

Relationship Building Activities

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A positive teacher-student relationship is what I will strive for with my students. Taking the time to get to know my students will help me connect and build trust (*Better Understanding Today's Students and Their Ways*, 2022). Building a relationship with students who trust me will allow them to grow and make them more open to participating in class. Building a relationship with my students will also lead to my students accepting the rules and procedures and the disciplinary actions that follow any violations that may occur (Marzano et al., 2003). Although there are many ways I will use to connect with my students, I will discuss how learning my student's names on the first day, reading my student's journals, and using the information I receive from students on the first day when they introduce themselves will allow me to show my students that I care about them and their future.

Learning my students' names is a straightforward thing I can do as an instructor to build a positive relationship. This will set the tone for the school semester. At the beginning of my teaching career, I had a student with a first name that was difficult for me to pronounce. Since I could not correctly say the student's name, I would call the student by his last name. After hearing his name many times from other classmates, I was able to pronounce his name. The look he gave me when I called him by his first name spoke volumes. From that day, I have made it my goal to correctly say and remember each student's name on the first day. Some may think learning your student's name on the first day should go without saying, but this strategy impresses students and helps me bond with them (Clark, 2012). I learned this early in my career. To remember each student's name, I created a graph of the seating in my class. As I call the student's name for attendance, I write it in their chosen seat. Throughout the class, I make it a point to respond to the students by name. By the end of class, I can put the face with the name.

Journaling is another way to build a relationship with my students. Journaling is a nontraditional form of assessment and a way to get to know my students (Milner et al., 2019). I use journaling throughout the semester as a way for students to express themselves openly. Students must write in their journals once a month. I give points for journaling but not a grade. I want the student to complete their journal feeling they can answer honestly, even if it comes with constructive criticism. To build a relationship, I will add questions related to class work and for them to express their feelings at home, work, or school. I inform the students that what they write will be confidential and that they are open to sharing. I will read their journals and directly respond to their answers. I also use their answers to check in on them. For instance, a student felt comfortable writing in her journal that she was homeless. In response, I replied that she should feel comfortable coming to me if she needed assistance. I would also ask in private how things were and if she needed anything. I made it a point to let her know she was not alone. If not for her having a space to share, I may not have known the difficulties she was having.

Finally, I will use the information students share about themselves on the first day of class during the semester. When I applied for a position working as a clinical dental hygiene instructor, I was asked about my hobbies. The interviewer and I still discuss my love for bike riding. Although we bonded because we have the same interests, the show of interest helped build a positive relationship, which is why I use it with my class. To incorporate what students share on the first day of school, I will use post-it notes as a reminder of what was shared. I will have each student write down why they decided to take this class, what they expect to learn from the class, what helps them relieve stress, and anything they would like to share about themselves. I will then have the students use their writing to introduce themselves to the class. I will go first so they can also learn a bit about me. After, I will collect what they wrote and make post-it notes

that I will use to check in on my students. So, if a student likes to cook during their free time, I will ask what's dishes have been made. If I discover something new during the semester, I will add it to the post-it notes as a reminder to follow up at a later date. Following up with students indirectly lets them know you care about them (Clark, 2019).

Showing an interest in my students will allow me to create a bond that will assist me in having a positive relationship. For some students showing an interest is key to their success (Marzano et al., 2003). That is why I want my students to know that I care about them and their performance in school. Learning my students' names on the first day, reading my student's journals, and using the information I receive from students on the first day will be some of the relationship-building activities I use throughout the semester.

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