

Strategies for Building Relationships

PURPOSE

This tool is meant to support teachers as they brainstorm relationship-building strategies for use with the whole class and individual students.

DIRECTIONS:

Use the activities below as a starting point for building relationships in your classroom.

Strategies for Whole-Class Relationship Building

Journaling or Conversation Notebooks	Map of My Heart
<p>Have students create a timeline of important events in their life. Students may choose to structure it by year, age, or grade. You may want to have students choose to include pictures, words, or small anecdotes. Make sure to model your own as you launch this activity with the class!</p> <p>NOTE: Tell students that they should only record events that they feel comfortable sharing. If there is something significant that they do not want to share, they should not feel pressured to include it. However, offer yourself for private conversations, if a student wants to talk and be aware of available supports for both students and teachers in the school.</p>	<p>In this activity, students draw (or are given a template of) a large heart. Students fill in, with pictures and/or words, the people, places, things, and activities that are near to their heart. The teacher should also create and share their own map!</p> <p>Some prompts for this activity might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes me happy? • What are some of my favorite things to do? • Who are the important people in my life? • What are some of my favorite memories? • What things or objects are important to me? <p>NOTE: If you choose to keep a binder of personalized knowledge of students, a copy of this project would be a great artifact to keep for each student.</p>
Timeline of My Life	Community Walk
<p>Teachers use journaling in the classroom in a variety of ways that can support relationship building. Here are some ideas to spark your thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may write daily in an individual journal, either freely or in response to a prompt. The teacher may select a few each day to respond to with a comment, question, or sharing of their own personal story or opinion. • The class may have a shared journal that each student can rotate taking home each weekend to add an entry. The next student to take home the journal can read the previous entries and add their own. The teacher should be included in this rotation! • Students may keep special “conversation notebooks” (or one per class) in which they jot questions or topics of choice that the teacher will directly respond to. Think of it like an “Ask Me Anything” session that is common on social media. Students can skim through previous questions and responses and add their own. 	<p>Take the class out for a walk in the community (with proper permission, of course!). Allow students to point out important places in their lives or parts of the community that are part of their daily routines.</p> <p>In areas where the community is spread out by great distances that could be challenging to walk, the class could also compile a list of important places and explore or mark them on an online map.</p> <p>Use the following prompts to help spark discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some places that you pass by on your way to school? • Where are some places that you go on the weekend? • Where do you buy groceries? Where do you go out to eat? • Where do you play? • What businesses or stores do you go to? • Where is the library, the fire station, the post office, etc.? <p>NOTE: Some areas may have negative connotations for students, or students may also not want to leave the school because it is a safe place for them. It is important for teachers to be prepared to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate attunement and responsiveness to these student feelings and behaviors <input type="checkbox"/> Be prepared for the possibility of agitated or escalated student behaviors <input type="checkbox"/> Clearly communicate how the teacher will ensure the safety of all students <input type="checkbox"/> Offer students the opportunity to “pass” on participating in the Community Walk, but contribute to the class’s collective knowledge about the community in an alternate way

Strategies for Individual Relationship Building

2 x 10	Banking Time
<p>Identify a student who needs extra socioemotional support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend 2 minutes per day with the student, for 10 consecutive school days. • Talk with the student about anything they want to talk about. • Focus on listening and the conversation, as opposed to the time or other things happening around you. 	<p>Identify a student who would benefit from trust-building with adults.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with an individual student for 10–15 minutes, 2-3 times a week. • The point of the session is to focus on the positive. • Follow the student's lead and do not attempt to teach. Listen to the student, narrate what the student is doing, and validate emotions. • The time is not a punishment or a reward and should be helpful, regardless of behavior.
The Talk Ticket	The Secret Code
<p>Identify a student who is able to self-regulate but may be shy or may struggle to communicate needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the student with 1-3 tickets per day/week. • Tell the student to give you a ticket anytime they need to talk about something. Schedule a time to talk within the day of receiving the ticket. 	<p>Identify a student who struggles to self-regulate in front of peers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the student, identify a secret code that can be used to communicate that the student wants a break or needs to talk to you. Or, it can be used to communicate that the teacher wants to talk with the student later. • Practice the code and celebrate when it is used correctly.