

Relationship Centered Classrooms

Learning Starts with Relationships. Students of color across California have identified relationships with their teachers and school staff as the #1 factor in closing the belief gap so that all students can reach their full potential, regardless of race or zip code.

How Do I...	Self-Rating and Comments	For students of color, a Relationship Centered Teacher...
1. Notice	Rating (circle): 1-emerging 2-developing 3-modeling Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greets us at the door by name, makes eye contact and smiles. • Notices our emotions and theirs—the good, the bad, and everything in between. • Pays attention to what’s said and unsaid—to our tone and body language.
2. Listen	Rating (circle): 1-emerging 2-developing 3-modeling Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is curious about our stories, asks for our opinions, and reflects back what they hear. • Reaches out to us when we’re feeling disconnected: “How are you doing today—really?”
3. Connect	Rating (circle): 1-emerging 2-developing 3-modeling Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a short welcoming routine like journaling, reflection questions, or circles, and optimistic closures to build connections. • Looks for daily opportunities to connect in small ways about what’s going on in our lives, and to share what’s going on with them.
4. Care	Rating (circle): 1-emerging 2-developing 3-modeling Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows concern when we’re having a bad day and affirms us when we’re having a good one. • Asks about things outside of school, attends games or events outside of class time, or makes positive calls home. • Remembers things we’ve shared with them and inquires about them regularly.
5. Interrupt Bias	Rating (circle): 1-emerging 2-developing 3-modeling Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notices when negative or biased thoughts pop up and asks: “Why am I reacting to this student in this way? What more might there be to this story?” • Reflects our identities on classroom walls and in the curriculum. • Creates space to talk about identity (race, class, gender, etc.), and builds lessons that are culturally relevant.
6. Empower	Rating (circle): 1-emerging 2-developing 3-modeling Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures projects and lessons to give us more ownership of the topics or process. • Draws from our lived experience and asks us what we already know and what we want to learn. • Asks for our feedback on classroom practices, instruction, or content—and then shows us how they’re using that input.