

Center Relationships and Care

Connectedness

Reflection Prompts

1. How will I learn about my students' home and community contexts in order to support and teach them this year? How can I avoid making assumptions about my students and their families based on my understanding of their contexts?
2. What does each one of my students appreciate, need, and worry about? How can I honor what they appreciate in my approach and curriculum? How can I address their needs and worries?
3. Where can I build in opportunities to share my story and learn alongside my students as we start to build relationships and community this fall?
4. How can I create opportunities for students to connect socially or outside the academic context?

Action Steps

- Design opportunities to check in with your students, and for your students to meet or connect informally with each other, on a regular basis.
- Write a letter to your students sharing your favorite experiences at school, what you missed while teaching remotely, and your hopes for the year. Have students write back, and then respond. While time consuming, these written "chats" invite storytelling and deepen relationships over time.
- Distribute asset-based surveys to learn students' strengths, interests, goals, what helps them thrive, what motivates them, their learning preferences, and who in your school community they connect with.

Predictability

Reflection Prompts

1. What effective classroom routines and structures have I used in the past that center relationships and care?
2. Which routines and structures can I focus on this year to help build continuity between face-to-face and remote instruction?
3. What systems can I put in place to track students' emotional health, interests, challenges, and concerns that they share during opening and closing routines?
4. How can I involve students in the classroom routines so they are positioned to lead them in the future?

Action Steps

- Establish **opening and closing routines** that you use to welcome students and check in on everyone's emotional well-being.
- Organize students into consistent small groups. Teachers have had success with triads that meet over time and develop a level of comfort and trust with one another.
- Establish a routine for receiving weekly feedback from students about what is and isn't working for them in class. Incorporate this feedback loop into assessments as well.

Empowerment

Reflection Prompts

1. Who are my most vulnerable students, and what specific actions can I take in the first weeks of school to engage them and their families? How will I start the process of relationship building with these students? Who can I turn to for help with this effort?
2. How can I use surveys and no-stakes pre-assessments to understand my students' interests, learning needs, and learning preferences?
3. How will I incorporate aspects of my students' identities and values when differentiating instruction?
4. Who in my school community can I partner with to support students with IEPs, learning differences, and my English learners?

Action Steps

- Review your roster and identify your most vulnerable students. Prioritize these students when creating your check-in schedule. Then schedule individualized check-ins with all of your students. Adapt **Activity 14 and Activity 15** from **Community Matters: A Facing History Approach to Advisory** to help guide your conversations.
- If you hold office hours, schedule them at different times and in different formats to meet with students in a variety of ways. Doing so helps to ensure that students with out-of-school and family responsibilities don't miss out on valuable learning opportunities.

Flexibility

Reflection Prompts

1. What steps can I take to ensure that students have some agency in what and how they learn?
2. How can I help my students draw connections between events in the past and what is happening in the world today?
3. Where in my curriculum can I provide choice for how students engage with one another and show their learning?
4. How can I create authentic assessments that tap into students' interests and engage them in complex problem-solving? How can I inspire them to think about who they are and who they want to be in the world?

Action Steps

- Tap into students' expertise by inviting them to help shape the learning environment. Invite pairs of students to lead the opening and closing routines.
- Sign up for the **Facing History Current Events** newsletter to learn how to incorporate current events into the curriculum in order to build students' capacities for critical thinking, emotional engagement, ethical reflection, and civic agency.
- Create multiple pathways for students to demonstrate mastery, and allow them to choose one that aligns with their interests and learning preferences. Consider student-created videos, **digital stories**, **podcasts**, **e-portfolios**, **blogs**, and creative projects.