

## **Building Classroom Culture**

High school classrooms are very dynamic thus starting off the year with a dedicated plan on how to structure an encouraging classroom environment as well as keeping a positive classroom culture can help build the student-teacher relationship for a year-long success.

Collaboration among students is a great teaching strategy to work into every lesson because students learn best when they are teaching/learning from each other. During collaborative work, it is imperative to set ground rules when students are working together so that each member feels comfortable enough to participate. The group dynamic also needs to actively establish roles so that each member is held accountable for their contribution to the group.

Project Based Learning (PBL) classrooms are structured around student collaboration. In order for groups to maintain function and respect, PBL students are expected to set up their own group rules and will utilize their social contracts to help promote their group's efficiency, respect, and collaboration. These contracts are a vital part of PBL because students are held to the standards they created themselves and are also in charge of penalizing those who do not uphold these standards.

Applying this strategy into an every day classroom can help the students monitor their own actions to make sure all members feel valued, increasing their motivation to engage and learn alongside their classmates.

Giving the students the power to manage themselves helps the teacher create rapport with students by giving them their own independence and instilling trust in them; thus furthering the respect they receive from their students.

Letting students create their own classroom culture allows for a safe work environment where students are not afraid to explore, make mistakes, and ask questions. Each and every student is welcomed into the classroom to engage with each other and learn freely.