Classroom Greetings: More than a Simple Hello

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A B S T R A C T

In classrooms, the act of saying hello - the ritual of shaking hands or hugging, and taking the time to exchange information – can enact relational values of "We"-ness, of belonging. In this paper we highlight how one second grade teacher's personalized and consistent use of greetings, and apprenticeship of students into how to greet and be greeted, functions to build community and involvement. Data are part of a two-year case study of a second-grade classroom in a diverse urban US context. This study examines approximately 16 weeks of classroom greeting data collected from Morning Meetings (10 hours, 39 minutes) and then homes in on 5 minutes across one day for a close look at the apprenticeship into, and roles of, being a greeter. Analysis explicates how greetings are used in different ways across time and how they work together to build classroom community togetherness. We argue that classroom greetings are a partial marker of dialogic pedagogy.

Keywords: classroom greetings; morning meeting, dialogic education; elementary classrooms

A R T I C L E   H I S T O R Y

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Introduction

Classroom greetings offer more than a simple hello. It can welcome students "in" and signal that they matter. A greeting says, "I see you, I welcome you, and I want to know more about you". The act of saying hello, the ritual of shaking hands or hugging, and taking the time to exchange information enacts relational values of "We"-ness, of belonging (Boyd, Edmiston, Vasquez, Staples, 2020). Greetings promote socio-emotional well-being. When students greet another student or visitor, they are saying "I see you and recognize you" – and they signal a welcome to the opportunity for dialogue. As collaborative social practices, greetings build and nurture community. Awareness of our need for community and the power of an inclusive greeting is highlighted at the time of writing up this paper: all co-authors are in lock-down because of the coronavirus pandemic.

To be sure, classroom greetings are only *one* of the many things that teachers do to establish and nurture a classroom community where students can work together, thrive and care for each other (Noddings, 2006). In this paper, we highlight how one second grade teacher's personalized and consistent use of greetings functions to build community, promote care, and inclusion. Data are from our two-year ethnographic case study of a second-grade classroom in a diverse urban US context. In a previous paper we presented a year-long cumulative whole class handshake greeting as a socio-epistemic-embodied-community building practice (Boyd, Jarmark, Edmiston, 2018). In this paper, we take a broad look at types of whole class greetings during Morning Meeting, of salutations on morning message large print charts, and at the job of the greeter in this classroom community. We show how this teacher apprentices her students into the value of greeting and of being greeted. We argue that greetings contribute to classroom conditions where students feel welcomed, safe, included and supported; and that this sense of well-being encourages students to engage productively in classroom activities. We further argue that this teacher's promotion of classroom greetings is wholly consistent with dialogic education and we posit classroom greetings as partial markers of discourse conditions where students know that they are seen and that their voice is valued and welcomed (Boyd & Markarian, 2011; Segal & Lefstein, 2016).

Our research question asks: What roles do classroom greetings play in this second-grade classroom community?

Literature Review

Gee (2011, p. 30, italics added) articulates how "language-in-use is a tool, not just for *doing things*, but also, used alongside other non-verbal tools, *to build things* in the world." We argue that to greet and be greeted can build classroom community. Greetings welcome us in and acknowledge "I see you." They can be verbal (such as Good Morning), and/or physical (such as a High Five). Whether they are speedy or elaborated expressions, greetings are phatic communion (Malinowski, 1921/1994) and the illocutionary force of a greeting (the intended force or effect) performs an important social function for community. Greetings manifest the social glue that binds us (Kadhim Jibreen, 2010). They are an emotional connection with trust.

Hymes (1994, p.16) reminds us that a greeting is a speech act with three stages: acknowledgement, ritual, and exchange of information. We detail these stages in Table 1 following and provide examples from our data.

Table 1
Stages of, and Exemplification for, a Greeting as a Speech Act

Stages		Examples	CLASSROOM DATA
1.	Acknowledgement	Good Morning, Hi	"Good morning or good afternoon. My name is…" (9th Sept., 2003, Turn 9)
2.	Ritual	Shaking hands, hugging	"The first thing we do is we shake hands." (9th Sept., 2003, Turn 7)
3.	Exchange of info	How are you doing?	"And we think about what we are doing, and we share with them what we are doing. Any other thing you could say to make them feel welcome, and let them know what's going on in the classroom." (9th Sept., 2003, Turn 11)

All teachers, but elementary teachers in particular, spend considerable time building classroom communities that are supportive of students' social, emotional, physical and academic needs. Noddings reminds us that in a caring community, "In an encounter, the carer is attentive; she or he listens, observes, and is receptive to the expressed needs of the cared for" (2012, p. 53). In a supportive classroom community, the teacher models how to show care, and encourages students to care for each other. Classroom members see and listen to one another. Edmiston (2014) reminds us of the socio-emotional and academic values of community-building actions as students nurture a "We"-ness disposition to learning together. Indeed, proponents of dialogic education validate collaborative learning and the acts of listening, of including, of showing a genuine and honest interest in each other's lives, and of respectfully reasoning together in ways that allow for dialogic space (see, for example, Aukerman, 2007; Boyd, Tynan, & Potteiger, 2018; Boyd & Janicki-Gechoff, 2020; Segal & Lefstein 2016; Wegerif, 2016). In this paper, we argue that the practice of, and apprenticeship into, greeting and being greeted is a partial marker of dialogic pedagogy in this second-grade classroom.

A classroom greeting is an essential part of a Responsive Classroom and of Morning Meeting. Our data were gathered from Morning Meeting time in a second-grade Responsive Classroom.

Morning Meeting begins "with students and teachers greeting one another by name. Varying the greetings…some simple and straightforward, others more complex" (Kriete, 2003, p. 68). Verbal greetings, high-fives, handshakes, song greetings (Bechtel, 2004; Boyd & Smyntek-Gworek, 2012; Boyd et al., 2020; Kriete, 2003) are practiced as students rehearse "appropriate body space, clear and audible verbalizations, friendly touch (in high fives and handshakes), and eye contact" (Bruce, Fasy, Gulick, Jones, & Pike, 2006, p. 10). Beyond the procedural of learning each other's names, greetings nurture a relational warmth and sense of belonging engendered through a peer's greeting. When students hear their own name, there is also a sense of individual importance (Bruce et al, 2006). In addition, morning message salutations (such as Dear Poets, and Dear Problem-solvers) remind students of, and position students with, identities that are promoted and valued in their classroom community. In such inclusive and supportive classroom conditions students are encouraged to listen and share (Boyd & Kneller, 2008; Gardner, 2012).

In Responsive Classrooms, the social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum as social growth supports cognitive development and social skills help students succeed academically and socially. "Process and content are seen as interdependent" (Stearns, 2016, p. 330). Morning Meeting, with its required whole group greetings, is one of the five elementary practices that are vital to Responsive Classroom communities. The others are establishing rules, energizers, quiet time, and closing circle and together these practices are intended to "create safe, joyful, and engaging classrooms and school communities" ("Principals & Practices," 2020). Indeed, it could be argued that these practices ensure a teacher *takes time* "to establish an environment that will

help students feel as though they are important members of your learning community and that you respect the funds of knowledge that they bring to school" (McGlynn & Kelly, 2018, p. 17).

To be sure, greetings help maintain the emotionally supportive classroom relationships that cultivate and sustain thriving classroom communities.

Methods

To understand greetings and the values they bring to a classroom community, our analysis unpacks their uses and patterning across time (Mercer, 2008). We then focus on the role of the classroom greeter and elucidate how personalized and consistent use of communal greetings contributes to classroom community.

This study takes place at a charter school in a rust belt city in the northeast U.S.A. In this school district students speak over 40 languages, and graduation rates are at 64% (class of 2017 according to the local Newspaper). All schools in this urban district qualify for free and reduced lunch based on the population of students living in poverty. Students enroll in this school through a lottery system which randomly selects applicants to fill seats in the school. The school follows the Responsive Classroom Approach where "adults nurture a sense of belonging, significant, and emotional safety so that students feel comfortable taking risks and working with a variety of peers" ("Principals & Practices," 2020). To support this approach, the school cultivates CARES values (Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control) school-wide. Particular classroom communities take CARES up and integrate them across interdisciplinary areas (eg: Math, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies). Embedded in Morning Meeting are routines and expectations (e.g.: a "greeting, sharing, group activity, and morning message") that focus on building a community that welcomes all students. This paper focuses on classroom greetings during Morning Meeting.

In our focal second-grade classroom community there are 25 seven and eight-year olds, the teacher Rachele, a teacher aide, and push-in and pull-out supports for Math, English Language Arts, and English Language Learning. Rachele holds a master's degree in education and had been teaching for 10 years. All names of participants are pseudonyms, except for the teacher.

Data collection

This greetings study is part of a two year (2012-2013) ethnographic case study in an urban second-grade classroom community. The data bank included more than 140 hours of classroom interactions and included: field notes; lesson plans; transcripts of classroom audio and video recordings and teacher and student interviews; and photographs and classroom artifacts. For this study we examine selected data: 1) approximately 16 weeks of classroom greeting data collected from Morning Meetings (8th April – 4th October, 2013, 10 hours, 39 minutes). These data were selected because it was the most complete and continuing period of morning meeting data collected; and 2) 18 minutes across one day (9th September, 2013) selected to provide a close look at the apprenticeship into and role of a greeter. Greetings data included lesson plans; videos and transcripts involving greetings during Morning Meeting, and across the day interactions involving the greeter; and photos of morning messages (noting their varied salutations such as Dear Poets, Dear Mathematicians).

Data analysis

Data analysis occurs on two levels. For both levels of analysis, we [re]viewed videos and transcripts and generated analytic memos (for example, compiling chart with types of Morning Meeting greetings and dates and tallying frequencies across time).

Level 1: Morning message salutations and Morning Meeting greetings

We consulted with lesson plans, videos, transcripts and photos to identify the types of salutations and greetings during Morning Meeting. We tallied and defined greetings according to video transcripts and triangulated with teacher interviews. We tallied how students were greeted in morning messages. We identified classroom greeting talk in terms of aspects of a speech act and categorized greetings in terms of their forms and functions.

We imposed categories for the Morning message salutations and the Morning Meeting greetings. The first two authors coded each salutation and greeting together; some greetings were double coded.

Level 2: The class greeter

The full data bank of transcripts was examined to locate talk involving the greeter. We noted ways teacher talk explicitly apprenticed the greeter into job responsibilities and ways the greeter articulated the why and what of their responsibilities. We also noted places where the teacher and students placed value on welcoming others into their classroom community. A transcript for 19th September was selected for close discourse analysis because on this day Rachele reviewed the roles and responsibilities of classroom jobs, and students acted out the roles of greeter.

Findings

A greeting is an always-present, caring practice of Morning Meeting in this classroom community. As Rachele puts it: "Through the greeting, every student is welcomed by name, and seen and smiled at" (Rachele email communication, 1st April, 2014).

Level 1: Morning message salutations and Morning Meeting greetings

Greetings occurred twice every Morning Meeting. First in morning message (a written salutation) and then through one of many different types of group greetings during Morning Meeting. We tallied and detailed these different greetings and showed how they involved differing amounts of time and communal interactions.

Morning Message Salutations

Each morning, the first thing these seven-and eight-year-olds saw when they walked into this second-grade classroom community was a morning message written on large print chart paper. The morning message both welcomed students into their school day and informed them of some of what would happen. We home in here on the personalized salutation that opens the morning message and details how it positioned students in particular, positive and timely ways. For example, "Hello Poets" welcomed students as poets when they were studying a poetry unit, and

"Dear Cooperating Kids" welcomed and reminded student to work together. Our data included morning message salutations for 59 school days and we categorized them in three ways.

- *Positioning students as experts of some kind:* Salutations such as "Dear Poets" and "Dear Fossil Hunters" connected to the curriculum and what students would be doing that day.

- *Indicating time in some way:* Some salutations were more generic and noted the likes of time of day ("Good Morning") or day of week (e.g. "Happy Friday");

- *Evoking community values:* These salutations promoted identities of friendship (e.g. "Dear Friends" and "¡Hola! Mis Amigos"), curiosity ("Dear Curious Cats"), cooperation ("Dear Cooperative kids") and self-regulation ("Dear Self Managers").

Because some salutations straddled two categories, we allowed for double coding. For example, "Happy Buddy day" was coded as both *indicating time in some way* (Buddy day occurs every Thursday when these second graders worked with their kindergarten buddies) and *evoking community values* (identities of friendship with kindergarten buddies). In similar fashion "Good Morning Friends" was coded as time (although more generically so) and community value of friendship. Five (5) salutations straddled two categories (indicated as such with an asterisk in Table 2). Thus, a total of 66 codings are represented in Table 2.

Table 2
Morning Message salutations

Salutations in 59 Morning Messages * = a coding for two categories	Dates	Frequency
Indicating time in some way		
1 "Happy Friday"	26th April, 24th May, 7th June, 14th June, 6th Sept., 13th Sept., 20th Sept. 27th Sept., 4th Oct.	9
2 "Good Morning!"	17th April, 24th April, 8th May, 22nd May, 28th May, 6th June, 12th June	7
3 "Happy Monday!"	15th April, 22nd April, 29th April, 13th May	4
4 "Good Morning Friends"*	5th Sept., 24th Sept.	2
5 "Good morning writers"*	20th May, 17th Sept.	2
6 "Good morning poets!"	11th April, 16th April	2
7 "Good morning inventors!" *	1st May	1
8 "Happy Birthday Mia!!"*	30th May	1
9 "Dear Spring Bunnies"	8th April	1
10 "Good Morning Almost 3rd Graders"	11th June	1
11 "Happy Thursday"	9th May	1
12 "Happy Wednesday!"	29th May	1
SUBTOTAL codings)		32 (6 double
Positioning as experts		
"Dear Friends"	25th April, 2nd May, 16th May, 20th June, 9th Sept., 10th Sept., 11th Sept., 26th Sept., 1st Oct., 3rd Oct.	10

	"Dear Writers"	14th May, 19th June, 12th Sept.	3
	"Dear Mathmeticians" [sic]	15th May, 18th Sept.	2
	"Good morning writers"*	20th May, 17th Sept.	2
	"Dear Artists"	18th April	1
	"Dear Farm Explorers"	30th Sept.	1
	"Dear Fossil Hunters"	3rd May	1
	"Dear Frogs and Toads"	19th Sept.	1
	"Dear Inventors"	30th April	1
	"Dear Poets"	10th April	1
	"Dear Self Managers"*	2nd Oct.	1
	"Good morning inventors!" *	1st May	1
	"Hello poets"	23rd April	1
	SUBTOTAL codings)		26 (4 double
Evoking community values			
26	"Good Morning Friends"*	5th Sept., 24th Sept.	2
27	"Dear Cooperating Kids"	25th Sept.	1
28	"Dear Curious Cats"	21st May	1
29	"Dear Self Managers"*	2nd Oct.	1
30	"Happy Birthday Mia!!"*	30th May	1
31	"Happy Buddy Day!"	23rd May	1
32	"¡Hola! Mis Amigos"	17th May	1
	SUBTOTAL codings)		8 (4 double
	TOTAL occurrences		66

For Morning Messages our data documented that across 59 days (66 tallies because of double-coding) this second-grade teacher greeted her students using 27 different personal salutations for morning message. As Table 2 reports, particular salutations were more represented. In the category *indicating time in some way*, "Happy Friday" and "Good Morning" were more represented than the other ten salutations combined. In the *positioning as experts* category, "Dear Friends" was more frequent. (We coded "Dear Friends" under expert category and "Good Morning Friends" as evoking community values category but recognize overlap.) Under the *evoking community values* category, frequency was pretty evenly divided across the seven salutations.

Morning Meeting Greetings

Greetings were an integral part of Morning Meeting. Time was taken every morning so greetings would become what her students did routinely, and that they would be expected from each other. Rachele took time and provided explicit instruction so that every greeting included three components: acknowledgement (usually the saying of another's name with eye contact), ritual (some type of handshake or connecting move), and exchange of information (this varies from Say Your Name to What's the News sharing). As Rachele put it: greetings created "… a connection they have with each other." (Rachele's Interview 11th March, 2013). Rachele articulated the value orientation of greetings. Greetings are "about checking on your friends, help people who are crying, noticing others, forgiving others, and fixing our mistakes. That's about greeting everyone and treating everyone like family" (Rachele, 3rd October, 2013).

During Morning Meetings these seven and eight-year olds participated in eleven different types of greetings that were repeated across 46 days. Some greetings involved just talk (for example, "Whip Greeting"), some talk and movement (for example, "Ball Greeting Game"), some were silly (for example, "Say Your Name/Silly Voice"), and some were newsy (for example, "What's the News"). All but one of these types of greetings included acknowledgement, ritual, and a brief or elaborated exchange of information. (The Class Handshake did not include saying of student name). Brief exchanges of information were quick, under a few seconds, and required the student to say a few words. Elaborated exchanges of information produced a lengthier response such as sharing multiple verbal responses as seen in "What's the News" or demonstrating many movements as seen in the "Class Handshake".

Table 3
Definitions and frequency for Morning Meeting greetings

Greetings for 46 days of Morning Meetings	8th April, 2013 – 4th October, 2013	Frequency	Time taken
Silly/fun verbal greetings, students always named their partner & made eye contact			
1 Say Your Name / Silly Voice *Students greet each other (the person sitting beside them in morning circle) by name using a silly voice.*	10th Sept., 19th Sept., 1st Oct.	3	Brief
2 Chicken Greeting *Students greet each other (the person sitting beside them in morning circle) by making the sound of a chicken and then saying the student's name.*	8th May	1	
3 Ikititty Bikitty Bumble Bee *Students repeat a short chant about Ikittty Bikitty Bumble Bee as students say their name.*	3rd Oct.	1	
4 Whip Greeting *Students greet each other by name (the person sitting beside them in morning circle) as fast as they can, allowing the greeting to whip around the Morning Meeting Circle.*	20th Sept.	1	
SUBTOTAL		6	
Verbal and movement greetings, students always named their partner & made eye contact			
5 Ball Greeting Game *Students select a person in the room to greet by name, make eye contact with one another and toss a ball to the person they named. The person then sits down and this continues until*	12th Sept., 17th Sept., 24th Sept., 30th Sept.	4	Brief

	everyone is greeted.		
6	Toe Elbow Thumb Partners *Students participate in 3 short greetings. Students find and greet their toe partner by having the partners' toes touch, then repeat it with their elbow partner, having the partners' elbows touch, and then their thumb partners, having their thumbs touch.*	22nd May, 12th June, 19th June	3
7	Spider Web *Students greet each other by saying their name and good morning (a person sitting across from them in morning circle) and then toss a ball of yarn. Students hold onto the yarn piece they receive to create a web.*	8th April	1
8	Skip Count Greeting *Students agree on a number to skip count around the Morning Meeting Circle. They use that number to skip that number of students, shake their hands, and greet them. The person that started the skip count switches place with the person they greeted and the skip counting and greeting continues until everyone has been greeted.*	5th Sept.	1
9	High Five Greeting *Students greet each other by giving each other a high five and saying good morning (and then their name),*	15th May	1
	SUBTOTAL		10

Telling about yourself greeting; but with rules: need to focus on one thing that happened over the weekend (if you don't know what to say, say what you had for breakfast), students always named their partner and made eye contact				
10	What's the News *Students greet and share something of interest to them with their classmates.*	15th April, 22nd April, 25th April, 26th April, 29th April, 13th May, 20th May, 6th Sept., 9th Sept., 13th Sept., 27th Sept., 4th Oct.	12	Elaborated
	SUBTOTAL		12	

Cumulative, socio-epistemic community building practice, no use of student names				
11	Class Handshake *Students greet each other and participate in a series of movements that they, as a class, have co-authored across time together.*	11th April, 18th April, 2nd May, 3rd May, 9th May, 16th May, 17th May, 23rd May, 24th May, 30th May, 6th June, 7th June, 14th June, 20th June, 11th Sept., 18th Sept., 25th Sept., 2nd Oct.	18	Elaborated
	SUBTOTAL		18	
	TOTAL		46 greetings	

Class Handshake Greeting: The most frequent (18/46) Morning Meeting greeting was the Class handshake. It was a regular Thursday greeting that started off with a single handshake and grew each week. It came to embody a shared history as students contributed and figured out how it would grow and "work[ed] together to do it, to make it work" (Teacher Rachele interview 11th March, 2013). As the class handshake was repeated, developed, and ritualized, *all* students contributed to the creation of an elaborated, socio-epistemic community-building practice that was both shaped by and responsive to each student's contribution (for more details see, Boyd, Jarmark, et al., 2018). The class handshake was characterized by much laughter, cooperation and collaboration: "when we do that class handshake, everybody does it, we all jump at the same time,

and we all turn at the same time, makes everybody feel connected with each other" (Rachele's Interview, 11th March, 2013).

What's the News Greeting: The second most frequent Morning Meeting greeting was "What's the News" (12/46). It occurred mostly on Mondays, following the weekend. This greeting expected an elaborated but focused telling about yourself - usually one thing that happened over the weekend. Students were expected to follow this rule: focus on one thing and if you don't know what to say, say what you had for breakfast. This greeting always included the students saying their name while making eye contact with their partner. It was an elaborated-individual practice, as students shared their own news.

In one sense, this greeting moved beyond "I see you" and "I recognize you" to "I know you and I am interested in you". *What's the News* addressed the whole child, both inside and outside of school. It closely embodied phatic communion in terms of sharing and being listened to:

> *"… every kid shares something. Sometimes only one kid shares, um, sometimes it's a turn and talk, so they can turn and talk for a minute about the weekend or -. Sometimes we do … share where they go around and share one word. There's many different ways we do that. But again, every voice is heard, and every child has chance to talk. They learn so much by talking and by listening to each other" (Rachele's Interview 11th March, 2013).*

Indeed, to encourage listening during "what's the news", teacher Rachele often pulled a lollipop stick (she had a set of lollipop sticks with the name of each child on one of the sticks) and invited someone in the class to remember what the child whose name was on the stick had shared.

Silly/Fun Verbal Greeting: This greeting included four examples: *Say Your Name/Silly Voice, Chicken Greeting, Whip Greeting,* and *Ikititty Bikitty Bumble Bee.* One of the four examples, *Say Your Name/Silly Voice*, occurred mostly at the beginning of the year with 3/46 occurrences. As indicated in the name of this greeting, students had to say their name in a silly or fun way. Students said their name while making eye contact with their peers. This greeting was quick and fun. Using these greetings demonstrated how Morning Meeting greetings could be brief and joyful but still they maintained that welcome in.

> *"This greeting is pretty fun [Say Your Name / Silly Voice]. Who agrees with me that this greeting can be funny? Remember that even when something is really funny, you can laugh about it but then come right back to the greeting" (19th September, 2013, opening turn of talk).*

Movement and Verbal Greeting

These greetings included some movement and an oral greeting. There were five examples of this greeting. The *Ball Greeting Game* (4/46, mostly the beginning of the school year) and the *Toe, Elbow, Thumb Partners* (3/46, mostly towards the end of the school year) were the two examples that occurred most. The greeting always included the students saying their name while making eye contact with whom they were performing the movement. Movement in these greetings was planned – Rachele felt it was important for these seven and eight-year-olds to not just sit for long periods but rather to be able to move. Indeed, Morning Meeting always included some form of movement and sometimes, as with this category, movement combined with the greeting. Rachele gives directions to her second graders in the following way:

> *"When you greet someone, you will look them in the eye, toss the ball underhand to that person. I would suggest that you greet them first and they greet back, and then toss the ball so they know it's coming. Okay? We're gonna go around the whole circle. Everyone's gonna be greeted with the ball. Once you're greeted, you sit down. And then we know you have been greeted. If you have played the ball greeting before, give me a thumbs up. Okay. And any questions or comments? Anything to add to my description?" (12th September, 2013, Turn of talk 3).*

Brief vs Elaborated Morning Meeting Greetings

The 46 Morning Meeting greetings can also be categorized in terms of brief and elaborated practices. Elaborated greetings (30/46) occurred twice as often as brief practices (16/46). The elaborated practices encouraged students to add to and contribute more to the greeting.

In the next section we focus on the class greeter and how these second graders were apprenticed into this class identity.

Level 2: The class greeter: Apprenticeship into responsibilities

Our close look at how this second-grade teacher apprenticed her students into the job of class greeter occurred during the third week of the school year. Teacher Rachele had been adding new student jobs each day and taking class time to explain what each job entailed and why each job was important. On our focal day, 19th September, 2013, Rachele returned to the role of class greeter (it had been introduced in week one) and spent five minutes of class time revisiting class greeter job responsibilities and why they were important. Following, we focus on these five minutes (8:31-8:36 am, Morning Meeting 19th September). First, teacher Rachele provided a clear explanation for what they would be doing and why.

> Rachele: I would like to share with you a little bit information about the classroom jobs. Friend, can you come and sit right here? We have been introducing jobs to you, and people have had jobs. But we haven't really discussed too many of the jobs. I just wanted to make sure everyone knew what the jobs were all about. Let's talk first about the greeter jobs.

Rachele then invited her second graders to ponder why people visited their school and their student role in welcoming *their* guests into *their* classroom. Rachele then had students role-play possible interactions they might have with visitors. We include the complete transcript and number the turns of talk from this point onwards.

1. Rachele: Do you know why people come to visit our school? A lot of people come to visit our school.

2. Student: Um, because it's an interesting place and they want to discover it and absorb it.

3. Rachele: I agree. That's exactly right. So when people come to visit our school, we need to make them feel welcome right? So one of the most important ways to do that is with our greeters. I heard people say that our school is unique in all of [*name of city*]. That when people come to visit they feel welcome. They feel that we are happy to see them. And our greeters have a very important job, because they help people feel welcome.

Having emphasized the importance of feeling welcomed and the importance of their class greeter – they are the gatekeepers, the greeters, and the historians before even stepping into the classroom with a guest - Rachele then had two students model what a good greeter does. The three steps that the two students outlined were in keeping with the class greetings these students

would practice all year with each other. They would shake the visitors' hand, welcome them into the classroom, and say their name and share what was happening in the classroom.

3. So what does the greeter do when guest comes to the door? What does the greeter do when there are two greeters? What does the greeter do, Imani?

4. Imani: Um one of, one of them **takes the person's hand** and then the other shakes the person's hand.

5. Rachele: Okay. The first thing we do is we **shake hands.**

6. Imani: Shake hands.

7. Rachele: When you shake the person's hand, what you **say** to them? Imani?

8. Imani: **Good morning.**

9. Rachele: **Good morning or good afternoon. My name is, and then you share your name**. Then what do you say to them? What can you say to make them feel welcome, Mary?

10. Mary: Um, **welcome to second grade, we are doing like Math.**

11. Rachele: And we think about what we are doing, and we share with them what we are doing. Any other thing you could say to make them feel welcome, and let them know what's going on in the classroom? Could you say "please come in"? Could you say "you are welcome to come in"? Could you say "we are glad that you are here"? Whatever you feel comfortable with to make these people feel welcome, it will be wonderful.

Rachele affirmed (turn 5, 9), prompted for clarification and elaboration (turn 3, 7, 9) and emphasized that this was not a scripted role but rather involved "whatever you feel comfortable with to make these people feel welcome" (turn 11).

Next Rachele had the current greeters (Brigida and Lincoln) model "this important job" (turn 11) with two students (Denzel and Antwan) acting as the guests.

11. Do we have somebody, who are our greeters this week? Brigida and Lincoln. Brigida and Lincoln, could we please have a demonstration of this important job? Okay. Denzel, you can be the guest. You can walk outside of the room. Denzel and Antwan, go right out of the door. Okay, so we are having a morning meeting. So when they come in, Brigida and Lincoln, think about what you are going to say to them. You're gonna have to walk over and greet to them. And speak loudly enough for us to hear you. Okay? So we are just watching, everybody turn your body so you can see. We are just having a morning meeting, maybe we are singing a song. We wish you well, we wish you well, okay, come in guys. [*Humming the class song "we wish you well" as Lincoln and Brigida get ready to demonstrate*].

12. Rachele: Okay, everyone silent. Our greeters have noticed they didn't need me to say anything. Let's watch.

Rachele involved the whole classroom community in this enactment. In fact, she moved the scene from the classroom door to the circle so everyone could view easily (turn 13). Then, while Brigida and Lincoln demonstrated the role of greeter, Rachele placed emphasis on their words and actions.

12. Rachele: Okay. Wait. Everybody stop for a moment. Let's move this whole thing…this whole thing to the middle of the circle. We will pretend that we are by the door. Okay so these two are here to visit our school, let's watch. Let's watch.
    <u>Brigida and Lincoln demonstrated how to be greeters in front of the class.</u>

13. Rachele: Who feels that this job requires, Elizabeth right here. Who feels this job requires little bit of bravery? Sometimes it's hard to introduce yourself to somebody that you don't know. But everybody. Antwan. Everybody in this room. Turn your eyes to me please. Turn your eyes to me please. Juana. Rodriguo. Everybody in this room will have the job throughout the year. So you need to practice.

Finally, Rachele acknowledged the bravery required to do this job well (turn 12). It was hard for anyone "to introduce yourself to somebody you don't know" but every one of these seven-and-eight-year olds would have the greeter job at some point throughout the year "so you need to practice".

This five-minute exchange illustrates how classroom time is taken to not just practice being a greeter but to underscore the dialogic value of greeting and being greeted. Rachele underscored that the job of greeter was hard work and assured students that they could perform it in a way that made them comfortable.

Discussion

> *[the label] Dialogic pedagogy should be reserved for instances in which the unfolding of classroom practice is guided by instruction that seeks to foment greater dialogism. In other words, dialogic pedagogy is enacted value orientation, that is, a purposive unfolding of language and action in which the teacher deliberately seeks to animate a dialogic pedagogical value (or set of values). (Aukerman & Boyd, 2019, p. 373)*

Aukerman and Boyd (2019) argue that examination of teacher moves and actions provide a potential index of pedagogical values. The teacher in this second grade classroom related to her students as human beings with feelings about and identities beyond the classroom, and she encouraged her students to see each other in the same way (Buber, 1950, I-thou relation: I really see and hear you, I engage with who you are and seek to understand it). Classroom greetings were one way that a classroom community of caring, of authentically relating, of "We"-ness, was cultivated. To greet and be greeted, to welcome members within their classroom community, and visitors into their classroom community, these were markers of a dialogic value orientation.

In this classroom community greetings were joyful, dynamic and robustly varied. *They were routine but not procedural.* Morning Messages were routinely included as part of classroom practice but the salutations in Rachele's classroom are personalized: local, timely identities (27 different salutations for 59 Morning Messages). Group greetings were routinely a part of Morning Meeting, and some associated with particular days (eg: What's the News on Mondays. Class Handshake on Thursdays). But across the year a repertoire of greetings was built and the teacher (or at times the student with the job of Morning Meeting helper) selected the greeting for the day according to preference or time availability or what students appeared to need (we documented 11 types of greetings across 46 Morning Meetings). Whether brief or elaborated, verbal or movement-oriented (or both), naming the person you were greeting and being named ensured you were seen and reminded each second grader that they were part of a great whole that cared for them. We

assert that in these classroom learning conditions seven and eight-year olds were likely more willing to muster the courage to not just welcome a guest into their classroom, but to grapple with academics that might be hard, to think out loud and to share ideas.

This is a second-grade classroom community with an ethos of care and involvement (Nystrand, 1997) and these seven and eight years olds were reminded of this on a daily and on-going basis.

Conclusion

So what are the theoretical and pedagogical implications for a study on greetings in a second grade classroom community? We offer two.

Dialogic pedagogy should we understood in terms of the deep characteristics of a classroom community; it cannot be understood in terms of a single practice or practices that are analyzed at the interactional level only. Dialogic pedagogy involves *interconnected* practices that are reciprocal, collective, and supportive in the moment, and purposeful and cumulative across time (see Alexander, 2008); it involves supportive classroom relations and dialogic value orientations. Classroom greetings are a partial marker of a dialogic value orientation. They nurture socio-emotional development, they cultivate an orientation of involvement and citizenship in the classroom community, and they bolster a safe and supportive learning environment.

We encourage teachers to take time for collaborative, caring, *personalized* social practices to actively cultivate inclusive thriving classroom communities. Teachers are critical in this matter. In this second-grade classroom community classroom greetings were routine but not procedural as, on a daily basis, students actively participated "co-constructing feeling, value and knowledge" (Bridley, Juzwik & Whitehurst, 2016, p.2) as they cultivated a dialogic relation with learning.

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