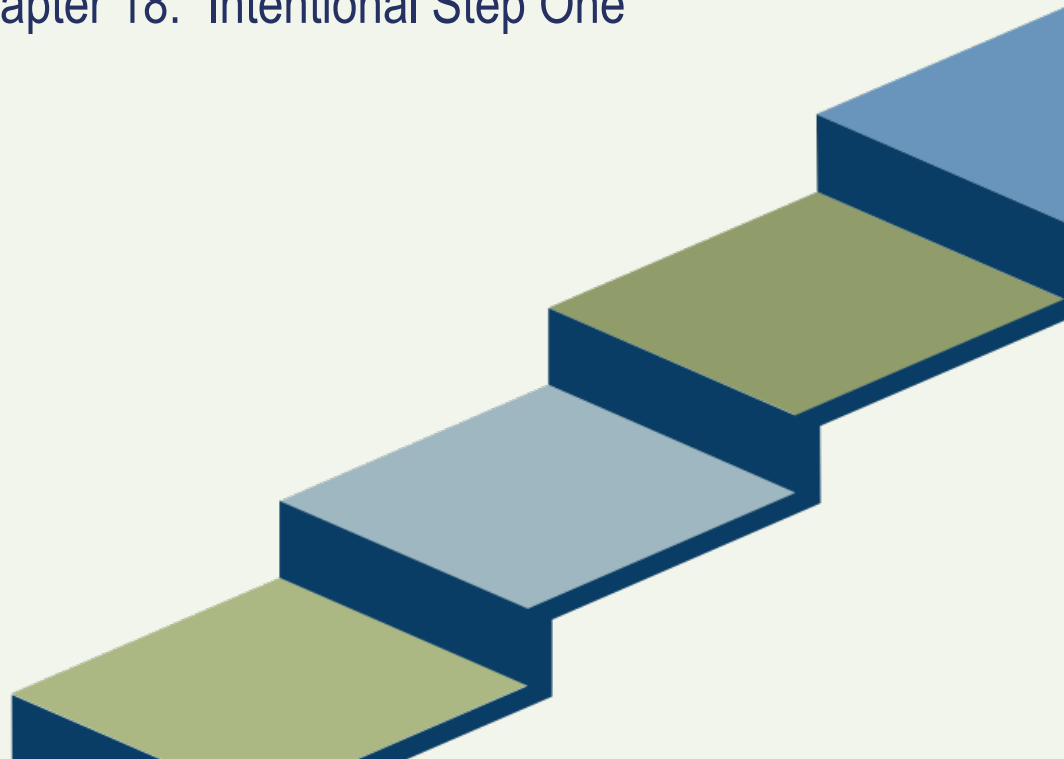


# Intentional Instructional Moves

Strategic Steps to  
Accelerate Student  
Learning

## Companion Guide

Chapter 18: Intentional Step One



## Chapter 18

### Intentional Step One: Cultivate Teacher-Student Relationships

According to Hattie (2017), building positive teacher-student relationships has an effect size of .52. Teachers can start by getting to know their students and cultivating strong teacher-student relationships. Invite students to fill out Learner Profiles or participate in ice breaker activities where they share information about themselves. Teachers can also have students create Interest Inventories and respond to prompts about their learning: *What would they like the teacher to know about them? What's one thing they want to improve this year? What's their favorite part of the school day, and why?* Expressing genuine interest in students helps promote inclusivity and ensures all students feel seen, welcome, and empowered in the classroom (Ivory, 2021).

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People can tell when they are genuinely liked and appreciated. Our students are no different.

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#### Strategy 1: Morning Meeting

The teacher facilitates a daily morning meeting and uses that time to build relationships with students. They can include bonding exercises, such as inviting the whole class to stretch, play a game, or solve a puzzle. These meetings can also introduce social and emotional activities, such as modeling how to talk about emotions or discussing a sensitive topic. Teachers can use this time to meet individually with students and check in with them: How was their weekend? Is there anything they are excited or concerned about? This is also a great time for students to share their thoughts, interests, concerns, etc. To build on this strategy, teachers can invite students

and/or small groups to lead the meetings. See Chapter 17 for more ideas on student Sharing Time.

Morning Meetings are common in elementary classrooms, but this strategy can work well for all grade levels. This interval helps students transition into class and reminds them of the norms and expectations (Minero, 2019). It gives teachers and students a designated time to cultivate community and promotes future-ready skills like flexibility, self-regulation (.52), active listening, and social influence.

### Strategy 2: Greet Students at the Door

At the beginning of class, meet students at the door and greet them as they enter the room. Teachers can simply say, “Good morning, Ashley,” or “Welcome to class, Daniel.” I’ve also seen teachers offer students a choice of non-verbal greetings, such as a thumbs-up, high five, or fist bump. The student gets to choose which greeting they’d prefer that day. This can also be an opportunity for teachers to check in with students and ask how their day is going or how they’re feeling. Once students are comfortable with this process, the teacher can ask them to greet another student. Eventually, students might take turns being the classroom greeter for the day.

Greeting students warmly as they enter the classroom helps them feel seen and welcome. It can build trust and rapport with students and reinforce the notion that their teachers care about them. Greeting students also promotes classroom cohesion (.44) and desirable behaviors such as open communication, empathy, and treating others with respect.

### Strategy 3: Tell Me Something Good

When students are entering or exiting the classroom, or at another transitional point during the day, the teacher can say: “Tell me something good that happened today (or recently).” Students can share their accomplishments, things they are looking forward to, and things that make them happy. They might share these ideas with the teacher, in small groups, or during a whole-class discussion. The teacher will listen actively as students share and offer encouragement. To add on to this exercise, teachers can invite students to go find another classmate and ask them to share something good in their life.

Tell Me Something Good fosters positivity and gratitude in the classroom. The teacher also gets to know their students better by learning about their interests, passions, and what makes them happy or excited. In turn, students feel valued and appreciated beyond their roles as learners. Positive classroom cohesion has an effect size of .44, which helps nurture students’ motivation and self-awareness.