

Building Rapport with Students

Understand that getting close to students gives them an important reason to succeed—to keep your personal opinion of them positive. Yes, it is better if they do well just to please themselves. However, at least in the beginning, **your opinion** may be all that some students have to lean on.

**Don't get too hung up
on the way
students dress.
A student can
have green hair
and still learn algebra.**

Remember that a student's hope is that he or she stands out, if not in the world, then at least in your eyes. Even when they're older and toughened and wise beyond their years, students still want to be noticed. **They still want to feel important. Notice them.**

In Your Classroom

Don't do something in the classroom unless you can see a reason for it. It may be fun to have fingernail painting contests or to watch funny movies, but what's the point? (There may be one. Just be sure you know what it is.) If you can think of no valid reason for an activity, don't do it.

Always have a box of tissues on your desk, even if you have to buy it yourself.

Don't fret too much if you don't get through everything in the curriculum. Very few teachers do.

Don't teach your students to be pessimistic about the future. Let them learn that somewhere else. Make them feel in your class that they can change the world.

Have a backup plan.

Look at yourself through the eyes of others.
You can be fashionable without being risqué.
Your friends may not raise an eyebrow to see
your thong underwear sticking out of your
low-rise jeans. A student or a parent may,
however, get a different message.

If you are close in age to your students, be especially careful not to become too familiar or casual with them. Never flirt with them.

Maintain some distance and dignity.

Don't complain to your students about how poorly teachers are paid or about how awful your job is. The classroom is not the place for it.

Know that whenever you pull into the school parking lot, whatever may be going on in your personal life, **you are in the role of teacher, mentor, and role model.**