

Building Relationships with Students and Families by Athena Turner, Executive Director, Teach for America

Ms Turner used a crisp two-pronged approach to build strong relationships with students and families. It helped me clarify many underlying subtle ambiguities and organise my thought process.

Concrete Strategies I walked away with:

There is a unanimous agreement on the importance of building strong relationships with students and their families. Everyone agrees that this helps mould their lives and mindsets. But the generality of the task often makes many of us like me at sea in acting. Athena Turner says that you can't master it in single day.

First, we must deeply believe in the vision, know the kids and build their belief on the same vision. Then constantly reinforce by making connections with their daily activities.

- A constant emphasis on having both *Excellence* and *Love* will keep the students invested in the goals. The students then realise the purposefulness of every action they do.
- Make the students feel that - "*Teacher deeply cares about what they want.*"
- Celebrate their success.

Clear classroom strategies out of the session:

- First 3 weeks – Getting to know each other (life maps etc.)
- College projects (around the interests of students obtained from the first 3 weeks)
- Keep families well informed about the progress of kids. Discuss with them the vision, plans and involve them in coming up with solutions to build trust.