

# Relationship Skills Handout 4b: Educator Vignettes — Example Responses

## **Directions**

After completing Handout 4a, consider the examples here as well as your responses. Examples are provided to help spark thought, but there is more than one “correct” answer.

## **Vignette: Mr. Acosta**

Mr. Acosta teaches eleventh-grade mathematics. He is interested in helping his students understand how mathematics is applied in the “real world” and encouraging more of his students to pursue degrees and work in STEM fields. Mr. Acosta has set up a series of business and career resources for his classes. At least once a month during the fall semester, Mr. Acosta invites individuals who use math in their daily work at local businesses, colleges, and companies to come speak to his classes. One week before each talk, Mr. Acosta presents some of the fundamental math skills or types of problems that the speaker may use in their line of work. Students are given time to prepare questions for the speakers in advance of the event. At the beginning of the spring semester, students pick which mathematics-related career path highlighted during the fall was most interesting to them. Each student is then grouped with the other students who chose the same career interest, and the group is paired with a community mentor from that field. Once a month, students check in with their chosen mentor to talk about resources available for their own future studies or job searches, to share tips, and to build connections with their peers and the community mentor. The project culminates in a job-shadowing visit for all of the students to their mentor’s place of employment at the end of the school year.

**How might this teacher build readiness and effectively introduce this activity and, following the activity, help students process what they learned?**

**Example:** The teacher can structure a discussion so that students think about how different types of relationships have helped them advance or succeed in different areas of their lives.

**Example:** The teacher can lead students in a mapping activity in which they write their personal career or college goals and connect those goals to the types of relationships they might need to draw upon to achieve those goals.

**Example:**After the final session, the teacher can have students brainstorm ways they can access mentoring relationships in the future.

**How might this teacher encourage active participation by all students?**

**Example**: The teacher can have students proceed through the project in pairs in which students are put in charge of ensuring that the other person gets what they need out of the experience. The teacher can provide structured times for pairs to meet before and after the mentor meet-ups to discuss their expectations, experiences, and areas in which they may need support.

**Example:** The teacher and mentors can be thoughtful about the kinds of experiences they design for students, making sure that there are different types of activities for different types of learners (e.g., planning both large, small, and individual or pair activities; planning activities that engage students in thinking or writing before sharing in a group; inviting a diverse group of mentors from a wide variety of organizations).

**How might this teacher ensure that this activity is responsive to the cultures of his students?**

**Example:** The teacher can provide adequate training and support to mentors, so they are prepared to be thoughtful and responsive in their engagement with students.

**Example:** The teacher can ensure that mentor organizations and businesses are selected from the communities in which students and their families live.

**How might this teacher build students’ understanding of why they are engaging in this activity?**

**Example:** The teacher can explicitly state that he is working on building real-world connections to mathematics, as well as building the students’ network of caring adult and career connections to support them after they leave high school.

## **Vignette: Ms. Lyons**

Ms. Lyons teaches first grade at a small elementary school where there is no in-school kindergarten. All her students arrive in first grade as newcomers to the school, and her students often come from at least four different local kindergarten programs. Ms. Lyons focuses her first week of school every year on friendship and building a classroom culture of kindness and respect. In a large group circle, students first introduce themselves to the rest of the class. After the full-group introductions, students are paired up in twos to “interview” each other more deeply using a set of discussion and listening guidelines that Ms. Lyons will use throughout the school year. After the interviews, students share at least one interesting thing they learned about their partner and one thing they liked about how their interviewer spoke or listened to them.

**How might this teacher build readiness and effectively introduce this activity and, following the activity, help students process what they learned?**

**Example:** The teacher can have students define what it means to be a friend and use common language about the skills involved in being a good friend (e.g., sharing, listening, supporting, encouraging).

**Example:** The teacher can set the classroom discussion and listening norms for the year together with students to ensure shared ownership and involvement of the students.

**Example:** Students can journal about their interview experience and write or draw about the way it made them feel to be listened to.

**How might this teacher encourage active participation by all students?**

**Example:** The teacher can have students cycle through different pairs for the interview activity, so they meet different classmates and have different types of discussions.

**Example:** The teacher can have students come up with the questions they want their partner to use for their interview session, so they get to share the kinds of things about themselves they feel most comfortable with or proud of.

**How might this teacher ensure that this activity is responsive to the cultures of her students?**

**Example:** If possible, the teacher can ensure that each student gets a chance to be interviewed by someone who speaks the student’s home language; the interviewer might be another student or a teacher.

**Example:** The teacher can engage students in the design of their classroom norms so that each year’s discussion and listening norms feel comfortable for the students in her class.

**How might this teacher build students’ understanding of why they are engaging in this activity?**

**Example:** The teacher can have the students role-play different scenarios in which they are using or not using the discussion and listening norms they set together, to practice what those norms feel like.

**Example:** The teacher can ask students to reflect on times when they have contributed to a discussion or have been listened to, and then share what happened in those times that made it possible for them to speak or be heard.

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