

Title

Wish my teacher knew...¹

Short description

This tool should be used for teachers to meet the students and in developing trust and understanding between teacher and student.

Detailed description of the tool and required materials, attachments

To identify some of the distress signals it is very important to ask students about their perspective. In this process some things are obviously easier while others are harder to discuss. It is very important to build an atmosphere where students can freely talk and work on the difficulties or other important things in schooling life. This activity can be organized after the first quarter of the school year, but it can also be organized any time later when teacher sees it is needed.

On the website Mindshift² can be found a story about incredible and yet very simple idea brought by elementary teacher Kyle Schwartz who asked her students to complete the next sentence in writing: "I wish my teacher knew . . ." Story about those responses she got was so moving that went viral very soon and teachers from all over the world asked their students the same question, getting information about what their students were troubling with. Some of the answers were:

"I wish my teacher knew how much I miss my Dad because he got deported to Mexico when I was 3 years old and I haven't seen him in 6 years."

"I wish my teacher knew that I've been having trouble balancing my homework and sports lately."

"I wish my teacher knew I don't have pencils at home."

So we suggest organizing this activity in three steps. Firstly teacher can ask students to find some comfortable, private place in the classroom (or if it is organized as a homework then to do that at home) and to have a piece of paper and

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² <http://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2015/08/26/rethinking-data-how-to-create-a-holistic-view-of-students/>

pen with themselves. Then teacher (can be a master teacher) ask students to start their writing with the sentence: “I wish my teacher knew...” Students can but should not be forced to write down their names on the same papers.

Written texts students hand over to teacher who should not read it aloud but rather ask students whether they want to talk about how they felt during the activity and after. Teacher should ask students how they would like him/her to respond and react to it. The point of this step is to start the optimistic discussion that would bring positive atmosphere to finish the exercise in.

Students’ writings should remain private, and teacher is supposed to use it only in planning future actions with individual students. Responses can be published on line or in some other way only anonymously and after consulting the student.

User’s guide, equipment

Equipment	Quantity
Papers and pens	By the number of participants
Chairs/lazy bags/...	By the number of participants

Level of difficulty (easy, medium, advanced)

Easy

Tags

Situation analysis, Distress signals, Select at risk students, Student centered support, Helping relationship, Getting to know the student.

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This tool can be found on the project website: crocoos.tka.hu

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