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Sounding Off On School Culture

“Great Ideas From Twitter”

Mini Podcast with Phil Boyte

Twitter is a really powerful tool to share resources with one another. Here’s some great things I’ve learned from people on Twitter recently.

“I was always told it’s okay to ask for help, and ask questions. I didn’t really believe that until I was an adult. I wish I would have understood that sooner.” ([@whiteeducator](#))

How many students sit in class with a question and don’t ask. How do we create a culture in our learning environment where our students aren’t afraid or ashamed to ask questions? Have that discussion with your students at the beginning of the year or semester: what do we want to do as a class to create a space where everyone feels free to ask for help and ask questions?

Some ideas:

- a. Let students choose their seat for the day. If they come in one day and they’re exhausted, they can sit in the back room and the other kids will respect that. If the kid walks in excited and ready to learn, they sit in the middle or front rows.
- b. Create a Google document that students fill out at the beginning of the class and they number the day 1-5 (1: they’re having a hard day to 5: they’re having a great day.) and a sentence that kind of explains why. So if a kid has their head down on their desk or seems out of it, the teacher can quickly check the document and see “Hey, Johnny didn’t sleep well last night because of some violence in the home.” and the teacher can show some empathy. That in turn promotes trust in the classroom because the student will feel like the teacher is on their side. ([@BSlaterSHS](#))
- c. Cell phones are a big part of student’s lives. How about having a frank discussion with your students asking, “How can we use cell phones in the classroom without getting caught up in the social media?” They might have some great ideas! Or tell them that you’ll give them a couple minutes in the middle of class where they’re allowed to check phones and respond to any messages they need to, and then everyone agrees to put them up for the rest of class. ([@tedfujimoto](#))
- d. Build culture by having students bring in a bag with 3 or 4 items to represent their culture (personal, family, neighborhood, etc.). Every day 3 or 4 students share their items at the end of class. The connection and community created is awesome.

Additional Reference:

- Donald Miller (Storybrand Podcast) & Chris Hogan (Retire Inspired)