

Relationship-Building Strategies for the Classroom

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Why Do It?</u>	<u>How to Do It?</u>	<u>Further Resources</u>
<p>Positive Greeting at the Door <i>A classroom practice that focuses on welcoming each student by name both in person and virtually.</i></p> <p><u>Age Range:</u> All grade levels</p>	<p>Greeting students as they enter (or exit) your classroom is a simple and effective way to create a welcoming classroom and build positive relationships. Being greeted by an adult who is happy to see them can start a student’s school day on a positive note. Likewise, an affirmative interaction at the end of the class can end student’s day on a positive note as well. Research has shown that positive greetings at the door increases students’ time on task, reduces disruptions, and builds positive relationships (Allday & Pakurar, 2007; Cook et al., 2018).</p>	<p>In person:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stand just outside or inside of the door Greet each student by name Have a short, positive interaction (e.g., praise, friendly comment, question) Direct them to the first activity <p>Virtual: Although there may not be a physical door, in the virtual classroom educators can welcome each student verbally or nonverbally to ensure they feel seen and valued. Educators can use a check in routine, set up a do now procedure, or assign different student greeter roles in the classroom to ensure that each student gets recognized in each synchronous session. In asynchronous sessions, educators can welcome students by name in the recording.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greetings at the Door Guide Positive Greeting at the Door article
<p>Community Circles <i>A classroom practice that emphasizes predictable, structured open dialogues between students and adults.</i></p> <p><u>Age Range:</u> All grade levels</p>	<p>Community circles are a key component of restorative justice and a powerful tool for relationship building. They allow all students to be heard and belong to the classroom community at large while equalizing the power between teachers and students. The circle is a structured dialogue process that allows students and adults a chance to share. Every circle is different, but each has the following components: opening ceremony, centerpiece, values/guidelines, talking piece, guiding questions, and closing ceremony. Community circles focus on learning more about themselves and their classmates.</p>	<p>In person: Before the community circle, plan your guiding questions and talking piece ahead of time. To set up a community circle, organize chairs in a circle with your centerpiece in the middle. To start the circle, review the agreements and start with a low-risk check in question that leads up to the main question of the circle. End the circle with a check out and closing.</p> <p>Virtual: Although there is no physical circle, a virtual circle contains the same components. Ask students to bring their own talking piece to the virtual circle and plan your questions ahead of time. At the time of the circle, review the agreements and provide a visual of the order of students in the circle on the screen. Sharing the questions visually and allowing participants to answer via chat can increase access for all students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circle planning guide Core Processes of Restorative Justice circles video Restorative Practices strategy brief Restorative Practices resource list Restorative Practices guide for educators

<p>Relationship Mapping <i>An activity that connects one adult to every student in school</i></p> <p><u>Age Range:</u> All grade levels</p>	<p>This reflective process helps identify students who do (or do not) have a positive relationship with an adult at school. Having a trusting and deep connection with students increases a sense of belonging in the school community, reduced bullying, lower drop-out rates, and improved social and emotional capacities. This tool allows staff to inventory their relationships and create an action plan to ensure all students feel a sense of belonging.</p>	<p>In person: This activity would ideally take place at the beginning of the school year (October). List student names on chart paper/white board. All staff members should review the list of names and place a yellow dot to the left of the name if they have a positive relationship with that student and a red dot to the right if the staff member believes the student is at-risk personally, or academically. Staff would reflect on what connections need to be made and what risk factors they need to consider. A follow-up should be scheduled approximately four weeks after to check if connections were made with identified students.</p> <p>Virtual: Consider using a protected Google/Excel spreadsheets to list the students' names. Ask staff members to respond and use a coding system next to the names. Staff can meet as a whole or by grade-level teams.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship Mapping Guide • Virtual Relationship Mapping • Resource Establish, Maintain, Restore relationships-building tool • Video: Make sure every student it known
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<p>2x10 Strategy <i>A quick practice to help build relationships with students who are hard to reach</i></p> <p><u>Age Range:</u> All grade levels</p>	<p>Challenging behavior may be an attempt to communicate a need for trust and connection. Giving non-contingent time and attention to an individual student can build the foundation of a trusting relationship. This strategy can also be based on function-based thinking, addressing the need for adult attention.</p>	<p>In person: Develop a system in which you build in time to spend two minutes getting to know a student, such as before or after class, during breaks, or when there is less direct instruction. Use data to identify which students you will use this strategy with as well to progress-monitor the impact of this intervention. Conversations should be casual and centered on his/her interests for the strategy to be effective.</p> <p>Virtual: The two minutes can be done by phone or virtually before or after instruction begins by messaging the student privately on chat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article on 2x10 Implementation • 2x10 Guide
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<p>Equity Audit and Reflection <i>A list of questions that allow teachers to reflect on whether they use culturally responsive teaching in their classroom in order to ensure equity</i></p> <p><u>Age Range:</u> All grade levels</p>	<p>It is important to give teachers the time to reflect on their interaction with students to promote an equitable classroom environment. Are students engaged and do they have a voice in the classroom? Do they feel valued? By answering specific questions, teachers can think about ways to nurture classroom community and be culturally responsive to the students they are serving.</p>	<p>In person: After a whole group discussion about equity and culturally responsive teaching, teachers can answer the questions individually. Then, ask teachers to share and reflect in pairs. As a follow-up, encourage partners to observe one another and provide each other feedback.</p> <p>Virtual: These activities can easily be done in a virtual setting, using break out rooms to reflect in pairs. Teachers can pop into another teacher’s virtual classroom to observe and provide feedback.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Justice Relationship Questions
<p>Student Advisory Committee (SAC) <i>A structured avenue to convene students to advise on school policies</i></p> <p><u>Age range:</u> All grade levels</p>	<p>To build authentic relationships, students must see that their opinions are considered in their educational experience. A student advisory committee can ensure this happens by letting students lead conversations about creating a better schooling experience. Students benefit from the opportunities to practice problem-solving, and leadership required to participate in decision making.</p>	<p>In person: Create a committee of student volunteers from various grade levels that represent the demographics of your school. Make sure to include students who may not traditionally be included. Start by having students provide feedback through focus groups on various issues that they can work with teachers and school leaders to improve school policy and decisions.</p> <p>Virtual: Create a virtual SAC with the goal of improving and evolving virtual programming to best serve the needs of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Voice Chapter Building Guide

<p>Family and Student Surveys <i>Questions and prompts that gather useful information about students and families in your class</i></p> <p><u>Age Range:</u> All grade levels</p>	<p>By collecting parents'/students' information as well as opinions and perspectives, educators can use it to inform their teaching strategies while also letting each student and family member know that they are valued.</p>	<p>In Person: Develop questionnaires at the beginning of the year using parent- and student-friendly language. Use trust building questions to establish relationships and communication. Make sure to follow up on what you learn to ensure students and families see that their voices matter to you.</p> <p>Virtual: Consider using Google forms or other easy survey distribution tools. Promote during family engagement events or social media platforms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning of the Year Relationship Building Toolkit
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Additional Resources:

Rose, J., Levenson, M., & Smith, K. (2019). PBIS: Practice Brief Cultivating Positive Student-Teacher Relationships. *PBIS Leadership Forum*. Retrieved from assets-global.website-files.com/5d3725188825e071f1670246/5d7bd214b509ea64bc58ac5a_rdq7%20brief%20-%20student-teacher%20relationships-2.pdf

Regional Education Laboratory Southwest. (2018). How can trusting relationships with adults boost student success? *Institute of Education Sciences*. Retrieved from ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/pdf/infographics/relsw-infographic11-508.pdf