



MARCH

STUDENT RAPPORT ROLE PLAY

Objective: Use conflict resolution strategies to improve rapport between staff members and students.

Participants analyze sample interactions, then use positive communication and conflict resolution strategies to improve staff-student relations. Creative role play (with optional student participation during the Booster Shot lesson) leads to open discussion and problem-solving.



LESSON 8: Student Rapport Role Play

MATERIALS

- Trainer's Script
- SCRIPT: *Student Rapport Role Play* (pages 106-112)
 - Skit 1 (1A + 1B)
 - Skit 2, 3, or 4 (both A and B versions)
- Lunchroom props (table to act as a service counter, optional trays, food props, aprons, etc.)
- Large paper, markers (optional)

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Read **all four skits**. Select skit 1 plus whichever skit (2, 3, or 4) addresses a topic of most importance to your lunchroom staff. Save the remaining skits for the Booster Shot lesson, or create new skits to address your lunchroom's particular needs. Make copies of each skit for **each participant plus the workshop leader** (who can also participate in the skits, if desired).

- **Skit 1:** student makes negative comments about school food
- **Skit 2:** student does not order a complete reimbursable meal
- **Skit 3:** FSD needs to increase sales of a target entrée
- **Skit 4:** school staff member influences students' choices and comfort level

IMPORTANT NOTE: *Always print/create BOTH versions of the skit—version A (a positive, calm, constructive way of responding to the situation) and version B (a negative, snappish, destructive way of responding to the situation). When writing your own skits (if applicable), use realistic situations and plausible dialogue to show the fine line between escalating a negative situation and turning it into an opportunity for growth and understanding (and food sales).*

➔ DO:

- Set up the lunchroom props. At a minimum, you'll need a table to act as a counter, with designated areas for food service and register. Further props generate interest, but are not strictly necessary.
- Assemble the pre-selected skits (skit 1 + **either** skit 2, 3, **or** 4). See the italicized comments above for details. Lay out the corresponding props.

💬 SAY:

This month, we'll build on the positive communication cues learned in the October workshop by taking them a step further—to **conflict resolution**.

School is a stressful environment for adults and students. This can sometimes lead them to be grumpy, rude, and even hostile.

- * Have you experienced this? What happened? How did you respond?

LESSON 8: Student Rapport Role Play continued



➔ DO:

- Allow participants to respond. (1–2 minutes)
 - › If a participant's response to a student's negativity or criticism is positive, praise him/her and point out how the staff could use that strategy also.
 - › If the response is dismissive or hostile, observe that this reaction is natural (we are all human) but this workshop will demonstrate strategies for turning the situation into a positive one for both parties. Be supportive and compassionate and thank them for sharing.

💬 SAY:

You are not alone. Every day, students struggle with many challenges: difficulty with school work, trouble fitting in, bullying, family troubles, poverty, and even crisis situations such as abuse, homelessness, and hunger. We may never know the details, but we can expect that for at least a few kids each day, this stress may manifest in lashing out, even at those of us who are not the cause of their situation. ***Our challenge is: what do we do about it when it does happen? Do we make it worse, ignore it, or make it better?***

We cannot control these outside influences on our students, but we can control how we respond to them—and we can even turn these potential conflicts into opportunities to build bridges between us and the students. ***Our compassionate responses could be the first kind words a troubled or stressed student hears that day.*** By remaining calm and positive, we control the situation. (As a bonus, we can also improve our lunchroom's atmosphere, efficiency, and bottom line.)

➔ DO:

- Distribute Skit A (versions A and B) to participants.

💬 SAY:

In today's activity, we will use conflict resolution strategies to promote positive relationships between students and lunchroom staff. In particular, we will show how different responses to comments can improve or worsen situations.

We will view two versions of the same situation. We'll watch one version, discuss it briefly, then watch another version of the scene and discuss it. We'll look for ways that the lunchroom staff members' words and actions influence the outcomes. Lastly, we'll work on ways to incorporate helpful ideas into our own practices.

➔ DO:

- Ask for volunteers to read for the first skit (**Skit 1**). The same people can play the roles in both versions, or you can choose two sets for the two versions.
- Ask the volunteers go to the "counter/table" area, choose roles, and read the lines in character. ***Read VERSION B first (the negative scenario).***





LESSON 8: Student Rapport Role Play continued

SAY:

Let's briefly discuss what we just saw:

- * Have any of you experienced this situation?
- * What long-term effects could lots of interactions like this have on the lunchroom?
- * What about on the students? (Consider both the students involved and those watching or who might hear about this afterward.) Whose side would they take, and why?

DO:

- Encourage participants to point out **words, actions/gestures, and inactions** which made the situation worse (or at least, not any better). (1 minute) Answers may include:
 - * Being impatient, not offering options ("cornering" the student)
 - * Not starting with a friendly greeting
- Then ask volunteers (the same or a new set) to return to the counter, choose roles, and read the lines in character. **Read VERSION A (the positive scenario).**

SAY:

Now let's discuss the second version (version A):

- * The student's initial attitude and words were the same, but the staff greeting and response differed between the two versions. How did they differ?
- * How did different staff actions change the results of the order?
- * What could be the long-term results of each scenario for the lunchroom?
- * Which is better, and why?

DO:

- Allow participants to point out the positive aspects of what they saw in the skit, including *words, actions/gestures, and inactions* which made the situation better. (1–2 minutes) Answers may include:
 - › Friendly greeting, smile
 - › Offering options
 - › Remaining friendly and calm

SAY:

This skit showed how **the adult controls the situation**. It is empowering to realize that the **students are not directing the interaction, even if they are rude or provocative**.

In today's second skit, please focus on the ways the adult can **de-escalate a conflict** situation. The goal of each student interaction is to build a harmonious rapport and have a friendly, efficient lunchroom service. **It is not to "win." Nobody "wins" by "beating" a student in an argument, because bad feelings remain and spread.**

LESSON 8: Student Rapport Role Play continued



➔ DO:

- Distribute the second chosen skit (**skit 2, 3, or 4**) to each participant. Repeat the activity, holding all discussion until the end. Budget the remaining time so the final “challenge” question is addressed as a “food for thought” closing idea.
 - › Participants read/act out version B (negative version)
 - › Participants read/act out version A (positive version)
 - › Discussion:
 - The student’s initial attitude and words were the same, but the staff greeting and response differed between the two versions. How did they differ?
 - How did different staff actions change the results of the meal order?
 - What could be the long-term results of each scenario for the lunchroom?
 - Which is better, and why?
 - **Challenge: How can lunchroom staff members use these strategies in their own interactions with students?**
- After the discussion, thank participants for their acting and reflective comments.

FOLLOW-UP

Post other follow-up discussion questions from the list below. **Choose a new question every 2–3 days.** Check back with the staff regarding their responses, individually or as a group.

- How have you been able to use the conflict resolution strategies with students recently?
- Has focusing on being compassionate even in the face of rudeness given you some insight into students’ situations?
- What emotions have you observed on our students’ faces today or recently? What might be going on behind-the-scenes with them which could spill over into their interactions with us?
- How can we help our students feel welcome and safe in our lunchroom? What can we say or do to demonstrate that we care for them?
- Please share an example of how you turned a potentially ugly or negative interaction with a student into a positive one.

Food for thought: Your compassionate words or friendly greeting may be the first kind thing each student has heard today. Be a hero to our kids.





BOOSTER SHOT 8: Student Rapport Role Play #2

with optional student participation

This workshop enables lunchroom service teams to practice conflict resolution in staff-student interactions. Participants confront, analyze, problem-solve, and discuss two common lunchroom scenarios, then use those strategies to ameliorate potential conflicts in their own lunchrooms.

*For added authenticity and straight-from-the-horse's-mouth perspective, invite a few students to join you for this workshop. Guidelines for recruiting appropriate students are addressed in the October Booster Shot lesson. Consider inviting the same students back, as the lunchroom staff may be more familiar and comfortable with them than with new students. If you choose to involve students, **prepare** them for the workshop ahead of time. Hold a short meeting to explain how the skits and discussion will work, perhaps sharing the skit A example, so the Booster Shot workshop can begin promptly with everyone on the same page.*

MATERIALS

- Trainer's Script
- SCRIPTS: *Student Rapport Role Play* (pages 106-112)
 - **Choose 2 scenarios** from Skits 2, 3, and 4 (both A and B versions)—whichever skits were not used in the first workshop—or make your own script using scenarios relevant to the lunchroom's needs
- Lunchroom props (table to act as a service counter, optional trays, food props, aprons, etc.)
- Name tags (if students are invited)

➔ DO:

- Before the lesson, create name tags (if students will join the workshop).
- Make sufficient copies of the remaining two skit topics. Assemble the props.

💬 SAY: (to lunchroom staff and students):

Welcome back, everyone. This month's focus is turning negative interactions into positive ones by being calm and compassionate. Today we'll view and discuss two more common lunchroom situations. We'll see two versions of each scenario and discuss how subtle differences in **our reactions, attitude, tone of voice, and body language** can create dramatically different outcomes with long-lasting positive or negative effects on all parties.

BOOSTER SHOT 8:
Student Rapport Role Play #2
continued



➔ **DO:**

- Distribute the name tags. Renew introductions.
- Divide the participants into two or four teams, depending on total numbers.
 - › If there are eight or fewer participants, create two teams; each team will perform both versions (A and B) of their scenario
 - › If there are nine or more participants, create four teams; each team will perform one version of one scenario
- Distribute the scripts accordingly.

💬 **SAY:**

Let's begin. As a team, quickly choose parts and read through your version(s) of your scenario. You'll have a couple of minutes to prepare, then we'll share with the group. You can use the props to help you act out the scene. Don't be nervous! We are a welcoming audience and the point of the skits is the discussion they inspire, not the acting!

During your performance, you may read your lines directly off the scripts (no need to memorize), but try to be expressive in your tone of voice and body language. We will view both versions, then discuss the differences we saw.

➔ **DO:**

- Facilitate the rest of the workshop. Circulate to assist groups, including jumping in to read a role if needed. Keep interactions light-hearted and fun. Manage the remaining workshop time.
 - › Practice/organization (1–2 minutes)
 - › First skit performances (version B, then version A) (1 minute)
 - › Discussion (2–3 minutes)
 - › Second skit performances (version B, then version A) (1 minute)
 - › Discussion (2–3 minutes)
- Discussion questions:
 - › What long-term effects could lots of interactions like this have on the lunchroom? On staff-student relations?
 - › What emotions were demonstrated by the student(s)? What was going on behind-the-scenes for the students or adults that added stress to the situation?
 - › The student's initial attitude and words were the same, but the staff greeting and response differed between the two versions. How did they differ?
 - › How did different staff actions change the results?
 - › Which response is better, and why?



BOOSTER SHOT 8: Student Rapport Role Play #2 continued

Focus the discussions on the positive communication strategies. Encourage each participant to comment at least once.

At the end of the workshop, thank the staff and students for participating. Encourage them to use these conflict resolution strategies both in the lunchroom and in their daily interactions to increase understanding and positive communication between individuals and groups.

FOLLOW-UP

As before, post follow-up discussion/food-for-thought questions for the staff. **Choose a new question every 2–3 days.** (These questions echo the ones from the main lesson.)

- How did the students' responses to the scenarios match our own? How were they different? What could this mean for our real-life interactions in the lunchroom?
- What emotions have you observed on our students' faces today or recently? What might be going on behind-the-scenes with them which could spill over into their interactions with us?
- How can we help our students feel welcome and safe in our lunchroom? What can we say or do to demonstrate that we care for them?
- Food for thought: Your compassionate words or friendly greeting may be the first kind thing each student has heard today. Be a hero to our kids.
- Please share an example of how you turned a potentially negative interaction with a student into a positive one.