

## Welcome to Conversations that Build Relationships with Students!

This module will help you find the right language to use in order to build warm, professional, respectful relationships with students. By the end of the module, you'll be able to:

- situate student communication skills within appropriate developmental stages to explain why students might react as they do to teachers/adults;
- describe effective communication strategies to use with students in order to build relationships;
- revise ineffective communication to make it follow the principles of effective communication.

Continue

Landing Page– transparent image, welcome text and objectives, continue button

The purpose of this course is to help new(-ish) teachers find the right language to use in order to build warm, professional, respectful relationships with students. At the end of the module, learners will be able to situate student communication skills within appropriate developmental stages to explain why students might react as they do to teachers/adults, describe effective communication strategies to use with students in order to build relationships, and revise ineffective communication to make it follow the principles of effective communication. This course is predominantly asynchronous, but should be undertaken as part of a cohort of teachers, either all from the same campus, or from schools across the same network/district. There should be a coach or school leader that supervises the course and facilitates match-ups for the final assessment.

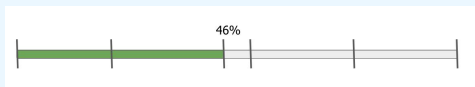
The initial welcome page will include the course objectives, as well as screenshots and information about how to navigate the online platform (similar to the one that Shar and Alex used to introduce us to Canvas at the start of this course).

Final Assignment for the course: With a fellow teacher from your cohort, plan a Zoom. Choose ONE of the scholar scenarios from Lesson #9, or one from your own class, and practice having that conversation with your partner. When you are finished, your partner should give you brief feedback, and you should practice a second time, implementing that feedback. Then, switch roles. Please be sure to record your practice session so you can share it with your coach and receive feedback on your

performance from them. Teacher pairings should be made by the coach or school leader that is leading the cohort through this course. That person will be the point person for making sure folks have access to all course materials, and for otherwise facilitating learning.

# What Counts as Effective Communication with Students?

A student comes to your first period 9th grade Algebra class ten minutes late, having just arrived at school. You meet him at the door, saying: "You're late! The assignment is on the board. Grab a seat and get working!"



Effective

Neutral

Ineffective

Right! This communication is Ineffective. By starting the conversation with a reminder that the student is late, you are pointing out his tardiness without any information as to why he is late, potentially embarrassing the student. Instead, try saying, "Good morning– I'm glad you made it! The assignment is on the board. Grab a seat and get working, and let me know if you need anything to get started!" This response is warm and direct, offering the student the opportunity to join class without making any value judgement as to his arrival time.

Oops! This communication is Ineffective. By starting the conversation with a reminder that the student is late, you are pointing out his tardiness without any information as to why he is late, potentially embarrassing the student. Instead, try saying, "Good morning– I'm glad you made it! The assignment is on the board. Grab a seat and get working, and let me know if you need anything to get started!" This response is warm and direct, offering the student the opportunity to join class without making any value judgement as to his arrival time.

Challenge: At the end of this lesson, teachers will engage in a sorting activity that asks them to categorize certain types of communication as effective, ineffective, or neutral. These examples will need to be context-specific, as communication does not exist in a vacuum.

Simple version example: In-platform (Canvas?) quiz matching card game.

- Scenario One: A student comes to your first period 9th grade Algebra class ten minutes late, having just arrived at school. You meet him at the door, saying: "You're late! The assignment is on the board. Grab a seat and get working!".  
Answer: If correct– You are right– this communication is Ineffective– by starting the conversation with a reminder that the student is late, you are pointing out his tardiness without any information as to why he is late, potentially embarrassing the student. If incorrect– This communication is ineffective–by starting the conversation with a reminder that the student is late, you are pointing out his tardiness without any information as to why he is late, potentially embarrassing the student. Instead, try saying, "Good morning– I'm glad you made it! The assignment is on the board. Grab a seat and get working, and let me know if you need anything to get started!" This response is warm and direct, offering the student the opportunity to join class without making any value judgement as to his arrival time.

Key Takeaways:

Effective communication with scholars:

- Withholds judgement about student behavior and intent

1. Seeks to build mutual understanding between teacher and student
2. Focuses on desired behavior
3. Is warm and respectful, but firm

Note: How this, and other quizzes or assignments work in the course, is dependent ultimately on what platform I use for the course. I'd like to try something like the [nursing school course](#) built with <https://www.smartbuilder.com>, but I have never used that platform, so I am not as familiar with it as I would like to be to commit to using it.

# Student Personas



**Ella**

- 10th grade student, honor roll.
- Loves to reading and singing (sometimes very loudly and at inopportune times!).
- Generally good natured, Ella rolls with the punches
- Usually assumes the best of people
- Rarely gets into trouble at school.



**Nyle**

- 8th grade student, athlete, and occasional honor roll student.
- Eager to please and do well, Nyle takes even small corrections to his behavior very personally
- Can sometimes feel like he is being singled out or treated unfairly.
- Occasionally acts or speaks before thinking.
- Capable of reflecting on his behavior and choices if he has had time to get to a calm headspace.



**Isaiah**

- 6th grade student, art club founder, skilled debater. I
- Well-meaning and joyful student
- Very social and struggles to be quiet and to stay on task in class.
- Loves to be the center of attention.
- Often pushes back against limits but in a good natured way, trying to see what he can get away with and accepting consequences of that limit testing with a philosophical attitude.



Teachers will be able to choose different student personas to practice with, and the same personas will be referenced throughout the module. Each students has unique strengths and challenges, and each responds differently in each situation, even if the teacher chooses the same language with different students. This reflects the very real challenge of teaching, where each different student in a classroom might react very differently to the exact same stimulus.

# Filling the Bucket

Drag each statement into the bucket to see if the statement fills or drains the bucket.



I love how you lead your team on this project, Isaiah!

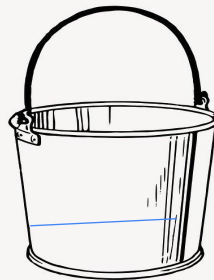
That's it, Isaiah. I'm calling your mother to tell her how disruptive you are!

Isaiah, we are working silently

I see a number of folks have gotten started- Isaiah, Mya, Abe...

Isaiah, is my lesson interrupting your socializing

(In response to Isaiah talking during the directions to an activity): Teacher makes eye contact, smiles, and holds finger to lips to indicate silence, then silently mouths "thank you" as Isaiah stops talking



Water level will rise or fall depending on the response.



This lesson will include readings from “Teaching with Love and Logic,” “Setting Limits in the Classroom,” and “How to Talk so that Students will Listen.” Using the bucket analogy, this lesson will discuss the ways in which we can continually fill our relationship buckets with students so that when we must, we can afford to dip from the bucket.

Challenge: (Assuming I can figure out an easy-to-create animation in a learning platform)

Choose a student persona, and then click on various statements to see if they fill or drain the bucket, and how much.

Sample student personas:

1. Ella— 10th grade student, honor roll. Loves to reading and singing (sometimes very loudly and at inopportune times!). Generally good natured, Ella rolls with the punches and generally assumes the best of people, and rarely gets into trouble at school.
2. Nyle— 8th grade student, athlete, and occasional honor roll student. Loves to goof around with his friends and is not always aware of his tone. Eager to please and do well, Nyle takes even small corrections to his behavior very personally, and can sometimes feel like he is being singled out or treated unfairly, even if his classmates receive the same consequences as he does. Occasionally acts or speaks before thinking, but is capable of reflecting on his behavior and choices if he has had time to get to a calm headspace.
3. Isaiah—6th grade student, art club founder, skilled debater. Isaiah is a well-meaning and joyful student who is very social and struggles to be quiet

1. and to stay on task in class. He loves to be the center of attention and seeks out his peers' approval frequently. Isaiah often pushes back against limits but in a good natured way, trying to see what he can get away with and accepting consequences of that limit testing with a philosophical attitude.
  - a. Sample Bucket Fillers and Drainers for Isaiah:
    - i. "I love how you lead your team on this project, Isaiah!" (+2)
    - ii. "Isaiah, we are working silently" (neutral)
    - iii. "I see a number of folks have gotten started- Isaiah, Mya, Abe..." (+1)
    - iv. (In response to Isaiah talking during the directions to an activity): Teacher makes eye contact, smiles, and holds finger to lips to indicate silence, then silently mouths "thank you" as Isaiah stops talking (+1)
    - v. "How was your weekend? Did you get to see that documentary on Basquiat that came out?" (+2)
    - vi. "Isaiah, is my lesson interrupting your socializing?" (-3)
    - vii. "Isaiah, I've told you a hundred times to stop talking. If you want to act like a first grader, maybe I should treat you like one!" (-5)
    - viii. "That's it, Isaiah. I'm calling your mother to tell her how disruptive you are!" (-5)

In my vision, there will be between 4-6 personas to choose from, with each having 6-8 statements that fill or drain the bucket. Some of those statements will be the same for all students, but their bucket values may be different. Ideally, there would be a bucket animation, perhaps with a sound effect, that shows the water line of the bucket rising and falling.

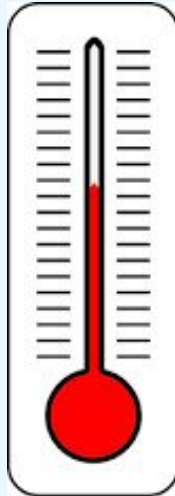
## Language that escalates; Language that deescalates

Drag each statement into the thermometer to see if the statement raises or lowers the temperature.

Why would you do that?

What did you do this time?

Can you tell me what happened?



Are you ready to talk about earlier?

Stand up straight and look me in the eye!

Sure, you didn't do anything. That's why I'm talking to you on my lunch.

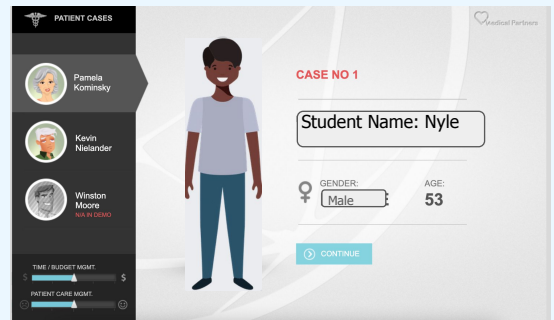
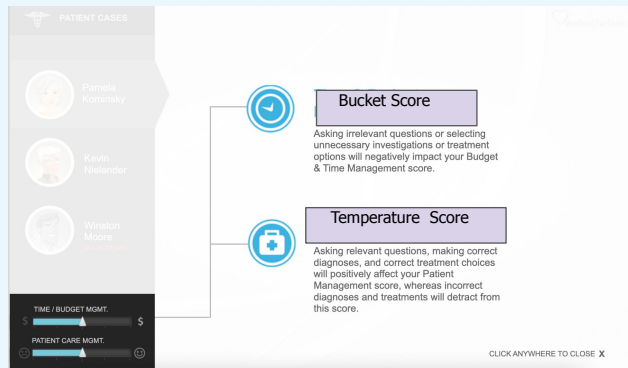
[Reading](#) (I am toying with the idea of using this source as a whole, including the reflection and discussion questions).

In my ideal vision, this lesson would contain examples of escalating and de-escalating language, and would finish with teachers either dialing up the temperature of an interaction or dialing down. Similar to the bucket lesson, I'd love to have a thermometer animation that allows teachers to type in or choose words or phrases that either escalate or deescalate a situation, with the thermometer rising or falling depending on the type of language chosen.

Another option would be for teachers to watch two videos— same child, same circumstance. In one video, the teacher chooses language the escalates emotions, and in the other, the teacher chooses language to diffuse the situation.



# Practicing Effective Communication



Challenge: Choose one of the student profiles in the left-hand navigation. Each is a student in your class, and each has a different behavioral support need. Using the information provided, as well as what you learned about effective communication in this class, walk through a behavioral scenario that promotes a warm, respectful, professional relationship between you and the student. As you make choices, your Bucket score and Temperature score will rise or fall. The goal is to have a high bucket score and a low temperature score by the end of the interaction.

I am HEAVILY inspired by [this course](#), and I would love to learn this platform so that I can build out a test experience that is similar in scope and navigation. It would offer three- four student profiles (from lesson #3), and would have the teacher practice a real-life scenario that is likely to happen in their courses.

# Practicing Effective Communication

The interface is titled "Practicing Effective Communication". On the left is a sidebar with a "Case No 1 of 3" header. Below it is a student profile card for "Nyle" with a cartoon avatar. The sidebar menu includes: "Student Background", "Initial Conversation", "Student Reaction", "Teacher Response", "Action Steps/Consequences", and "Follow Up". At the bottom of the sidebar are two progress bars: "TIME / BUDGET MGMT." and "PATIENT CARE MGMT.". The main content area is titled "What Happened..." and contains the instruction "Click on the boxes below to see more information about the student and the situation." There are two interactive boxes: "Profile" and "Situation". The "Profile" box is linked to a text box containing: "Nyle is an 8th grade student, athlete, and occasional honor roll student. Eager to please and do well, Nyle takes even small corrections to his behavior very personally, and can sometimes feel like he is being singled out or treated unfairly. He occasionally acts or speaks before thinking, but is capable of reflecting on his behavior and choices if he has had time to get to a calm headspace." The "Situation" box is linked to a text box containing: "Nyle's school shares space with an elementary school, and in order to not disrupt the learning of younger students, stairwell transitions are silent, since noise carries from the stairs to classrooms. On the way from the cafeteria from lunch to class, Nyle and a classmate are speaking and laughing loudly. You were able to see that Nyle was one of the louder students, but you could not see who he was laughing and talking with. You need to remind Nyle of the school's expectations for noise level on the stairs. What is a developmentally-appropriate response to Nyle's behavior?". A large orange "Continue" button is at the bottom right.

Challenge: Choose one of the student profiles in the left-hand navigation. Each is a student in your class, and each has a different behavioral support need. Using the information provided, as well as what you learned about effective communication in this class, walk through a behavioral scenario that promotes a warm, respectful, professional relationship between you and the student. As you make choices, your Bucket score and Temperature score will rise or fall. The goal is to have a high bucket score and a low temperature score by the end of the interaction.

On this slide, I've decided to lighten the cognitive load by having users click to see the student's profile, and then click again to see the situation of the activity. That way, they are not greeted by a wall of text.

Text for situation: Nyle's school shares space with an elementary school, and in order to not disrupt the learning of younger students, stairwell transitions are silent, since noise carries from the stairs to classrooms. On the way from the cafeteria from lunch to class, Nyle and a classmate are speaking and laughing loudly. You were able to see that Nyle was one of the louder students, but you could not see who he was laughing and talking with. You need to remind Nyle of the school's expectations for noise level on the stairs. What is a developmentally-appropriate response to Nyle's behavior?

# Practicing Effective Communication

The screenshot shows a digital interface for practicing communication. On the left is a sidebar with a dark background. At the top, it says 'Case No 1 of 3'. Below that is a profile card for a student named 'Nyle' with a cartoon avatar. The sidebar has several menu items: 'Student Background', 'Initial Conversation' (which is highlighted), 'Student Reaction', 'Teacher Response', 'Action Steps/Consequences', and 'Follow Up'. At the bottom of the sidebar are two progress bars: 'TIME / BUDGET MGMT.' and 'PATIENT CARE MGMT.', each with a slider and a smiley face icon. The main area on the right has a light purple header 'Initial Conversation'. Below the header is a text box asking 'How would you begin your conversation with Nyle? Choose as many statements as you would like.' There are four checkboxes with corresponding text: 'Hi, Nyle. Thanks for talking to me.', 'Nyle, You were talking on the stairs. You know why that is not acceptable. Are you ready to take accountability for your behavior?', 'Why were you and your friends goofing off and being disruptive on the stairs?', 'Before we start, who else was talking– I know it wasn't just you.', and 'Can you tell me what happened on the way up from lunch?'. At the bottom right of the main area is an orange 'Continue' button.

Case No 1 of 3

Nyle

Student Background

Initial Conversation

Student Reaction

Teacher Response

Action Steps/Consequences

Follow Up

TIME / BUDGET MGMT.

\$

PATIENT CARE MGMT.

Medical Partners

### Initial Conversation

How would you begin your conversation with Nyle?  
Choose as many statements as you would like.

- ☐ Hi, Nyle. Thanks for talking to me.
- ☐ Nyle, You were talking on the stairs. You know why that is not acceptable. Are you ready to take accountability for your behavior?
- ☐ Why were you and your friends goofing off and being disruptive on the stairs?
- ☐ Before we start, who else was talking– I know it wasn't just you.
- ☐ Can you tell me what happened on the way up from lunch?

Continue

Challenge: Choose one of the student profiles in the left-hand navigation. Each is a student in your class, and each has a different behavioral support need. Using the information provided, as well as what you learned about effective communication in this class, walk through a behavioral scenario that promotes a warm, respectful, professional relationship between you and the student. As you make choices, your Bucket score and Temperature score will rise or fall. The goal is to have a high bucket score and a low temperature score by the end of the interaction.

This slide demonstrates one of the activities for teachers to engage in for this final asynch assessment before they begin pairing up with their teacher partner for the final assessment. On this screen, teachers can choose as many statements as they think are appropriate. Their choices will influence the bars on the bottom left, either filling or emptying the bucket, and raising or lowering the temperature.

# Practicing Effective Communication

Case No 1 of 3

Medical Partners

## Initial Conversation

View Response

Hi, Nyle. Thanks for talking to me.

View Response

Nyle, You were talking on the stairs. You know why that is not acceptable. Are you ready to take accountability for your behavior?

View Response

Why were you and your friends goofing off and being disruptive on the stairs?

View Response

Before we start, who else was talking- I know it wasn't just you.

View Response

Can you tell me what happened on the way up from lunch?

Continue once you've views the student's response(s)

Continue

**Challenge:** Choose one of the student profiles in the left-hand navigation. Each is a student in your class, and each has a different behavioral support need. Using the information provided, as well as what you learned about effective communication in this class, walk through a behavioral scenario that promotes a warm, respectful, professional relationship between you and the student. As you make choices, your Bucket score and Temperature score will rise or fall. The goal is to have a high bucket score and a low temperature score by the end of the interaction.

When learners click on “View Student Responses,” they’ll get a pop up with the student’s reaction. Example:

Question: Why were you and your friends goofing off and being disruptive on the stairs?

Response: I wasn’t! I wasn’t talking! We didn’t even do anything!

In the course that inspired me, learners can only see responses to the statements they choose. I would like them to be able to see all of the potential responses, as I think it is instructive to see all outcomes, even as the learner’s individual choices impact their bucket and thermometer scores.

# Practicing Effective Communication

The screenshot shows a digital interface for practicing communication. On the left, a sidebar contains a menu with options: 'Case No 1 of 3', a profile picture of a student named 'Nyle', 'Student Background', 'Initial Conversation', 'Student Reaction', 'Teacher Response', 'Action Steps/Consequences', and 'Follow Up'. Below the menu are two progress bars: 'TIME / BUDGET MGMT.' and 'PATIENT CARE MGMT.'. In the center is a full-body illustration of a young man with dark skin, wearing a light blue t-shirt and dark blue pants. To the right of the illustration, a green checkmark icon is followed by the text 'Positive Relationship in Progress!'. Below this, a box titled 'It was effective when...' contains a paragraph of feedback text. Another box titled 'Next Time, Try...' contains the text 'None. You made all the correct choices!'. At the bottom right is a blue button with a right arrow and the word 'CONTINUE'. The top right corner of the interface has a logo for 'Medical Partners'.

Case No 1 of 3

Nyle

Student Background

Initial Conversation

Student Reaction

Teacher Response

Action Steps/Consequences

Follow Up

TIME / BUDGET MGMT.

\$

PATIENT CARE MGMT.

Medical Partners

✓ **Positive Relationship in Progress!**

It was effective when...

You greeted Nyle warmly and gave him a chance to explain what happened from his point of view before making a judgement on his actions. You also reinforced the purpose behind the school's rule, and solicited ideas from Nyle for how he might make a different choice next time he and his friends have energy to burn on the stairs. As a result, Nyle accepts that his behavior has a consequence, and he feels listened to and respected.

**Next Time, Try...**

None. You made all the correct choices!

CONTINUE

## User Feedback Page

Once teachers have chosen their initial conversation, their responses, and appropriate action steps or consequences, they'll land on the feedback page. This can help reinforce the choices they made, or can explain why their choices were not necessarily the most effective ones in trying to build and maintain a relationship with the student in question.