

Student Questions

Conversation Cards for Building Trust

Purpose: The purpose of this resource is to have ideas for questions that educators can use with multilingual learners to help build trust and collaborative relationships with them. This is not a comprehensive list of questions but a list of ideas. The questions are intended to be used with the WIDA Conversation Card Template.

Instructions: Choose a few questions that fit best with your context or create your own. You do not need to use all the questions. Write the questions you'd like to use in the Conversation Card Template, and then print them out for your conversation. For example, the conversation cards could be used during a morning meeting, homeroom, a classroom conversation, an open house, a home visit, or another formal or informal event or conversation.

Considerations for Use With Students, Families, and Community Members

- **Current level of trust:** Consider the strength of your relationships as you use and share the conversation cards. Forcing a question-and-answer format in early interactions with students, families, and community members may unintentionally create pressure, making them feel uncomfortable rather than supported.
- **Trust happens in a variety of ways:** Consider small gestures that make multilingual students, families, and community members feel welcomed and valued. Use simple greetings in their home languages. Share your own experiences if you are an English learner or migrant; express humility, value in families' languages, and a learning stance if you are not. This helps build empathy and relatability. Even small efforts can go a long way in making them feel seen.
- **Trust happens over time:** Show that you are open and welcoming, and value where multilingual students, families, and community members are at with engagement. This means listening to their stories and needs, responding to their feedback and ideas, connecting in places they prefer, and offering opportunities to collaborate. Make relationship-building an ongoing practice.

Questions for Educators to Use With Students

Beginning Relationship Building

1. Please share a little bit about yourself.
 - a. What kinds of things do you like to do?
 - b. What are you really proud of or excited about right now?
2. Please share a little bit about your family and community.
 - a. What makes your family or community special to you?
3. Could you tell me about the languages you speak (at home, in the community, and at school)?
 - a. What do you love about speaking more than one language? How does speaking more than one language help you? Is there anything hard about it?
 - b. How do you use your home language(s) in school?
4. Could you tell me about your school?
 - a. What do you like about school? What is your favorite subject? Why?
 - b. What is hard? What is helpful for you when something is hard?
 - c. What kinds of things make you feel welcome in your class or school?
 - d. How does the school or your teachers include your language background, cultural background, or family life in your classes and the school?
 - e. Have you ever had a negative experience at school connected to your language, culture, or family life? How can we help make sure that doesn't happen again?
5. Describe your perfect classroom or school. What would it look like or sound like?

Ongoing Relationship Building

1. How are things going with ____? (Note a specific thing you've discussed in the past.)
2. Is there anything new you'd like to talk about with ____? (Note a specific thing you've talked about in the past.)
3. How else can I support you?