

# SEL

## Strategies



### Building Relationships

**WHY:** Human beings are biologically wired to connect with each other. We are a relational species. Dating back to cavemen times, there was safety in numbers; if we lost our tribe, we were more vulnerable to predators. The way to stay safe was to build strong relationships. With the surge of technology and push to increase test scores the last few decades, relationships have been drastically altered, and as such, students' physical and mental health have suffered, as well as their ability to achieve academically.

**WHAT/HOW:** Care about your students as human beings, not just as potential test score statistics. Some ideas for how to do this:

- First and foremost, LEARN YOUR STUDENTS NAMES!! You should have all your students' first names completely memorized within the first 3-4 weeks of school MAX.
- Ask your students how they are doing
- If they seem to have a down demeanor on their faces, ask if they are okay
- At the beginning of each class, scan the room for various facial expressions, body language, etc., that you can follow-up on later
- Ask about students' weekends and/or home lives (it may feel like you're prying, but you're not – they are CRAVING human connection more than you know)

### 75/25 Rule

**WHY:** Research shows that the better relationships you have with your students, the better they will do academically.

**WHAT/HOW:** Spend MAXIMUM 75% of your instructional minutes on academic content (CCSS, NGSS, etc.). In the other portion of the time, here are some ideas:

- Wellness warmups
- Community-building circles
- Share stories about your own life
- Ask questions about their lives (get to know them as human beings)
- Explicit SEL lessons (see other side of handout)
- Mini-lessons on social-emotional issues happening on campus
- Nature walks

### Tell Stories

**WHY:** If students REALLY want to learn solving equations for x, they can Google it or YouTube it or go to Khan Academy. The landscape of education has changed vastly over the last few decades. One thing they CAN'T learn via Google or YouTube is how to be good people, be empathic, compassionate, respectful, etc. You modeling these qualities teaches them more than they could ever learn about academics.

**WHAT/HOW:** During wellness warm-ups, share your own stories of things you did the previous night or over the weekend. When students see you as a human being, it allows them to relate more to you, which will allow them to foster more of a sense of respect for you.

### Be Vulnerable

**WHY:** Kids see "perfection" on social media everywhere and compare themselves to the images of perfection portrayed on social media. This unrealistic standard makes them feel that there is something wrong with them. When you as their teacher model stoic, "perfect" behavior, it makes them feel as though they aren't allowed to make mistakes.

**WHAT/HOW:** I'm not going to lie, this is going to be hard, but so, SO worth it! Being vulnerable just means being you. If you're having a bad day, tell your students you are having a bad day. If you're feeling adventurous, you can even tell them why. The more you open up and share your own hardships and/or mistakes with your students, the more they will respect you and ultimately want to please you. This in turn, minimizes negative, disruptive behavior. Another huge way to be vulnerable is to apologize to your students if/when you've made a mistake. You're human – it's okay to show them that.

### Other SEL Resources / Strategies

Additional detailed strategies can be found in my book – be sure to go to [www.withheartproject.com/book](http://www.withheartproject.com/book) to get your free copy ☺

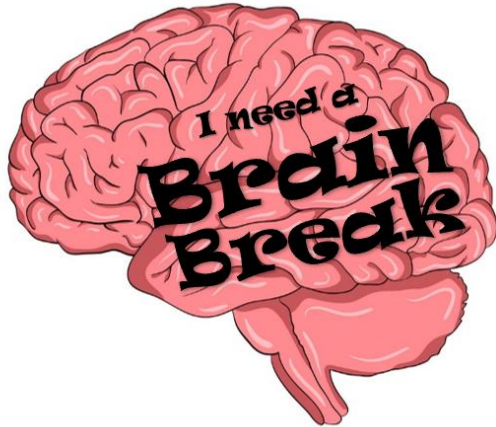
# Explicit SEL Lessons

If you're ever feeling adventurous and want to take a break from your academic content, why not try something new? I'd imagine some of the behaviors you're noticing in your students might be driving you a little bit crazy. Why not make a lesson out of it? I gave the following lessons and associated activities with my math students, and doing so contributed to them outperforming all other same-grade math students on campus:

- Empathy
- Labels & Stereotypes
- If You Really Knew Me
- Life Stories
- Self-Esteem & Positive Self-Talk
- Overcoming Hardships
- How Your Brain Works
- Rewriting Negative Thinking
- Dealing with Difficult Emotions
- Mindfulness
- Think Before You Speak
- Boundaries
- Prejudice
- Violence
- Anger
- Fights
- Assertive vs. Aggressive
- Stop Bullying: Make Your Voice Count
- Forgiveness & Moving On
- Disconnect to Reconnect
- Self-Advocacy & Communication Skills
- Resolving Conflicts
- Understanding & Relieving Stress
- Depression & Anxiety
- EMPOWER (Thriving vs. Surviving)

If you would like additional information on bringing these lessons to your school, please contact me at [kristenmiller@withheartproject.com](mailto:kristenmiller@withheartproject.com).

**FRONT:**



**BACK:**

