

Using Trust Generators to Build Rapport

In addition to building trust through acts of caring and authentic listening, we can build trust by being more authentic, vulnerable, and in sync with our students. According to researchers, there is a set of actions that help us make more intimate connections with one another and opens the door for building trust (Brafman & Brafman, 2011). I call them *trust generators*.

Figure 5.2 Trust Generators

Trust Generator	Definition	What It Looks Like
Selective Vulnerability	People respect and connect with others who share their own vulnerable moments. It means showing your human side that is not perfect.	Sharing with a student a challenge you had as a young person or as a learner. Sharing new skills you are learning and what is hard about it. The information shared is selective and appropriate.
Familiarity	People develop a sense of familiarity with someone who they see often in a particular setting such as at a bus stop everyday or in the café on a regular basis.	Crossing paths with a student during recess or lunch. Bumping into students and their families at a community farmer’s market or at a local park. Attending community events that you know the student may have attended.
Similarity of Interests	People create a bond with others who share similar likes, dislikes, hobbies, and so forth. This common affinity allows a point of connection beyond any obvious racial, class, or linguistic differences. This plants the seed of connection in the relationship.	Sharing hobbies, sports, or other things you like that are similar to a particular student’s interests. Also sharing social causes that you are passionate about, such as saving the environment or caring for animals.
Concern	People connect when another shows concern for those issues and events important to another, such as births, illnesses, or other life transitions. This plants the seed of personal regard.	Remembering details from a student’s life. Demonstrated by asking follow-up questions about recent events.
Competence	People tend to trust others who demonstrate they have the skill and knowledge, as well as the will, to help and support them. This plants the seed of confidence in others.	Students trust the teacher when the teacher demonstrates the ability to teach effectively or make learning less confusing, more exciting, and more successful.