

How to Empower Your Students Online:

Building Rapport with Students Improves Teacher Confidence and Effectiveness



There are benefits to both teachers and students when they have a strong relationship, whether online or offline, research has shown that the warmth of these relationships is one of the primary reasons teachers stay in the profession, and “one of the most important sources of enjoyment of, and motivation for teaching.”¹

Teachers, who teach English online to students in a one-on-one setting, often remark about the benefits of the strong teacher-student relationship. More than 1,000 teachers responded to a survey conducted by VIPKid (August 25, 2019), saying that creating warm relationships with their students helped them to be more confident and effective in their teaching, and that it had both professional and personal benefits.

¹ Claessens, Luce & Tartwijk, Jan & Want, Anna & Pennings, Helena & Verloop, Nico & Pj, Brok & Wubbels, Theo. (2016). Positive teacher–student relationships go beyond the classroom, problematic ones stay inside. *The Journal of Educational Research*. 110. 1-16. 10.1080/00220671.2015.1129595.

Finding Fulfillment through Strong Teacher-Student Relationships

The opportunity to focus one-on-one with a student allows teachers to get to know both the student and the family. This, in return, helps teachers personalize the learning experience for each student. Most students grow confidence in themselves within a positive relationship.

“

I work harder for them because we share a strong connection. It makes me work to improve as a teacher, to constantly learn.

My confidence as a teacher has developed as a result of seeing how my students have learned and developed.

Makes me happy and want to come to work. Feels like I'm making a difference.

”

How Teachers Build a Positive Relationship with Their Students

Several common threads in the survey responses emerged from teachers about how they build positive relationships with their students.

Techniques for building positive relationships with students:

- Smiling
- Asking students questions about themselves and their activities
- Being animated during their teaching
- Showing students that they care



These are the same techniques a teacher would use in a brick and mortar classroom, but because one the VIPKid platform you are teaching 1:1, it is even more impactful. Teacher Chelle’s summed it up nicely:

“ I build positive relationships with my students by getting to know them. I ask personal questions about what they like and what they don’t like. I ask about their family, and I tell them about mine. Relationships are all about caring about the other person. I try to show my students that I care about them and not just about them learning the English language. ”

Whether in a traditional classroom, or teaching 1:1 online, teachers who have strong bonds with their students believe this has made them more effective.²

How do teachers build a close connection with their students?



“ I listen closely to things they share with me. Then I make sure to ask about those things in the next class.

I encourage and praise throughout the class. I add humor and laughter and I share myself with my students.

I never tell them that they have made a mistake. I keep it positive by saying “that’s close” and then immediately correct the mistake and have them say it correctly. ”

² Kirby Hall School (2017, December 4). The Importance of Positive Teacher-Student Relationships. *Kirby Hall School Blog*. <https://www.kirbyhallschool.org/the-importance-of-positive-teacher-student-relationships/>

Signs of Successful Relationship Building

There are some obvious and familiar signs that teachers on VIPKid have been successful in relationship building. They have a positive rapport with families, and kids appear happy to start class. But there are some other interesting observations as well, such as students being unafraid to make mistakes. It is a clear signal that this is a relationship of trust and security for the student. When teachers know their students well, they can determine the most effective teaching method.

When they feel comfortable and accepted, students respond and participate more in class. There are often unmistakable signs that students feel connected to their teachers.

Teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness and their rapport with students are important as it influences the development of the relationship, but the relationship also has an impact on the teacher's well-being. The benefits of teaching for VIPKid allow many to cheerfully get up in the early hours of the morning to teach students on the other side of the world because the experience with the students is so rewarding.

“

The parents have told me! They say their kids love seeing pictures of my pets and children, and they love learning about my life in America.

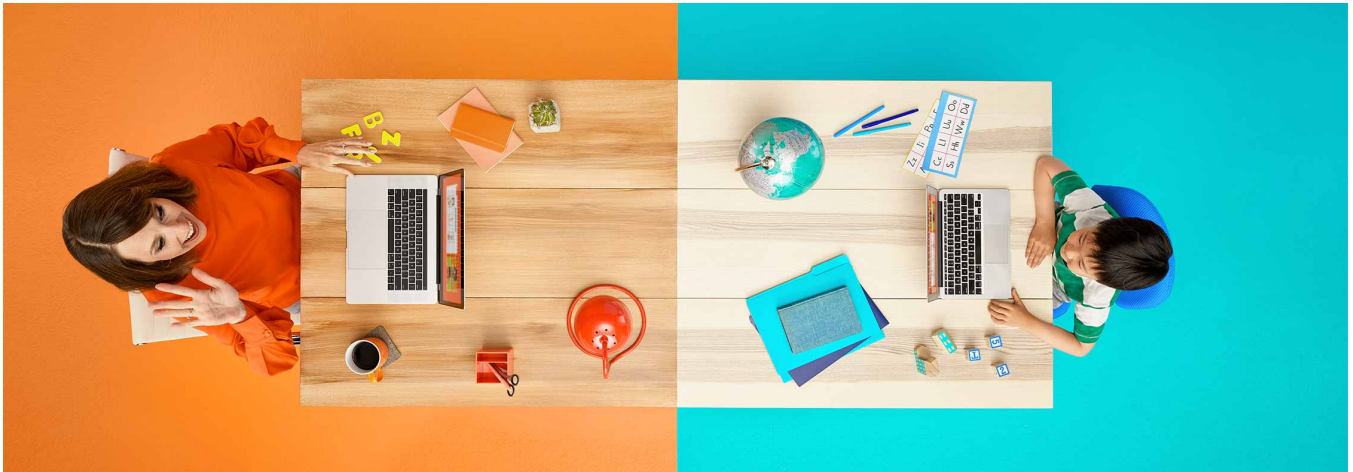
When a student is comfortable enough to tell you that they don't understand something. You can feel the trust they place in you that they don't have to be perfect and that you have their best interest in mind.

I know my hard work has paid off when a previously quiet, reserved child starts smiling at me and being more engaged in my lessons. I also watch their reactions at the end of class when I click on 'Finish Class.' I don't exit immediately. I especially watch my young students whose parents are with them. A student who smiles at their parents and immediately starts rattling off in Chinese makes my heart feel good. I have no idea what they're saying, but I can tell they enjoyed the time they spent with me.

I know my strategies have been successful at building positive relationships with my VIPKid students when their parents ask me to give their child an English name and ask me to visit them in China. They value and trust me.

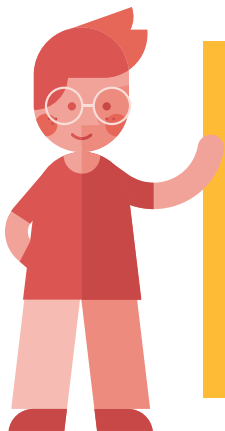
”

Quotes are comments pulled from the VIPKid survey taken by teachers.



Key Takeaways from the Research and Survey

- 1 Strong relationships between teachers and students create benefits for both. Teachers find these relationships motivating and strive harder to establish trust with their students to enhance their academic growth. Students feel secure and encouraged to take academic risks.
- 2 The 1:1 nature of VIPKid teaching facilitates the development of good rapport between student and teacher, which enables increased learning.
- 3 Signs of success are clear markers in a 1:1 online teaching situation. Teachers share their best practices with all teachers who are interested in the benefits of a strong teacher-student bond. Survey respondents find 1:1 teaching motivating and personally and professionally satisfying. Most teachers feel that their teaching experience with VIPKid makes them more confident and effective professionals.



For more information about becoming a teacher with VIPKid, visit us at www.vipkid.com. VIPKid is a global education technology company that connects children with the world's best teachers for real-time online English language learning. VIPKid's mission is to inspire and empower every child for the future and believes that education is not one-size-fits-all. Students are unique and the world is within their reach when connected with great teachers capable of personalizing learning and sparking curiosity. Follow [@thevipkidlife](https://www.instagram.com/thevipkidlife) on Instagram and Twitter.