



Why Before School Is The Perfect Time To Build Rapport

Five minutes.

That's all it takes to improve your relationship with your students. And why is that important?

Because having rapport with students translates to powerful and behavior-influencing leverage – the kind of leverage that compels them to want to behave, to want to do well, and to want to please you.

And those few minutes before the morning bell are perfect for improving relationships, perfect for building a natural, trusting bond between you.

But you have to get up from your desk to do it.

You have to set aside your lesson plans, walk away from your last minute preparations, and give up your most treasured final moments of morning solitude.

For wherever your students congregate before school – in the hallway, on the playground, lined up outside your classroom – that's where you should be.

Chatting, listening, smiling . . . just visiting.

Here's why:

It's an easy way to build rapport.

Simply being with your students outside the limits of the classroom is an easy, organic way to build rapport. But it's important that you bring with you no agenda, no expectations, and no strings attached. Just bring your non-judgmental self and a modest goal of getting to know your students better. And they'll take care of the rest.

It's an opportunity to talk with those who talk less.

As your students grow accustomed to your presence every morning, they'll begin drawing closer – sharing personal stories, becoming more familiar, smiling and laughing more and making eye contact. This is especially important for shy, quieter students. You see, the more comfortable they are with you in these casual moments, the more they'll open up, participate, and contribute in class.

It allows you to prove that every day is a new day.

The idea that yesterday's mistakes and misbehaviors are forgotten is an important part of an overall strategy to **turn around your most difficult students**. But it doesn't work if they don't believe you or if your actions say otherwise. Thus, spending some quality, no-strings-attached time with them every morning is an especially impactful way to prove this truth to a skeptical bunch.

It brings less popular students into the fold.

No, you're not going to have a particular agenda or awkward strategy to force friendships with less popular students. But what you are going to do is let everyone see who these students really are. You're going to let their personalities blossom and shine. And as you build rapport with them, and bring others into the conversation, friendships will develop naturally. You're just a gardener planting seeds.

It's a reminder of what a blessing it is to be a teacher.

The love of teaching can be found in your relationships with students. It's the deep connections, the laughter, the thank yous, the smiles, and the poignant moments you'll always remember – and that can never be taken away. The more time you spend with your students “just because,” the more influence you'll have, the better teacher you'll be, and more you'll love your job.

Just Be You

The biggest mistake teachers make when attempting to build rapport is that they try too hard. They dominate the conversation – talking at, rather than with, students. They **shower them with praise**. They **talk too loud** and too aggressively.

In other words, they *force* the relationship – and come across as inauthentic.

The truth is, having a healthy, trusting, and influential rapport with students, the kind that gives **your classroom management plan** relevance and meaning, is primarily a function of your likeability.

So take it easy.

Listen more than talk. Don't try so hard. Let the conversation come to you – and then let it go where it goes.

Just be there. Be open. Be available. And most of all . . .

Be yourself.

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