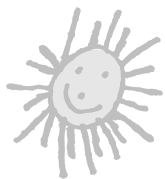


Viewing Guide

by Lynn Bechtel



Doing Morning Meeting

The Essential Components



From the Creators of the
Responsive Classroom® Approach

The *Responsive Classroom*®/Stenhouse Publishers
Copyright © 2004 Northeast Foundation for Children, Greenfield, MA

All rights reserved. This guide may be photocopied for staff development use only.

The Morning Meeting Book, expanded ed. (Kriete with contributions by Bechtel 2002) is also available at www.responsiveclassroom.org or www.stenhouse.com.

Lynn Bechtel is an editor and writer at Northeast Foundation for Children. She wrote the chapter on Morning Meeting in middle schools that appears in the expanded edition of *The Morning Meeting Book*.

Contents

Introduction	4
How to Use This Video	5
<i>Viewing the Video Straight Through</i>	5
<i>Viewing the Video in Segments</i>	6
Overview Segment (00:25)	7
Greeting Segment (2:43)	9
Sharing Segment (8:12)	10
Group Activity Segment (15:00)	12
News and Announcements Segment (18:28)	13
Final Thoughts	15
About the Publishers	16

Introduction

Every day in thousands of classrooms around the country, students and teachers begin their day with Morning Meeting, a key strategy of the *Responsive Classroom*® approach to teaching. In *Doing Morning Meeting: The Essential Components*, we are invited into two classrooms at Kensington Avenue School in Springfield, Massachusetts, to observe their Morning Meetings. We watch as students in Maureen Russell's first grade special needs inclusion classroom and Leslie Cirone's fifth grade bilingual inclusion classroom greet each other, share about their lives, engage in group activities, and read the News and Announcements chart.

Kensington Avenue School

Kensington Avenue School is a K-5 school in Springfield Massachusetts, with a multi-racial and multi-ethnic population of 350 students. Kensington Avenue School has been doing Morning Meeting school-wide for the past few years.

How to Use This Video

This video can be used with a variety of audiences: It can serve as an introduction to Morning Meeting for teachers and administrators who are new to the concept or for parent groups. It can be used with groups of teachers who have learned basic information about Morning Meeting through reading *The Morning Meeting Book* (NEFC 2002) and/or attending a *Responsive Classroom* introductory workshop. And it can be used with teachers who have been doing Morning Meetings and want to refine their practice. For any group, the video offers an opportunity to watch two experienced teachers run successful Morning Meetings.

We recommend watching the video as part of a workshop that allows for interactive viewing. To help you plan, we offer suggested questions as well as background information on Morning Meeting and each of the components. In addition, we give page references for the 2002 expanded edition of *The Morning Meeting Book*. Reading relevant sections of the book along with watching and discussing the video could provide a rich study of Morning Meeting.

Viewing the Video Straight Through

There might be situations where you'll want to view the video straight through with minimal time for discussion. In that case, we recommend that you offer a brief introduction and give people a "large picture" question to think about as they view the video.

Doing Morning Meeting makes six main points; questions can be drawn from any of these points:

1. Morning Meeting builds community by helping students feel a sense of significance, belonging, and engagement.
2. Morning Meeting gives students daily practice in the social skills needed for academic learning throughout the day.
3. Morning Meeting creates a climate of trust and respect which enables children to feel safe enough to take the risks necessary for learning.
4. Morning Meeting builds positive relationships between students and between teachers and students by helping them get to know one another and develop their capacity for empathy.

5. Morning Meeting integrates the teaching of social and academic skills.
6. The key to success with Morning Meeting is being proactive.

Here are a few suggestions for “large picture” questions:

1. We say that Morning Meeting helps children feel safe enough to take the risks necessary for learning. Note places in the video that support this statement. What contributes to this safe environment?
2. Note places in the video where children have a chance to practice key social skills such as listening carefully or treating each other in a friendly and respectful way. What skills are practiced? What do the teachers do to make sure this practice and learning happens?
3. Successful Morning Meetings require careful structuring, teaching, and managing. What do the teachers do to make sure the Morning Meetings run smoothly and are beneficial to all students? Pay attention to transitions, the language used by teachers, references to behavior expectations, and the use of reflection time.
4. Morning Meeting merges social and academic learning. For example, during one of the greetings that we see, children make eye contact, smile, and greet in different languages. Where else do you see both kinds of learning happening?

Viewing the Video in Segments

The video easily divides into five segments. It begins with an overview of Morning Meeting followed by segments on the four components of Morning Meeting: Greeting, Sharing, Group Activity, and News and Announcements. Depending on time available and the needs of the group, you could break after each segment for questions and discussion. The “large picture” questions listed in the previous section could be used to structure a segment-by-segment viewing.

On the following pages, you’ll find a brief description of each segment, points to highlight in the segment, background information that includes “keys to success,” and suggested questions for viewers that could be used in addition to or instead of the “large picture” questions.

Overview Segment [00:25]

We get our first glimpses of Morning Meeting, hear from teachers and students about the impact of Morning Meeting on the rest of the school day, and learn about the goals and basic structure of Morning Meeting.

Points to Highlight:

- Pay attention to how the rooms are set up to facilitate Morning Meeting.
- Think about the procedures that students need to learn in order to make a smooth transition to the meeting circle.

Format of Morning Meeting:

- Morning Meeting consists of four components, done sequentially: Greeting, Sharing, Group Activity, and News and Announcements.
- Morning Meeting happens every day, first thing in the morning and lasts fifteen to thirty minutes.
- All children and adults in the room sit in an even circle so that each person can see everyone and be seen by everyone.

Keys to Success with Morning Meeting:

- Work with the children to establish behavior guidelines that will help the meeting work. Below are the guidelines from Maureen's and Leslie's classrooms this year.

*Maureen's First Grade
Meeting Guidelines*

Sit with our legs crossed.
One person talks at a time.
Listen to the person talking.
Be safe in your own space.

*Leslie's Fifth Grade
Meeting Guidelines*

Listen quietly when someone else is talking/sharing.
Sit cross-legged (so everyone has enough room).
Come empty-handed.
Look at the person talking to show we're listening.
Take care of our materials.

- Post the behavior guidelines in the meeting area. Throughout the year reinforce the expectation that children live up to these guidelines.
- Model the expected behaviors so children have an understanding of what the behaviors look and sound like; practice behaviors with the children.
- Introduce the components one at a time, teaching the behaviors that children will need in order to be successful. Although Sharing is the second component in Morning Meeting, we suggest teachers introduce it last because it requires such sophisticated skills. Most teachers begin with Greeting and News and Announcements, then introduce Group Activity. When children are comfortable with the other components, teachers introduce Sharing.
- Pay attention to management issues, such as:
 - How you gather children for meetings
 - How you make the transition between components
 - How you remind children of the meeting guidelines
 - How you use language to reinforce positive behaviors
 - How you redirect children who engage in problem behaviors during meetings
- Allow regular opportunities for reflection with the children—for example, asking “How did we do with greeting someone new today?”

Questions for Viewers:

1. What are the first things you notice about Morning Meeting from these quick glimpses?
2. What would you need to do to create a Morning Meeting space in your classroom?

For more on an overview of Morning Meeting, see *The Morning Meeting Book*, pages 1–31, 105–109 (overview of Morning Meeting with middle school students), and 147–148 (overview of Morning Meeting with second language learners).

Greeting Segment [2:43]

In the Greeting component of Morning Meeting, each child begins the day hearing his or her name spoken clearly and making friendly contact with peers. Early in the year, the greeting should be simple, with a focus on learning each other's names and making friendly eye contact. Once students are comfortable with a simple greeting, they can learn more complex greetings—for example, greeting in different languages or doing greeting activities that involve singing and movement.

In the video we see several greetings: a simple handshake greeting; a ball toss greeting; a greeting that involves singing, movement, and saying “hello” in different languages; and a high five greeting. We also see several examples of how Leslie and Maureen work with the children to ensure success.

Points to Highlight:

You'll see and hear a lot about the importance of consistent and ongoing classroom management in this segment. In particular, pay attention to:

- Leslie's use of reflection with the fifth graders. [4:02 and 7:19]
- Maureen's discussion with the children as they begin their meeting. Note the language she uses. [4:38]
- Leslie's introduction to the high-five greeting. With her careful use of language, she gives students the responsibility to live up to established expectations at the same time that she reminds them about those expectations. [6:37]

Goals of Greeting:

1. To set a positive tone for the day
2. To provide a sense of recognition and belonging
3. To help children learn and use everyone's name
4. To let children practice hospitality

Keys to Success with Greeting:

- Discuss, model, and practice how to greet someone in a friendly, warm, respectful way.

- Teach a wide variety of greetings, beginning with simple, low-risk greetings.
- Pay continuing attention to the basics, such as friendly eye contact, voice tone, and body language.
- Make sure children greet everyone, not just their best friends.

Questions for Viewers:

1. Maureen and Leslie both have discussions with the students that begin: “What needs to happen...?” or “What do we need to remember....?” What do you think are the benefits of such discussions?
2. Think about the first graders’ “Hello Neighbor” greeting. What sort of preparation might children need in order to do this greeting in a safe, friendly, orderly way?
3. The video was filmed in November and December when students were ready for more complex greetings. What kinds of problems might occur if greetings such as the “Hello Neighbor” greeting or the ball toss greeting were done the first week of school?
4. What social skills are the children practicing in the various greetings?
5. How does Greeting help create a safe community?

For more on Greeting, see *The Morning Meeting Book*, pages 33–47, 109–113 (Greeting with middle school students), 148–150 (Greeting with second language learners), and 155–174 (a collection of greetings).

Sharing Segment [8:12]

Sharing requires sophisticated and complex communication skills such as focusing ideas and asking questions that expand on a topic. Because Sharing is so complex, it’s often the last component taught to children.

During Sharing, students present news they wish to share. Listeners then respond by asking questions and offering comments. There are several formats for Sharing. Two of the most commonly used formats are interactive sharing, where one child shares with the whole group, and group sharing (sometimes called “lightning” sharing), where each child in the group says one thing about a particular topic.

In this segment you’ll see both interactive and group sharing.

Points to Highlight:

- Pay attention to the teachers' roles during Sharing—providing structure, coaching, managing the circle, but staying in the background as much as possible.
- Sharing offers opportunities for students to help each other. Pay attention to the students translating for each other during the fifth graders' "lightning" sharing. [14:18]
- Expectations need to be developmentally appropriate. Note the different levels of skills used by first graders and fifth graders, particularly during the interactive sharing.

Goals of Sharing:

1. To develop and practice the skills of caring communication, such as empathic listening
2. To help children know others and be known
3. To encourage habits of inquiry
4. To give opportunities for children to practice speaking in a strong and individual voice
5. To develop children's vocabulary and language skills

Keys to Success with Sharing:

- Teach children what kind of news is appropriate to share (community news vs. private family news).
- Brainstorm ideas for sharing topics.
- For interactive sharing, teach, model, and practice the jobs of the audience and the sharers.
 - *Audience:* Members of the audience need to listen carefully and think about what the sharer says, take turns speaking, raise hands to speak, think of a comment that focuses on the sharer, think of friendly questions that will extend the topic, and respond appropriately to a wide range of news.
 - *Sharers:* Sharers need to present a brief, interesting piece of news; focus on one main idea; develop the idea with one or two details; speak clearly and loudly; and initiate questions and comments.

Questions for Viewers:

1. What risks do students take during Sharing? What makes it possible to take these risks? How might this risk-taking transfer to the rest of the day?
2. In the first graders' interactive sharing, what is Maureen's role? Why and how does she intervene?
3. What academic skills are students practicing? How might these skills carry over to the rest of the day?
4. What social skills are they practicing? How might these skills carry over?

For more on Sharing, see *The Morning Meeting Book*, pages 49–71, 113–119 (Sharing with middle school students), and 150–151 (Sharing with second language learners).

Group Activity Segment [15:00]

Group activities are short, varied activities that help build community and allow everyone to contribute at their own level. Some activities have clear academic skill building components; others offer practice in skills such as listening, following directions, and exercising self-control. All activities should be active, inclusive, cooperative, and fun.

In this segment, you'll see a range of activities, including two that focus on curriculum content.

Points to Highlight:

- Management is important to the success of Group Activity. Notice how Maureen and Leslie pay careful attention to introducing the activities. [15:49 and 17:13]
- There are many different kinds of activities students can do. Note the range of activities shown in the video.
- Group Activity is a great place to reinforce academic skills in a fun way. Note the two activities that integrate curriculum content.

Goals of Group Activity:

1. To build community culture by developing a class repertoire of songs, games, chants, and poems

2. To foster active and engaged participation
3. To heighten the class's sense of group identity
4. To have fun together while becoming more competent in key social skills
5. To enhance the learning of curriculum content through fun group experiences

Keys to Success with Group Activity:

- Choose varied activities that are age appropriate and include all skill levels.
- Before the activity, teach, model, and practice appropriate social and physical behaviors.
- During the activity, encourage appropriate behavior, redirect when students get off track, and stop the activity if necessary.
- Occasionally, after the activity, reflect with students on how it went.

Questions for Viewers:

1. How does Maureen help students make the transition into the “Pop-Up Number” activity?
2. In Leslie’s introduction to the “Mystery Word” activity, she asks students to think about what’s challenging about being in the middle of the circle. What purpose does that question serve?
3. Maureen says that Group Activity helps create a safe environment for taking academic risks throughout the day. What risks do students take during Group Activity? What makes it possible to take these risks? How might this transfer to the rest of the day?

For more on Group Activity, see *The Morning Meeting Book*, pages 73–87, 119–121 (Group Activity with middle school students), 151–153 (Group Activity with second language learners), and 175–201 (a collection of activities).

News and Announcements Segment [18:28]

At the end of Morning Meeting, students read together a message that the teacher has prepared on chart paper. The message reinforces curriculum

content and gives children opportunities to practice both academic and social skills. It also provides a transition into the rest of the day. The information on the chart is familiar and of interest to all children and usually includes an interactive piece.

In the video, we see several examples of charts and we see students reading the chart before the meeting and responding to the chart during the meeting.

Points to Highlight:

- Notice the content and the format of the sample charts.
- Watch how the children work with the chart before the meeting. [19:44]
- Notice how Leslie and Maureen use the chart to engage children's interest.
- Note how Leslie helps the children make the transition from chart work to seat work. [21:47]

Goals of News and Announcements:

1. To help children make the transition from Morning Meeting to the rest of the day and get them excited about what they'll be learning
2. To develop and reinforce language, math, and other skills in a meaningful and interactive way
3. To build community through shared written information
4. To reinforce social skills

Keys to Success with News and Announcements:

- Prepare the message chart before students arrive; model good printing or cursive writing and correct usage in the message.
- Keep the chart simple, vary the type of work, and focus on one academic skill that students have already learned.
- Include a meaningful interactive piece that stimulates discussion during the meeting and connects to the day.
- Vary the format used for reading the chart from meeting to meeting, (e.g., in unison, teacher reading, one student reader, etc.).

Questions for Viewers:

1. What sort of preparation do the children need in order to work independently with the chart before the meeting?
2. What opportunities does this component give for students to help each other?
3. How does the News and Announcements chart differ from other written morning messages?

For more on News and Announcements, see *The Morning Meeting Book*, pages 89–102, 122–124 (News and Announcements with middle school students), 153–154 (News and Announcements with second language learners), and 203–215 (suggestions for creating News and Announcements charts and sample charts).

Final Thoughts

No matter what format you use for viewing the video, it's a good idea to provide a structure for final reflection. If there's not enough time for a closing conversation, you could end with a "question to think about" such as:

- What's one thing that you learned from watching this video?
- What's one new thing you're going to try the next time you do Morning Meeting?
- What's one thing you'd like to explore further?

If there's time for discussion, you might ask questions such as:

- How does the climate created in Morning Meeting serve children through the rest of the day?
- What kind of planning and facilitating does the teacher need to do in order to achieve this climate?

About the Publishers

Doing Morning Meeting is the result of a collaboration between Northeast Foundation for Children and Stenhouse Publishers.

Northeast Foundation for Children and the Responsive Classroom® Approach

Northeast Foundation for Children (NEFC) is a nonprofit educational organization whose mission is to foster safe, challenging, and joyful classrooms and schools, K–8. NEFC develops and promotes the *Responsive Classroom®* approach to teaching, which offers educators practical strategies for bringing together social and academic learning throughout the school day.

NEFC offers workshops for teachers, a newsletter and website, books and other resources, and on-site services for schools and school districts.

For more information or to order books and videos, please contact:



Northeast Foundation for Children
39 Montague City Road
Greenfield, Massachusetts 01301
800-360-6332
www.responsiveclassroom.org

Stenhouse Publishers

Based in Portland, Maine, Stenhouse is committed to publishing high quality books and videos for teachers, by teachers. For more information or to order books and videos, please contact:



Stenhouse Publishers
477 Congress Street, Suite 4B
Portland, ME 04101-3451
800-988-9812
www.stenhouse.com