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USE TRUST TO BUILD TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

To paraphrase the late educator Rita Pierson, young people don't learn from old people they don't like.

In addition to our collective personal knowledge about the power of humane, growth-producing relationships, there is compelling research evidence to support this. We have already noted that teacher credibility has an effect size of 1.09, which is impressive. But if we just consider teacher-student relationships, the effect size is 0.47, still above average and likely to further accelerate learning. There is a distinction between teacher credibility and teacher-student relationships. The former operates in one direction and lies within the student's perceptions. The latter is bidirectional, as both teacher and student participate in its development. These are not unrelated to one another, and in fact trust is foundational in relationships.

Positive relationships between teachers and students are among the most commonly cited variables associated with effective instruction. If the relationship is strong, instructional strategies seem to be more effective. Conversely, a weak or negative relationship will mute or even negate the benefits of even the most effective instructional strategies.⁶

The Search Institute has created a Developmental Relationships Framework. Their model has five major components (expressed from the perspective of an individual student):

1. **Express care**—Show me that I matter to you.
2. **Challenge growth**—Push me to keep getting better.
3. **Provide support**—Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.
4. **Share power**—Treat me with respect and give me a say.
5. **Expand possibilities**—Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.



The Developmental Relationships Framework

Young people are more likely to grow up successfully when they experience developmental relationships with important people in their lives. Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. Search Institute has identified five elements—expressed in 20 specific actions—that make relationships powerful in young people’s lives.

Elements	Actions	Definitions
 <p>Express Care Show me that I matter to you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be dependable.....Be someone I can trust. • Listen.....Really pay attention when we are together. • Believe in me.....Make me feel known and valued. • Be warm.....Show me you enjoy being with me. • Encourage.....Praise me for my efforts and achievements. 	
 <p>Challenge Growth Push me to keep getting better.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect my best.....Expect me to live up to my potential. • Stretch.....Push me to go further. • Hold me accountable.....Insist I take responsibility for my actions. • Reflect on failures.....Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks. 	
 <p>Provide Support Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate.....Guide me through hard situations and systems. • Empower.....Build my confidence to take charge of my life. • Advocate.....Stand up for me when I need it. • Set boundaries.....Put limits in place that keep me on track. 	
 <p>Share Power Treat me with respect and give me a say.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect me.....Take me seriously and treat me fairly. • Include me.....Involve me in decisions that affect me. • Collaborate.....Work with me to solve problems and reach goals. • Let me lead.....Create opportunities for me to take action and lead. 	
 <p>Expand Possibilities Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire.....Inspire me to see possibilities for my future. • Broaden horizons.....Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places. • Connect.....Introduce me to people who can help me grow. 	

NOTE: Relationships are, by definition, bidirectional, with each person giving and receiving. So each person in a strong relationship both engages in and experiences each of these actions. However, for the purpose of clarity, this framework is expressed from the perspective of one young person.

Note that each of the major components has actions and definitions. For example, one of the actions is to advocate. *Stand up for me when I need it.* This is one of 20 actions, all of which are powerful. Consider each of the factors from the Developmental Relationships Framework. **Use the scale on the right** to estimate the number of students who believe that you demonstrate each factor.

<p>Express care—Show me that I matter to you.</p> <p>no students few students most students all students</p>
<p>Challenge growth—Push me to keep getting better.</p> <p>no students few students most students all students</p>
<p>Provide support—Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.</p> <p>no students few students most students all students</p>
<p>Share power—Treat me with respect and give me a say.</p> <p>no students few students most students all students</p>
<p>Expand possibilities—Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.</p> <p>no students few students most students all students</p>

Source: The Developmental Relationships Framework is copyrighted by Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN (www.searchinstitute.org) and used with permission.

Take a look at your responses. What do you notice? What are your strengths and opportunities for growth? Are you willing to share your responses with a trusted peer and solicit advice?

TAKE ACTION

using the action plan process, what is your goal for improving or maintaining positive, growth-producing relationships with students?