

## **Closing Reflection**

Within any classroom, there is diversity present far beyond what meets the eye. In addition to racial and ethnic diversity, students will have a wide variety of socioeconomic statuses, familial backgrounds, interests, learning preferences, academic capabilities, and more. Knowing your students individually is crucial to creating an environment where all feel safe to take academic risks. In order to cultivate this environment, I plan to do the following within my classroom.

First, I will provide students with the opportunity to share their identities with me, as well as share aspects of my life with them. This helps them conceptualize me as a person and grow comfortable sharing information with me as well. While this may start with basics, such as their favorite book or animal, it opens the door to later communication. This will allow students to feel comfortable coming to me over other issues as time moves forward as we have already built trust, and therefore make them comfortable within the classroom.

Secondly, I would allow students to have ample opportunity to share their identities and news with one another. This encourages students to have relationships with one another and therefore create a better sense of empathy and community within the classroom. Throughout my internship experience, I have done this daily through morning meetings. I encourage students to share aspects of their cultures, lives, and overall identities with one another. It is incredible to see how quickly this builds community among the students. For example, one student shared that her mother was going into labor any day now and each day students excitedly greeted her at the door asking if the baby had come each morning. This not only makes students feel seen by others, but also makes them feel cared for and supported and therefore more willing to take academic risks.

Finally, I would encourage students to take academic risks and make them comfortable doing so by modeling that behavior for them on a daily basis. I would ensure I am empathetic

and caring to other students, modeling the relationships I wish to have them build amongst each other. Moreover, I would model making mistakes as okay. During my time in second grade, I made lots of mistakes. Some were on purpose, answering math problems incorrectly and allowing students to catch my mistakes, as well as some accidental, choosing an incorrect answer as correct in a Kahoot. Regardless of how the issue arose, I would point out that I made a mistake, ensure my behavior did not drop, and model how to fix the issue. I would often verbalize this for them as well by saying something like “did I make a mistake? Oh no, I did! That is okay, let me see how I can fix it!”. This showed them that if I was okay after messing up, they would be too.

As I approach my first year teaching, I have many goals for myself. Whether it be instruction, organization, team-wide collaboration, classroom management, or more, I will constantly have to be changing and adapting to the needs of my students. My goal is just that, to be willing and open to adaptation. Too often teachers get stuck in a rhythm, regardless of how effective it is. In my first year, as I test out new concepts and ideas, I must be willing to make changes as needed and be open to new ideas.