

# **Workshop 2.**

## **Setting the Stage: Creating a Learning Community**

At the heart of inquiry teaching and learning is a positive environment that encourages and supports students on their learning paths. This program looks at what is needed for building that foundation and preparing your students for inquiry investigations.

# On-Site Activities and Timeline

## Getting Ready

30 minutes

### Discussion (20 minutes)

What does your science class look like? Group yourselves in pairs by grade level: K-2, 3-5, 6-8. Share your logs of your observations of the activities you and your students were doing in science during the week. What did you find out about the interactions between you and your students? What was the nature of their social interaction? What did you do? What opportunities were there for engaging in inquiry?

### Focus for Viewing (10 minutes)

Reconvene as a group to prepare for today's session. This workshop focuses on the culture of your science classroom, and ways to develop a community of learners. Describe the characteristics of a classroom environment that would support inquiry teaching and learning. Make a list on a flip chart of what you'd expect to see in a classroom in which students are part of a "community of learning."

## Watch the Workshop Video

60 minutes

### Video Pause Point

Discuss Chris Collier's classroom environment.

- What were some of the ways Chris facilitated a positive learning environment?
- How does a positive classroom environment foster inquiry learning?

## Going Further

30 minutes

### Discussion (10 minutes)

In pairs by grade level (K-2, 3-5, 6-8), discuss your reactions to the program. Jot down questions or observations you have for future discussion.

### Discussion (20 minutes)

In pairs by grade level (K-2, 3-5, 6-8), discuss the learning environment you saw in the videos. Then describe the learning environment in your classrooms. What might you do differently to develop a learning community? How might you incorporate some of the strategies suggested in the panel discussions? Identify something in context of what your students are already doing that you can change in order to develop your classroom community. Make a list of things you could try. Think of new ways of grouping students and encouraging their communication and social skills.

# For Next Time

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## Homework Assignment

Keep up your journal. During the week, reflect on your practice and think about small steps you can take to develop a supportive learning environment. How can you provide opportunities in which students can begin to take more responsibility for their own learning? Try something new that is child-centered, and describe what happens in your journal.

Use these guidelines (developed by Lisa M. Nyberg, Ph.D., California State University, Fresno) to help you:

- During your discussions, encourage children to share personal experiences or personal connections to the topic. Value and build upon student input.
- When students are solving a problem, celebrate the diversity of strategies they use. Accept and share their different ways of finding answers.

## Reading Assignment

You will find the following assignment in the Appendix of this guide (pages A-28 through A-35), or you can find it at [http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2000/nsf99148/ch\\_8.htm](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2000/nsf99148/ch_8.htm).

- **Setting the Stage for Inquiry**, by Doris Ash

## Find Out More

Go to [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/inquiry](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/inquiry) and click on **Find Out More** for a list of monographs, essays, articles, and books that further explore the topics from this workshop.

# Notes

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