

## What difference do teacher-student relationships make to students' involvement in lessons?

### Research taster

Research shows that teachers who have positive relationships with their students promote more discussion with students and make more use of students' ideas in ongoing teaching interactions. Carl Rogers, a widely recognised expert in fostering positive relationships, believed that the way to create successful relationships was through being caring and showing empathy. When he did this, he found that students became more interested and independent learners – they enjoyed lessons more, attended more often and learned more.

### Your evidence

You and your colleagues might like to survey the students in your classes / particular year groups to find out how they perceive your relationships with them. Questions you might ask could be:

	Always true	Mostly true	Sometimes true	Never true
Most teachers are interested in and care about me				
I feel listened to and my views are taken seriously				
I can ask the teacher when I don't understand something				
My teachers notice when I'm good at something				
I enjoy lessons				

You could look for patterns and discuss possible reasons for them with your colleagues. You might also want to explore with focus groups of students reasons underlying the common answers to find out why they feel more successful and engaged in some lessons than others. For example, you might ask, 'How do teachers show that they are interested in you?' Or you could ask them to complete sentences such as 'I know I have a good relationship with teachers when they ...'

### Next steps

You and your colleagues could build what you learn from your students about the classroom climate you create and how they affect their engagement into your curriculum planning. Once you feel you have enhanced your relationships with your students, you could perhaps survey the students again for their views of your new teaching style and/or ask a trusted colleague to observe a teaching session then give you feedback on your interactions with students. You could also discuss with your colleague the effect of your interactions on both your relationship with your students and their engagement with learning.

### Find out more

- Participation anthology RfT Section 2, page 8
- RfT Carl Rogers and classroom climate