



Building Positive Teacher-Student Relationships: Helping Students Transition to High School by Increasing their Connectedness

Jennifer Ramos, Ed.D.

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Overview of the Spotlight Session

- Background
- First day of teaching: Expectations vs. Reality
- Positive Relationships in the Classroom: What the Research Says
- Teacher Characteristics
- Strategies to Build Positive Relationships in the Classroom
- Best Practices
- Questions/Answers

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Background

- 13 years of teaching experience; English , AVID & GFSF
- Earned my doctorate in Organizational Leadership from Brandman University. Dissertation examined the strategies AVID teachers use to build positive teacher-student relationships.
- When I was approached to teach Get Focused, Stay Focused at my school site, I jumped at the opportunity because I felt that it would help to improve the school's freshmen transition initiative by helping students feel connected to school, and ultimately, their future.

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Day 1 of Teaching : August 2004

Expectation	Reality
All of my students were as excited about school as I was.	I was more excited than the majority of my students.
Students would have a solid understanding of English concepts, etc.	Some, yes. More of my students, no.
All students would be successful and would enjoy my class.	Not. So. Much.

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Positive Relationships in the Classroom: What the Research Says...

- Education in the 21st century is very complex, which mirrors the complexity of students in the classroom.
- The diverse student populations are dealing with an extraordinary amount of pressure, both socially and academically; therefore, the need for establishing positive relationships with their teachers and peers is needed now more than ever.
- These connections within the classroom, for both the teacher and student, can have a deep impact.

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Benefits of Positive Teacher-Student Relationships

For Teachers	For Students
• Retention within the teaching profession	• Positive social and emotional effects for students
• Job satisfaction	• Increased academic achievement
• Intrinsic value of helping students reach their academic potential	• Health and well being, including improving a student's self-esteem, confidence, and motivation
	• Increased connectedness to school

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Teacher Characteristics

Research indicates the following (4) teacher characteristics help to cultivate relationships within the classroom:

1. Attunement
2. Relatedness
3. Supportiveness
4. Gentle discipline

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Attunement

Definition: being or bringing into harmony; a feeling of being "at one" with another being

- allows for teachers to gain a better understanding for their students in addition to their perspectives
- are better equipped to help support them academically as well as socially.

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Relatedness

Definition: associated; connected

- how students feel their teachers perceive them
- refers to "the experience of connecting with others in ways that conduce toward well-being and self-cohesion in all individuals involved"
- students are more likely to be more engaged and motivated within contexts where their basic psychological needs are being met; therefore, teachers must be able to connect with students in a manner where students feel accepted, respected, and valued

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Supportiveness

Definition: giving support; providing sympathy, encouragement or additional help

- Relatedness, the second teacher characteristic, and supportiveness the third characteristic, are equally as important in order for teachers to build positive relationships with their students.
- When students feel as if their teacher accepts, respects and values them, they also feel supported.

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Gentle Discipline

The fourth and final characteristic, gentle discipline, gives teachers the ability to provide management within their classroom to ensure that learning is not compromised. Four common rules for effective classroom management:

1. well-defined classroom rules
2. objective-oriented learning environment
3. positive and encouraging climate
4. provide students with clear expectations of responsibility

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Strategies to Build Positive Relationships

- Setting high expectations
- Engagement techniques
- Praising students
- Linking learning with "real world"
- Emphasize constructive discipline
- Effective classroom management
- Peaceful resolution of problems

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Best Practices

- Greeting students at the door
 - Tickets in/out the door
- Setting norms/expectations
 - Social contracts
- Engagement
 - Socratic seminars
 - Flip the classroom
 - Writing (informal/formal)
- Praise
 - Snaps, tweets, marbles
 - Handshakes

AVID's got all its marbles!
I, _____, would like to nominate _____ for the _____ marble, which represents _____ because: _____

Green - Leadership
Black - Inspiring potential
Yellow - uplifting attitude
Red - enthusiasm
Blue - responsibility
Purple - ready/standing up for one another

Orange - confidence
Peach - collaboration/being a team player
Multicolor - student whose words and actions have been truly inspirational = marbles!



Contact Information

Jennifer Ramos, Ed.D.
Cosumnes Oaks High School
(916) 683-7670
jmramos@egusd.net

**"IT'S THE LITTLE CONVERSATIONS THAT BUILD THE RELATIONSHIPS AND MAKE AN IMPACT ON EACH STUDENT."
ROBERT JOHN MEEHAN**