social Contract	Communal Bonds Collective Purpose Group Accomplishments Shared Values Caring Leadership Sense of Belonging	Traditions, Rituals and History Shared Identity Shared “Socially Constructed Reality”

Chapter Reflection 15-d: As you examine Figure 15.1, which of the qualities do you find the most compelling? What are your essential goals for your students?

What Will it Take to Create My 1-Style classroom community?

The basic requirements are:

- **Intention.** To successfully lead a 1-Style classroom community we must have a vision of what the collective wants to accomplish. The intention of promoting self-responsible students needs to be ever-present in our minds and guide our actions. The 1-Style teacher is required to be purposeful in what they say and do, far more than the other three management styles.
- **Awareness.** We need to be ever-conscious of both the covert and overt factors within the classroom environment that can undermine our success. The mental games (especially Social Darwinism), the patterns within us that cause us to get negative, and the students tendency to revert to “failure psychology” thinking all have the potential to hamstring our efforts and therefore must be given sufficient attention. Being present and aware generally will also be critical. Being in tune with the state of mind of the group is a necessity.
- **Skills.** This chapter and previous chapters provide many strategies to contribute to success in this effort. It is necessary to become familiar with the skills that students will need in the process of becoming more self-responsible. As discussed, we must refrain from certain dysfunctional practices as we incorporate more effective practices.
- **Commitment.** Creating a 1-Style classroom community is complex. If it were easy, a greater number of teachers would do it; as we see, they do not. The 1-Style classroom requires commitment, patience and perseverance. Students may initially resist our efforts (they have grown accustomed being dependent and dysfunctional), and we ourselves may even experience a strong desire to adopt a 2-Style approach or give up and adopt more of a 3-Style. We may find it necessary to take moments of reflection to recall why we are making this effort. A helpful note: efforts can be more successful and less stressful in collaboration with others who have similar goals for their classrooms.

Chapter Reflection 15-e: One of the disappointing realizations that many idealistic and ambitious teachers hit is that their efforts are not always appreciated by their peers. In some schools this may take the form of a subtle competitive attitude; in others there may be open resentment toward those who are attempting to do something positive and ambitious. The reasons this occurs are complicated, but it is more common than most of us expect. Attempting to create a 1-Style Classroom may engender resentment from some of your colleagues. Consider connecting with colleagues who are supportive of your efforts and in whom you can confide. Most teachers who head down the road of the 1-Style classroom need some emotional and technical support.

Assess the Receptiveness of Your Student Groups

Any group of students can become a functioning 1-Style Classroom. Some groups will just require more time and effort than others. For some, a 1-Style of management will feel familiar to other contexts in their life (e.g., home, previous classes, afterschool groups, etc.). For these students, there will be little remediation required. We will not be working against a failure psychology and/or a hard mistrusting emotional shell. We simply need to develop the skills at each stage of the process. For other groups, a 1-Style approach will seem as unfamiliar as if you were speaking a foreign language (Wolk, 2002). I have taught both kinds of groups. When faced with the more challenging task, even the most ambitious among us will be tempted to give in and revert to a style of teaching to which our students are accustomed; i.e., to use 4-Style with a group who are used to being treated that way. But there are many reasons to maintain

our intention to create a 1-Style approach. First, it is possible. There may not be many who try it, but I have seen many 1-Style classrooms in schools where 95% of other teachers in the school assumed that the only thing that would work was a 2- or 4-Style approach. It may take relatively longer to accomplish. We may only succeed at creating a foundation. But if we do, we have had a transformative effect far beyond anything that we observe immediately. We see only the tip of the iceberg of the changes that we have made. Second, creating a 1-Style classroom community has been shown to promote higher achievement, motivation, and commitment to schools (Watson & Battistich, 2006). Third, the bonding and social skills development has been shown to decrease problem behavior in the classroom and beyond (Blum, McNeely, & Rinehart, 2002). Fourth: students are worth it. We have the opportunity to reproduce the normal dysfunction condition or to transform it. Do we want to be one more link in the chain of failure, or do we want to be a catalyst for change?

A DEVELOPMENTAL SEQUENCE FOR CREATING THE 1-STYLE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

Creating a 1-Style classroom community can only be accomplished in a developmental sequence. We will lead our students through the following three stages of development: 1) Formation, 2) Transition, and 3) Encouragement. Each stage requires the foundation of the preceding stages to function successfully. We need to develop a foundation of trust and clarity before we can successfully promote self-directed behavior. Likewise, our students need to feel as sense of belonging and identity before the class can begin to look anything like a community. In the remainder of this chapter we will examine development of a 1-Style classroom community in relation to each of the three developmental stages.

Stage One-- Formation

Management Goals: Clarity and Intention

The foundation of the 1-Style Classroom is built upon clarity of expectations. A well-established cause-and-effect relationship needs to be promoted in the minds of each student -- when we do A, B will follow. As facilitator of the process, we need to be intentional about taking action and raising awareness that promotes clarity of expectations. High expectations are nice, but students cannot rise to a level of behavior that they do not grasp (on a real and material level). Having high expectations is just a start. We must teach in accord with our expectations and include the skills required to function self-responsibly. We therefore need to be deliberate about creating the following features within the class:

- **Social Contract and Social Bonds.** The social contract provides an opportunity for students to be responsible to the group; their collective contributions engender a sense of security. As each member supports the collective, there is a consequential sense of security for all. That security includes material and emotional safety. In Chapters 8 through 10 we outlined the process of creating a social contract defined by well-established social bonds. A social contract exists to the degree that it is understood and shared. We know that it is working when we see students take ownership of the agreed-upon principles of the contract. The communal sense of safety and faith in the contract will develop as we consistently take relevant action and implement consequences, both positive and negative.
- **Culture of Listening and Respect.** To function effectively, students should expect to be attentive and can expect that others will be attentive to them -- in other words, participate in a "culture of listening." A culture of listening and respect will be a prerequisite for many of the more advanced stages in the development of the 1-Style classroom. Chapter 5 outlines a detailed process for creating this environment.
- **Social Frames.** From the first day of class, students should recognize that there are deliberate and conspicuous social frames operating in the 1-Style class. As discussed in

Chapter 3, students should become increasingly conscious of the relationships between freedom and responsibility, success and recognition, and warmth and respect.

- **Operationalize Conceptual Expectations.** Concepts like responsible, respectful, cooperative, positive attitude, full-effort, risk taking, and being creative are abstractions. They will remain abstractions until they are “operationalized” and reified in students’ experience (Hickey & Schafer, 2006). It is our obligation to make these ideas concrete and personally meaningful. We typically assume that students already know what it means to exhibit these behaviors or that they will grasp these concepts as a result of a handful of verbal comments that we make. If so, we over-estimate the degree to which they have an operational working knowledge of the concepts that we use to describe good behavior. There are many strategies for making conceptual expectations concrete. First, we can use positive recognitions of behavior. When we see behavior that defines high quality effort, for example, we can publically recognize the practical action that we observed that characterized the term. Second, as discussed in Chapter 12, we can ask students to publically recognize one another’s positive behavior. Third, we can use an assessment system such as that outlined in Chapter 20. This can be done formally or informally. If we have a class who seem to lack both a conceptual as well as a behavioral knowledge of how to act in a responsible and functional manner, systems such as these can be the most effective means for promoting understanding and changing behavior. The community development section that follows will offer additional ideas in this area.
- **Put in Place Mechanisms for Effectively Facilitating Cooperative Learning, Conflict Resolution and Class Meetings.** As early as possible, students should begin to practice cooperative learning and conflict resolution. (Strategies for doing so are outlined in detail in Chapters 12 and 13.) In the first stage our primary focus should be on teaching these skills rather than being too concerned with how effective each appears (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Avoid short cuts. For example, maintain your expectation that cooperative groups follow the protocols that are set out even if your students insist that they do not want or need them. When things devolve it is difficult to reestablish original expectations.

Class Meetings should be introduced when the group is ready for them (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). Use your own insightful judgment. A sound freedom-respect frame and a culture of listening and respect must be in place before attempting a class meeting of any substance. If the idea of a class meeting is new to our students, we might initiate the idea of democratic participation by holding votes on various classroom matters. We might start with shorter, less consequential topics for class meetings, such as whether to have the shades open or closed. In addition, the social contract development and evolution process can act to introduce class meeting protocol. In these early stages, keep class meetings short and efficient. Students will recognize they have an opportunity to be heard, but excessive complaining, spurious comments, or personal attacks are inappropriate. A more complete process for facilitating class meetings is explained later in the chapter.

- **Establish Your Role and Vision.** Unless students have come from a class in which a 1-Style of management was used, they will assign you a role similar to those adopted by their past teachers. It may be useful to tell them right up front, “In this class, I am not going to get mad at you, lecture you, shame you, wish you were different, play games with you, compare you to other students; nor will I accept excuses, poor efforts, disrespect of others, or selfishness. And soon you will not accept those things from yourselves or others in the class.” Expect students to question your resolve early in the year. They will ask you (and test you), “Do you really mean what you say?” “A few put-

downs are okay, right?” “Making a mediocre effort is okay once in a while, right?” At some point they will learn from our actions that we are absolute about some things. Next, it will be useful to give them a sense of your vision. Where is this going? No matter the current state of affairs or the self-image with which students enter the class, students need to be sold the idea that soon they will be respectful, responsible, self-directed learners, and that you have no doubt that they are capable of and will ultimately accomplish that goal. The vision will eventually emerge from the collective, but at this stage it needs to come from the teacher so that we set out on in the right direction.

Chapter Reflection 15-f: It is tempting to resent our students early in the year for trying to test us. But we need to give them a break and realize that they are responding the way they are used to. As things get better, they will forget these former ways. When that day comes, are we still going to hold it against them?

- **Development of Clear Expectations.** The 1-Style Classroom is dependent on clearly established expectations. Expectations are rooted in the law of cause-and-effect. Students understand the “if..., then...” For example, if they listen with attention they will know what is going on and things happen smoothly; and if they do not, they will not know. In addition, there may be other consequences that the teacher implements. However, if we explain things repeatedly, complain that there is too much talking, and are inconsistent with our consequences or uses illogical punishments, no cause-and-effect relationship will develop in the minds of the students except, “when the teacher gets mad, s/he complains, but does nothing of consequence.”

If we model and expect a type of behavior — for example, respectful interactions, the students will soon see that there is an expectation for such behavior. We show there is a value to using the behavior and a consequence when it does not happen. Lectures, guilt, preaching, and chronicling failure seem like action but they are operationally useless. We must take real action. Model the behavior deliberately. Help the students recognize the value that behavior has to themselves and the class. No matter how repetitive it may feel, it is useful to promote mantra-type language. For example, “in this class we all try our best,” “this class has only responsible learners,” or, “the great thing about this class is that we always listen to one other and expect to be listened to.”

The difference between expectations in the 2-Style and 1-Style approaches relates to what the students are responding to. In the 2-Style classroom the students are responding to clear and consistent consequences and modeling. The students know what is going to happen and the teacher follows through. The cause-and-effect is created in a systematic manner and reinforced each day. In the 1-Style classroom the clarity is just as evident, but the cause-and-effect is located (psychologically) in the students’ awareness of the purpose of the behavior. For example, if we all listen to each other, we develop respect and we learn more. It feels right on an intrinsic level. In most cases, both the 1- and 2-Style approach will begin with much the same set of strategies;; eventually the teacher attempting a 1-Style approach will encourage a shift in students’ thinking from the extrinsic consequences of an action to the intrinsic value of an action.

Community Development Goals -- Safety and Belonging

When we look out at that group on the first day, though it may not be evident, the pervasive emotion in the room will likely be one of *insecurity*. On some level most students feel apprehension and alienation from the other members of the class (Watson & Battistich, 2006). Simply put, the other members are still very much “other.” This insecurity will work against the development of community within the group. First and foremost, *community must be built within an emotional climate of safety and belonging*.

The teacher is the only one in the equation who can help the students past their insecurity and on the road to feeling bonded as a group. It will be useful to keep in mind that each and every member of the class wants the same thing deep down -- the natural condition. In our core we all want to feel safe, loved, valued, and connected (Glasser, 1990). When we don't get these basic needs met, we compensate. Each student's default compensation strategies will look a bit different (e.g., acting like they are cool, know-it-all, apathetic, overly accommodating, clowning, etc.). Maintain your awareness of the fact that your students' selves are not their compensation strategies. Moreover, avoid the trap of assuming that the existing dysfunctional group dynamics (e.g., Social Darwinism, casual abuse, drama, obsession with “their thing,” etc) are natural. They may be normal, but they are not natural.

Chapter Reflection 15-g: Some readers may be wondering what is meant by making a distinction between natural and normal. Natural is what is possible and feels the most true to our nature. Normal is what happens by accidental conditioning. If we do nothing toward achieving the natural, we will get normal. Normal is characterized to a great extent by dysfunction. Natural is what we fundamentally need. We can test this assumption later when we have helped the group develop into a community. After we have helped them move from normal to natural, we can ask them if they would rather go back to the way that they were, or ask them if they prefer the climate in this class versus ones in which they need to raise their defenses to survive the threatening and chaotic environment.

In Stage One in the process of community development there must be an intentional effort to: 1) create emotional safety, 2) promote the individual membership and identity of each student, 3) cultivate social bonds and a sense of fairness, and 4) make a connection with each student.

Emotional Safety and Intolerance of Put-Downs and Destructive Language.

Research has shown that verbal abuse and bullying has increased in the past decade (DeVoe, 2003). In nearly every school, including those considered the safest and most affluent, we find that students accept verbal abuse as a normal part of their experience during the school day (Shindler, Jones, Taylor, Cadenas, 2003). While it may be common it is extremely harmful. We have all experienced the deadening effect it has to the quality of life in a school.

This is an area where students need us to be absolute. In our role of classroom leader we need to be absolutely intolerant of put-downs, verbal abuse, name calling, and bullying. If not, students will not feel safe. They need to see real enthusiasm for those things that you regard as unconditional. If there are acts of abusive speech or action, give consequences that send the message, “there will never be a time when put-downs are okay.”

It may be helpful to create an expectation in the class that “we only say things that make us better.” We can call this anything that we like (e.g., life-giving language, positive language, constructive language, affirming language, etc.). It will be a good place to use a mantra such as

“In this class we only use affirming language.” Students will come to know that no matter what they hear when they are outside the walls of class, within our walls they are safe from abuse.

Chapter Reflection 15-h: Reflect on the not unusual experience of a new teacher, teaching high school English. Her goal is to create a student-centered class. As part of this she asked her students to share their writing with one another to foster a community of authors. After two months, she was a little disappointed. While her students were sharing with her and accessing their inner creativity, they did not feel comfortable sharing their work with one another. What would you tell this teacher? At what stage of the community development process would you put this class?

Individual Value, Membership and Identity

Many students spend their time in school feeling misunderstood, alienated, and as though they have no value (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994; Wolk, 2002). They look to friends, sports, clubs, and even gangs to fill the void that results from unmet needs. Before our students can be expected to come out of their self-protective shell and consider the needs of others, they need to feel valued and that they are “someone” in the group.

In this early developmental period in class life, send the message that every student is important and valued. Every student needs to feel that they have a meaningful contribution to make. Some of the strategies that will support this goal include: 1) giving students roles and responsibilities, 2) finding out who the students are, and 3) beginning cooperative/collaborative activities as soon as possible.

- **Giving Students Roles and Responsibility.** As soon as possible, incorporate students into leadership roles. If an activity can be managed by a student, take yourself out of the role of leader, and hand it over to them as soon as they show that they are capable. But recall the freedom/responsibility frame when doing so. Leadership roles are for those who have demonstrated the maturity and commitment required. Developing the expectations for being a leader will require the same process as those for other expectations. The following pedagogical sequence may be helpful: teach; recognize positive examples; practice in a low threat situation; practice in a more intense situation; then recognize the value of demonstrating a high quality of the expectation (in this case the skill of being a good leader). Some teachers assign roles to all students. This can eliminate the sense that roles are for favorites. If you cannot find roles for all students, make sure that they know that all students will be rotated into a role eventually.

If you are having difficulty coming up with roles that students can take within your class it may be useful to simply ask yourself the question, “Would a student be capable of leading or managing ___ activity?” Good examples of situations that students are fully capable of leading are classroom routines, calendar activities, dismissals and recording simple data (i.e., milk counts, who has completed an activity, etc.). We typically underestimate the contribution students can make in helping the classroom run. For example, Jerome Freiberg (1999) has identified 40-plus developmentally appropriate jobs for students in the classroom. However, do not put students in situations that require them to make interpretations of value that effect other students’ grades, social standing or dignity.

- **Allow Students to Share their Story.** Each and every one of us has a unique story. No matter how shy, we still long for others to know us. We want to be more than just a name and a physical appearance. We each have interests and experiences and dreams.

There are many effective strategies for helping students share more of who they are with other members of the class. In primary grades it can be a powerful experience for students to write an Auto-Bio poem about themselves (example below) or create a self portrait (Alexander, Springer, & Persiani-Becker, 2006). For older students there are a number of ways they can put their mark on the room. We can have them create a personal collage or have them write a paragraph about themselves as a caption to a drawing or photo of themselves.

Auto-Bio-Poem Activity		
One way to help student express who they are and allow other to get to know them is through the use of an Auto-Bio-Poem activity (Alexander, Springer, & Persiani-Becker, 2006). In this exercise student are asked to write an eleven line poem about themselves. The teacher should begin by setting the context and modeling their own Auto-Bio poem. Here is an example of one student's poem.		
<i>Line 1:</i>	Your first name	Sandra
<i>Line 2:</i>	Four descriptive traits	Honest, caring, curious, energetic
<i>Line 3:</i>	Sibling of...	Sister of Graciela
<i>Line 4:</i>	Lover of (people, ideas)	Laughter, learning, challenge
<i>Line 5:</i>	Who feels...	Joy when playing with my friends
<i>Line 6:</i>	Who needs...	To laugh and sing
<i>Line 7:</i>	Who gives...	Friendship, encouragement, and smiles
<i>Line 8:</i>	Who fears...	Teenagers, getting in trouble, mean dogs.
<i>Line 9:</i>	Who would like to see...	Peace on Earth
<i>Line 10:</i>	Resident of (your city)	Los Angeles
<i>Line 11:</i>	Your last name	Sanchez

It is also effective to find ways that students can self-express. Look for ways that their work can be displayed and published. It sends the message that you care, they matter, and that the purpose of the class is not simply to fulfill State standards but to grow as a community of learners.

- **Begin Cooperative Activities as Soon as Possible.** In the first day or two, have the students work in groups or teams. These kinds of activities set the tone of the class and make the statement that “we are going to work together, let’s get used to it” (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). The internet is filled with examples of cooperative games and activities. Most are excellent, but be a selective consumer. Make sure that the activities you choose have no “winner,” are low threat, and can be performed by students of any ability level. Examples of first week cooperative activities that have been effective include: scavenger hunts, group foil sculpture, cooperative relays, creating a class logo in groups, capture the flag, or parachute activities. Recall the discussion of cooperative learning. It will work best not expect students to perform a new skill (i.e., how to work in a team) and be responsible for processing new important content at the same time. Also, recall that the social contract development process (described in Chapter 8), if done cooperatively, can contribute to the goal of promoting group cohesion as well.

Chapter Reflection 15-i: Reflect on situations in which you were part of a group who were unfamiliar to one another. There was no change; the members of the group remained anonymous to one another. How much connection did you feel? How much incentive did you feel to express yourself? Now compare that to groups where you were asked to contribute or share personal information. Did you feel more connected to the members of those groups after learning more about who they were?

Cultivating Social Bonds and a Sense of Fairness

Before students buy into the idea of the collective, they need to feel that the collective is safe. The class must be a predictable and fair place. Students need to feel that we are consistent and honest in implementing the social contract, before they will be willing to work for the common good. If students perceive us to have “favorites” or “lost causes,” they will not trust us as a leader. Moreover, if students feel that we are not interested in or competent enough to manage the social contract, they will lose respect for us and our vision. When the students can say to themselves, “this teacher has it together, they are fair and consistent, and they get results,” they will be ready to buy into the potential of the collective. If not, we will never get off the ground floor in our efforts toward community.

Connection with the Teacher

A community requires caring leadership. To be an effective leader, we do not need to be charismatic or dynamic, we simply need to be conspicuously interested in our students’ welfare. For younger students this is especially important. Some of the ways that we show care include:

- Getting to know our students’ names and using them
- Asking students about outside school interests and activities
- Keeping an open door for students who want to talk
- Being “present” and attentive when we have conversations with students
- Keeping positive recognitions public and negative recognitions private
- Eliminating all sarcasm, shaming, teasing, or embarrassment

Students need to know that we are on their side. Weeks of relationship building can be destroyed by one act of perceived cruelty. For example, the simple act of making fun of one student to other students can seem harmless to us, but can have the effect of making us an unsafe person to that student. Even if we think they should be “able to take it,” any humor that causes pain is not safe or justifiable. Avoid victimizing humor, e.g., sarcasm, teasing, making fun of others, comical put-downs, etc. Instead, use humor that is safe. Being silly, self-deprecating, looking for irony, making puns and victimless practical jokes are typical forms of comedy that do not leave any scars.

It will be useful to model self-disclosure and self-expression. This needs to be done with care. We might start with safe sharing, for example, talking about our family, pets or hobbies. Then, increasingly take opportunities to share your appreciation for the level of effort students are showing in their work, or how much progress they are making toward being self-responsible. Finding opportunities to compliment students is powerful positive recognition and will add to the emotional bank account.

Concretizing the Concept “Community”

As we have discussed regarding our management goals, we need to make the concepts that define our behavioral goals as concrete and practical as possible. The same thing should occur when it comes to the definition of “community.” The members of the community need to be explicitly aware that becoming a community is an active goal. Few of our students will be able to

define community when they walk in on day one. We will need to undertake some form of intentional process for defining it. Initially we will need to create formal terms and language that define our concept of community. No matter how elegant our definition is, it is still abstract language. This abstract language will stay conceptual and academic until we make it meaningful (i.e., real, personal and material in the students' experience). There are many ways that we can achieve this. They include:

- Teacher-student public recognitions (Chapter 4)
- Self-assessment of process and participation (Chapter 20)
- Student-student positive recognitions (debriefing, Chs. 4 and 12)
- Concept attainment exercise on sub-terms for community

Another method for making our community themes more concrete is to focus on them in depth one at a time. This idea is explained in detail in the book *Tribes: A New Way of Learning and Being Together* by Jennie Gibbs (1995). In this system, the teacher or school as a whole selects one of the defining characteristics of community that has been decided upon. For example, if we determined that community is made up of the sub-factors of *respect, responsibility, listening, cooperation, service, and effort*, we would select one of them to use as a theme for the month. The term is integrated into the curriculum or serves as the focus of our recognition of positive behavior, class discussions and student-student public recognitions. Each month (or week if our group is fast to pick up the idea) we could introduce another term. Figure 15.3 depicts some example of how themes could be displayed in chart form.

Figure 15.3: Examples of Community Themes

Concept: Listening

Looks Like	Sounds like	Feels Like
Eyes on speaker Following directions Et cetera	One at a time Encouragement Et cetera	A culture of listening We care We want to learn Et cetera

Concept: Cooperation

Looks Like	Sounds like	Feels Like
Taking turns Sharing Et cetera	Conflict being resolved Students on task Creativity at work Et cetera	We are part of a team Everyone is necessary We've got "flow" Et cetera

Concept: Responsibility

Looks Like	Sounds like	Feels Like
Doing our job Being effective in my group role Being accountable to the social contract Et cetera	Asking when we don't understand No excuses, no whining Et cetera	We are mature We can do it ourselves We trust each other Et cetera