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Establishing optimal relationships between educators, parents and students through dialogue

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“Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer the one who teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.”

Paulo Freire
Establishing Rapport/Alliance: Dialogue!

- Invite Trust
- Show Genuine Interest
- Cultivate Empathy
- Nurture the Relationship
- Commit to Open Communication

Common challenges faced by educators connecting with culturally diverse students and their families:

- Language Barrier
- Cultural Illiteracy
- Shyness vs. Prejudice
- Communication Deficits
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• Courage to overcome language barriers:

Invite trust by showing effort to communicate
1) Model appropriate and respectful communication with the parental figure.
2) Utilize technological resources such as translation applications for mobile communication devices.

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• Curiosity can overcome cultural illiteracy:

Inform yourself: Become a teacher-student!
1) Show genuine interest about your student’s language and culture. It only takes a few minutes to research your student’s cultural and linguistic background.
2) BEWARE of stereotypes! Educators, like most human beings, often respond to students and their families based on prevalent cultural biases in the dominant culture.
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• Overcoming stereotypes:
  Empathy leaves no room for biases
  1) Under “stereotype threat” the fight, flight, freeze mechanism is activated and the capacity to think clearly vanishes.
  2) Creating a safe environment for positive interactions fosters mutual learning. Both sides can benefit from open-hearted exchanges, paved with mutual respect.

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• Shyness vs. Prejudice:
  Commit to communication – become a teacher-student!
  1) “I don't know” versus “I know exactly what is going on…”
  2) Becoming aware of automatic responses fueled by blind assumptions: Sometimes a negative past experience can unfairly obscure a new situation.
  3) Beginner mindset: new situations present new opportunities for learning about different individuals within the same culture.
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• Communication Deficits:

Empathic attunement

1) Listen with intent – use reflective listening tools.
2) Refrain from giving advice. Give examples of how “sometimes students often succeed when…” or “families usually improve communication when…”
3) Patience-acceptance: Keep kindness in mind!

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“Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people.”

Paulo Freire