



## Guide to Relationship-Rich Education in Teaching & Learning: Introduction to the 2022 Pedagogicon Proceedings

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Carpenter, Russell and Dvorak, Kevin, "Guide to Relationship-Rich Education in Teaching & Learning: Introduction to the 2022 Pedagogicon Proceedings" (2023). *Pedagogicon Conference Proceedings*. 2. <https://encompass.eku.edu/pedagogicon/2022/frontmatter/2>

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# 2022 Pedagogicon Proceedings

## Guide to Relationship-Rich Education in Teaching & Learning

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*The Guide to Relationship-Rich Education is a compilation of teaching strategies that promote relationship-rich education strategies (Felten & Lambert, 2020) across higher education contexts. In this guide, teacher-scholars present relationship-rich strategies and corresponding analyses across teaching and learning environments.*

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### Introduction

The 2022 Pedagogicon conference theme, *Relationship-Rich Education in Teaching and Learning*, invited participants to explore how relationships are at the core of a successful educational experience—for students and faculty. As Felten and Lambert (2020) note, relationship-rich education is the process of engaging students meaningfully in learning through human connections. They demonstrate how peer-to-peer, student-faculty, and student-staff relationships are the foundation of learning, belonging, and achieving in college. Using their extensive research, which consisted of hundreds of interviews with students, faculty, and administrators from higher educational institutions across the United States, Felten and Lambert developed four “interlocking principles” that are common to successful relationship-rich approaches:

1. *Every student must experience genuine welcome and deep care* - the approaches that show students are valued as people within the classroom and across higher education institutions.
2. *Every student must be inspired to learn* - the approaches that show genuine interest in students, share the passion for a discipline with others, and inspire students to learn.
3. *Every student must develop a web of significant relationships* - the approaches that help students build relationships with faculty, staff, and other students.

4. *Every student must explore questions of meaning and purpose* - the approaches that encourage students to ask—and pursue—questions of significance to their development, learning, and growth (pp. 17-18).

The following sections provide a scholar-teacher (see Gettings, 2017) approach to relationship-rich education in a range of disciplines from a variety of perspectives. The sections are divided into categories based on each of relationship-rich education's four guiding principles. In each section, Pedagogicon 2022 conference presenters share and analyze specific teaching strategies that offer readers the opportunity to use them in classrooms or programs at their own institutions.

### **Every Student Must Experience Genuine Welcome and Deep Care.**

**Leah Simpkins, *Eastern Kentucky University***

*Strategy: Creating and Nurturing Relationship-Rich Environments*

Students at the collegiate level should know that they are valued and appreciated. Faculty have the opportunity to extend a relentless welcome to students that provide purpose and true outpourings of care through just getting to know the students' names and being more available to students when students need faculty to answer questions in real time. Students having a sense of belongingness to campus creates an avenue for student success and care in their education. Then, taking that a step further and extending a strong welcome and encouraging students along their journey through care assists students with their relationship-rich education nurturing and environment of learning. Faculty could do this in class by having students create a name tent (a piece of paper that a student writes their name onto and places on their desk) to indicate what they wish to be called upon in class by the faculty member and classmates is one way of doing this. Another welcoming extension is to create an introduction by the faculty member which includes their history to their discipline and whatever else the faculty member feels comfortable sharing. Lastly, asking the students to do the same type of introduction for their peers and following up on commenting on each student's introduction. Students knowing that faculty care and are available to address their questions during open office hours is a large part of student success and to the development of nurturing relationships on campus in order to foster learning.

## *Analysis*

Faculty getting to know the students' by name is a large part of belonging to class, which can be assisted through the creation of both a name tent and introduction to the class. When a faculty member uses a student's first name to call upon them students feel more included in the conversation and connected to the class. Having a more open classroom creates a more cohesive learning environment of inclusion and acceptance. Furthermore, faculty providing open office doors to signify they are available while on campus or staying after class to address students' questions individually if needed, Extended office hours for students to be able to reach faculty virtually on evenings and weekends is helpful to reach students and to address their questions when the students have them in real time.

### **Marie Mater, Houston Christian University**

*Strategy: "I am from..." Icebreaker*

Give students a printed handout with the following text (with space after each stanza for students to write their answers):

"I am from..." Exercise (Poetry Writing Tool by Beverly Daniel Tatum, 2007; also attributed to George Ella Lyon, n.d.)

- Stanza One: I am from... (list familiar items found around your home)
- Stanza Two: I am from... (list familiar foods prepared/eaten around your home)
- Stanza Three: I am from... (list family "sayings" or phrases used by family members)
- Stanza Four: I am from... (list people and/or pets in your family)

Ask the students to complete the handout. Tell them that they will be sharing their answers with the rest of the class. Once students have completed it, have each student say their name and share their responses to each stanza aloud with the rest of the class.

When all of the students have finished, thank them for sharing a bit about themselves and remind them that every individual comes from a cultural background and has a unique identity.

### *Analysis*

This strategy is an excellent way for students to introduce themselves to the rest of the class. It is a low-risk social activity. It enables everyone in the class to learn something about their colleagues, and makes the students feel valued as people. One challenge is helping students understand what is being asked. The instructor should provide an example or two for each stanza when explaining the activity. The instructor should also begin the sharing session by modeling the presentation of their own material. Students can sit or stand for their presentations depending on the context and the venue.

**Susan Weaver, *University of the Cumberland***

*Strategy: Welcome PowerPoint*

A welcome PowerPoint slide helps to stimulate casual interaction in an online class. Students have an introductory post to share their preferred name, major, and if they are new to the program or completing it. These all fit on a bright yellow Welcome PowerPoint slide. Additional slides provide space for photos if they have chosen to add them.

### *Analysis*

The PowerPoint posted on the course website helps other students find persons with the same majors, same place in their program, or whom they recognize from other classes. It also provides a terrific “cheat sheet” to make it easy to learn students’ preferred names.

**Nedim Slijepcevic, *Eastern Kentucky University***

*Strategy: Mitigating Imposter Syndrome through Modeling and Highlighting Student Contributions with Online Course Announcements*

This strategy addresses the imposter syndrome as one of the barriers to student success. Felten and Lambert (2020) mentioned imposter syndrome as one of the causes of students not asking for help or building relationships with other learning community members.

To help mitigate the effects of imposter syndrome, at the beginning of each semester, instructors should start modeling and sharing student contributions that occurred in class discussions or similar online collaboration tools.

For example, early in the course (e.g., Module 1), instructors should become active in the class discussion boards and identify the students who modeled the appropriate academic and social engagement behavior. Once the initial module concludes and the next module begins, instructors should craft a multi-purpose course announcement that reflects on the past module, provides additional course-related information, and lists several student discussion contributions or ideas.

Depending on the instructor's preferred communication style, exemplified students and their contributions can be weaved into a more extended reflective narrative or listed in the bullet-point format with instructor reflections on each student's contribution, strengths, and expertise. This practice should be repeated in each consecutive module or unit until all students are exemplified at least once.

By engaging in this practice, instructors signal students that their ideas and opinions matter and belong in the class. This practice also can encourage exemplified students and motivate others to want to be recognized the next time. Moreover, finally, by engaging in this practice, instructors inform the rest of the class of the expected level of discussion engagement and that they are active in the course and are reading student contributions.

### *Analysis*

The practice of modeling and highlighting student work was used in two introductory and sequential graduate core courses with considerable success. It was observed that some students who appeared to lack a sense of belonging interacted more often with their peers toward the end of the course. Qualitative analysis of end-of-the-course blog reflections also indicated that students appreciated discussions and peer feedback more when compared to the previous two cohorts. Furthermore, the survey used to gauge the Community of Inquiry's Social Presence and the sense of genuine welcome, care, and valuation as a person indicated high mean values for all questions.

One recommendation is to simplify the process by using bullet points highlighting each student. A simple recognition of what the student said augmented with faculty comment extending on the student's contribution can be sufficient. Bullet points eliminate the need for a lengthy narrative with integrated student responses and allow the instructors more freedom and creativity.

## **Every Student Must Be Inspired To Learn.**

**Maria Bane, *Eastern Kentucky University***

*Strategy: Reflect and set personal learning goals*

I primarily use this strategy following what I call Understanding Checks-- paired or small group work in which I've asked students to interact with course concepts by answering questions or solving problems. The approach could also be incorporated into homework assignments, quizzes, or other course activities. At the end of any such exercise, I review answers with the class, encouraging students to share and explain their responses. Students correct their own errors as we review the activity. Then, students respond in writing to three questions:

1. How did you do?
2. What was easy or hard about this?
3. What is your plan for further improvement?

I verbally encourage students to pursue their plan for improvement between now and our next class meeting. Students submit the exercise to me and are evaluated based on a good faith effort in completing the activity, correction of their own mistakes, and engagement in meaningful reflection. Activities and reflections are returned during the next class or as soon as possible.

### *Analysis*

Reading student reflections and personal learning goals has been helpful in making my teaching more responsive. Students often ask good questions and highlight points of confusion that I may clarify via announcement or during our next meeting. By combining student awareness of difficult concepts with a specific, self-directed course of action, they are better inspired to improve their own understanding. Students have planned to review specific concepts, stop by office hours, or focus more on application than memorization (a suggestion I was thrilled to see from my undergraduates and a skill crucial to future success).

**Melony Shemberger, *Murray State University***

*Strategy: Building Confidence Through Project-based Learning*

To inspire students to learn and reduce anxiety in challenging courses, project-based learning offers real-world and personally meaningful opportunities in the classroom. At the same time, these projects build the confidence needed for



students to succeed. An upper-level, undergraduate course in which this strategy has been effective is research methods. Students tend to experience anxiety in this type of course and frustration with statistics and research design. To minimize anxiety in a research methods course, exams and quizzes were eliminated, and project-based learning using a scaffolding method was implemented.

Through this method, students apply the weekly content studied in each module or unit — e.g., dependent and independent variables to be measured, validity and reliability of a measure, sample size, descriptive statistics, methodology, inferential statistics — to design a research study that focuses on a problem of their choice. Throughout the semester, students submit each part of the project for helpful, timely, and warm feedback from the instructor, and the students incorporate any revisions. The tangible outcome is a digital poster, and students present their work in a celebration of scholarship on campus.

During class meetings, peer-to-peer discussions reinforce articulation of the content. Students are given scenarios and must collaborate on their responses using the research content studied. They practice talking the research language through these discussions, helping them to build not only their knowledge, but their confidence as well. These in-class discussions of the concepts help the students to create a community in which the members encourage each other.

### *Analysis*

Project-based learning replaced exams and quizzes in the research methods course in fall 2021. Student attendance was high because students were not afraid to come to class. Through peer-to-peer discussions of the content that enhanced their research projects, the students' confidence in designing a research study increased each week.

Rubrics are helpful instruments for instructors when assessing student work on the research project; however, the instructor's feedback must be warm and helpful. This became a critical piece in establishing a stress-free learning environment for student learning to take place.

### **Susan Weaver, *University of the Cumberland*s**

#### *Strategy: Global Issues Forum*

This is a nonacademic strategy to broaden horizons while providing a forum for persons with unique cultural or international experiences.

1. Identify students or faculty from other cultures willing to share information about lived experiences or a controversial issue in their country or culture. Topics might be political, social, economic, religious, educational, or other.
2. Advertise the topic and presenter through fliers, social media, and personal invitations.
3. The presentation part is only about 10-15 minutes to allow time for a good dialogue with questions and answers.
4. Usually, someone attending welcomes an opportunity to be the next presenter.

### *Analysis*

Although this can be done as an occasional one-off, having a series of three or four weeks seems to work best. It is essential to have a featured presenter and topic to promote. A series of sessions, such as Appalachian culture, can be divided into three weeks to cover various aspects. However, international topics are ideal because international students offer a unique opportunity to share and learn about life and critical issues. Limit the session to about 45 minutes. Pizza adds informality to foster interaction. All attendees seem appreciative of the opportunity to share and learn from each other.

**Cindy Hayden, Hayley Rickard, Amanda Hansford, & Tyler Bush, *Eastern Kentucky University***

*Strategy: A Student-Faculty Partnership in Redesigning Renewable Assignments*

Step-by-Step Guide:

- A. Whenever possible, ask for student input into designing assignments for a course you are teaching for the first time. This could be students you have taught in previous courses or connecting with students before the class begins and asking for feedback on assignment design.
- B. When creating assignments, make every attempt to situate it into a real-world situation. This could be working with a business in the community or creating a website so students' work can be posted for others outside the class to see.
- C. Ask students to rework their assignments, responding to the instructor feedback, then post the revised assignment to the website for students to refer to in the future, for other students to use, or for people in the community to benefit from the students' work.

- D. Once assignments have been graded, seek feedback from students in the course on specific aspects of each assignment.
- E. Have students provide feedback individually and as a group again at midterm and at the end of the semester on the assignments including templates, grading rubrics, and assignment instructions. This feedback could be obtained orally in class or anonymously on a survey.
- F. Close the loop and revise the course assignments before teaching the course again to a new group of students.
- G. Repeat the process of asking for student feedback on assignment design each time you teach the course.
- H. Continue to redesign assignments and use renewable assignments with each iteration of the course.

### *Analysis*

This strategy works best if you have a trusting relationship with students. If you teach in a professional program, you may have taught students before in a different course, so students have already developed a bond with you.

A challenge you might face when implementing renewable assignments is students may not understand the purpose of revising, remixing, and redistributing information from open educational resources.

Also, students may be reluctant to offer oral feedback or feedback that is identifiable to a person on specific assignments, since the student is still being graded in the course.

Extending the student-faculty partnership to redesigning course assignments can produce higher quality learning materials.

### **Ali Yaylali, Eastern Kentucky University**

#### *Strategy: Demonstrating Holistic Care for Undergraduates' Learning*

Holistic care for student learning aims to build a positive learning community by welcoming undergraduate students and caring deeply for their academic progress.

- A. Introductions: Ask students to introduce themselves virtually before the first meeting of the semester. Read each introduction and post a response. Show another warm welcome with spontaneous interest in their backgrounds and experiences during the class (e.g., what you like about their hometown).

Continue building the community by celebrating academic or non-academic achievements or good news as your first agenda item of each class throughout the semester.

- B. Invited Meetings: During the 2nd week, invite students to an in-person meeting. Everyone must sign up for a 15-minute meeting for an informal conversation about their learning and how you could better assist them. You may use Calendly for stronger student agency and liberty in scheduling. Ask 2-3 questions about their learning strategies and how you can support them in your course. Challenge power dynamics by sharing your own learning strategies.
- C. Celebrate Quality Work: Once a week, praise 2-3 students publicly by referring to their quality work. Every student should receive such praise during the semester. Keep a log of the student names.
- D. Anonymous Survey: Around mid-semester, send a Google form that asks what is going well and how you could make small changes in the course. This shows how much you care for their progress and value their feedback. As a follow-up, communicate 2-3 changes that you plan to make based on their feedback to set a positive tone for the rest of the semester. For example, I changed the deadlines from Wednesday to Friday nights upon learning that students struggled with many mid-week deadlines across multiple courses. I also decided not to penalize any late work since seniors struggled with coursework and clinical observations.

### *Analysis*

Celebrating academic and non-academic accomplishments or good news seemed to build a very positive classroom environment. Making it the priority of weekly meetings helped students start with high motivation. Students shared their accomplishments passionately (e.g., passing a teacher licensing exam). Students reported that their instructor showed care for their learning and growth. The biggest challenge is that this strategy requires a mindset shift on the part of an instructor. Instructors might assume that grades correspond to an acknowledgement of students' quality work. However, allowing them to share their accomplishments in public has an effect on students' positive learning behaviors and community building. To put this strategy in place naturally, first pay attention to quality student work in the first few weeks. Then, build in your lessons a 5-minute transition time when you could specifically share 2-3 exemplary works.

## **Every Student Must Develop a Web of Significant Relationships.**

**Travis Martin, *Eastern Kentucky University***

*Strategy: Mask Painting to Negate Imposter Syndrome and Encourage Critical Thinking About Presentation of Self*

Mask painting is an activity found in disparate places such as elementary schools, therapists' offices, and public libraries. In all iterations, the mask symbolizes the performance of self that characterizes the painter's interactions with others in day-to-day life. It is an activity that pushes internal, often unconscious thoughts into the conscious world. Usually, the painter paints the outside of the mask the way they think the world sees them; the inside of the mask is the way they see themselves. Within higher education, the activity is useful for exploring imposter syndrome, performativity, mental health, self-care, self-esteem, neurodivergence, and the interior lives of others.

### *Part One: The Outside of the Mask (During Class)*

Arrange for a location that is free of distractions. This space can be a classroom if you are able to minimize or mask noise. The facilitator needs to arrive about half an hour early to put down table coverings, get cups of water, and set out paint. The more "ready-to-go" the paint stations are prior to class, the quicker the students will be able to move into painting. Allocate about an hour for the exercise on the first day.

Explain how mask painting can help the students think about the unspoken world. Talk briefly about how different colors symbolize different forms of expression (a handout from an entry-level art class can do the trick). Prompt the students to think about how their behaviors, demeanor, accent, attitude, and sense of style all have an influence on their interactions with others. Then, ask them to paint the outside of the mask the way they feel the world sees them. The masks will need a place to dry between class meetings.

### *Part Two: Reflection (Outside of Class)*

Ask the students to come to the next class meeting ready to share at least one realization they had about themselves during the painting exercise. Tell them to be thinking about the next stage in which they will consider perceptions of others.

### *Part Three: The Inside of the Mask (During Class)*

The second painting session is similar to the first, except the students paint the inside of the mask the way they see themselves. Begin by asking them to share their reflections from between the sessions if they are comfortable. They can use their masks as visual aids. It helps make the interior of the masks more creative. After, allow the students to paint for as long as they seem on task.

This second session tends to go quicker in terms of logistics. You may have time to discuss both sides of the mask on the same day. Or you may choose to wait for a discussion during a third class period, have the students write a reflection, etc. Introduce concepts such as “imposter syndrome” and “performativity” into the discussion. Help the students make connections between their past, present, and future selves. Get them to see how their perceptions (real and imagined) shape reality, and how they will continue to shape their interactions with others when they enter “the real world” outside of college. Most importantly, get them to see how they can move everything discussed within their locus of control through conscious performances of self.

### Supplies

- Assorted acrylic paints
- Colored Sharpies
- Disposable hand wipes
- Disposable table cloths
- Large disposable cups for water
- Other art supplies (variety packs are great – feathers, sparkles, googly eyes, etc.)
- Packages of assorted paint brushes
- Painting Masks
- Paper towels
- Sharpies fine point black
- Small “shot glass” cups for paint
- Wheeled Tote

**Laurel Schwartz, Michelyn Bhandari, & Julie Lasslo, Eastern Kentucky University**

*Strategy: Student leadership is a force multiplier*

In 2019, a team of academic health department staff and public health faculty were assembled. First, the team prioritized an action plan for the community health assessment (CHA). Then, the team restructured the data collection instrument used previously. In the fall of 2019, the survey was administered. Leveraging the assistance of public health students played a significant role in the successful development, marketing, distribution, and analysis of the survey. Throughout the process, the team included undergraduate students who were completing their internship and graduate students completing an applied practice experience (APEX), as “active agents.” A graduate public health student developed the survey and drafted the IRB application. An undergraduate internship student assisted with the survey distribution plan, trained students to assure data integrity, and created marketing materials (social media graphics and messages). Faculty trained public health seniors on human subject’s protection who then distributed the survey and collected data at local businesses and community events. A graduate student provided weekly data reports during the data collection and conducted the data analysis. An undergraduate student collected secondary data centered on the social determinants of health and graduate students prepared data summary visuals. These students were an integral part of the team as leaders and were guided with both internal and external mentorship.

During the winter, two community focus groups were conducted. Each group had participants representing law enforcement, city government, local businesses, school system officials, faith-based leaders, medical care providers, social workers, and a non-profit housing organization. Two public health graduate students assisted with qualitative data collection by taking notes, transcribing, and completing analysis of major themes.

In spring of 2020, the team shifted the project online. The CHA results were shared online for community members and presented via an online video presentation. The video, along with a link to the full results, and an online prioritization survey were advertised online, in email, and on social media. The success of our health assessment came from leveraging our community relationships to engage our stakeholders, and the use of public health students as leaders.

## *Analysis*

Using public health students in their internships and applied practice experiences, and as a senior class, was an excellent way for students to not only have exposure to public health practitioners in the local context, but to also serve as “active agents.” The partnership and student leadership was mutually beneficial and served as an important part of the success of the project. Students were able to build a web of internal and external mentors and advisors as well as expand their professional networks, thus providing benefits outside of the classroom. Students thrive as leaders when afforded the opportunity.

### **Every Student Must Explore Questions of Meaning and Purpose.**

**José Juan Gómez-Becerra, Abbey Poffenberger, & Socorro Zaragoza,  
*Eastern Kentucky University***

*Strategy: My Symphonic Self: A Holistic Approach to Career Readiness*

Every student should experience the opportunity to unfold a web of inquiry through the interconnections of their lived and learned experiences. Effective relationship rich education should provide students space/activities/tools/guidance to value the intersection between themselves and their roles in their communities. Students in the Spanish program at ECU participate in an array of high-impact practices and relationship rich strategies to become aware of the interconnections of who they are as versatile professionals. By exploring questions of meaning and purpose within our program, students reaffirm the value of their linguistic and cultural competency.

In the Service Learning Spanish for Social Services course, students select a service site based on their academic and professional interests. Students determine their goals in collaboration with their professor and service site mentor. They then write critical reflections where they analyze and explore the meaning and purpose of their experience.

Spanish majors also enroll in a culminating capstone course where they develop a project that identifies an opportunity to impact change in the Spanish speaking community and provides solutions based on research, classroom discussions, and their service learning and lived experiences. They also create a holistic bilingual digital portfolio which highlights the high-impact practices and other applied learning experiences in one symphonic document. The digital portfolio sets-up students to develop a cohesive narrative about themselves to explore the



questions of meaning and purpose prior to graduation. The relationships are built intrinsically in the exploration of themselves, and extrinsically as connections to community and professional partners.

### *Analysis*

Upon the completion of their digital portfolio, students demonstrate a better understanding of how to transfer knowledge to practice. They are better equipped to see themselves as agents of change in the transformation of their communities. A challenge could be identifying and creating a web of community partners willing to provide professional mentorship. In our case, this challenge has been overcome through two decades of cultivating intentional relationships of meaningful and mutual partnerships through *Confianza*. We model a circle of trust as a key element that is passed to the students to continue these professional relationships.

### **Susan Weaver, *University of the Cumberland*s**

#### *Strategy: Aligning Beliefs, Values, Actions*

The current political climate creates an underlying animosity about many issues that seem to defy reasonable discussion. This strategy fosters self-exploration and value clarification.

1. Students identify a symbol such as a religious, political, school, team, organization, or other to reference on a page divided into three columns to answer the following questions:
  - a. Column 1: What are the origins of this symbol? What does the symbol mean to me? Why do I display it? Does the symbol reflect or create conflict?
  - b. Column 2: How do others perceive this symbol? Why might they feel differently? Would some people perceive it as a threat?
  - c. Column 3: Is the symbol more important than my regard for others? Are there appropriate or inappropriate times to display it?
2. Students then gather in small groups, with each group focusing on one symbol to discuss feelings and a summative statement about how to address contentious issues.

## **Casey Humphrey, Eastern Kentucky University**

*Strategy: Allow time for unstructured discussion*

Time in class to cover necessary content is limited and valuable. It is easy to fall into a structured class pattern to ensure that all necessary content is addressed. However, regularly allowing unstructured space for students to engage in thoughtful conversation with both their peers and the course instructor allows students to more deeply explore the purpose and meaning behind course content. There are various ways to implement these conversation spaces into different courses. A small class may be conducive to a full class discussion including the instructor, similar to a roundtable format. A larger class may benefit more from breaking into groups with the instructor contributing as they can. No matter the format, the conversation should be student guided. Students have to feel comfortable that their discussion will be valued and that there are no “right and wrong” answers. Potential guided questions that can be used to get the conversation started could include:

- How do you feel about the topic we covered in class this week?
- Where do you see this topic intersecting with a recent current event?
- Is what you’ve learned in this class similar or different to other things you have learned?
- How do you see this topic being used in your future career path?

### *Analysis*

Students may not expect to be given the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions and therefore it can sometimes be difficult to get conversations started. Once students realize the course instructor is interested in their ideas and opinions the conversations begin to flow. Students are then given the space to think deeply and explore meaning and purpose surrounding the course content.

## **Jamie Shaffer, Eastern Kentucky University**

*Strategy: Leadership Philosophy to Reflect on Values*

The world needs strong and ethical leaders. College is the ideal place for our students, who will fill these roles in the future, to begin thinking about what kind of a leader they want to be. All of my students are required to create their own leadership philosophy that they refer back to frequently during the semester. This

philosophy assignment helps them reflect on what they believe, what others can expect of them, and how they can best support the work being done.

Format for the philosophy exercise is flexible – some choose written form, some have created videos, and others have chosen more artistic submissions like a collage. Regardless of the form, they are asked to reflect on the following:

- A. Personal Values: What you believe in, such as honesty, commitment, respect for others
- B. How You Will Work: Description of how you will carry out your responsibilities
- C. Expectations: What you expect of others and what they can expect of you
- D. Non-negotiables: What you will demand and what you will not tolerate
- E. Priorities: What's important, and in what order
- F. Personal Idiosyncrasies: Your peculiar likes or “pet peeves”
- G. Commitment: Your willingness for feedback
- H. Ethics: How will you determine what is morally right or wrong, and act accordingly?

Students incorporate ideas from class discussions and content from readings and lecture into their philosophies.

### *Analysis*

Students really seem to like this assignment, and often pour their heart and soul into it. They are not required to share what they write about, but many choose to refer back to it in other assignments or in class activities. They can also keep and use this philosophy long after they leave college. Such reflection points allow students a moment in their very busy lives to think more deeply about their own goals and what they value in life and work.

### **Camille Skubik-Peplaski, Eastern Kentucky University**

*Strategy: Building Relationships Together as a Team*

My focus of using relationship-rich education is now to have students find their sense of purpose and meaning while tapping their power as an occupational therapy student. In my fieldwork class, I greet each student individually and then I challenge them to baffle me with a clinical question in videos and in the clinic while watching client therapy sessions together to build their confidence and

inspire them to learn. We eat lunch together while at their clinical fieldwork when each student self-reflects what they observed about their performance in the morning and sets goals for their performance in the afternoon. I give feedback in the moment to help the student assimilate classroom knowledge while with a client for them to see who they are now and what they can become as a therapist. To show that the student matters, I have started asking each student, at the start of class, probing questions as part of mentoring conversations to build authentic relationships. They have been asked to describe what they like best being part of a team, worst day at work, best teacher and why, hometown and family structure, what scares them being a therapist, and favorite hobby. Changing my teaching focus to demonstrating that I care and build connections with my students has helped me to create depth in my relationships, to understand them and genuinely guide their success. My goal is to have students feel like they're part of a team, committed to everyone's learning outcome.

### *Analysis*

I am evaluating my relationship-rich education strategies through a pre- and post-test reflecting student confidence, ability to communicate, time management, and preparedness for fieldwork. In addition to the survey, each student was asked three questions on the course evaluation to identify how their instructor inspired their learning, invested in their learning, and viewed them as a learner. Posing personal questions to the students has been the most gratifying for me and the most challenging is being vulnerable, asking them to stump me with their questions. My advice is to trust yourself; the connection with them far outweighs being right.

### **Conclusion**

The approaches in this guide offer perspective from across disciplines and levels, including those teaching graduate and undergraduate student populations. They are applicable in a range of settings and adaptable to learning contexts.

The guide format allows for cross-comparison, combining, or reimagining those strategies that are most promising or applicable. We encourage readers to adapt these approaches, assess them on their own terms, invite student input, and to shape them to enhance relational practices in their own educational environments.

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