

Building Stronger Relationships With Students

A List of Strategies

Over the next several months, try to incorporate some of these strategies into your lessons as a way to build stronger relationships and connections with your students. This list has been developed with SEL strategies as well as content strategies that have been reworked to increase a sense of belonging and connection in the classroom.

Concept/Strategy Name	Short (simplified) description
Learn Names Quickly	Research shows that using a student’s name has large impacts on your relationship with them. Tips: use name cards for the first couple of weeks; “study” a seating chart; make mnemonic devices to learn their names. Be sure that you are pronouncing them correctly or using the appropriate nickname.
The Three Coins	Put three coins in your pocket or on your desk. Make a point to talk one on one to three different students, and when you do, move the coin to the other pocket or to a different part of your desk. This will ensure that you are reaching each student, not just those students who are “easy to talk to.” You can also do this with each block.
Listen	Yes, it’s exactly how it sounds. Remember to listen to students, even when they don’t even know they are communicating with you. “Students are not giving you a hard time, THEY are having a hard time.”
First/Last Word First/Last Word as an AE Strategy	Start with a word that is key around feelings or attitudes.. Ask participants to create an acrostic poem at the start of the session. For example, you could ask them to do “joy” to get a sense of what brings them joy. This could be quick and used as an entrance or exit slip.
Data Wall/Picture	Give participants a post it & ask them to write their name on it. Next, ask them to post their name on a poster/picture or statement that most represents how they feel or what they understand. This can happen at the beginning, middle or end of a session, and can give you a picture of where people stand on a concept. You can do this to ask them how they feel about life in general or something specific.
Read and React Read and React as an AE Strategy	Provide participants with a short passage or quote, and ask them to react to it. They can text render, discuss it, or write a response. You can check out this great list of “life quotes.”
Smart Charts/ Gallery Walk Smart Charts as an AE Strategy	Provide poster paper for brainstorming or recording information to groups or partners. Post around the room and have all members walk around to read them (or comment or place question marks or check marks). You can ask questions about how students are feeling or what’s on their mind.

Analogy Prompt/Picture Connection	Present participants with an unfinished analogy and ask them to complete it. For example, “Starting a new school year is like.... Because...” Or provide a picture of something and ask... “This picture is like dealing with conflict because...”
Is – Isn’t <small>(Also a great concept attainment strategy for content)</small>	Ask participants to define a concept by creating a chart to explain what it “is” and what it “isn’t.” They can do so with examples or definitions. You can provide terms like, friendship, loyalty, respect, love, happiness.
Exit Slip; Ticket Out	Ask participants to provide feedback, understanding or comments from the session on their way out. This can be in the form of a question, 3-2-1 or reflection writing. You can encourage them to share something that’s on their mind or something that they are feeling.
One Word Summary/ Whip Around	Ask participants to think of one word that comes to mind when they think of a given topic, or one word that summarizes the way they are feeling. Then, you can whip around the room so all members can hear all the words. Remind that if someone said the word they wanted to say before them, that’s OK. Just repeat it.
Traffic Light Self-Assessment	Have participants hold up a colored card that represents their feeling or attitude towards a topic. Red- don’t get it; not good or no; Yellow- sort of; it’s OK or maybe; Green- got it, it’s good or yes.
Graffiti Wall	Have participants write out ideas on a large chart paper or doodle images to represent a concept, how they are feeling or their attitudes from the day.
What’s Important Poem or Haiku Poem	Participants can write a poem in this form: What’s important about ----- is... It’s true that... It’s true that... It’s true that... But the most important thing about ----- is... OR write a haiku to summarize the concept from the day or a feeling or attitude from the day.. Haiku’s are 3 lines and have 5 syllables, 7 syllables, and 5 syllables. Encourage them to communicate something that is on their mind.
Concept Map	Provide a graphic organizer for participants to conceptualize an idea or feeling. For example, if you are looking at a bunch of things that need to be accomplished, you can provide a flow chart and ask members to conceptualize the ways that they could get completed.
3- Minute Pause	Pause to allow for processing and reflecting. Ask participants to make connections to prior knowledge, experiences or their feelings. You can provide prompts... -I changed my attitude about... -I became more aware of... -I am feeling... -I was surprised by... etc.

Inside-Outside Circle	Create discussion with people by holding two circles where people in the inside circle face those in the outside circle. They can move to the right/left to change up their partner. Provide any prompt to elicit conversation.
Four Corners	Post 4 ideas or opinions in each corner. Ask participants to go to the corner that most represents their feeling on it. Members can partner with someone in their corner or another corner to discuss or debate their choice.
Stand Up/ Sit Down	Ask a series of questions and ask members to stand or sit according to their answers. Example, "I am anxious about the upcoming test..." My favorite ice cream flavor is chocolate."
Find Someone Who...	Partner people by asking them to find someone who... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have a different birthday month as them - are both wearing the same color shirt, etc. - has the same number or colored card as they do - has the "match" to their card (you can do common pairs, peanut butter and jelly; Mickey and Minnie, Phillies and The Phanatic etc). Then give them a prompt to talk with that person.
Five Word Summary	Ask participants to define, explain or share how they are feeling a concept in 5 words. In other words, what are the 5 words that are most critical to the concept.
The 5 Whys	Participants practice explaining their rationale to an opinion, statement, feeling or attitude by asking why? They then ask "why?" again and repeat for 5 times, writing a response every time.
Role Playing (Fish bowl)	People (can be participants or the facilitator & participants) role play some concept or idea. For example, a role play could include a student engaging in a difficult conversation or something that is bothering them.