Cultivating Positive Student-Teacher Relationships through PBL

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Overview of Today’s Session

1. Describe the importance of student-teacher relationships
2. Discuss the elements of positive student-teacher relationships
3. Share strategies for...
   1. Increasing student voice in PBL systems
   2. Getting to know your students
   3. Increasing positive student-teacher interactions

Handouts: http://www.pbis.org

Connections…

- Find a partner you don’t know yet
- Take turns sharing your answers to these questions:
  1. Who was a teacher who really connected with you?
  2. What was it they did that made the difference?

Just what are positive student-teacher relationships?

- Warm tone
- Genuine
- High standards

(Pianta, 1999)
Is creating positive student-teacher relationships more of a trait or a teachable skill?

- Always happy to see you when you come in the door
- Don’t hold grudges

What qualities do people value in romantic relationships? (Phillips, 2010)

What strategies build positive student-teacher relationships?

- Increase **student voice** in PBL systems

**Ask the Audience**

- In a word or two…

  - How do you think your students would describe your school’s behaviour support systems?
“Nothing about us without us.”

Student PBL Advisory Board
- Liaisons between School PBL team and student body
- Selected to reach marginalized and vulnerable youth

Stakeholder Input & Satisfaction
- Student PBL Advisory Board
- Stakeholder Input and Satisfaction Surveys
- Voice in expectations and matrices
- Co-teaching of expectations
- Student clubs

Increase student voice in PBL systems
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Ask your local PBIS Assessment coordinator for access (it’s on our FieldTest site)
There are three ways of trying to win the young. There is **persuasion**. There is **compulsion** and there is **attraction**. You can preach at them; that is a hook without a worm. You can say “you must volunteer.” That is the devil. And you can tell them, “you are needed” that hardly ever fails.

- Kurt Hahn

**How about cogeneration of classroom rules?**

- The “Classroom Constitution”

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**Satisfaction Surveys**

Ask your local PBIS Assessment coordinator for access (it's on our [FieldTest](#) site)
How about cogeneration of classroom rules?

- The “Classroom Constitution”
  - [https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/a-new-set-of-rules](https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/a-new-set-of-rules)
  - Students generate the classroom expectations and/or rules collaboratively
  - Everyone signs the constitution

A less perfect union?

- Use the school-wide expectations to frame the work
- Generate examples within the expectations
- Avoid signatures
- Supplement with a “rights” activity?

A more perfect union…

- Classroom Bill of Rights Activity

**Classroom Constitution**

We, the students of Mrs. Goode's class, in order to create a classroom where we can do our best thinking and learning, do understand and agree to follow these rules:

1. Be Safe - We will do our best to keep ourselves and others safe by following school rules and not hurting anyone.
2. Be Respectful - We will take care of and respect our classroom, our materials, and each other.
3. Be Responsible - We will take our own personal responsibility for our actions and help our classmates do the same.

This constitution was signed by all the students and teachers at room 1366 on May 23rd, 2011.
Rules Gallery Walk

1. Students walk around the school and document (e.g., photograph) any “rules”

2. Post rules on the walls of the gym with a set of questions on flipchart paper:
   - Is the rule positively stated?
   - What is the purpose of the rule?
   - What is the underlying value that this rule promotes?
   - Is this rule necessary?
   - Does this rule fit within any of our school-wide expectations (if they exist)?

3. Use results to revise expectations and rules

“The Blank Matrix Activity”

- Provide students with a school-wide matrix (with blank expectation by setting cells)
- Have students write (or draw) expectations for each area
- Use results to:
  - Revise matrix to include more “student-friendly” examples
  - Identify areas or expectations that need reteaching

Bullying Prevention in PBL

The BP-PBL Curriculum: Student training

- Teaching school-wide rules
- Responding to problem behaviour - “Stop, Walk, Talk”
  - Stop: Tell someone who is teasing to “stop”
  - Walk: Walk away from the problem behaviour
  - Talk: Tell an adult

Available for free at [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)

Ross, Horner, & Stiller, 2008
A BP-PBL Case Study
(Good, McIntosh, & Gietz, 2010)

- Implementation through a Student PBL Leadership Team
  - Had input in making the BP-PBL program socially acceptable to all students
  - Selected the “Stop” signal
    - “Too far” with hands crossed
  - Three Grade 8 students presented the program to the rest of the school

Student Clubs

- Indigenous Boys Book Club
  - Identify a book to read
  - Invite community members to join

- Student social justice club (Take Action)

- Student fine arts expression clubs

Outcomes
- Office discipline referrals (ODRs) for verbal bullying

![Chart showing Office discipline referrals (ODRs) for verbal bullying]

- Total ODRs
- 2007-2008
- 2008-2009

- Month
- September
- October
- November
- December
- January
- February
- March
- April
- May
- June

Indigenous Boys Book Club
- Identify a book to read
- Invite community members to join

Student social justice club (Take Action)
- Empower students to exercise their voices at school in a way that is typically unavailable to them. Students write, present, and listen to the work of their peers.
Student Clubs

Student Stories Club
(Perry G Keithley Middle School, Franklin Pierce SD, WA)
- Monthly lunchtime opportunity
- Students submit stories for approval before the session
- Monthly themes
  - e.g., Identity: must start with “I am…”
- Vote on the best ones and hold a community poetry slam

What strategies build positive student-teacher relationships?

- Increase student voice in PBL systems
- Get to know students and their lives

Get to Know Students and Their Lives

- Attend student extracurricular events
- Strengths & interests assessments (surveys or interviews)
- Student/teacher “About Me” poster activity
- Values cards activities
- Share yourself too!

Strengths & Interests Assessment

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

My name: _____________________________
Something I am really good at is: ____________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
My favorite thing to do outside of school is: __________________________________
______________________________________________________________
Here is how I’d like you to let me know when I’m doing a good job:
Circle things you’d like and cross out things you wouldn’t like:
Tell me quietly  Tell the whole class  Give me a school-wide ticket
High-five  Fist bump  Secret signal between you and me
Other: ____________________________________________________________
To be even more successful, here is the help I need from you: ____________________
______________________________________________________________
Strengths & Interests Assessment: Possible Items

- **Background**
  - Do you have a nickname?
  - Who do you live with/takes care of you/who knows you best?
  - What languages are spoken in your home?

- **Strengths**
  - Something I’m good at is…
  - Something I want to get good at is…
  - Something I like to do outside of school is…
  - Something I’m proud of about…
    - Myself…
    - My family…
    - My culture…

- **Interests**
  - Who is your hero?
  - What do you want to be when you grow up?
  - Who is your favorite musician?
  - What makes you laugh?
  - What is your biggest fear?
  - If you could eat one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be?

- **Support**
  - The things I most need help with are:
  - The things that get me angry are:
  - To be even more successful, here is the help I need from you:
  - If I’m not doing what you want, I respond best when you tell me this way:
Strengths & Interests
Assessment: Another Example

- If you’re proud of me, I hope you…
- If I’m angry, please…
- When I’m not in school, my responsibilities include…
- I hope this is a class where…
- I hope we don’t…
- I respect teachers who…

(Erin Olsen)

Strengths & Interests
Assessment: Another Example

- Letter to Teacher
  - On the first day of school (or semester)
    - Ask students to write you a letter as if it is the last day of school
    - Explain why being in your class was their best year ever

(Barbara Blackburn)

Strengths & Interests
Assessment: Options

- Administer to everyone
- Administer to a few
- Use as 1-on-1 interview
- Use as reciprocal interview
- Drip a question a week

Strengths & Interests
Assessment: Activity

- Complete the student assessment handout as a 1-on-1
  - Take turns asking each other the questions
  - Ok to “pass”
- Discuss how you’d use in your classroom
Strengths & Interests Assessment: Possible Items

- Strengths
  - Something I’m good at is…
  - Something I want to get good at is…
  - Something I like to do outside of school is…
  - Something I’m proud of about…
    - Myself…
    - My family…
    - My culture…

Strengths & Interests Assessment: Preparation

- Come up with your own survey questions
- How will you administer it?
- How will you use it to guide instruction?

“About Me” Poster Activity

Cambridge Early Learning Center, Nashville TN
Classroom Storytelling Activity

- Tell the class the story of how you became a teacher – show a picture that symbolizes the story
- Ask students to share a story about them in small groups (perhaps with a picture on their phones)
- With permission, ask one student in each group to share the story of someone else in their group

Storytelling activity

1. Take a look at your phone’s pictures. Find one that represents something about who you are or aspire to be
2. Find another partner you’ve not talked with yet
3. Take turns introducing yourself through this picture

Activity: Integrating GTKU Activities

1. Complete the form
2. Discuss with an elbow partner
3. Share out

How can we intentionally bring this new knowledge to improve relationships with students?

Some ideas…

- Find similar interests/strengths for students with weaker relationships
- Look for “down times” to discuss students’ lives
- Look for times during the day when commenting on strengths would be useful
What strategies build positive student-teacher relationships?

- Increase **student voice** in PBL systems
- Get to know **students and their lives**
- Increase **positive to negative interactions ratios**

Which PBL Features are Most Predictive of Equity?

- Significant predictors of decreased disproportionality:
  - Regular use of data for decision making (Tobin & Vincent, 2011)
  - Implementation of classroom PBL systems (Tobin & Vincent, 2011)
  - Use of formal reward systems (Barclay, 2017; Tobin & Vincent, 2011)

Where did that 5:1 positive to negative ratio come from?

- John Gottman
  - University of Washington
  - Relationship research

“as much as I could, I tried to find the good, and praise it.”

Alex Haley
Consider Interdependent Group Acknowledgement Systems

Reinforcer Preference Surveys
Praise Preference Assessment

Put a star by your favorite and an X by any you don’t like.

When I do something good, I want Mrs. [ ] to...

[ ] Our class gets a chain.
[ ] I get a WOW! Ticket.
[ ] Mrs. [ ] tells me I did a good job.
[ ] Mrs. [ ] gives me a smile or a thumbs up.

Results also replicated in a larger study (Cook et al., 2018)

Greet Students at the Door

- Stand at the door as students arrive and:
  1. Greet them by name
  2. Say something positive or neutral
  3. Direct to the first activity

Jamie Judy
Lastinger Primary School
Tifton, GA
Greet Students at the Door

Jamie Judy, Lastinger Primary School, Tifton, GA

Helpful Hints

1. Stand just inside or just outside of the door
   1. Not hallway monitor – focus on positivity with your students!
2. Positively interact with students
3. Try a precorrective thank-you
   1. Maybe not necessarily DIRECTIVE
   2. Ex: “Thank you for…[what you’re asking them to do next].”

Activity:
Incorporate Greetings

- Discuss with a neighbour
  - Do you already do it?
    - If so, how do you do it?
  - What are some ways it could work at your school/classroom?
- What are some barriers?
  - What might you do to address them?
Activity: Integrating Greet at the Door

1. Complete the form
2. Discuss with an elbow partner
3. Share out

What strategies build positive student-teacher relationships?

- Increase student voice in PBL systems
- Get to know students and their lives
- Increase positive to negative interactions ratios
- Intensify efforts when needed

Intensify Efforts When Needed

- 2 x 10 intervention
  - 2 min. for 10 days
  - End each session with an optimistic closure

Students work hardest for teachers they like and respect. When I’m asked, “How do I get the students to like and respect me?” my immediate response is, “Like and respect them first.”

Dr. Debbie Silver in Education Week Teacher
Closing Activities to Build Relationships

- “A-A-A”
  - In a circle, ask each person to share an:
    - an Acknowledgement
    - an A-ha or
    - an Apology
  - Allow students to “pass” if they don’t have one to share

Your Turn!

- Share with the group:
  1. What are the strategies you use to build positive student-teacher relationships?

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