

BUILDING COMMUNITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Kira Smith
Teaching and Learning Services

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Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory

We acknowledge that McGill University is located on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. McGill honours and respects these nations as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we meet today.

Introduction to the Toolkit

The screenshot shows the McGill Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) website. The header includes the McGill logo, the text "Teaching and Learning Services (TLS)", and "A member of Student Life and Learning". There is a search bar and a "Quick Links" dropdown menu. The navigation bar includes links for "About Us", "Teaching @ McGill", "Learning @ McGill", "Graduate Education", "Teaching & Learning Spaces", and "Projects". The main content area features a red "Faculty of Arts Toolkit" button, a "Welcome to the Toolkit" section, and a list of tool categories: "Preamble", "Course Design: Preparatory Tools", "Course Design: First Day of Class Tools", "Course Design: Ongoing Tools", "Students in Difficulty", and "Getting Feedback from Students on the Classroom Community". A large graphic on the right side of the page reads "Faculty of Arts Toolkit for Building Connections in the Classroom" and includes a description: "A collaborative initiative between the Faculty of Arts and TLS, this collection of tools is designed for instructors in the Faculty of Arts. Arts instructors already use many strategies to foster a sense of belonging in their classrooms, so this toolkit aims to showcase and build upon the expertise of instructors in the Faculty." Below the description is a button that says "Access the toolkit".

The cover of the toolkit features a decorative flourish at the top, followed by the title "BUILDING COMMUNITY IN THE CLASSROOM" in blue capital letters. Below the title is the subtitle "A Toolkit for Instructors in the Faculty of Arts" and a stylized blue bird logo. At the bottom, it states "SEPTEMBER 1, 2017" and "McGill University".

Introduction to this Session: Content

Strategies we'll
discuss today

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Introduction to this Session: Learning Outcomes

1. Understand how an instructor's choice of teaching and learning strategies influence the sense of community that students feel in the classroom.
2. Apply practical strategies for community building to realistic classroom contexts.
3. Reflect on the importance of community in the classroom as a principle.

Introduction to the Session: The Space and Group Norms

- The closest gendered bathrooms are up one floor, on the right (when exiting the elevator).
- Feel free to move your body or position yourself in the way that you feel most comfortable.
- Ask questions at any time about anything.
- Use technology as you wish.
- If you no longer wish to participate, or want to step out of the room for a moment, please do so – no explanation is required.

Working Definition: “Community in the Classroom”

- *“A sense of belonging where all students feel best able to learn”*
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Create Your Student Profile

What is their name?

Where do they live?

Where did they live before
beginning their studies at McGill?

What barriers to
learning do they experience?

What do they study?

What is their age?

What obligations do they
have outside of their studies?

Strategies for Building Community

1. Swap profiles with another group.
2. Consider the following question:

Using our working definition of community, how can you build a community in the classroom for this student?

3. View suggested strategies and consider your own strategies for *before classes begin, the first day of class, and throughout the semester.*
4. Define your own context.

Reflections

- Which strategies do you think would be most helpful in building a community for your student?
- What thoughts, challenges, or biases came to light during this process?
- What questions remain unanswered?

Resources

- The Faculty of Arts Toolkit:
 - <https://mcgill.ca/tls/projects/faculty-arts-toolkit>
- Marcy Slapcoff and Kira Smith
 - marcy.slapcoff@mcgill.ca and kira.smith@mcgill.ca
- Further reading:
 - References available upon request!