

Strategies for Making Connections

(3 pages)

Personal Connection Strategies

- ▶ Be at the door and greet students as they arrive.
- ▶ Collect personal index cards.
- ▶ Use the 4H method (handshake, high five, hello, how are you).
- ▶ Thank them for cooperating before they actually have.
- ▶ (Music teachers) Welcome students with a few bars of favorite music.
- ▶ Apologize when you blow it and know it.
- ▶ Offer “personal best” awards.
- ▶ Send positive postcards.
- ▶ Use a “reframing” strategy when dealing with difficult students.
- ▶ Play “their” music occasionally.

Academic Connection Strategies

- ▶ Congratulate five students per class on something they accomplished.
- ▶ Say “thank you” for a class contribution instead of “right” or “wrong.”
- ▶ Offer adequate wait time after asking a question.

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- ▶ Use e-mail to communicate assignments, long term projects, and due dates.
- ▶ Plan group celebrations to recognize outstanding individual effort (for example, plan a whole-school breakfast in honor of “honor society” students or a group reward based upon an individual’s improvement).
- ▶ In addition to or instead of having an “honor roll,” establish an “on-a-roll” program that honors improvement.
- ▶ Give a silent (using nonverbal cues only) or loud cheer.
- ▶ Take photos of students as they are working on projects.
- ▶ Display student work in the classroom.
- ▶ Specify daily learning objectives.

Social Connection Strategies

- ▶ Create an appreciation sharing or thank-you board.
- ▶ Say “good morning” and “see you tomorrow.”
- ▶ Compile a “nice things” list.
- ▶ Oversee a social action project around a community issue, encourage class to sponsor a charity event or fundraiser, or both.
- ▶ Encourage students to help each other (even around behavior issues).
- ▶ Facilitate a social problem-solving session around a class or individual problem.

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- ▶ Ask students to bring learning supplies to help each other in case someone forgets.
- ▶ Offer students responsible jobs (absence communicator, rule reminder, cheerer-upper), especially those who need positive recognition.
- ▶ Look for opportunities to involve students in school issues that affect them (mediator, student council representative, or discipline committee member).
- ▶ Establish policies and practices that make it unacceptable to say or do hurtful things.

