



## 2 X 10: GETTING TO KNOW A STUDENT

*"The secret in teaching lies in respecting the student."*

*—Ralph Waldo Emerson*

### OVERVIEW

Teachers spend two minutes a day for ten days talking to a student with whom they wish to foster a positive relationship.

### PLANNING FOR IT

#### WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- Any time during the school year, but especially at the beginning of the year to cultivate positive relationships with students

#### TIME REQUIRED

- 2 minutes per day for 10 consecutive school days

#### LEVEL

- Pre-K & Lower Elementary
- Upper Elementary
- Middle School
- High School

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Teachers will:

- Cultivate a positive relationship with a student by spending time getting to know that student

## MATERIALS

- None

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

- [Making Practices Culturally Responsive](#)
- [Adapting Practices for Students with Special Needs](#)
- [Making Classrooms and Schools Trauma-Informed and Healing Centered](#)

## SEL COMPETENCIES

- Relationship Skills

## HOW TO DO IT

### REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

- Take a moment to think of a social situation or a classroom where you felt shy or didn't feel you belonged (i.e., that someone cared you were there), and someone reached out to you in a way that made you feel more connected.
  - Who was this person and what did they say to you to make you feel as if you belong?
  - Did your interaction with this person change how you felt about being in this situation or classroom? For example, did you feel that you had every right to be there, or did you question whether this was a fit for you?
  - Did your behaviors or beliefs about yourself change as a result of this interaction? For instance, did you feel that you had a positive contribution to make, or did you continue to feel shy about being there?
- What is your reason for doing this practice? How is it relevant to a student's life? Would they agree with you?
- If the student comes from a different background than yours, how might you learn more about this student's background in order to better connect with them?
- Reflect on whether you might hold any unconscious biases around race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, gender, or other forms of diversity toward a student.
  - This [article](#) by John A. Powell provides strategies for removing these biases.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Choose a student with whom you have had a hard time creating a positive connection or who perhaps is struggling. Students who are habitually quiet or who don't participate in class may also benefit from this exercise.
- Build time into your daily schedule to interact with this student for 2 minutes per day for 10 consecutive school days; for example, connect with the student before school, passing time, recess, lunch, during seat work, in the hallways, or after school.

- Be sure to keep your interaction with the student positive and focused on the student’s interests. Avoid talking about classwork unless prompted by the student. Here are some possible topics for conversation:
  - Favorite movie, TV show, sports team, music, etc.
  - Favorite thing to do after school or on weekends
  - The student’s upcoming game or performance
- Listen more than you talk. If it’s helpful, you might review the steps for [Active Listening](#).
- After the first ten days, continue to find ways to informally connect with the student.

## REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

Do you notice a change in this student or in your relationship with them? Has your view of the student shifted after doing this exercise? If so, in what way?

## THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

### EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

Studies with diverse groups of students have found that [students describe good teachers](#) as those who listen and take a personal interest in students’ lives.

### WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The [teacher-student relationship](#) is at the heart of teaching. Students who know their teachers care about them are more [engaged](#) and [motivated to learn](#). They also show greater [prosocial—kind and helpful—behavior](#) and increased [academic achievement](#). Indeed, for [students in grades 8-12](#), the teacher-student relationship is the one factor most closely associated with academic growth.

And teachers, too, [benefit from good relationships](#) with their students by experiencing the joy of teaching, helping them to maintain their commitment to the profession by preventing burnout.