

Relationship-Building Activities

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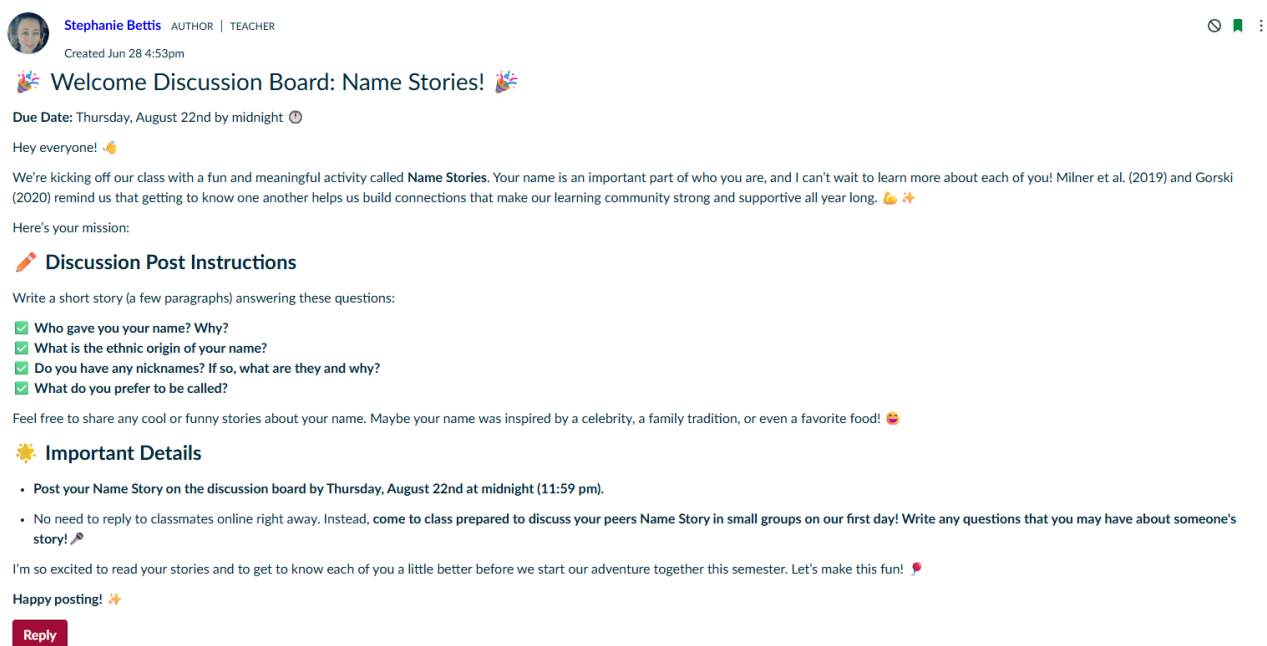
Building relationships in the classroom allows me to gain insight into my students' foundational background knowledge, which often includes their unique experiences, insights, and perspectives (Milner et al., 2019). By getting to know my students personally, I can draw on examples from their lives to make the content I teach more relevant and meaningful (Milner et al., 2019). Milner and colleagues (2019) explain that students living in poverty may primarily interact with peers from their own neighborhoods, which can limit their social connections. However, relationship-building activities in the classroom can help bridge these gaps and encourage students to connect with classmates outside their immediate communities. Fostering these relationships not only helps students feel more comfortable but also encourages a strong sense of belonging for the rest of the school year. The purpose of this paper is to explore three artifacts, name stories, greeting students at the door, and find someone who, that I will use to promote meaningful student-student and student-teacher relationships.


Name Stories

I have always had an interest in learning the origins of people's names. To me, teaching someone's name brings up stories where I can learn something new or share something in common with the person. Name Stories is an activity where students write short stories about their names and have an open discussion with their peers and instructors (Gorski, 2020). Milner et al. (2019) mention that instructors and peers taking the time to get to know one another can help to build upon their lives throughout the academic year.

I would assign this as a discussion board introduction before the first day of classes. By giving it before classes begin, students who are unaware of the answers can have meaningful conversations with parents or guardians to help them answer questions. I would inform the

students instead of replying online on the first day of class, we would break off into groups to discuss and ask any follow-up questions. Discussing this in person will help students feel more comfortable interacting with their peers and me. Below is an example of the following questions and format that I would present to my students:



 **Stephanie Bettis** AUTHOR | TEACHER 🔒 🌱 ⋮

Created Jun 28 4:53pm

Welcome Discussion Board: Name Stories!

Due Date: Thursday, August 22nd by midnight 🕒

Hey everyone! 🌟

We're kicking off our class with a fun and meaningful activity called **Name Stories**. Your name is an important part of who you are, and I can't wait to learn more about each of you! Milner et al. (2019) and Gorski (2020) remind us that getting to know one another helps us build connections that make our learning community strong and supportive all year long. 🍌 ✨

Here's your mission:

Discussion Post Instructions

Write a short story (a few paragraphs) answering these questions:

- ✅ Who gave you your name? Why?
- ✅ What is the ethnic origin of your name?
- ✅ Do you have any nicknames? If so, what are they and why?
- ✅ What do you prefer to be called?

Feel free to share any cool or funny stories about your name. Maybe your name was inspired by a celebrity, a family tradition, or even a favorite food! 🍌

Important Details

- Post your **Name Story** on the discussion board by **Thursday, August 22nd at midnight (11:59 pm)**.
- No need to reply to classmates online right away. Instead, **come to class prepared to discuss your peers Name Story in small groups on our first day!** Write any questions that you may have about someone's story! 🗣️

I'm so excited to read your stories and to get to know each of you a little better before we start our adventure together this semester. Let's make this fun! 🍌

Happy posting! ✨

[Reply](#)

Greeting Students at the Door

As a socially awkward person myself, I understand that some students may feel uncomfortable when entering a new environment with unfamiliar people. Meeting my students at the door with a welcoming message and open body language can help create a positive atmosphere in the class (Milner, 2019). Being positive and connecting with students before they take their seats can create an engaging environment where students are eager to learn. As Cantor (2019) mentions, connecting on a social level can activate someone's cognitive skills. By connecting with students on an individual basis, I will lead the students to feel like they are all being seen and not being skipped over.

To implement this concept in my classroom, I would start by arriving 30 minutes early to ensure all technical components are set up and I am by the door to welcome students. On the first day, I will greet each student who comes through the door with the words, "Hello, I'm Ms. Bettis, and welcome to your first day of class." During the first day of class, I will go over with the students that each class, I will be by the door waiting for them. If they are comfortable, I can meet them verbally, high-five them, or offer a hug, depending on their comfort level. Please let me know whether hello or high-five. I like the idea of implementing a sign on the door, but since I don't stay in the same classroom and other instructors use the classrooms, the paper will get lost or taken down by the custodian.

Find-Someone-Who

Find-someone-who is a relationship-building activity where the instructor develops questions of different levels of difficulty, and the students must mingle amongst each other to find someone who can answer the question (Randall, 2018). By implementing this activity in group work for an actual class, Cranton (2012) notes that exchanging information in group work is an essential component of meaningful learning for students. During welcome orientation to the dental programs, we always have students participate in 'Find Someone Who.' However, I never thought about incorporating this activity into my academic classes, which I will be integrating into my Dental Medical Emergency class.

In my Dental Medical Emergency class, I would implement Find Someone Who as an activity to engage with other students. I would create 10 questions that students would need to find someone that can answer these questions. After ten minutes, I would have the students volunteer to provide answers and the person who helped them answer it. Below is an example of the following questions and format that I would present to my students:

🦷 FIND SOMEONE WHO... 🚑

Dental Medical Emergency!

Instructions: Take ten minutes to "Find Someone Who" can answer these questions.

Rules:

1. You are not allowed to answer your own questions yourself. You must find someone else.
2. You must have all your peers answer at least one before using the same person again.
3. You have 10 minutes to answer all questions.
4. After 10 minutes, we will come back together and answer the questions and who helped you answer it.

Question	Answer	Signature
Can name the <i>first thing</i> you should do if a patient faints in the dental chair.		
Knows the medical term for low blood sugar and one symptom of it.		
Can explain how to position a patient having an asthma attack.		
Can tell you what drug is in an emergency kit for anaphylaxis.		
Knows what color a nitroglycerin bottle usually is and what it's used for.		
Can describe one sign of a stroke (CVA) in a patient.		
Knows how to check a patient's pulse and where to find it.		
Can tell you what to do if a patient has a seizure during treatment.		
Knows what acronym "CAB" stands for in emergency response.		
Can list two items you'd find in a dental office emergency kit.		

Conclusion

By implementing Name Stories, Greeting Students at the Door, and Find Someone Who, I will foster connections with my students, and students will gain connections with their peers. These activities can be easily incorporated into the lesson plans I have already established for my courses. The only activity that I would include once a year would be the name stories since I see the same students for one to two years. However, Greeting Students at the Door and Finding Someone Who can be built into my courses throughout the entire semester which can be beneficial to connecting with my students. As I continue to learn, I want to uphold my teaching philosophy of fostering strong student-teacher professional relationships and providing student-centered teaching opportunities through relationship-building activities.

References

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