

Let's Re-Examine the Tradition of Morning Circle Time

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Consider this...

Communication is not me asking you a question I already know the answer to. (That's testing) Communication is you telling me something I didn't know you were going to say.

Erin Sheldon
Mom of Maggie

Traditional Morning Circle

- Months of the year
- Days of the week
- Weather
- Counting
- Why do we do this?
 - Kids need this to be able to pass assessments (PASA, local assessments, etc).
 - We've always done this.
 - This is part of our daily routine. Routines are important for our students.

Reconsidering Morning Circle

- Encouraging opportunities for communication
 - Encouraging interaction between peers
 - Building belonging in a classroom community
 - Routine to start the day
- Why do we do this?
 - It's an easy, ready-made for communication.
 - We want more interaction between students themselves-not just student to teacher.
 - We want the students to recognize they are a part of a community and every student is important.
 - Routines will help them to build their knowledge of a schedule (i.e. our personal appointments)

Video

How Can We Create This Kind of a Morning Meeting Too?

What are our challenges?

- Students who are non-speaking.
- Students who are not independently mobile.
- Students who appear inattentive or easily distractible.
- Students with very varied abilities.
- Multiple adults in the classroom.
- Time constraints.
- Collaborating with the whole team.

Students who are non-speaking

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>What</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What form of AAC is each student using? • Core vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify target core words • Communication opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements • Comments • Interruptions, etc | <p>How</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeling AAC systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No tech, mid tech, high tech • Partner assisted scanning on manual boards/books • Pause/wait time • Reduce question asking |
|--|---|

Modeling AAC Systems

- Model different forms
 - everyone uses a language board,
 - everyone uses eye gaze,
 - everyone uses high tech speech generating device
 - Everyone needs AAC all the time
- Modeling AAC with Greeting
 - Bring back the JOY-Make it FUN
 - Make up lists of fun greetings with the students that could be available
 - Expect the student to say hello to the person next to them
- Include sharing time with information from parents

Creative "How's" of AAC

- Start with 1-2 days a week everyone uses AAC
 - Start off with using AAC for just the greeting. Do that for a period of time.
 - Expand the use of AAC using it with the greeting and the sharing. Do that for a period of time
- Video morning meetings
 - Used for reviews with students
 - Sharing with other students
 - Sharing with parents
 - Sharing with other adults who were not in the room
 - Find a way for the student to be the videographer
 - A great observation tool for adult interaction

Students who are not independently mobile.

- Look at them out of their chair OR change of position in their chair.
- Use walkers as dynamic standers.
- Use standers with everyone standing.
- OT/PT come in and help with varying positions and varied equipment.
- Alter positions of the paraprofessionals
 - Beside students
 - Behind students
 - Near students

More "How's" to consider

- Students only day
 - Teacher facilitates
 - ONLY students participate
 - Paras sit behind students
- Everybody day
 - Teacher facilitates
 - Students and paraeducators participate
 - Paras sit next to their students

Student/equipment example pictures

Students who appear inattentive or easily distractible.

- **Family Involvement**
 - 4-5 questions that students can talk about during morning meeting.
 - What the family did over weekend?
 - Family favorite TV shows/food/games/activities
 - Family plans
- **Environmental arrangement**
 - Where in the room is morning meeting happening?
 - How does the student get there?
 - What position is the student's body in?
- **Time**
 - Whole time needs to be shorter
 - Provide enough time for processing information and responding

Students with very varied abilities.

- Everyone using the same method of AAC.
- Working in small groups.
- **Time**
 - Shorter group
 - Allow time for processing
- **Seating positions near each other**
 - Communication interaction occurs more easily when students are at similar eye levels.
- OT/PT/SLP can join morning meeting to help bridge the gap(s).

Small Groups

Morning Circle Group

- Small group
- Establish sense of emotional safety in the context of establishing classroom community.

Calendar Group

- Individual or small group
- Skills that can be taught individually or 1:1
 - Calendar skills
 - Counting
 - Colors

Where can you start when you leave today?

- Look at morning meeting time with new eyes.
- Concentrate on changing the greeting.
- Look for changing the structure of the whole morning meeting gradually.
 - Change one thing at a time. Reflect and modify.
- Look at Responsive Classroom Model
- Contact Karen and/or Nora

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Thank you for your time and attention!
Have Fun!

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