VIRGINIA ASCD
Learn. Teach. Lead.

CREATING A CULTURE OF RESPECT

Essential Question:
How does my classroom celebrate who my students are as people and as learners?

Empathy

Relationships

Celebration of Diversity

Growth Mindset

Cultural Competence

Restorative Practices

Relationships

Students who have healthy and trusting relationships with teachers and each other show better motivation to learn and more appropriate behavior. A sense of belonging is the basis for addressing students' social and emotional needs and strengthening their academic achievement.

Through our actions, behaviors, and language, teachers show students that we care for them and want to know them as individuals.Consider building ideas like these into daily and weekly instruction all year long:

- Foster a sense of belonging. Begin by greeting students at the door using their names.

- Make it a point to listen to what students want to tell us. It can be difficult to stop and just listen, but two minutes of listening can make a difference to a student.

- Encourage students to share their thoughts through journaling, surveys, or art work.

- Ask parents/guardians – through surveys, phone calls, school or home visits – what hobbies or interests make their student "come alive."

- Let our students see who we are. Share information about interests and activities outside of school, family, and friends.

Relationships among students are essential in the classroom, and teachers have a great deal of influence over how students perceive and feel about each other. Teachers can be intentional in providing experiences that model and develop relationship skills:
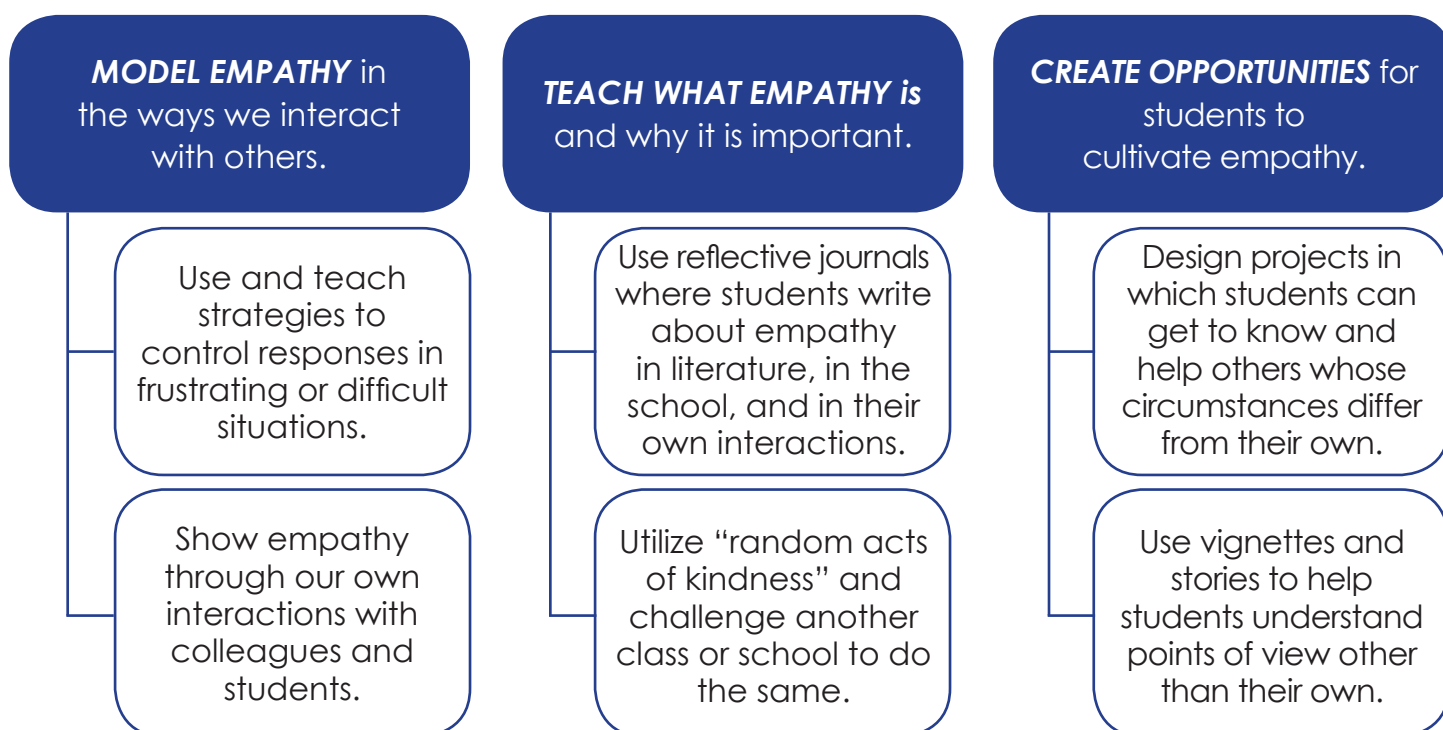
• Plan time and structures for students to share their interests and experiences. Morning meetings, team-building activities, and simple sharing time are all helpful. As students become more comfortable and skilled at sharing with each other, these activities can become problem-solving activities when issues like bullying or arguments occur.

• Teach and practice skills students can use to build relationships with each other, such as giving compliments, writing friendly notes, and practicing acts of kindness. Initially, sentence starters can be used to model these types of interactions.

• Support friendships among students and provide opportunities for them to connect with each other through games and collaborative work.

• Practice flexible grouping: ensure students work with a variety of peers in a variety of grouping configurations for a variety of instructional purposes.

• Help students who have common interests connect with each other and provide a forum for them to bond over these commonalities.

Empathy

When students have empathy for others, engagement and achievement increase and negative behaviors are reduced. Empathy involves noticing and seeking to understand the feelings of others and caring about them.

HELPING STUDENTS DEVELOP EMPATHY:

MODEL EMPATHY in the ways we interact with others.	*TEACH WHAT EMPATHY is* and why it is important.	*CREATE OPPORTUNITIES* for students to cultivate empathy.
Use and teach strategies to control responses in frustrating or difficult situations.	Use reflective journals where students write about empathy in literature, in the school, and in their own interactions.	Design projects in which students can get to know and help others whose circumstances differ from their own.
Show empathy through our own interactions with colleagues and students.	Utilize "random acts of kindness" and challenge another class or school to do the same.	Use vignettes and stories to help students understand points of view other than their own.

Growth Mindset

MODEL, TEACH AND DEVELOP A GROWTH MINDSET:

• Teach that learning can- and at times, should- be difficult. Substitute, "I can't do this yet." for "I can't do this."

• Reinforce the idea that everyone learns in different ways and at different rates. Understanding is more important than finishing first.

• Emphasize that we grow and learn from mistakes, and that failure can be a positive step towards further learning. We can model this by owning up to our own mistakes and describing how we learned from them.

• Build opportunities for reflection and revision to further learning. Use grading practices that motivate students to improve and show progress over earlier work.

• Consider teaching students how their brains learn and process new information. Help them think about how they learn best.

• Cultivate and honor perseverance and resilience in students.

Growth Mindset

BE AWARE OF THE PRAISE YOU PROVIDE:

• Acknowledge effort and hard work. Encourage students to believe that they can learn, even if it does not come easily to them.

• Be careful of praise like "You're so smart," "I like that answer." Often this implies that being smart is a set characteristic, not one that can be cultivated.

• Share specific, growth-oriented feedback that highlights what students did well and what their next steps should be.

Celebration of Diversity

Students enter our classrooms with a wide variety of backgrounds, interests and cultures. These differences provide us with opportunities to celebrate, learning from and about each other.

When teachers reflect on our own perceptions of our students, we often discover implicit biases that affect our interactions and students' opportunities to learn. We can challenge our own implicit bias by listening to and learning from colleagues and students who are different from ourselves.

We also have opportunities to:

• Utilize "teachable moments" to help students understand how stereotypes, groupthink, and other practices can lead to prejudice and discrimination.

• Provide opportunities for students to get to know each other. Use age-appropriate icebreakers, sharing and groupwork protocols, and other methods for students to share their lives and cultures.

Cultural Competence

TO DEVELOP OUR OWN CULTURAL COMPETENCE AS ADULTS, WE CAN:

Work to understand the cultures we serve.	Honor and celebrate diversity within the classroom.
Become aware of our individual biases and reactions to people from cultures different from our own.	Tap into the cultural norms and experiences of our students and their families as learning resources.
Visit the homes and neighborhoods of your students.	Purposely engage in activities that are outside your usual experience.
Maintain a journal to consider and reflect on events through the eyes of your students.	Use video or peer observation to gain a perspective on how your students perceive your interactions with them.

TO BE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE IN OUR PRACTICE, WE CAN:

- Understand that people from different cultures learn in different ways. They may be most comfortable learning independently or be more comfortable working collaboratively. Gaining knowledge of these differences helps us adapt lessons to maximize student success.

- Provide multiple and varied opportunities for collaborative work. Adjust the way in which groups are structured so that students of different cultures and backgrounds work together.

- Encourage multiple (and multicultural) viewpoints and interpretations of content.

- Engage parents in dialogue about their children's aspirations and needs.

- Increase class pride by displaying student work. Show genuine appreciation for their unique contributions to the classroom.

- Ensure that information can be communicated to students and families in their home language as needed.

- Choose books and materials that represent a range of cultural norms, including those represented in the class.

Restorative Practices

Schools thrust students into groups where they have many interactions with many people each day. Restorative practices help students prevent and solve problems and conflicts in positive, thoughtful ways.

Interactions
How do we react when students misbehave or are disrespectful? Do we model responding with respect? Do we focus on correcting the behavior rather than on belittling the student?

Environment
How can the physical space be designed to help students feel welcome and comfortable? Are there places for private conversation? Is there space to "cool down" and refocus?

Process
Are students clear about what to do when conflicts arise? Have they practiced these skills and had opportunities for feedback? Are there scaffolds in place to support students as they move toward independence?

Application
How might students use elements of school-based restorative practices in their lives outside school. How can we support this?
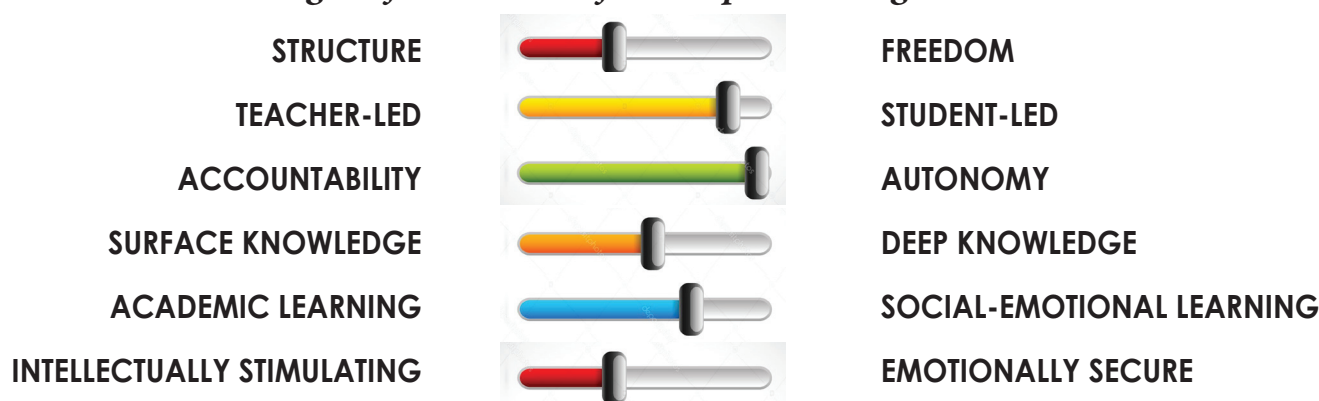
Virginia Department of Education

- Choose books and materials that address questions of belonging and identity.

- Establish, with the students, classroom standards (such as respect, trust, truth, etc.) that can be a frame of reference for all discussions of behavior and classroom actions

- Be mindful of the examples used in teaching. Are they always from the same cultural background or do you look for opportunities to highlight the diversity to be found within each academic discipline?

As teachers, we are called to continually adjust the sliders below to meet the changing needs of students while embracing the factors that reflect deeper learning classrooms.

STRUCTURE		**FREEDOM**
TEACHER-LED		**STUDENT-LED**
ACCOUNTABILITY		**AUTONOMY**
SURFACE KNOWLEDGE		**DEEP KNOWLEDGE**
ACADEMIC LEARNING		**SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING**
INTELLECTUALLY STIMULATING		**EMOTIONALLY SECURE**

The **PROFILE OF A CLASSROOM** *provides basic frameworks and prompts to guide teacher decision making. Content is based on these learning principles and pedagogies developed by Virginia educators.* **Access the documents at VASCD.org**

Learning should…

…uncover student strengths through meaningful learning experiences.

…be defined by success criteria that are clear, attainable and cultivate future success.

…provide regular opportunities for students to make authentic contributions and connections.

…be active, driven by investigation, relevance, and application.

…foster productive struggle, persistence and growth through a feedback spiral.

…occur through meaningful interactions, partnerships, and shared decision making.

…ensure that all learners see themselves in the curricular experience.

…lead to maximum growth for every student regardless of background or limitations.

Teaching should…

…emphasize worthwhile experiences using essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions in pursuit of a solution or product creation.

…leverage interdisciplinary thinking and application to the world outside of school, including to career opportunities.

…utilize collaborative structures for learning and assessment with self, peers, and/or experts.

…include purposeful checkpoints where students set goals, evaluate progress, and plan next steps.

…structure time, space, and grouping with student needs in mind.

… cultivate classrooms communities where learners feel safe and confident.

…tailor learning experiences to be developmentally appropriate, aligned to learning science, and responsive to individual needs.

The Profile of a Virginia Classroom is a partnership between VASCD (vascd.org) and the Virginia Department of Education, with support from Jobs for the Future.