

Relationship-Building Activities

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As an aspiring teacher, I find it imperative to construct relationships with my students, as well as for them to develop relationships with each other. Milner et al. (2019, p. 84) express the importance of the relationship I should have with my students as an educator in order to create a supportive learning environment. According to Marzano et al. (2003, p. 43), I should strive to achieve student cooperation and control in my classroom by building positive relationships with my students. Additionally, student relationships with one another are vital in formulating a safe and caring environment with effective classroom management (Marzano et al., 2003, p. 42; Milner et al., 2019, p. 86). Guidi et al. (2022) present a variety of relationship-building activities that would certainly be useful in my classroom as a dental hygiene instructor for constructing relationships with my students and with each other that can be used at the beginning of and throughout the semester. Ultimately, having relationship-building activities in my classroom can help foster relationships between myself and my students as well as with one another.

One approach to getting to know my students and continuing my relationship with them during the semester would be to use a relationship-building activity called “Quick Connectors” (Guidi et al., 2022, p. 12-13). This particular activity is conducted by me giving the students a prompt and having my students break into pairs or groups to discuss their responses (Guidi et al., 2022, p. 12-13). After a few minutes, students will share responses with the class, and I will also provide a response, allowing for relationships to form (Guidi et al., 2022, p. 12-13). Some prompt categories that make this activity useful at the start of the semester and during the semester provided by Guidi et al. (2022, p. 12-13) include “Getting to Know You” and “Learning and Reflection.” For example, a prompt that could be used for this activity would be “What made you want to become a dental hygienist?” Everyone willing would be able to provide responses during class discussion. This activity will help foster a caring learning environment

that provides support to my students (Milner et al., 2019, p. 84). Milner et al. (2019, p. 84-86) discuss how crucial it is for me to implement activities that make students feel like they belong; therefore, “Quick Connectors” is a viable activity in this case. In short, “Quick Connectors” is an easy way for students to connect initially and continuously with not only each other but also with me (Guidi et al., 2022, p. 12-13).

Another strategy, “Pass It On!,” supplied by Guidi et al. (2022, p. 10-11), would help cultivate my relationships with my students as well as among themselves. This specific activity occurs by presenting a prompt to the class and having the students and myself write down our responses about ourselves, then crumpling the papers into balls (Guidi et al., 2022, p. 10-11). For instance, a prompt could be, “What do you like to do outside of dental hygiene?” Next, the students and I will stand in a circle and throw the paper balls to one another while a timer counts down from about 45 seconds (Guidi et al., 2022, p. 10-11). Once the timer stops and everyone has a paper ball that is not their own, we will work to find the individual the paper ball we have belongs to (Guidi et al., 2022, p. 10-11). “Pass It On!” can be performed multiple times with the same question or with a new question (Guidi et al., 2022, p. 10-11). This activity allows for the development of a controlled and vibrant learning atmosphere that promotes teacher and student relationships to, in turn, further effective classroom management (Marzano et al., 2003, p. 42). Marzano et al. (2003, p. 41) explain the need for relationship building in the classroom to maintain effective classroom management due to the fact that my students may be more accepting of rules because of my relationship with them. Moreover, “Pass It On!” is a strategic approach for myself and my students to build meaningful relationships throughout the semester (Guidi et al., 2022, p. 10-11).

An additional approach to learning about my students at the beginning of and during the semester is through using an activity called “Newsfeed” (Guidi et al., 2022, p. 34-35). This distinct activity consists of fairly constant use where students will utilize discussion boards in Canvas, answering prompts specifically after holiday breaks or even various weekends (Guidi et al., 2022, p. 34-35). To illustrate, a prompt could be, “Share something that you are proud of yourself for this week.” Students and I would use the “Newsfeed” platform to share responses and even respond to others (Guidi et al., 2022, p. 34-35). In addition, an in-person class discussion can be incorporated to further the benefits of the activity (Guidi et al., 2022, p. 34-35). It is my hope that consistent use of the discussion board forum would encourage students to connect and provide a way for students and myself to reflect on the semester. This activity grants my students and me the opportunity to have a consistent platform that is intriguing and makes students feel supported and heard (Milner et al., 2019, p. 86). Milner et al. (2019, p. 84-86) touch on how students need a safe environment to grow academically and emotionally, making “Newsfeed” an appropriate activity to follow my students throughout the semester. Therefore, “Newsfeed” is a wonderful way to have constant relationship building with and among my students (Guidi et al., 2022, p. 34-35).

Constructing and maintaining relationships with my students is of utmost importance for me as a prospective educator. It is vital for me to ensure that my classroom provides students with a safe space, and it is supportive of their academic journey (Milner et al., 2019, p. 86). It is pivotal for me as a teacher to utilize the best practices to promote effective classroom management that will advance collaboration and authority (Marzano et al., 2003, p. 43). Furthermore, I not only believe that it is critical for me to have connections with my students but also for them to connect with each other through relationship-building activities (Guidi et al.,

2022, p. 4-5). Overall, in order to have successful relationships in the classroom among all parties involved, I feel that relationship-building activities must be implemented.

References

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