

Getting to Know the Students

Key Question: How can you learn about your students?

Directions: Listening to students, understanding their needs, and responding to their suggestions are important ways to build relationships in the classroom. Many beginning teachers make the mistake of being a friend to students and then have difficulty being a teacher later in the year. Use the ideas on this page to discuss practical ways to survey your students. Ask your students to complete any of these with short answers. Share the results with your mentor and what you learned by doing this.

Student Interest Survey

Sample Questions:

- What do you like most about school?
- What do you think your strengths are in the classroom?
- How do you learn best?
- What is your favorite subject? Why?
- What language do you speak at home?
- Have you ever traveled to another country?
- What could I help you learn this year?
- What do you wish you could do in school?
- What is your favorite sport or hobby?
- Do you play a musical instrument?

Adapt questions to meet the needs and ages of students. You may need to read the questions to younger children and write their answers on the board, or students can circle a smiley or frown face to express their opinion.

1. *Option:* Select a question and have students write the answers on an index card. Make sure students write their names on the cards!
2. *Take photographs of each student.* Students love it, and it will help you learn their names and faces. This may be more appropriate for younger students. A whole-class photograph is fun for all age groups.
3. *Interview a few students.* Ask them to talk about their experiences in school and share how they best learn. You can assist your novice teacher in documenting the responses using audio features on phones or tablets. Be sure to get permission from students and parents.
4. *What are your ideas for getting to know your students?*