

# Agenda

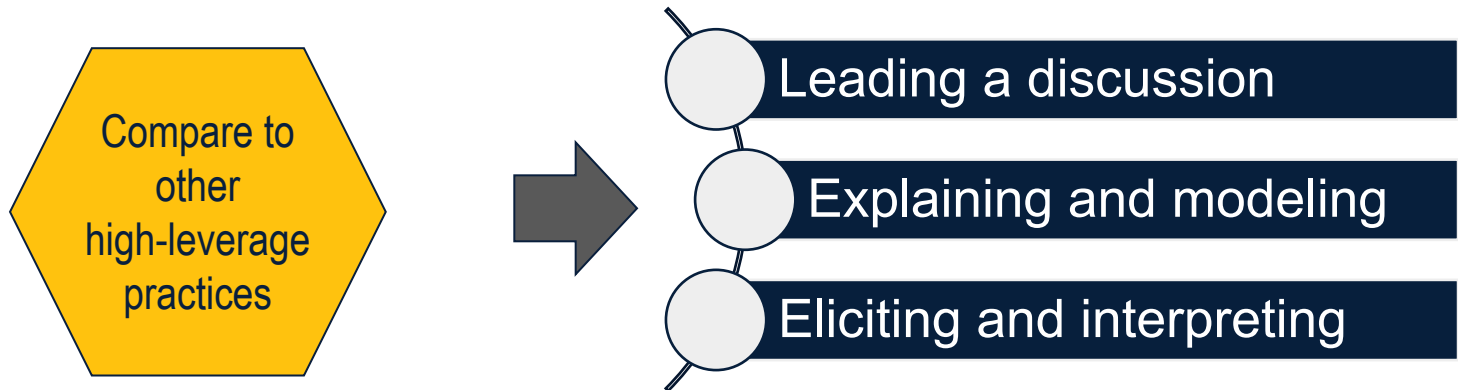
1. Examine the practice of building respectful relationships (BRR) with students
2. Consider how we teach (BRR) to teacher candidates
3. Use a decomposition to see and analyze the practice
4. Learn about and analyze small conversations  
Introduce the activity structure of small conversations and their purposes  
Situate small conversations inside work on building respectful relationships

# Getting Situated

- Decomposition - <http://gvsu.edu/s/1uE>

# What is unique about building respectful relationships?

- It happens all of the time and is connected to nearly everything teachers do.
- It is often embedded inside other high-leverage practices.
- The success of its enactment is often tied to context and shaped by individuals' intersectional identities.

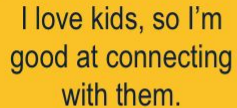


**In this context, what are some challenges in building respectful relationships?**

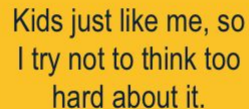
# Building respectful relationships also matters significantly

This statement is illustrated in a recent study that describes the practice of six White, female teachers in multiracial, multiethnic urban classrooms.

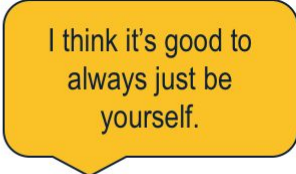
- The teachers were experienced and “highly effective”
- The teachers felt building respectful relationships was a strength



I love kids, so I'm good at connecting with them.



Kids just like me, so I try not to think too hard about it.



I think it's good to always just be yourself.

From Curren-Preis, M. (2018). *Creating and using the persona in teaching: Challenges of connection and control*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.

**3. What is something you wish your teacher did more of to make you feel good, noticed, or respected?**

Liked me more

**3. What is something your teacher did NOT notice about you that you wish she had?**

That I'm capable

**4. How do you think your teacher was feeling today about you? Why?**

Ignoring she wouldn't answer none  
of my questions + seemed irritated  
by me.

# Yet, the work is often taken for granted

It is often assumed that...

- the work of building relationships is simple and easy to learn
- many new teachers already know how to build relationships
- building relationships is a “natural” skill\*

Instead...

- The practice of building respectful relationships is difficult and complex.
- Research has shown it to be especially challenging for White teachers in cross-cultural contexts.
- It must be unpacked and explicitly taught to teachers.

\*Ball, D. L. & Forzani, F. M. (2009). The work of teaching and the challenge for teacher education. *Journal of teacher education*, 60(5), 497-511



# Checking in

- What are some things you already work on with candidates (directly or indirectly) related to the practice of building respectful relationships with students?
- What are some things you have tried in this COVID-19 context to teach how to build relationships with students/build relationships with students?



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**Decomposing the practice:**  
***Building respectful relationships with students***



### Building respectful relationships with students

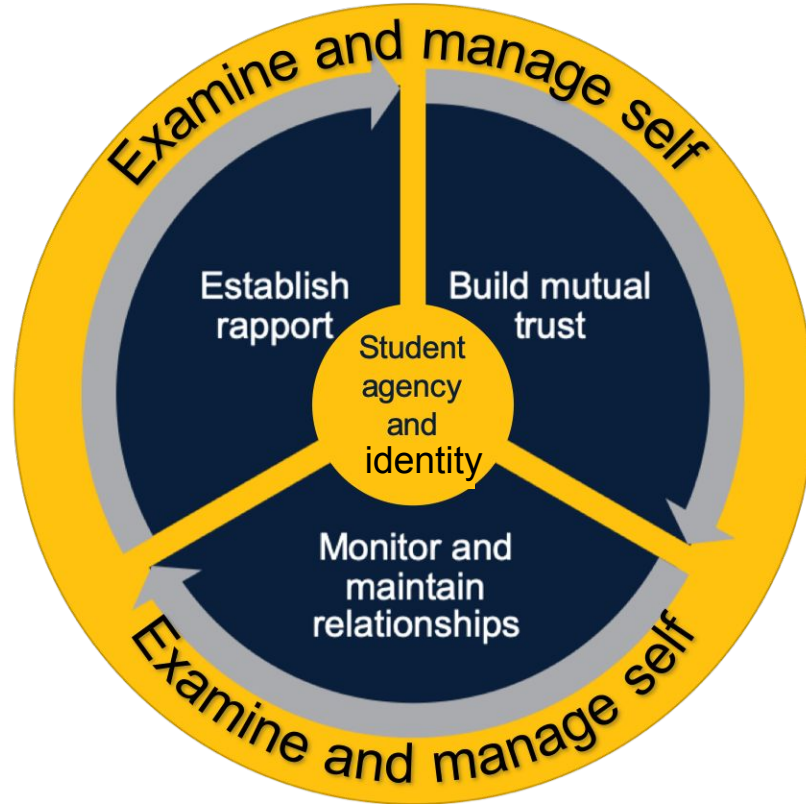
Teachers intentionally build and sustain respectful relationships with students in the classroom. Teachers who form respectful relationships with students are able to work collaboratively with children and manage power dynamics in ways that increase student participation, engagement, and achievement. Respectful teacher-student relationships are characterized by trust, care, joy, and appreciation of students' cultures and communities. Teachers develop their relationships in all aspects of their teaching, including small conversations with individuals, notes to students, nonverbal signals, and how they respond to and acknowledge students during lessons.

### Advancing justice through building respectful relationships with students

The quality of the relationships that students have with their teachers affects their success and flourishing. Teachers' relationships with students can help students feel valued and supported, can positively shape students' academic identities, and help engage them in learning. A teacher who has strong relationships with students will be better positioned to leverage that knowledge in favor of curriculum and learning activities that are relevant to students' lives and draw on their experiences. However, because teacher-student relationships can also be harmful and oppressive, and can reproduce patterns of racism, care with developing positive relationships is foundational to everything teachers do.

### Decomposition of building respectful relationships with students

Establish rapport	Build mutual trust	Monitor and maintain relationships with students	Examine and manage self in relationship with students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to learn about and connect with every student as a human being</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to learn about and connect with you</li> <li>• Use work on content to both convey appreciation/regard for and connect with students</li> <li>• Find small moments to connect with children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate trustworthiness</li> <li>• Treat students as trustworthy</li> <li>• Support students to engage in productive struggle with content and to persevere</li> <li>• Invite and take seriously students' questions, challenges, criticisms, disagreements without taking it personally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish routines for connecting with students on a regular basis (e.g. greeting students at the door)</li> <li>• Build communication systems (e.g., interactive journaling, regularly scheduled check-ins, surveys) in order to gather individual student thinking and feedback</li> <li>• Develop systems to track the quality and quantity of interactions with individual students</li> <li>• Recognize and actively mediate conflict—take ownership when mistakes are made, and adapt behavior based on the needs of the relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend to who you are outside of the classroom</li> <li>• Attend to who you are as a professional inside the classroom</li> <li>• Examine your personality, interrogate your biases, and identify blind spots in terms of how they might impact relationships with individual students</li> <li>• Attend to how you express yourself</li> </ul>



# What does the practice entail?

AREAS OF WORK	CATEGORIES OF TECHNIQUES
<b>Establish rapport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seek to learn about and connect with each student as a whole person</li><li>• Provide opportunities for students to learn about and connect with you as a whole person</li><li>• Use work on content to both convey appreciation/regard for and connect with individual students</li></ul>
<b>Build mutual trust</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate trustworthiness</li><li>• Treat students as trustworthy</li><li>• Support individual students to engage in productive struggle with content and to persevere</li></ul>
<b>Monitor and maintain relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitor relationships</li><li>• Maintain relationships</li></ul>
<b>Examine and manage self in relationship to students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attend to who you are outside of the classroom</li><li>• Attend to who you are as a professional inside the classroom</li><li>• Attend to how you express yourself</li></ul>

# Using a decomposition to see the work of teaching

- As you read the transcript, consider the core areas of work outlined in the decomposition:
- Establish rapport
- Build mutual trust
- Monitor and maintain relationships with individuals
- Examine and manage self in relationships with students

1. What are examples from the transcript of each of these areas of the practice? What techniques do you see the teacher doing within each of these areas?
2. What is NOT represented through this transcript related to the practice of building respectful relationships with students?



# La'Rayne and the teacher contract

1 Teacher: I think we have time for a couple of more ideas.  
2 Remember that the question is what does a good  
3 teacher do that helps you to do really well and supports  
4 you to learn a lot? La'Rayne?  
5 La'Rayne: I think that when you call on people, I think you always  
6 look on that side more than you do on the sides that  
7 are over there and over there.  
8 Teacher: So, you want me to be careful to be looking all around  
9 the room when I call on someone?  
10 La'Rayne: Yeah. 'Cause it seems like every time you call on  
11 someone, you're either calling like someone over there.  
12 Teacher: So, where do you think I am not looking enough,  
13 La'Rayne?  
14 La'Rayne: Over there and just-  
15 Teacher: Okay. So, be sure- How could we put that, La'Rayne?  
16 Be sure to look all around the room to call on kids?  
17 La'Rayne: Yes.  
18 Teacher: That's a really helpful one I think.

19 Teacher: Okay. Are you ready to see the picture? Remember, I  
20 don't want anyone to say the answer out loud and I  
21 don't want anyone to confer. What I want to know is  
22 what you think when you see this. So, all we're gonna  
23 do is read the problem together and make sure you can  
24 read it. Who could read the first question? Don't say  
25 your thinking about it, just read it.  
26 Okay. I'm trying to do what La'Rayne suggested, I'm  
27 trying to look around the room more. Okay, Dior, I'm  
28 calling on you. Could you read the first question up  
29 there, please?

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30 Teacher: La'Rayne? That was a super helpful comment you  
31 made for the teacher contract. About looking all around  
32 the room.  
33 La'Rayne: Okay.  
34 Teacher: That was really helpful.

## Using transcript to introduce the practice to beginners

- What would this transcript of La'Rayne help beginners see about the practice of building respectful relationships with students?
- What might be harder to see about the practice through this transcript?
- What are things you'd like beginners to notice about the transcript, and how might you help them do so?



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## **Making the practice learnable: Laying the groundwork**

# Laying the groundwork

## Learning about children

- Interview a child
- Ethnography of a classroom
- Student survey
- Observe children across multiple settings
- What else?

## Learning about families, schools & communities

- Ethnography of a community institution/neighborhood
- Interview with community member
- Interview with parent/guardian
- Home visits

## Learning about the “self”

- Interrogating of the “self”
- Video analysis of self
- Interrogating biases
- What else?



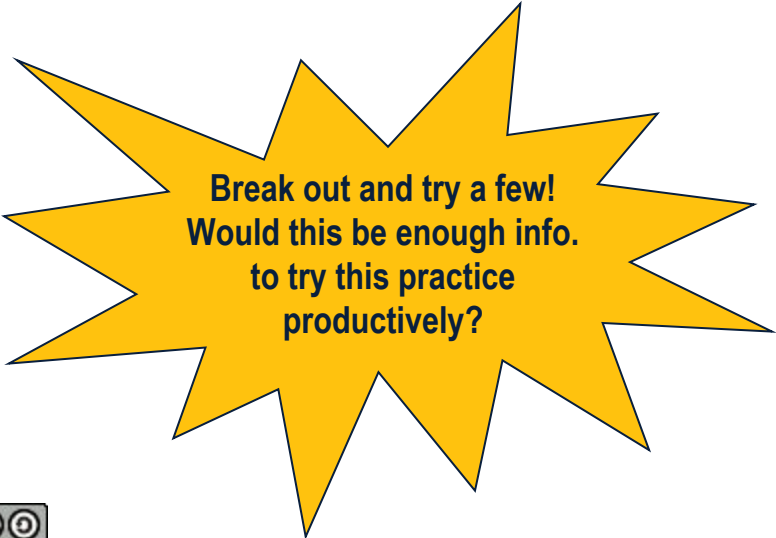
**An example of building respectful relationships:  
Small conversations with children**

# We can build respectful relationships through Small conversations

- Small conversations are the brief, relationship-building conversations teachers have with children throughout the day.

## Quick tips:

- You can converse as yourselves
- Small conversations are “small”



**Break out and try a few!  
Would this be enough info.  
to try this practice  
productively?**

# What are small conversations?

Small conversations are one vehicle through which teachers enact the areas of work outlined in the practice of *building respectful relationships with students*.

## Purposes of Small Conversations

Build connections and trust

Get to know children and find out what they are thinking

Demonstrate regard for and a belief in students

Personalize school, given the group context

Help children acclimate to routines or tasks

Lay the groundwork for helping children learn

- They occur throughout the day in a variety of contexts
- They can be content-neutral or content-specific
- They are often one of the first things novices do with children in the field

Adapted from Ball, D.L. (2019) "Small conversations." Course materials: University of Michigan, ED406.



# Features of small conversations

## Launch

- Open-ended but still specific enough for child to answer
- Content-specific or content-neutral
- Takes child's interests, preferences and experiences into account
- Often private(ish)

## Two-to-Three Talking Turns

- Convey attention and regard (e.g., by paraphrasing or asking questions)
- Demonstrate listening (e.g., by pausing)
- Avoid “filling in,” making assumptions or using questionable reference points
- May allude to prior small conversations
- Strategic about personal disclosures

## Exit

- Expresses gratitude or appreciation
- Uses physical cues
- Implies the conversation will continue at a later time

# Let's try one

- Take turns initiating and engaging in small conversations with one another.
- You do not need to pretend you are speaking to a child. It is okay to try out “small conversations” with another adult.
- As you practice small conversations, think about what feels hard or easy... and also about what might be challenging for novice teachers.

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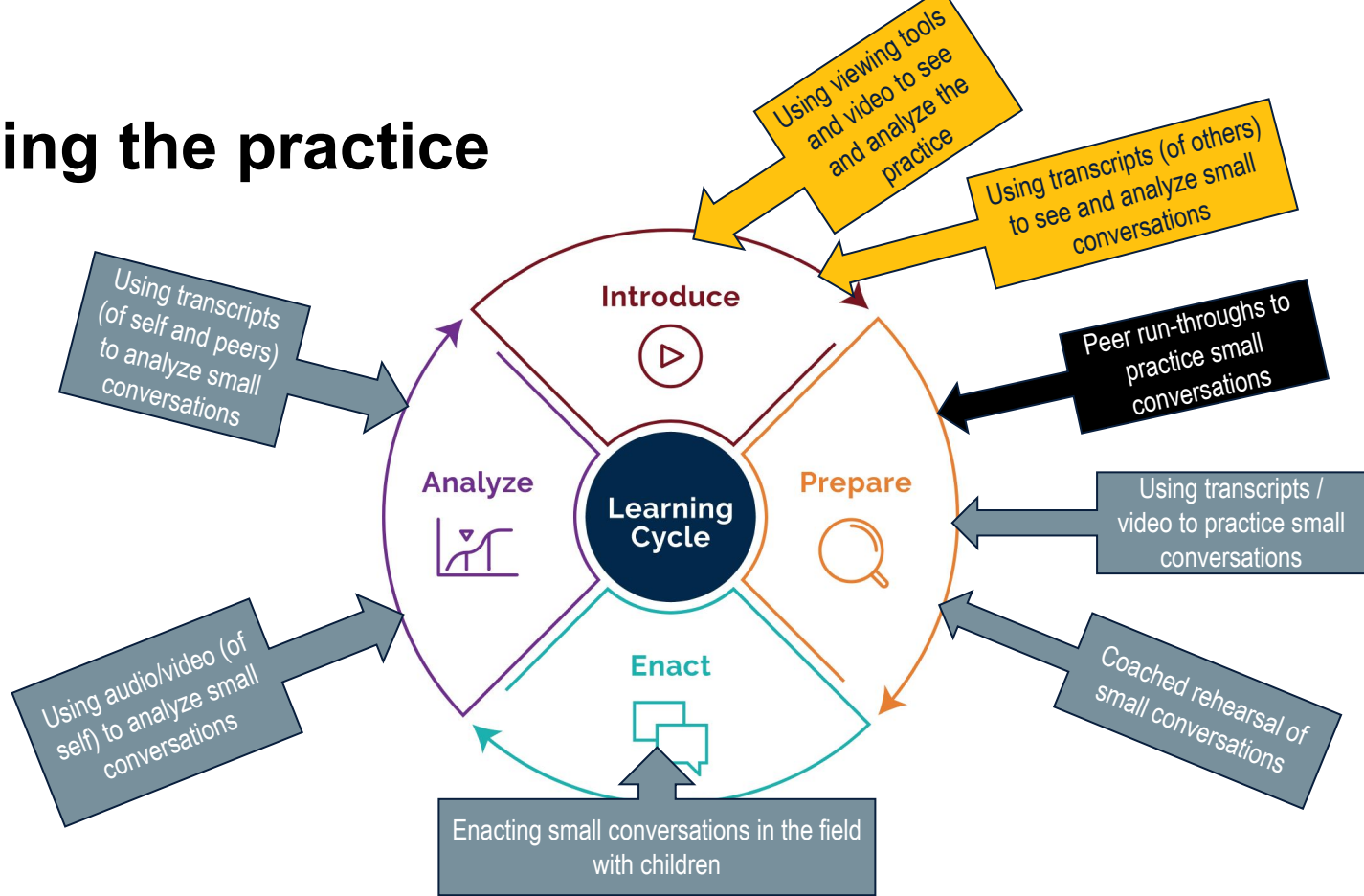
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**Revisiting the practice of  
*building respectful relationships with students***

# Making connections to the practice

AREAS OF WORK	SOME CONNECTIONS WITH SMALL CONVERSATIONS
Establish rapport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Through small conversations, teachers can learn about and connect with each child as a whole person and as a learner</li></ul>
Demonstrate trustworthiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small conversations convey teachers' regard and their sense that students are trustworthy</li><li>• Teachers can demonstrate trustworthiness in small conversations, such as when respecting students' privacy</li></ul>
Monitor and maintain relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small conversations allow teachers to monitor and maintain relationships with children (e.g., as ways for teachers to "check in" with students)</li></ul>
Examine and manage self in relationship to students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small conversations require ongoing management of the self</li></ul>

# Teaching the practice





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