

Six Relationship-Building Behaviors for the Classroom Teacher

a = what teachers do to make the behavior part of classroom practice

b = a sample statement or activity that encompasses the behavior

c = what the behavior does for students

1. Show unconditional positive regard (i.e., love unconditionally)

- a) Act warmly toward students on all possible occasions, regardless of behavior – especially those students who are the most challenging to work with.
- b) Show kindness even to the student who was disruptive yesterday, or to the student who once again failed to complete the assignment he promised.
- c) Unconditionally positive behavior assures students that misconduct or performance failures will not diminish the teacher's care for them

2. Ask students about their progress, their welfare, their feelings...

- a) Show interest in how students are doing, socially, emotionally, and with subject matter
- b) "How are you finding this activity, John?"
"Hey, Max, are you doing okay this morning?"
- c) Shows care and encourages students to express themselves openly – to use their "voice" – facilitating connection with their teacher

3. Express affection

- a) Be warm and kind to students.
- b) "It's good to see you, Teresa!"
"Your smile always helps our classroom feel like a happier place."
- c) Helps students feel they are cared for

4. Promote cooperation

- a) Set up activities that encourage students to work together toward common goals.
- b) "See if you can figure this problem out working as a group."
"Working together, find your two best ideas for how Tricia can solve her problem with Anne"
- c) Allows for joint pursuit of a goal; helps students learn from one another, advance together

5. Show enthusiasm

- a) Present learning content enthusiastically to make it fun and interesting
- b) "I love what we're doing next; I think you'll find it very interesting!"
"I think our progress so far is great! Can I help you take you a step further today?"
- c) Models the attitude and energy that the teacher hopes students will feel; shows students that the teacher has a high level of interest

6. Seek, and show, understanding of students' points of view

- a) Try to understand how students see things before suggesting a new way to approach learning material
- b) "I can understand that there are other things you'd rather do after school"
"Help me understand what part you find the hardest"
- c) Helps students feel listened to, and understood

The above comes from Ahmadi et al., 2023. A Classification System for Teachers' Motivational Behaviors Recommended in Self-Determination Theory Interventions. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000783> (Adapted by D. Streight).