GK	Hello Christina! Time for our third session in the TALE academy. What is the topic today?
CLH	OK! So today is one of my favorite topics, it is Building Classroom Community, and as always it's with our twist, across learning environments.
GK	Of course it's across learning environments.
CLH	Yup. So alright Gina, if you ask any teacher or student what the most important thing that they took away from remote learning was, what do you think they'd say?
GK	I have a few thoughts about that, they might say, "I hate technology" or "Eating snacks anytime of the day is perfect", or I never thought that "you're on mute" would be a phrase I would come to hate.
CLH	Yes, I agree, all of those things. But I think the most resounding answer that you're probably going to hear is something like that all students and teachers and administrators, we all learned that we are nothing and we learn nothing without community and relationships.
GK	That's very beautiful and very true.
CLH	Yes, so in an interview from MIT Teaching and Learning Lab Professor Justin Wright, one teacher was quoted as saying, "I have to stop thinking of community building as one unit at the beginning that I rush through and start thinking about how community can play a much larger systemic role in my classroom".
GK	You know, I get that. Over the past couple of years, it has just become clearer and clearer what everyone involved wants, what we want, we want it back, we want it. That's to bring a level of humanity and connection to education that was just not sustainably emphasized or a priority in decades past. Like eating all of our vegetables or exercising 30 minutes a day. I mean, it's a good idea, but who has the time? So we all knew that taking the time to build a classroom community with intention and thoughtful planning was the ideal. And we all know that student achievement is significantly improved in positive school climates where there's trust, where there are relationships and there's identity acceptance right, but turning this knowledge into reality has not always been easy. Why do you think?
CLH	I mean, probably from experience, I can say teacher burnout, testing, and things are always changing in education, and I think that really prevents us from sort of establishing these foundations of classroom community as a priority.
GK	Time to change it!
CLH	Yes, I think so too and whenever we change something it's important to identify where we came from, where we are now and what we want to strive for.

GK	I couldn't agree more, pretty much the hallmarks of any lasting effective systemic change, knowing where you came from, where you are now and where you want to go.
CLH	Yep, okay so where were we before the pandemic I guess is the question. I think we always knew that building, fostering and sustaining classroom community is essential to the learning process and that students can't learn and we can't teach without establishing norms, relationships and this common understanding that we all deserve to be heard and seen and in our last podcast, we talked about these four constants across learning environments. Do you remember what they were?
GK	I super do. I know this! Predictability, flexibility, connection and student empowerment.
CLH	Yes, that's it.
GK	I love those, that was a great session and I can promise our listeners that those four constants across all the environments are going to come back later. So that's where we've been, and to highlight where we are now, through emergency remote teaching, we learned that these classroom communities are just as, if not more important across all learning environments. And that's just because we saw how many students and teachers were alienated in those remote learning environments, they didn't feel like they were part of a community. And consequently, we saw drops in achievement. So students who feel removed from this community are also more likely to incur behavioral stuff like suspension, lower grades, acting out. So we see a lot of negatives from disconnection from the social fabric.
CLH	Yeah and we definitely saw this more than ever during the emergency remote teaching, when sort of the whole country's sense of predictability and flexibility, connectedness and empowerment felt really dangerously at risk. And as a result, we as teachers we all found these ways to combat student feelings of separation by going above and beyond. I mean, I'm just going to give us all a pat on the back. We did these car parades, and we did sidewalk chalk art, we did care packages and google meets with funny cat ear filters. One time, I did it and I could not remember how to take it off, like I couldn't remember how to take the filter off and I just had to do the whole class like that.
GK	That's adorable, I remember reading these stories and watching these videos and being just totally overwhelmed by the amount of goodness there is in the world.
CLH	Yeah, I think that's definitely easy to forget sometimes.
GK	So what's next? Now that we've been through this whole scenario, where do we go next?
CLH	Alright, well now that we don't need to do those car parades and care packages and stuff, and now that we're living in this world that looks really different, after we all

	experienced this trauma, the question now becomes how do we take the empathy and the lessons that we learned from that time of crisis and use them to craft a place where all students, whether they're learning 5ft away from us, right in front of us or 5 towns away from us on Zoom, feel welcome, safe seen and heard. So I guess we're going to maybe explore how to apply the very best parts of pandemic teaching to education moving forward.
GK	Right, and we're going to identify 8 phases that typical instruction takes over the course of a lesson. So these 8 phases are part of any lesson, no matter where they take place, in person or remotely. And everybody who's a teacher will find these 8 phases of instruction to be familiar. They're the processes that we perform everyday in our classrooms. So we'll break them down a bit here and then give listener's the chance to explore some ways to integrate classroom community into each one of these phases. Was that extremely complicated?
CLH	No, I think that was actually extremely uncomplicated. Alright, so Phase One, Self care. There is the seat belt analogy, like you've got to put your seatbelt on first or your oxygen mask on first before you are able to put someone else's oxygen mask on. It really just means take care of yourself before you take care of other people because self care is the first and foremost of any plan in general, but definitely of any learning plan. So what are a couple of ideas for self care?
GK	In a classroom it might mean just taking one minute for quiet breathing during a particularly hectic lesson or the other side of it, breaking for a ten second dance party when you sense that things are feeling tense or people need a brain break and they just need to move those bones. So whatever the technique, modeling self care for your students shows them the importance of attending to our human needs, and how doing so will greatly improve everything that comes after. We have to walk our talk on self care, right in front of them.
CLH	Yup, and then next is setting the stage, do you want to take that one?
GK	OK, setting the stage, Phase Two. I find these 8 phases really kind of humorous because you would never write this down or think it, but there is a lot of truth to the 8 phases. So here we are, beginning the top of the lesson, we took care of ourselves and others, we're setting the stage. So let's think back to the teacher from Dr. Wright's MIT research, who realized that she needed to start thinking about how community can play a much larger, systemic role in her classroom, that it wasn't just a unit at the beginning of the year, some icebreaker games. Well she hit the nail on the head. We are bombarded everyday with lessons that need to be completed and academic issues that need to be addressed and often community building just doesn't make it into our precious 45 minutes, but it needs to.

	So when we develop a sustained, for example, class agreement or routines, or team building activities we're investing in having success that last through to June, so we can begin our lessons with a review of agreements or work through a routine that they do everyday or do a game, something that sets the stage, that warms up the space.
CLH	Alright so Phase Three is welcoming your learners and this is the phase where we sort of focus explicitly on creating this feeling of acceptance. Again, like you're saying Gina, these are not phases that we're writing down, they're just like, this is like a 2 seconds, right? The students are coming in and you're greeting them at the door, you're giving them a handshake, a high-five, or you're sending them a personal message in the chat, and it shows students that you see them as whole people. When we start with that connectedness and not just jump right into the content, it helps us to establish these positive feelings, those feel good feelings that allow the students to go ahead and take risks, be open and to engage.
GK	Now we are powering through these 8 phases of instruction. I have a feeling a college professor thought of that stuff but anyway, we're at phase four, warming up the think tank. Now we're starting to creep towards the meat potatoes of the lesson. In this phase, focus on engaging student inquiry through hands-on activities or entry games. So when you create an opening routine like a bell ringer, word scramble, sudoku, and you do that a lot, you do it often and they're able to practice and know what's coming, you establish that sense of predictability that builds student confidence and success. So here is where our listeners try to think of some types of activities that they start the day or lesson with that will allow students across all learning environments to interact with each other.
CLH	Right so this is really about, like you might already have bell ringers in the classroom but how do you make that portable so that it is also happening wherever students are learning. This is sort of like our engage section right. Like a pre-assessment but it's more interactive?
GK	Yeah, everyone's doing it, everybody's sort of touching base with what the theme is going to be, what are we doing today, gathering that collective place of 'What do we all know about this?' or 'What did that activity have to do with what we're doing next?' Just sort of getting everybody warmed up, and there are ways that are deeply explored in our resources where that can happen online as well as in person.
CLH	Alright, Phase Five, Connections during the lesson.
GK	Me me! Alright, at this stage we've taken our deep breaths, we've established routines, we've greeted our students, we've primed the pump all in the first five minutes or so. And I'm going to say we establish those routines outside of the list. Otherwise, wow, what a busy person we are. Now it's time to work with content. So whatever the subject, whatever the lesson, creating opportunities for interactions between students builds on the classroom community and the sense of connectedness that will foster a deeper understanding of the material.

	So we can do this through jigsaw activities, classroom discussions, structured discussions, think pair share's and through this, it's like a twofer, the students master not only concepts, but they are practicing embedded SEL relationship skills as well.
CLH	I love a good two for one. Alright, Phase Six, it's my favorite. It is Students Drive the Learning. Our good friend, Benjamin Franklin, Good old Benji on the $100 bill.

He said this quote: "Tell me and I will forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I will learn".

Did you also know that Benjamin Franklin was like the oldest man at the signing of the Declaration of Independence? |
| GK | I did know that. |
| CLH | OK, well, didn't teach you anything new. So the question we have to ask is, how do you involve your students in their own learning? What opportunities do they have to feel empowered?

After two years of having their choices taken away, this is a chance to give our students back some of that loss. When we teach them that what their learning matters to them, we're giving them agency, inspiration, self discipline so we can here think about how we'll help students drive the lessons that we're trying to teach them and we're actually going to look at some of those strategies in a later session. |
| GK | Very nice. All right, Phase Seven, closing time. Okay, now the lesson has come to an end, or towards the end, class is winding down and you could almost take a bathroom break. Closing activities are final, we opened our lesson, we should close our lesson. They're vital to the flow of the lesson and again, they build in that sense of predictability.

Investing time in reflection at the end of your lesson provides an opportunity for students to do a bunch of things. Assess their own understanding and understand their own performance and even reflect on relevance, right, how relevant it is to them. So they give you, as a teacher, a sense of where you are and where you still need to go.

So when we think about this in the context of community, we're looking for a group closing routine that can help to bring the class back together again and strengthen that sense of belonging. |
| CLH | Right, and again, that group closing routine is going to be across all learning environments, no matter where our students are.

And then let's see, Phase Eight is the last one, it's communicating with families. We're going to talk a lot more about this in session 8, and then we're going to have a whole module dedicated to it, but we're going to touch on it for just a second here.

This is a phase that happens outside of the lesson, but it really holds a lot of value because it gives students the maximum opportunities to succeed. When we involve families, we're sending a message, again, that we see students, we respect them, we know that they're whole people, we know that they have lives that aren't just all about |

	school and these connections that we make with families will really have lasting effects on their outcomes.
GK	And as long as they're like immediate family, it's their cultural assets. What learning and knowledge do they have that they don't get from school, they get from being a part of a family and part of a community and how do we leverage that and bring it into the classroom, make it real. OK! We did it, 8 phases of instruction Christina that was very long.
CLH	It was. We covered a lot of ground, so let's let these teachers know what they will be doing with all this info in the next session.
GK	So from here, listeners, you'll be going on to explore a few options on the choice board and you'll get to engage in what it looks like to build a classroom community around these 8 phases of instruction. There are a bunch of really great resources coming up, including a truly inspiring video by Rita Pearson, so we hope you enjoy the next session.
CLH	See you next time!