



Case Study 2: What is community? What was Rochester's community like?

Overview

Students will explore what a community is and investigate what Rochester's community was like in the 1950s-1960s through examining local images and a read-aloud of 'Constance Mitchell Stands up'.



I can explore what a community is and describe what Rochester's community was like during the life of Constance Mitchell by reading a book about her life and looking at pictures from her community.

Teacher Resources

[Day 2 Grade 2 Slide Deck](#)

[Constance Mitchell Stands Up By Leslie C. Youngblood](#)

[Spanish Translation Connie Mitchell Stands Up](#)

Share with Students

[Day 2 Grade 2 Handout \(Spanish Version\)](#)

NYS Social Studies Framework

2.2b A community is strengthened by the diversity of its members, with ideas, talents, perspectives, and cultures that can be shared across the community.

Students will explore how different ideas, talents, perspectives, and culture are shared across their community

Next Generation NYS ELA Standards

2SL4: Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.

NYS Culturally Responsive Framework

Reflect, honor, value, and center various identity perspectives as assets in policies and practices

Teaching Tolerance Standards

Identity 1 ID.K-2.1 I know and like who I am and can talk about my family and myself and name some of my group identities.

Identity 3 ID.K-2.3 I know that all my group identities are part of me—but that I am always ALL me.

Identity 4 ID.K-2.4 I can feel good about myself without being mean or making other people feel bad.

Identity 5 ID.K-2.5 I see that the way my family and I do things is both the same as and different from how other people do things, and I am interested in both.

Diversity 8 DI.K-2.8 I want to know about other people and how our lives and experiences are the same and different

Justice 12 JU.K-2.12 I know when people are treated unfairly.

Justice 13 JU.K-2.13 I know some true stories about how people have been treated badly because of their group identities, and I don't like it.

Justice 14 JU.K-2.14 I know that life is easier for some people and harder for others and the reasons for that are not always fair.

Justice 15 JU.K-2.15 I know about people who helped stop unfairness and worked to make life better for many people.

Action 18 AC.K-2.18 I will say something or tell an adult if someone is being hurtful or something is unfair, and will do my part to be kind even if I don't like something they say or do

Sequence of Instruction

Pre-Teaching/Introduction

Students will review vocabulary from Day 1 lesson



Vocabulary Teaching Tip

The following terms will be defined throughout the lesson. These definitions will provide foundational knowledge and understanding as they progress through this and the proceeding lessons on race and community.

Vocabulary

Identity
Community

Race

Racism



Social-Emotional Teaching Tip

In this lesson, students will learn about the history of their community. While reading the story of Mrs. Constance

Mitchell, students may not know about Rochester's history of discrimination. However, some students may have close relatives or family friends, like Mrs. Mitchell, who experienced racist acts. It is important to recognize this painful history and the memories that may surface for many local neighborhoods and families. It is also possible that some students have relatives or family friends who were responsible for racist acts and policies. As mentioned in lesson 1, it is important to give permission for students to feel big feelings or even be confused. Check-in regularly with students throughout the lesson to gauge cues of discomfort, confusion, sadness, anger, guilt, etc. Remind students that no one in the classroom is at fault. The goal is to learn from the past to provide a brighter future for all Rochester citizens.



Figure 1: Framework for Systemic Social and Emotional Learning.
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[NYS SEL Benchmarks](#)

2A.1a. Recognize that others may experience situations differently from them. 2A.1b. Use listening skills to identify the feelings and perspectives of others.

2B.1a. Recognize their similarities to and differences from others. 2B.1b. Express respectful curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others.

2B.1c. Recognize bullying behaviors and practice safety and courage in seeking help from a trusted adult to respond.



Culturally Responsive Teaching Tip

Before teaching the lesson, become familiar with the narrative of Connie Mitchell and her experiences in Rochester fighting against racist policies. Consider reading through the following materials to build background knowledge on her story:

[Constance Mitchell Oral History UR](#)

[Strike the Hammer The Black Freedom Struggle in Rochester, New York, 1940-1970](#) By Dr. Laura Warren Hill

If students ask hard questions that you may not have an answer to, inform them that you will search and provide an answer the next day. It is okay to not have all the answers in this lesson. If students are asking difficult questions, it reveals their engagement and interest in the topic. Feel free to reach out to our team at swiegand@ccsi.org for help answering student questions.

Class Activity 1/5: Warm-Up/Introduction

5 minutes

Note: Teacher directions are directly connected to the slides in the [slide deck](#).

Teachers can guide this analysis by focusing on words and activities that are embedded in the Learning Target. (Slide 2)



Learning Target: I can describe the community of Rochester during the life of Constance Mitchell.

(Slide 3) Social and Emotional Learning check-in

As the lesson is beginning, check in with your students to gauge how they are feeling. There still may be emotions or thoughts from the previous lesson that have not been processed, so it is important to check in with students to assess their social and emotional learning needs before the discussions and activities about building community. Invite students to show the class with their fingers which number 'pig' represents how they're feeling today? Or ask a student to pick one of these [SEL check ins](#) for the class to use.

(Slide 4) Consider showing the short video on Belly Breathing. Let students know that they might have some big feelings during the story they're going to read today. They can take belly breaths to help them manage how they're feeling. Invite them to share what strategies they use when they have big feelings.

(Slide 5) Review the group norms established the day before. See the [day 1 teacher directions](#) for support. Consider asking students to pick one they want to work on today or have them share a compliment with a friend who is doing a good job with one of them.

Class Activity 2/5: What is a community notice and wonder activity

10 minutes

(Slides 6-11)

Spend a few minutes on each slide having students turn and talk with a neighbor and then sharing with the group about their responses to the questions on the slides:

What do you notice and wonder about this Rochester Community?

What is safe, kind, and fair in this community?

Note that all of the images chosen are from Rochester's past and present. Prompt students to state what they notice about each picture. Encourage them to look closely at the picture and make observations. Positive affirmation is critical in this stage as it spurs students on to make further observations. This is a perfect activity to engage students who tend to avoid sharing answers. Making observations and the affirmation that follows is a helpful way to build student confidence. Steer the sharing toward specific details of WHAT they see and guide them away from inferences and guesses at first.

(Slide 12)

Ask the class to think about what all the different photos had in common. Invite them to respond to the questions:

What is a community?

What do communities do?

Encourage them to cite specific examples from the images. For example, communities celebrate holidays like Diwali, plant gardens to grow healthy food, or help each other learn new things. Allow students the time and space to struggle as they seek to define community based on the pictures.

Teaching Tip



This activity moves their observations toward a definition of community, though they will likely not be aware of this. Use an anchor chart to record student answers or recall student responses that move toward a definition of community. Consider using the anchor chart across the following days.

(Slides 13-14) Connect what the students shared to the text on the slides. Share with the class that "A community is a group of people who live, learn, celebrate, play, and work together. And that a good community is where diversity is a strength and where people are safe, kind, and fair."

Class Activity 3/5: What was Constance Mitchell's Community Like?

15 minutes

(Slide 15) What do you think the community of Rochester was like years ago? Consider inviting students to turn and talk with a partner to discuss what they think Rochester was like years ago. Ask them if Was it safe? Was it kind? Was it fair? This can be a fairly quick conversation.

(Slides 16-32) Read aloud Constance Mitchell Stands Up. Let students know they'll be reading it again tomorrow. Today our goal is to learn about what her story tells us about Rochester years ago (in the

1950s-60s). Read the entire story without any questions or checks for understanding. Consider referencing the Learning Target as a way to encourage students to pay attention to the community of Rochester in the story. Prepare students that they will analyze whether Rochester was SAFE, RESPECTFUL, and KIND. Let them know Constance Mitchell was a real person. Her daughter helped write this story about her mom's life.

Teaching Tip



Communicate that you will read the story out loud. Read slowly at a steady pace. In lessons 3-5, students will be close reading specific parts of the story. The purpose of today's reading is to introduce the entire story and to spark interest and curiosity about Mrs. Constance Mitchell and the city of Rochester.

See and review suggestions under the Social and Emotional Learning section. In the process of reading Mrs. Constance Mitchell's story, pay attention to student body language and listen for comments that might hint at feelings or emotions. If appropriate, remind students that the goal is not to portray Rochester as a horrible place. Our past as a community includes racist policies and actions but due to the activism and leadership of people like Mrs. Mitchell, Rochester is still becoming a community that welcomes everyone. The goal is to inspire students to continue the legacy of Mrs. Mitchell and others.

Class Activity 4/5: Handouts and Discussion

10 minutes

(Slide 33) If there's time consider passing out the three different handouts. Make sure each student has one of them. Invite students to work in groups of two or three to look at their picture from the book and write a sentence or two about whether Rochester was 'fair, safe, and kind'.



Teaching Tip

The images do present tension in the community of Rochester. For example, one picture presents a fairly safe picture of Connie's 1950s classroom with activity and life while the other picture presents an unsafe picture of buildings that were burning and hazardous in the 1950s. Seeing and naming this tension in our community is an insightful observation. As students make claims about the Rochester community, encourage them to identify evidence from the pictures to support their analysis. Planning to leave time for individual student reflection and time to debrief their answers collaboratively at tables and/or with the whole class can lead to rich insights and questions.

Class Activity 5/5: Optimistic Closure and SEL Check-In

(Slide 35) SEL Check-in

Invite students to share what zone or zone they're in. Let them know that whatever zone their in is ok. There is space for their unique feelings and reactions in class. Encourage kids to support their neighbors with a smile or a fist bump if they're having a hard time. Then consider sharing that

Connie and her friends were in the red zone when they experienced unfairness in Rochester. They were also in the green zone because they were proud of who they were. Tomorrow we're going to look closer at the story and explore how they noticed their big feelings and used them to roll up their sleeves, stand up, and make their community stronger.

Invite a few students to share with the class how we can use our feelings to make a difference like Constance Mitchell and her friends did. ?

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