

# Revitalizing The Other Side of the Report Card: A Collection of Tools

*Teacher to Teacher*

Nancy Doda, Ph.D.,

[ndoda@teacher-to-teacher.com](mailto:ndoda@teacher-to-teacher.com)

[www.teacher-to-teacher.com](http://www.teacher-to-teacher.com)

*Find Someone Who...*

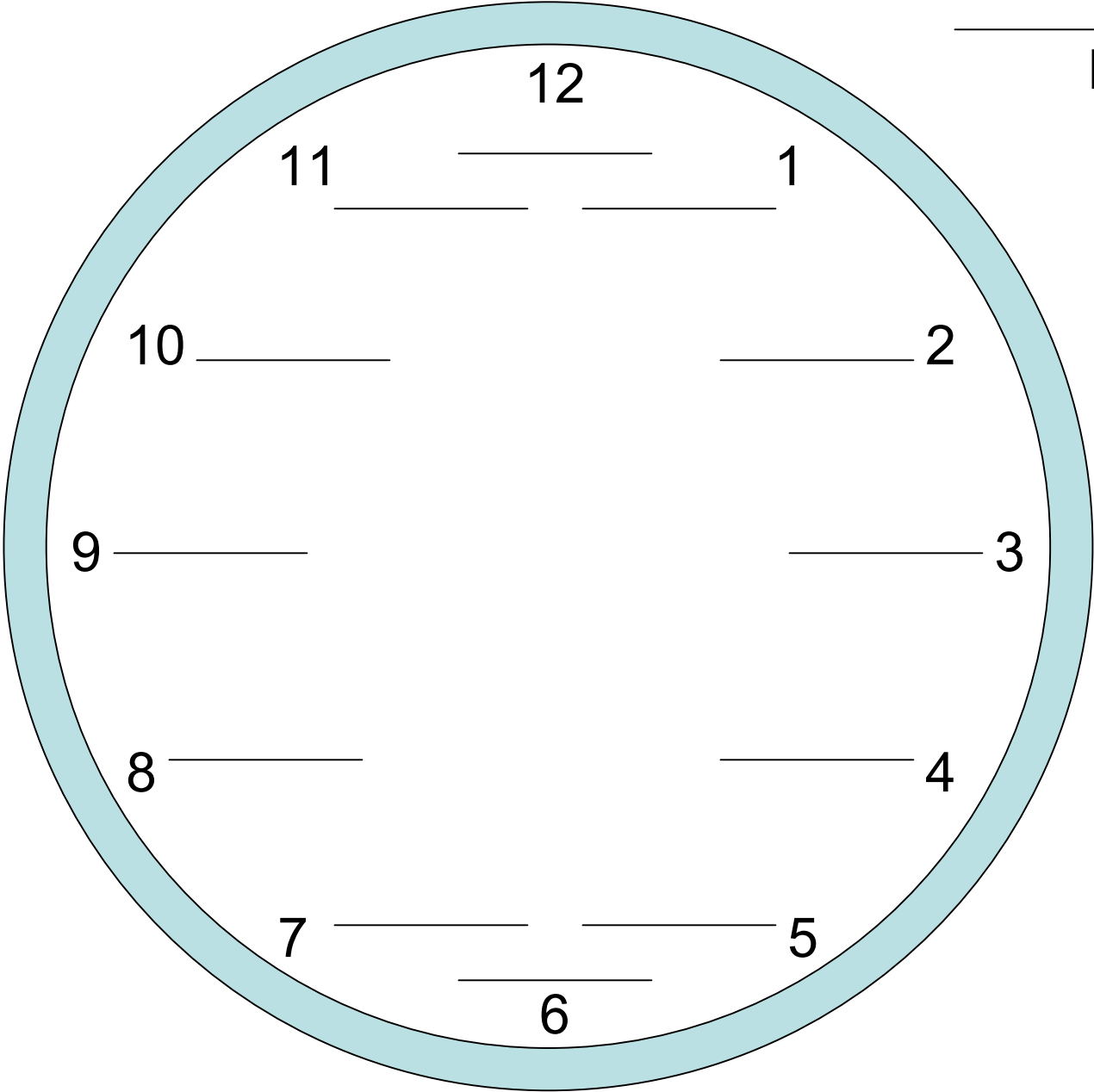
*Only one person per category!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Visited the Grand Canyon Before	Has exciting plans for next summer
Has taught special needs students	Has had a broken a bone
Has a good movie to recommend	Can talk about a favorite book
Has seen a stage play	Has been teaching more than ten years
Has recently visited someplace special	Can share a favorite recipe
Can recommend some Monday Night fun	Is a music lover
Is a former athlete	Visited Another country
Has children at home	Has a terrific teaching tool

# Clock Appointments

\_\_\_\_\_ Name



## Making a Heart Map

We use the image of our heart to describe many things. Many of you may have had a broken heart or have felt your heart soar after an exciting moment in your life. In order for all of us to get to know you, I want you to create an image of your heart which you will later describe and explain to the class.

### **Assignment:**

On a blank sheet of paper, draw a picture of what you hold close to your heart. Things to consider putting in your heart include the following:

1. People, places important to you
2. Things you do well or like to do
3. Hobbies, interests, sports, clubs you are a part of
4. Information about family, nationality, etc.
5. Unusual experiences
6. Favorite quotes, movies, books, etc.
7. Cultural symbols representing your heritage
8. Nicknames/adjectives to describe you
9. Photos of you or you with your family/friends
10. Anything else that defines you

### **As you design your heart keep in mind:**

1. Color symbolism
2. Placement of information- things most important should go in the middle, least important outer edge or things not part of you anymore (like a broken heart or a bad memory) can go outside your heart
3. Design of heart- doesn't have to be typical heart shape (Be creative!)
4. Use words and pictures (drawn) or clip art okay...

You should bring this to class tomorrow and be ready to share your heart with your classmates- thus, please include material you will be comfortable sharing!

### **QUESTIONS TO HELP MINE YOUR HEART**

What has stayed in your heart? What memories, moments, people, animals, objects, places, books, fears, scars, friends, siblings, parents, grandparents, teachers, other people, journeys, secrets, dreams, crushes, relationships, comforts, learning experiences?

What's at the center? The edges? *What's in your heart?*

## Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner says, “It’s not how smart you are, it’s how you are smart.” He defines intelligence as, “the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that re valued in one or more cultural settings.” He elaborates on those cultural settings in literature from Project Zero, the Harvard University group with which he’s associated:

“Even at the preschool level, language capacity is not assessed in terms of vocabulary, definitions, or similarities, but rather as manifest in story telling (the novelist) and reporting (the journalist). Instead of attempting to assess spatial skills in isolation, we observe children as they are drawing (the artist) or taking apart and putting together objects (the mechanic).”

—Project Zero, Harvard University

Our general intelligence, according to Gardner, is divided into eight different and equally important intelligences. They are:

Verbal/Linguistic—Ability to think in words and to use language to express complex meanings.

Examples: poets, teachers, writers, public speakers, journalists.

Logical/Mathematical—Ability to calculate, hypothesize, quantify things. Can carry out complex math operations, use symbolic and sequential reasoning skills, as well as inductive and deductive thinking patterns. Examples: scientists, detectives.

Bodily-Kinesthetic—Ability to manipulate objects and use a variety of physical skills. Good use of timing and mind-body coordination. Examples: athletes, dancers, surgeons, craftspeople.

Visual/Spatial—Ability to think in three dimensions. Good at mental images, spatial reasoning, graphic and artistic skills, puzzles, active imagination. Examples: sailors, pilots, sculptors, painters, architects.

Musical—Ability to recognize, create, and reproduce music. Ability to figure out pitch, rhythm, timbre, and tone. People with this intelligence like learning with songs, patterns and rhythm. Examples: composer, musician, singer, listener, conductor.

Interpersonal—Ability to understand and interact with others well. Uses verbal and non-verbal communication, sensitive to moods of others, Can accept multiple perspectives. Examples: teachers, social workers, actors, politicians.

Intrapersonal—Ability to understand yourself, your thoughts and feelings, and to use that knowledge to plan your life. Very intuitive and reflective. Examples: psychologist, spiritual leader, counselor.

Naturalist—Ability to tell the differences among living things, sensitive to the natural world. Recognizes patterns in society and in nature. Categorizes things. Examples: naturalist, collector, camper, researcher, botanist, zoologist.

## WHERE DOES YOUR TRUE INTELLIGENCE LIE?

This survey will help you identify your areas of strongest intelligence. Read each statement. If it expresses some characteristic of yours and sounds true for the most part, jot down a "T". If it doesn't mark an "F". If the statement is sometimes true and sometimes false, leave it blank.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I'd rather draw a map than give someone verbal directions.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ If I am angry or happy, I usually know exactly why.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I can play (or used to play) a musical instrument.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I can associate music with moods.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ I can add or multiply quickly in my head.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ I can help a friend sort out strong feelings because I successfully dealt with similar feelings.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ I like to work with calculators and computers.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy categorizing things by common traits.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ I pick up new dance steps fast.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ It's easy for me to say what I think in an argument or debate.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy a good lecture, speech or sermon.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ I always know north from south no matter where I am.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ I like to gather together groups of people for parties or special events.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ Ecological issues are important to me.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ Life seems empty without music.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ I always understand the drawings that come with new gadgets or appliances.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ I like to work puzzles and play games.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ Learning to ride a bike (or skate) was easy.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ I am irritated when I hear an argument that sounds illogical.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ I can convince other people to follow my plans.
21. \_\_\_\_\_ Hiking and camping are enjoyable activities for me.
22. \_\_\_\_\_ My sense of balance and coordination is good.
23. \_\_\_\_\_ I often see patterns and relationships between numbers faster and easier than others.
24. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy building models (or sculpting).

25. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy working on a garden.
26. \_\_\_\_\_ I'm good at finding the fine points of word meanings.
27. \_\_\_\_\_ I can look at an object one way and see it turned sideways or backwards just as easily.
28. \_\_\_\_\_ I often connect a piece of music with some event in my life.
29. \_\_\_\_\_ I like to work with numbers and figures.
30. \_\_\_\_\_ Animals are important in my life.
31. \_\_\_\_\_ I like to sit quietly and reflect on my inner feelings.
32. \_\_\_\_\_ Just looking at shapes of buildings and structures is pleasurable to me.
33. \_\_\_\_\_ I like to hum, whistle, and sing in the shower or when I am alone.
34. \_\_\_\_\_ I am good at athletics.
35. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy writing detailed letters to my friends.
36. \_\_\_\_\_ I am usually aware of the expression on my face.
37. \_\_\_\_\_ I am sensitive to the expressions on other people's faces.
38. \_\_\_\_\_ I stay "in touch" with my moods. I have no trouble identifying them.
39. \_\_\_\_\_ I am sensitive to the moods of others.
40. \_\_\_\_\_ I have a good sense of what others think of me.

#### SCORING SHEET

**Circle each item you marked as "TRUE". Add your totals. A total of four in any of the categories indicates ability.**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
10	5	1	9	3	2	13	8
11	7	12	18	4	6	20	14
19	17	16	22	15	31	37	21
26	23	27	24	28	36	39	25
35	29	32	34	33	38	40	30

Totals \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal Linguistic A- Red						
Mathematical Logical B- Blue						
Visual Spatial C- Orange						
Bodily Kinesthetic D- Yellow						
Musical E- Green						
Intra-personal F- Purple						
Interpersonal G- Brown						
Naturalist H- Black						

Name \_\_\_\_\_

SCORE

MI Strengths      **0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**



## **MAKING CONNECTIONS**

### **Purpose:**

Connections is a protocol that is used to bridge the interval between what has happened at home over the weekend and what happens at school. It is a way for students to clear their minds, acknowledge personal problems, announce an achievement, or share how they are feeling or why. The Connections protocol can also give teachers a deeper understanding of their students and/or advisees, alerting them to problems, challenges, or triumphs in their students' lives. Therefore, it is important that every student participate.

Insist that all students sit in a circle facing each other and that desks are clear.

### **Rules:**

- This time may not be used as a study hall or SSR.
- This time is not for use as just a "gripe session"—if students have a genuine concern, ask that they share it appropriately. Sometimes people just need to get things off their chest, so you'll notice that many of these activities require that listeners not respond immediately.
- Do not allow students to sit in isolation or visit with a good friend – even paired-sharing should be an attempt to pair students who do not normally talk to one another.
- Do not allow students to listen to ipods.
- Do not allow students to leave the room for any reason.

### **Basic Check-In Protocol:**

1. All participants must sit in a circle.
2. The advisor says, "Connections is open" or gets things started by offering his/her own check-in.
3. Students take turns sharing in either a go-around, which begins with one student and then goes around the group in a clockwise formation, or popcorn-style, with students who are seated anywhere in the group speaking.
4. Follow these NORMS:
  - Everyone must say something (even if it's just "good morning").
  - Speak only once until everyone has had a chance to speak.
  - Listen actively to what people have said but do not respond. This includes verbal and nonverbal communication such as nodding/shaking head, smiling/frowning, or giving any type of reaction. "Connections" is not a time to engage in discussion.

NOTE: If any issue comes up that the group wants to respond to, the participants can decide to make time for a discussion after "Connections" is over. You can then use this time as a "teachable moment" and ask students to try to see the other side of a situation or ask the group to help problem-solve.

### **Alternate Check-In Activities:**

1. What's Your Weather? - Each student checks-in by explaining his/her current "weather condition" (e.g., "stormy", "cloudy", "sunny", "hurricane's a brewin'", etc.) Everyone must offer a weather condition, although they may choose not to share an explanation.
2. Four Corners - Create four possible check-in reactions (e.g., four "weather conditions", four emotions, one – four stars); then ask each student to choose a corner and then share with everyone in that corner why they are there. One option is to have the group come back together and each person share-out one thing they heard someone else say.
3. Pair-Up - Students check-in with a partner. Since the point of this activity is to encourage students to get to know each other, you can also
  - Have students create "appointment calendars" so they are sure to pair up with everyone else at least once throughout the year. If students create an appointment calendar without specific dates, you can have them use them once a month, checking-in with several others each time.
  - Create name cards and randomly/selectively pair-up studentsNOTE: The Advisor could pair-up with a student if there is an odd number, specifically checking-in with a particularly troubled student.
4. "Dear Advisory" – Advisory begins with students being given 3x5-inch cards on which they can write a dilemma they are having, a question about a difficult situation they are in, or a problem for which they need advice. Students can write as little or as much detail as they would like, but they do not write their name on the card unless for some reason they wish to do so. The advisor collects the cards and takes a moment to look through them. The advisor should note if any themes emerge (so that he or she does not pick similar problems) and choose four or five cards to read aloud. After reading one aloud, the advisor asks the group for advice on the problem. Advisors can encourage student discussion by asking questions such as, "What do you think about \_\_\_\_\_?" or "What would you do if this was your problem?"

Some alternatives:

- Circle-Up and Light a Candle - This is similar to "Dear Advisory" but without the anonymous factor, so it should be used with students who feel comfortable with discussing problems together. Students simply take turns sharing out problems or frustrations; it is the job of the circle to find the "Buddhist gift" or "silver lining" or possible solutions.
- Can You Relate? - Students take turns sharing a frustration and students who can relate share a similar situation/frustration. The point of these is not to look for solutions, just "vent" and seek common ground.

**If you have extra time, try**

### **Activities for Getting to Know Each Other:**

1. Human Safari – Each student writes down an interesting or unique fact about himself or herself on a piece of paper. The advisor collects and mixes them up and redistributes them so that each person gets a card (not his/her own). Then each person tries to find the person who matches the information on the card. At the end of the time allotted, each person introduces the person they found and gives an interesting fact about them. NOTE: If someone did not find their person they can share the interesting fact and that person can step forward.
2. Fact or Fiction – Each student writes down two things about themselves, one factual and one fictitious. Then each student takes a turn sharing one (they may choose to elaborate); then the others try to decide whether it is fact or fiction being shared.
3. Loaded Questions -- Pass out quarter sheets of paper. Each student will need a pencil or pen. (It works best if all students use the same type of writing utensil.) Ask a question; each student writes down an answer on a piece of paper. These are collected and one student goes through the stack, trying to match each answer to the writer. Some possible questions:
  - What 3 adjectives describe you the best?
  - What is the one thing that always makes you laugh hysterically?
  - If you were guaranteed an honest answer to any question from any person in the world, who and what would you ask?
  - What are you most proud of?
  - What song do you keep hearing over and over again?
  - What is the most annoying show on television?
  - What is the nicest feature of the person on your right?
  - What is the last movie that made your eyes tear up?
  - What one object in your home are you most embarrassed about owning?
  - What is your most annoying habit?
  - How many minutes does it take you to get ready in the morning?
  - What is one thing you always wanted as a kid but never got?
4. Speed Interview (“NASCAR Journalism”) Divide the group in half; create an inner circle and an outer circle, facing each other. In one-minute intervals, rotate the inner circle. Some possible interview questions:
  - Each person creates an interview question (without sharing it out), and then asks that question of each person he/she interviews, noting the answers. When the interview is over, each person figures out a way to summarize the “data” collected and shares it with the class. (For example, if a student decides to ask, “What’s your favorite movie of all time?” they may report out the information by offering titles or by categorizing films into genres: “A third of this group offered horror titles and two-thirds preferred comedies.”)
  - Each pair talks for the allotted time before rotating. At the end of the interview period, each student tries to write down 1 fact they learned from each interviewee. Then they can share out lists to check for accuracy.
5. Commonalities - Form small groups of 3-5. Each group will need a piece of chart paper and markers. Ask each group to list things they can observe that they may have in common; then ask each group to list things they may have in common but cannot be seen. After five to ten minutes, ask each group to select 3 – 5 favorites to share out.  
Debriefing questions:

- What cliques do we have at school?
  - Do you consider cliques good or bad?
  - How might being part of a clique be helpful or limiting to us?
  - What does it mean to stereotype?
  - How might we stereotype people?
  - What efforts can we make to learn about what people are like on the inside?
5. Venn Diagrams - Form small groups. Each group will use a piece of paper and markers to create a Venn Diagram that depicts all the things they have in common with everyone in the group and with one other and all the ways they are unique.
- Debriefing questions:
- What surprised you?
  - Did you have more in common than you thought?
  - What do you think are the reasons behind your commonalities?
  - In what ways were you unique?
  - What contributed to your uniqueness?
  - What did you learn about someone else you didn't know previously?
6. Human Bingo – Give each student a copy of the “Human Bingo” board (see attached). Instruct students to fill in their bingo sheet by asking other participants if they have any of the things, qualities, or accomplishments on the sheet. If the answer is yes, the student signs his or her name on the bingo game sheet next to the answer. Each person may only initial one box on the bingo card. To win the game, participants must make a row in any direction. (The teacher may decide to offer a “free” box before the game begins.)
- Debriefing questions:
- What surprised you?
  - Was there any question that no one could answer?
  - What was the one thing that people most often checked off about you?
7. Circle Scramble – Each person says his/her first name so that everyone can hear it. Then, without any verbal or nonverbal communication, the group must attempt to organize into alphabetical order. Once they think they have it, each person says his/her name to see how close they came. Go for further rounds if necessary. You can also try this with:
- Middle or last names
  - Birthdays
  - Addresses
  - Names of pets
8. High-flying Spirits – Give everyone in the group an index displaying a name associated with a theme (Batman, Robin, Batgirl, Chief O’Hara, The Joker). Participants find other people in their theme. When all groups are formed, they must create and present a cheer related to their theme. (The advisor will want to create enough themes that enable him/her to divide the advisory into small groups of 4 to 5)
9. Twenty Questions – Each participant needs pencil and paper. Instruct each advisee to complete the sentence, “I am” twenty times, listing all the “roles” they fill (such as “I am a daughter”, “I am a baseball player”, “I am a driver of a red car”). Encourage the listing of roles or positions/activities, not personal characteristics/adjectives. Each participant then shares his/her list with the group.
10. Show and Tell – Just an old-fashioned game of “show and tell”. If you want students to bring in an item, let them know ahead of time.

## COMMON GROUND STRATEGY

### **Common Ground** starter topics

Arrange students in a circle.

#### ***“Step forward if you:”***

Completed homework.

Ate a healthy breakfast.

Got up before 6:30 am.

Watched the TV last night.

Dreamt of summer vacation.

Did something helpful on my way to school.

Walked my dog today.

Kissed my Mom or Dad or sibling before leaving.

Have fun plans for the weekend.

Forgot to make my bed.

Rode a bus to school

Ran to the bus

Completed my homework

Feel hopeful today

**Dream Big**

*If there were ever a time to dare,  
To make a difference,  
To embark on something worth doing,  
It is now.*

*Not for any grand cause, necessarily –  
But for something that tugs at your heart,  
Something that's your aspiration,  
Something that's your dream.*

*You owe it to yourself to take your days here count.*

*Have fun.*

*Dig deep.*

*Stretch.*

*Dream big.*

*Know, though, that things worth doing seldom come easy.*

*There will be good days.*

*And there will be bad days.*

*There will be times when you want to turn around,*

*Pack it up and call it quits.*

*Those times tell you that you are pushing yourself,*

*That you are not afraid to learn by trying.*

*Persist.*

*Because with an idea,*

*Determination, and the right tools,*

*You can do great things.*

*Let your instincts,*

*Your intellect,*

*And your heart guide you.*

*Trust.*

*Believe in the incredible power of the human mind.*

*Of doing something that makes a difference.*

*Of working hard.*

*Of laughing and hoping.*

*Of lazy afternoons.*

*Of lasting friends.*

*Of all the things that will cross your path this year.*

*The start of something new bring the hope of something great.*

*Anything is possible.*

*There is only one you.*

*And you will pass this way only once.*

*Do it right.*

### **Building Class Norms**

- A. Students each take time to respond to the following:
1. I like classrooms where students ...
  2. I don't feel good in classes when students ...
  3. I can concentrate in class if ...
  4. I learn best when ...
  5. I feel safe when ...
  6. Teachers can help me best when they ...
- B. Students meet in small groups to review the needs of their group and make suggestions for the CLASS Norms or Ways of Living Together.
- C. The entire class shares each group's ideas and synthesizes the final list (this could take several attempts).

## OUR WATERSHED CHARACTERISTICS

CARING

CAUTION

COOPERATION

COURAGE CREATIVITY

FRIENDSHIP

RESPONSIBILITY

**Caution** is when you try to avoid things that will put you in danger. Caution is to be careful and aware. To be cautious is to be alert. The opposite of caution is recklessness.

**Courage** is to be brave. It takes courage to do the right thing even if it is not popular. Courage is to stand up to your fears. To reach most goals you need to have courage. The opposite of courage is cowardice.

- **Lauren Becker**

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To me, **Friendship** means that you and someone else can trust and count on each other. Friendship also means that you can be there for them and they can be there for you in tough an emotional situations.

To me, **Creativity** is a quality that means you are able to be inventive and original. Besides being inventive and original, you need to think that you always can improve.

- **Todd Martin**

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**Responsibility** is when somebody tells you to do something then you do it. For example, you would bring your homework in on time and completed. Also, you would do things individually without being asked to do them. You would also know the distinction between right and wrong.

**Cooperation** is when a group of people come together to get something done. Everybody would have an equal part in that project to produce the best quality from hard work.

- **Rosa Hwang**

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**Caring** is a feeling to worry or be concerned for someone or something. I think each person should care about the others and should help the others in Watershed, especially on trips.

**Commitment** is an obligation to something. It's when you say you will do something and stay with it and do your best. Everybody in our class should put their full commitment in their work.

- **David Lee**

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## **Introduction to Writing a Constitution**

Yesterday, Mr. D explained that our team will be working differently than we have in the past and differently than the other teams at North Middle School. One difference is that we want to involve you, the students, more in your own education. In order for that to work, it's important for all of us, as a team, to decide how we can make this the best it can be as a learning community.

We teachers used to give out a packet of rules for the team during the first week of school. This year, we'd rather work with you to decide what would be most likely to help each of us grow as learner. Next week, we'll work together to write a team constitution for that purpose.

But before we can do that, it's important to come to some agreement about what learners need in order to be successful. So today, we're going to work on an activity to help us reach that agreement. Each person is going to start out by coming up with some ideas alone, then join others in a small group to put those ideas together, then come back to this large group to compare notes. After that, we'll bring the whole team together so that we can reach agreement about what learners need to succeed.

STEP 1: So let's start with this question: What qualities are necessary in a good teacher?

Next question: What qualities do successful students have?

STEP 2: MEET IN SMALL GROUPS TO CREATE VENN DIAGRAMS OF STUDENT/TEACHER QUALITIES.

STEP 3: MEET AS LARGE GROUP TO CREATE MASTER VENN DIAGRAM.

STEP 4: IDENTIFY QUALITIES WE PRIZE IN GOOD STUDENTS AND TEACHERS.

STEP 5: CREATE AFFIRMATIONS TO FIT EACH QUALITY.

STEP 6: SIGN CONSTITUTION!



## Steady Tools

### 10 Ideas

#### Ways Teachers Can Prepare Themselves for the Role of Advisor

- 1.** To be an affirming advisor, it is more important to listen than to give advice. Don't feel frustrated if you can't instantly solve a student's problems. Realize that you *are* helping – by listening, and by responding positively to the student.
- 2.** It takes time for an atmosphere of trust to evolve within a group. Don't expect too much too soon. Allow time for trust to develop.
- 3.** An atmosphere of trust can be established only when the adolescent believes that confidences will not be betrayed. It is important to respect the privacy of your students. Discuss also with your colleagues those circumstances under which it might be in the child's best interests to reveal a confidence, as when the child or another is in danger.
- 4.** Develop and practice good observation skills. Be sensitive to student attention spans, health and social habits, mood swings and body language. Use anecdotal records, checklists, and other quick-and-easy recording devices to gather data that will help you know students better.
- 5.** Teach yourself to facilitate discussions that are not simply question-and-answer sessions. Learn to ask the kind of open-ended question that stimulates thinking.
- 6.** A sense of humor will get you through the year. You may not be a comedian, and that is perfectly alright. A fine and useful sense of humor simply means that you don't take yourself too seriously, and that you choose to see humor in a situation.
- 7.** When working with young people, it is much more effective to *model* good coping skills than it is to give lectures. Attention to your own personal growth may be the best gift you can give to your students.
- 8.** Give students *time* to think. There is nothing wrong with a little silence as a child is groping for a way to express a feeling or idea.
- 9.** Learn to be tolerant of the values of your students if they differ from your own.
- 10.** If you can make a special attempt to understand the uncertain, often bewildering, position of an adolescent, you will become more accepting and non-judgmental – two traits that truly might make a difference in a young life.

## CPR: Circle of Power and Respect Procedures

### *Getting Ready?*

- Step 1: Select a focus or topic – students may help
- Step 2: Determine who will share. Limit to 3-5 students.
- Step 3: Determine who will lead (1 student only).
- Step 4: Gather in a complete circle.
- Step 5: Start the CPR Time (20 mins.)

### *Who does what?*

#### Those who share:

The student(s) who is to share can make only one statement about the topic, and then is to ask the group, “Are there any questions or comments?”

#### The Leader:

The student who is the leader/facilitator takes charge of calling on persons to share, and on calling on 3 additional persons who have questions or comments for the individual who has just made their statement. This person should also keep the CPR format flowing according to guidelines established.

#### The Others:

All other members of the circle may volunteer to ask a question or make a comment to the speaker. Hands raised or pass the small ball.

#### The Teacher:

Just be in the circle. Only interfere in a serious crisis or during practice role playing.

#### Hints?

- Rotate all roles fairly.
- Let students evaluate “how we did” aloud and on paper, especially for first 3 sessions.
- Generate topics at first; but quickly turn it over to kids.
- Don’t overuse – maybe 3x weekly, for 20 mins each.
- Combine with Morning Meeting other pieces (e.g.; News, Special Business, Fun Activities).

Adapted from the Northeast Foundation for Children’s Responsive Classroom Practice

## CHALK TALK PROTOCOLS

*A Chalk Talk is what we do in advisory or homebase when we want to discuss something, but if we were all taking it might not make any sense because we 'd be talking on top of each other. So in a Chalk Talk, we write down everything that we think on a big piece of paper, and there is no talking. All you need to do is take a marker and write whatever you're thinking." --Wildwood sixth-grade student*

A Chalk Talk is a silent activity that gives participants the opportunity to brainstorm or share their thoughts about a specific question. A Chalk Talk allows students to express their feelings, emotions, and opinions about a particular topic that can then be commented on or discussed nonverbally. It's like a big virtual chat room. Chalk Talks give even quiet students an opportunity to participate and "speak."

A Chalk Talk begins with the advisor writing a question or prompt on a chalk- or white board or on a large roll of paper that has been affixed to an advisory room wall. Students are given chalk or markers and are asked to write their thoughts, comments, or perspectives about the topic. Participants can comment in writing on what another person has said, agreeing, disagreeing, or sharing a different point of view. When not writing, students should be active readers, studying and thinking about what their peers are writing and commenting on each other's statements.

At the end of a Chalk Talk, especially the first few that an advisory does together, the advisor and students should debrief the protocol verbally to reflect on both the experience of participating in a Chalk Talk and the question or prompt that they were commenting on.

Chalk Talks can be used as a tool to explore any unit in the advisory curriculum. For example, at the beginning of a Division Three unit on leadership, students are asked: "What is a leader?" Another example in Wildwood's Division Two is when a Chalk Talk is used to explore the essential question: "How do we create a healthy community?" Using Chalk Talks in this way gives students the opportunity to write down their initial thoughts and to create, as a group, their own definitions of leadership or community.

A Chalk Talk can also be used to check on students' understanding of a topic. Advisor Becca Hedgepath recalls a memorable Chalk Talk that she did with her sixth-grade students: "The topic for the Chalk Talk was, 'What is advisory?' I wanted to see if, having talked about advisory and having experienced it, they really understood it. Students wrote statements like, 'It's an opportunity to get to know the teachers.' 'It's an opportunity to brainstorm.' 'It's an opportunity to team-build.' 'It's an opportunity to seminar: and so on.'"

Hedgepath continues, “I’ll never forget that someone wrote, ‘Advisory is like a cheese muffin. It’s crusty on the outside, and then when you get to the inside it’s nice and soft and sweet and delicious I thought that was great. And they sort of bounced off that and talked about how they enjoy it, how it’s a safe space, and how advisory is an interesting place to come and connect.’”

A Chalk Talk is also a safe way to discuss problematic topics such as race relations, class conflicts, or bullying issues. Chalk Talks can also encourage students to dig deeper into a question or dilemma. Questions can range from “What is the difference between collaboration and cheating?” to “What is the difference between affirmative action and reverse prejudice?”

Finally, Chalk Talks can be used at the end of an advisory unit to do a final group reflection. An example in the *Toolkit* DVD is a high school advisory group that reflected on the question: “How have I used the Habits of Heart at school this year?” As was noted, the advantage of using a large roll of paper for a Chalk Talk is that it can be saved and reviewed in the future as a starting point for additional discussion or reflection.

### Chalk Talk

**Purpose:** To reflect, generate ideas, solve problems, or express opinions silently Chalk Talks encourage participation by everyone, even quiet students. The silence encourages thoughtful contemplation and dialogue.

**Time:** Typically 15 to 20 minutes plus 10 to 15 minutes to debrief

**Materials:** Chalk- or dry erase board or a large, 4-to 6-foot sheet of paper taped to the wall (this allows the Chalk Talk to be saved for future reference and/or documentation)

Colored chalk or markers

**Protocol:** • The advisor writes a question or prompt in large lettering in the center of the board or paper.

The question or prompt is used to generate written dialogue on a subject or issue for the advisory group to explore.

- The advisor explains that a Chalk Talk is a silent activity No one may talk. Students are given chalk or markers with which to write down their thoughts, opinions, or solutions. Besides writing, time is spent reading and reflecting on what others have said. Participants can comment or ‘build on’ what is written by:

- o Linking comments by drawing a line to connect one comment to another

- o Adding to what someone has written

- o Agreeing or disagreeing with what someone has written

- The advisor can choose to act as an observer or to interact with the Chalk Talk to expand the

conversation by:

- o Writing a question in response to a participant's comment
- o Adding his or her own reflections or ideas
- o Circling an interesting idea and inviting participants to comment
- o Connecting ideas or comments with a line and adding a question mark
- These types of interactions by the advisor encourage the participants to do the same, and a very active written conversation can develop. At the end of the Chalk Talk, the facilitator can choose to take some time to verbally debrief with the participants, asking them to further reflect on what they have learned.

## **Helpful and Healing PICTURE BOOKS**

TITLE: You Look Ridiculous Said the Rhinoceros to the Hippopotamus  
AUTHOR: Bernard Waber  
PUBLISHER: Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston

TITLE: There's a Nightmare in My Closet  
AUTHOR: Mercer Mayer  
PUBLISHER: The Dial Press, New York

TITLE: The Giving Tree  
AUTHOR: Shel Silverstein  
PUBLISHER: Harper & Row, Publishers

TITLE: The Blind Men and the Elephant  
AUTHOR: Lillian Quigley  
PUBLISHER: Charles Scribner's Sons, New York

TITLE: The Velveteen Rabbit  
AUTHOR: Margery Williams  
PUBLISHER: Platt & Munk, Publishers

TITLE: The Fall of Freddie the Leaf: A Story of Life for All Ages  
AUTHOR: Leo Buscaglia, Ph.D.  
PUBLISHER: Charles B. Slack, Inc.

TITLE: How Does it Feel to Be Old?  
AUTHOR: Norman Farber  
PUBLISHER: E. P. Dutton, New York

TITLE: Love You Forever  
AUTHOR: Robert Munsch  
PUBLISHER: Firefly Books

TITLE: Hey, Al

AUTHOR: Arthur Yorinks  
PUBLISHER: Sunburst Book

TITLE: I'll Always Love You  
AUTHOR: Hans Wilhelm  
PUBLISHER: Crown Publishers, Inc., New York

TITLE: Where Are You Going, Little Mouse?  
AUTHOR: Robert Kraus  
PUBLISHER: Mulberry Books, New York

TITLE: The Runaway Bunny  
AUTHOR: Margaret Wise Brown  
PUBLISHER: Harper & Row, Publishers

TITLE: Joyful Noise  
AUTHOR: Paul Fleischman  
PUBLISHER: Harper & Row, Publishers

TITLE: The Pain and the Great One  
AUTHOR: Judy Blume  
PUBLISHER: Dell Publishing Co., Inc

TITLE: Dinosaurs Divorce: A Guide for Changing Families  
AUTHOR: Laurence Krasny Brown and Marc Brown  
PUBLISHER: Little Brown and Company, Boston

TITLE: My Mother's Getting Married  
AUTHOR: Joan Drescher  
PUBLISHER: Dial Books for Young Readers

TITLE: What Kind of Family Is This?  
AUTHOR: Barbara Seuling  
PUBLISHER: Western Publishing Co., Inc., Racine, WI

TITLE: Somebody's Mother  
AUTHOR: Susan Fulop Kepner  
PUBLISHER: Strawberry Hill Press, San Francisco, CA

TITLE: Arthur's Teacher Trouble  
AUTHOR: Marc Brown  
PUBLISHER: Little Brown & Company, Boston

TITLE: 101 Ways to Tell Your Child "I Love You"  
AUTHOR: Vicki Lansky  
PUBLISHER: Contemporary Books, Chicago

TITLE: What To Do When You're Feeling Blue  
AUTHOR: Mark Schneider and Ellen Meyer  
PUBLISHER: Contemporary Books, Chicago

TITLE: The Hating Book  
AUTHOR: Charlotte Zolotow  
PUBLISHER: Harper & Row, Publishers



TITLE: People  
 AUTHOR: Peter Spier  
 PUBLISHER: Doubleday

TITLE: Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day  
 AUTHOR: Judith Viorst  
 PUBLISHER: Macmillan Publishing Company, New York

TITLE: Rotten Ralph's Trick or Treat  
 AUTHOR: Jack Gantos  
 PUBLISHER: Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston

TITLE: Jenna and the Troublemaker  
 AUTHOR: Hiawyn Oram  
 PUBLISHER: Henry Holt and Company, New York

TITLE: The Same But Different  
 AUTHOR: Tessa Dahl  
 PUBLISHER: Viking Kestrel, Viking Penguin, Inc., New York

TITLE: A Family Is a Circle of People Who Love You  
 AUTHOR: Doris Jasinek and Pamela Bell Ryan  
 PUBLISHER: CompCare Publishers

TITLE: A Dictionary of Silly Words about Growing Up  
 AUTHOR: Henry Beard and Roy McKie  
 PUBLISHER: Workman Publishing, New York

TITLE: Speaking of Success  
 AUTHOR: Mary Alice Warner  
 PUBLISHER: Peter Pauper Press, Inc., White Plains, New York

TITLE: The Hug Therapy Book  
 AUTHOR: Kathleen Keating  
 PUBLISHER: CompCore Publications, Minneapolis, Minnesota

TITLE: It Isn't Always Easy, but Always Know That I Care  
 AUTHOR: Susan Polis Schutz, Editor  
 PUBLISHER: Blue Mountain Press, Boulder, Colorado

TITLE: Don't Ever Give Up Your Dreams  
 AUTHOR: Susan Polis Schutz, Editor  
 PUBLISHER: Blue Mountain Press, Boulder, Colorado

TITLE: A Song Called Hope  
 AUTHOR: Arthur Gordon  
 PUBLISHER: C. R. Gibson Company, Norwalk, Connecticut

TITLE: Listening to the Littlest  
 AUTHOR: Ruth Reardon  
 PUBLISHER: C. R. Gibson Company, Norwalk, Connecticut

TITLE: A Book of Wishes for You  
 AUTHOR: Eve Merriam  
 PUBLISHER: C. R. Gibson Company, Norwalk, Connecticut

TITLE: The Kid's Book of Questions

AUTHOR: Gregory Stock, Ph.D.  
PUBLISHER: Workman Publishing Company, Inc., New York

TITLE: A Book of Questions to Keep Thoughts and Feelings  
AUTHOR: William Zimmerman  
PUBLISHER: Guarionex Press, Ltd., New York

TITLE: All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten  
AUTHOR: Robert Fulghum  
PUBLISHER: Villare Books, Inc., New York

TITLE: Life's Little Instruction Book  
AUTHOR: J. Jackson Brown  
PUBLISHER: Rutledge Hill Press

TITLE: 14,000 Things to Be Happy About  
AUTHOR: Barbara Kipfer  
PUBLISHER: Workman Publishing

TITLE: The Book of Questions  
AUTHOR: Gregory Stock, Ph.D.  
PUBLISHER: Workman Publishing

TITLE: The Kid's Book of Questions  
AUTHOR: Gregory Stock, Ph.D.  
PUBLISHER: Workman Publishing

TITLE: P.S. I Love You  
AUTHOR: J. Jackson Brown  
PUBLISHER: Rutledge Hill Press

TITLE: Oh, the Places You'll Go  
AUTHOR: Dr. Seuss  
PUBLISHER: Random House

TITLE: Learning to Learn  
AUTHOR: Gloria Fender  
PUBLISHER: Incentive Publications

TITLE: Crow Boy  
AUTHOR: Taro Yashima  
PUBLISHER: Puffin Books

TITLE: The Teacher from the Black Lagoon  
AUTHOR: Mike Thaler  
PUBLISHER: Scholastic Books

TITLE: Charlie the Caterpillar  
AUTHOR: Dom DeLuise  
PUBLISHER: Simon & Schuster

TITLE: Sleeping Ugly  
AUTHOR: Jane Yolen  
PUBLISHER: Coward-McCann

TITLE: On the Day You Were Born  
AUTHOR: Debra Frasier

PUBLISHER: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich

TITLE: The Frog Prince Continued

AUTHOR: Jon Scieszka

PUBLISHER: Viking Press

TITLE: The True Story of the Three Little Pigs

AUTHOR: Jon Scieszka

PUBLISHER: Viking Press

TITLE: The Giving Book

AUTHOR: Bob Stanish

PUBLISHER: Good Apple Publishing

TITLE: Connecting Rainbows

AUTHOR: Bob Stanish

PUBLISHER: Good Apple Publishing

TITLE: 50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth

AUTHOR: Earthworks Group

PUBLISHER: Universal Press

TITLE: Revolting Rhymes

AUTHOR: Ronald Dahl

PUBLISHER: Bantam Books

TITLE: Worlds of the Future

AUTHOR: Educational Insights

PUBLISHER: Dominguez Hills, CA

TITLE: Fred's TV

AUTHOR: Clive Dobson

PUBLISHER: Firefly Books

TITLE: The Terrible Thing that Happened at Our House

AUTHOR: Marge Blaine

PUBLISHER: Scholastic Book

TITLE: Paper Bag Princess

AUTHOR: Robert N. Munsch

PUBLISHER: Annick Press, Ltd.

TITLE: Forget Me Not

AUTHOR: J. Schein

PUBLISHER: Annick Press, Ltd.

TITLE: I Know the World's Worst Secret

AUTHOR: Doris Stanford

PUBLISHER: Heart to Heart

Compiled by the National Middle Grades Resource Center

# TEACHER ADVISORY ACTIVITY OPTIONS

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

AFFECTIVE ART  
STORY TIME  
DISCUSSIONS  
GOAL SETTING  
AFFECTIVE EXERCISES

## INTERPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

DIALOGUE DIARIES  
COMMUNICATION EXERCISES  
CELEBRATIONS  
GAMES  
INTRAMURALS  
CONTESTS  
SCHOOL PRIDE  
PROJECTS

## ACADEMIC

DEBATES  
PANELS  
STUDY SKILLS  
CONFERENCES  
CONTRACTS  
PARENT CALLS  
AFTER-SCHOOL  
ASSISTANCE  
MINI-CLUBS

## ENRICHMENT