



Ensure Automatization Through Practice and Review

Relationship skills are an important component of Social Emotional Learning (SEL). As with each element of SEL, it is important that students be provided with direct skill instruction, opportunities for structured practice, and explicit feedback. Included are some possible suggestions for the incorporation of direct instruction, practice, and feedback in the classroom. With these suggestions, students should receive structured lessons and support in the skills necessary to appropriately engage in each activity. Each classroom and student population will be different and may benefit from more or less structured activities.



Class Meetings and Shared Norms

A popular way to build relationship skills and general expectations is to set up a class meeting time. During the elementary grades, this typically happens as the “morning meeting” where students review the calendar, day of the week, or schedule for the day among other housekeeping items. Students may even have a reading time where they learn to sit quietly, ask appropriate and relevant questions, and respond to each other. Through these meetings, students learn how to take turns, have ownership over some elements of the meeting, and show respect for each other and the educator.

- **Class Contracts** are another helpful way to increase student ownership and allow all students to have a voice in the norms and rules developed for the class. Drafting a class contract together is a great way to build the relationship skills for middle and high school students. When students are active in brainstorming behaviors and expectations that are important for the class, they take greater responsibility for following them.



Student-Based Activities: There are a variety of activities that educators can build into daily classroom routines that will assist students develop and refine relationship skills,.

- **Class Buddies**, sometimes called “around the world” or “**clock buddies**,” allow students to work with different partners during class activities. The basic premise involves students assigning different partner names on a given sign up sheet. At any given time, students can be asked to work with a specific partner, which gives students the opportunity to work with different classmates regardless of preference. Students have the opportunity to work on their relationship skills with their various partners.



- **Think Pair Share** is another way to engage students in working with a greater variety of classmates. With this activity, students first develop their own thoughts/answers to a question. Then, students are paired with a classmate to discuss their opinions. After arriving at a shared answer, the partners present their response to the class.
- **Student Editors** provides students with an ownership role within the classroom. With any assignment, students can be asked to share feedback with each other either through editing written work, giving feedback on an element of performance, or even rating the teacher and engaging in shared dialogue. In order for this activity to be effective, students must know how to provide and receive an appropriate critique, so a checklist or template would be helpful.



Course/Content Development

As students grow in their development of skills, educators could consider building more relationship skills into course content or creating relevant new classes. One example of this could be a Debate class or club in which students must practice conflict resolution, collaborative learning, and communication skills in order to find success within the curriculum. Across school environments, educators have also created after school clubs or elective courses that build on these relationship skills and require students to practice and refine them through academic and interest-driven interactions. Hands-on activities and classroom games are examples of less intimidating ways to build these skills within curriculum.

HOW DOES THIS CONNECT TO ENSURE AUTOMATIZATION THROUGH PRACTICE AND REVIEW?

Each suggestion for relationship skill practice provides students with multiple opportunities that can occur across the school day and across content areas, which research has found is the best way for students to master Social Emotional skills. The more students are exposed to situations in which they are required to utilize relationship skills, the more likely they are to inherently develop and use these skills. Instruction and activities that allow students to practice and receive feedback on their relationship skills are important to development and mastery.