



# START A CLASS BY FOCUSING ON THE RELATIONSHIP



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Hi!  
I'M JOLY, A VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION TEACHER. IN ADDITION TO THIS WORKBOOK, YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM AT [OBSERVATOIREFP.ORG/EN/RELATIONSHIP-MANAGEMENT](http://OBSERVATOIREFP.ORG/EN/RELATIONSHIP-MANAGEMENT) HAPPY READING!

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# INTRODUCTION

- Feel welcomed and accepted within the group.
- Learn in a pleasant environment where the climate facilitates positive discussions.
- Be involved and recognized in the development of group functioning.

Those elements are essential for students.

**AS A TEACHER, HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE THIS?**

**HOW DO YOU START A CLASS WITH A NEW GROUP AND  
CREATE A FAVOURABLE CLIMATE?**

**THESE ARE THE QUESTIONS WE AIM TO ANSWER IN  
THIS WORKBOOK.**

## **WE SUGGEST**

A workbook with two sections: the relational preamble and the partnership.

This workbook will help you develop teaching strategies on how to start your class, by focusing on the development of a significant relationship with and between your students.



# RELATIONAL PREAMBLE

## DEFINITION

The relational preamble appears in different forms. This is a moment, in the very first minutes of class, where the teacher ensures that the students are prepared mentally and emotionally. It is not the time to teach content, but rather to assess the students' state of mind, as soon as they arrive.

Holding informal discussions, creating a favourable atmosphere for the class or organizing a simple game are specific activities for immediate greetings, and support relational aspects. Teachers focus on the individual beyond the content or the learning objective. You should aspire to build or enhance the relationship both at the beginning of the course, and at the beginning of every class.

## RELEVANCE

It is essential to take a moment, at the beginning of a class, to focus on the teacher-student or student-student relationship. This allows the group to engage with the primary objective of the course more quickly and, above all, to be prepared to learn the material.

As a teacher, directing attention toward the students, on what they are experiencing, on what bothers them, on what fascinates or interests them, will develop and maintain a positive relationship between the student and the teacher.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Carrying out a relational preamble is simple. First, the teacher contemplates the most effective approach in regard to a few different elements:

- desired mood or atmosphere for the class (relaxed, energetic, etc.)
- student needs
- news
- previous discussions
- student interests

In the emotional preamble, a logical sequence can also be followed by using the same one every week, but adapting it or proposing variations. It is also possible to use more than one form of preamble at once.

## EXAMPLES

- Warm greetings (smile, say “hi, how are you?”, be accessible, etc.)
- Give handshakes
- Display a “random fact” on the board (you can download an app such as Daily Random Facts)
- Display a riddle on the board
- Display on the board the joke of the day
- Display on the board the proverb of the day
- Initiate informal discussions, encourage students to share (about weekend activities, reality shows, home-cooked meals, family, etc.)
- Draw on the board
- Create a mood (subdued lighting, music, decorations, etc.)
- Suggest the ribbon game (students choose a red, yellow, or green ribbon depending on their mood and cut it to the length of their choice to indicate the intensity of their mood)
- Talk about the news (if a big event is in the news, we can discuss the subject in class, talk about how it makes us feel, etc.)
- Monitor relationships between students (if there’s tension in the group, we need to discuss it before starting the class.)
- Organize a small game (riddle, hanging man, line dance, aerobic, meditation, etc.)



# THE PARTNERSHIP

## DEFINITION

The partnership aims to establish a common goal, an objective, and to agree on group functioning in the context of a classroom session or a competency.

Partnership is developed between the teacher and the learners. Together, they discuss and debate in order to determine a common basis for the course.

This will prevent interference. In a partnership relationship, the students and the teacher agree on functioning, roles and responsibilities, and deadlines.

## RELEVANCE

Establishing a partnership makes it easier to manage the classroom and to respect ground rules for the group. Because students are involved in the process of establishing the partnership, they are more likely to be engaged, to be empowered, and to adhere because they have the opportunity to contribute: it is their ideas!

Partnership also fosters a sense of belonging to the group and contributes to students feeling valued. In other words, the teacher expresses significant consideration for their students during the first class. This sets the tone for the rest of the semester: relationships are at the core of teaching. Let's work together!

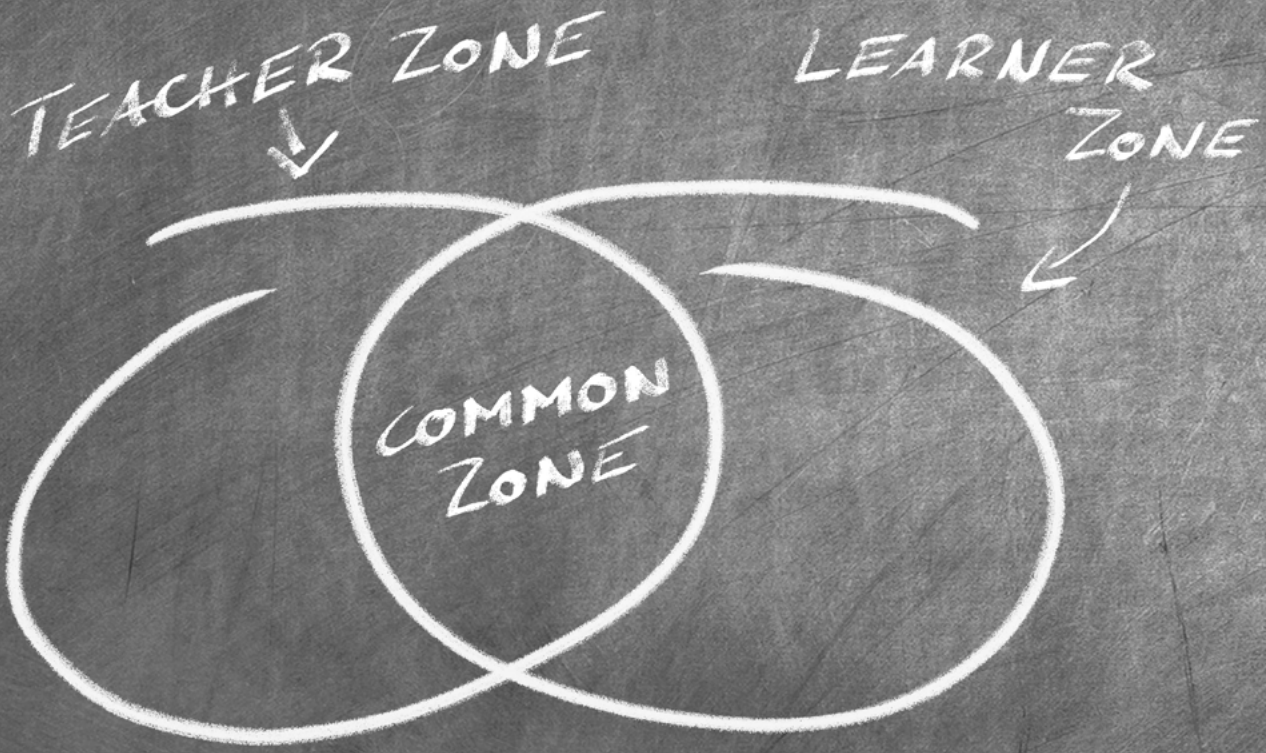
## IMPLEMENTATION

During the first class, following the presentation of the students, the teacher, and the course outline, the teacher should suggest to the class that they all develop the partnership.

Together, the students and the teacher agree on:

- classroom rules (management of lateness, absences, breaks, etc.)
- each party's roles
- everyone's expectations (course outline, evaluations, teaching strategies, participation, etc.)
- the consequences of not respecting the agreement

You can discuss anything you wish to include in this partnership.



## TEACHER'S ROLE

The teacher must play the role of facilitator during the establishment of the partnership. Tasks are varied:

- Explain the purpose of the activity
- Ask open-ended questions
- Manage speaking turns
- Ask clarifying questions as needed
- On the board, write the ideas suggested
- Rephrase some ideas
- Avoid expressing your opinion while students are speaking (verbally or nonverbally)
- Guide the discussion
- Summarize

The teacher presents their ideas and expectations after the students finish discussing theirs.

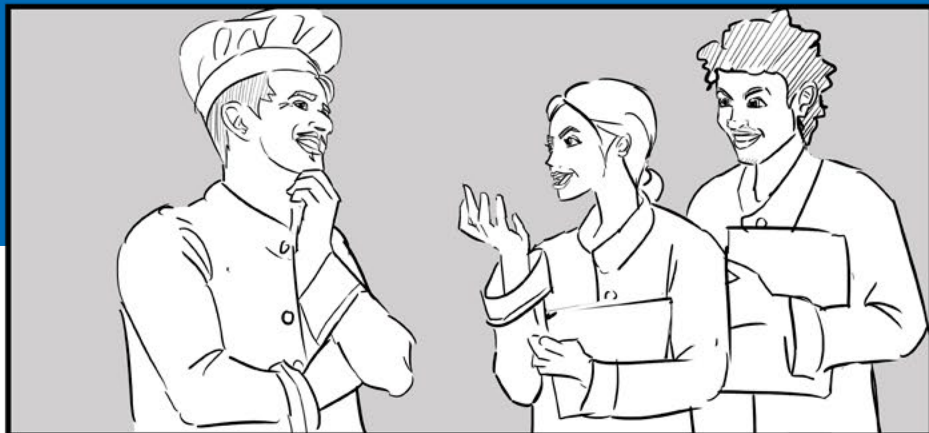
Then, the two parties will determine what to write in the common zone.

Next, the teacher leads the group toward determining consequences to be applied if the partnership is not respected. The consequences need to be reasonable and logical, while allowing for some humour and light-hearted elements.

Finally, the teacher will make the final version available to students (poster in the classroom or Word or PDF document via email or shared using Omnivox, Moodle, Teams, etc.)

# IMPLEMENTATION

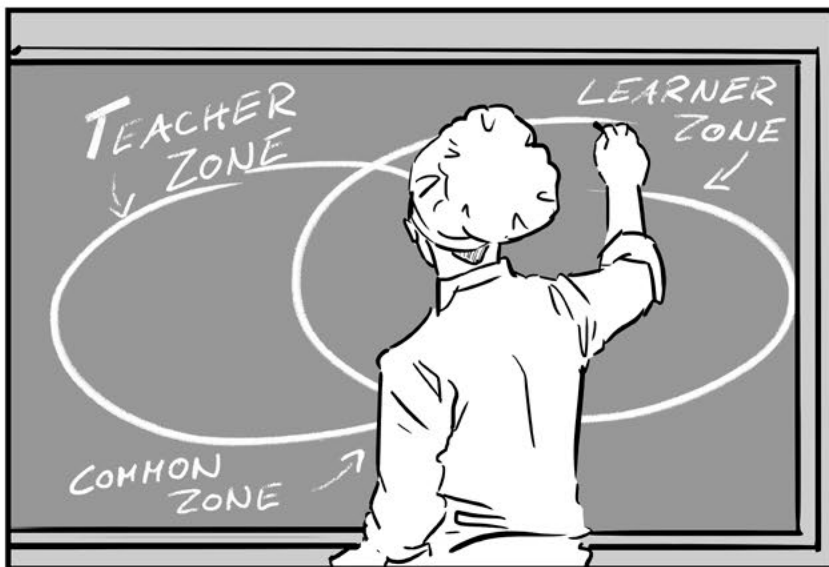
ALBERT, A COOKING TEACHER, MEETS HIS STUDENTS FOR THE FIRST TIME. THIS IS THE FIRST CLASS OF THE SEMESTER. HE STARTS BY INTRODUCING HIMSELF AND THEN ORGANIZES AN ICEBREAKER TO ALLOW STUDENTS TO GET ACQUAINTED AND TO EXCHANGE IDEAS IN AN ENJOYABLE ENVIRONMENT.



NEXT, ALBERT PRESENTS THE COURSE OUTLINE, THE OBJECTIVES TO BE ACHIEVED, AND THE MATERIAL THAT WILL BE COVERED THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER. IN ADDITION, HE WISHES TO ESTABLISH THE CLASSROOM PROCEDURES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HIS GROUP.



FOR ME, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT WE WORK TOGETHER AND THAT YOU HAVE A SAY IN HOW THE GROUP FUNCTIONS, AND ON THE CORE VALUES OF THE GROUP. THAT BEING SAID, WE WILL NOW DEVELOP A PARTNERSHIP THROUGH AN EXERCISE. SINCE WE WILL SPEND THE WHOLE SEMESTER TOGETHER, I INVITE YOU TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS, YOUR EXPECTATIONS, AND YOUR PREFERENCES FOR THE COURSE.



THE IDEA IS TO IDENTIFY WHAT YOU FEEL IS IMPORTANT IN TERMS OF CLASSROOM FUNCTIONING. WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF THE TEACHER? FOR YOU, WHAT IS AN IDEAL TEACHER? WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF YOUR CLASSMATES? WHAT RULES ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU? ARE THERE ANY TEACHING STRATEGIES THAT YOU PREFER? GO AHEAD AND SPEAK YOUR MIND! I WILL NOTE WHAT YOU SAY IN THE APPROPRIATE SECTION, AND I WILL ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS IF I NEED CLARIFICATION. IMPORTANT: NO CENSORING!! ALL ANSWERS ARE WELCOME! WHEN YOU ARE READY, RAISE YOUR HAND!



STUDENTS OFFER IDEAS

I FIND IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE VISUAL CUES WHEN THERE IS A LOT OF THEORY!

I EXPECT YOU TO ANSWER EMAILS QUICKLY

I THINK AN ACTIVE CLASS IS WAY MORE INTERESTING!

I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE ASSIGNMENTS AT LEAST TWO TO THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE DUE DATES!

WE COULD AGREE ON 5 MINUTES MAXIMUM IF WE ARE LATE!



WHAT KIND OF VISUAL CUES?  
HMM YES, I SEE  
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?  
I UNDERSTAND

ONCE THE STUDENTS ARE DONE, THE TEACHER SUMMARIZES WHAT WAS SAID AND THEN PRESENTS THEIR OWN EXPECTATIONS. THE TEACHER MAKES SURE THAT THE GROUP IS COMFORTABLE WITH WHAT WAS DISCUSSED. THE GOAL IS TO REACH A COMMON UNDERSTANDING THAT SATISFIES EVERYONE.

AWESOME WORK, TEAM!  
I THINK IT MAKES A LOT OF SENSE! DO YOU ALL AGREE?  
WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADJUST ANYTHING?

FINALLY, TOGETHER, WE NEED TO ESTABLISH "LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES" ASSOCIATED WITH NOT RESPECTING THE AGREEMENT.

NOW, WHAT CONSEQUENCES DO YOU PROPOSE IF THE AGREEMENT IS NOT RESPECTED? FOR EXAMPLE, IF A STUDENT ARRIVES 10 MINUTES LATE WHEN WE AGREED WE WOULD TOLERATE UP TO 5 MINUTES

WE COULD GIVE ONE CHANCE, BUT IF IT HAPPENS MORE THAN ONCE, THE STUDENT NEEDS TO WAIT UNTIL THE BREAK TO ENTER

THE STUDENTS SUGGEST THEIR IDEAS. THE TEACHER AND THE STUDENTS DECIDE ON THE CONSEQUENCES. THE TEACHER MAKES SURE EVERYTHING IS REASONABLE AND FEASIBLE. WHEN THE PARTNERSHIP IS ESTABLISHED, THE TEACHER MAKES THE FINAL VERSION AVAILABLE TO THE GROUP (IN WORD, PDF OR OTHER FORMAT).

# INSPIRATIONS AND COLLABORATIONS

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## SOURCES

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