



FOR CREATING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Rtime is a structured programme, using random pairing to create an environment supporting and enhancing attainment, relationships and citizenship.

Why should we do Rtime?

Rtime has been devised specifically to enable everyone in the class to get on better with one and other. This will accelerate learning and raise self-esteem. Rtime is a tool for all round growth, progress and for 'multiplying special time'. We all recognise the importance of teaching the basics in all subject areas and there are many children who need to be taught the basic skills of communicating effectively.

Being made aware of what to do will help guide and direct children in the use of proven ways of relating positively with each other.

Much of the emphasis is on teaching good manners, co-operation and respect. There are those who take longer to develop these skills as well as those who are not taught, or have little or no opportunity to observe them. Just as we teach children academic skills, social qualities need to be treated and valued in a similar way.

A school where respect and courtesy are high on the agenda will be a community, which fosters good relationships, as well as accelerating learning.

What is Rtime?

The essence of this approach is a series of 10 - 15 minute activities, which take place over a period of 30 weeks (an academic year).

Placed in random pairs, (that the children 'self-select' via a series of pairing exercises), the children are given a short task to complete in their pairs - working together in partnership.

All of the tasks are easily achievable and so there is an in-built element of success each time. When a task is completed the children are encouraged to thank their partner and to give positive feedback by saying something nice to their partner about how they have worked together.

What does Rtime achieve?

*	Relationship building	*	Tackling Bullying
*	Supporting transition	*	Understanding others
*	Enabling children to get to know each other better	*	Drawing in the socially excluded
	Self esteem and confidence building	*	Modelling respectful behaviour
*	Acceptance of others	*	Citizenship
*	Respect towards others	*	Nurturing
*	Trust building	*	Social cohesion
*	Listening skills	*	Achievement and satisfaction
*	Emotional wellbeing	*	Bring peace and calming into the class
*	Communication skills	*	Developing confident teachers
*	Conflict resolution	*	Preparing children for involvement in school councils
*	Co-operative working	*	Role modelling

Who can benefit from this approach?

Rtime is for all ages and can be used in classrooms, clubs, drama studios, study groups and as it does not require a specific space it can take place anywhere. It is not only for children with problems - every child will benefit, and so will the adults working with them.

How do you get started?

The approach is very simple. It is, however, strongly recommended you discuss the programme with others who have had the experience of using it. (References and contacts can be made available).

I can provide help and support along with the Rtime manual, which includes.

- A questionnaire for each year group
- Ideas for getting the children into their random pairs
- 30 plus activities for the paired tasks for each year group
- Advice about how to round off the Rtime sessions

Rtime has been tried and tested in a range of primary, special and secondary schools. Teachers who have used the approach have been amazed at the impact that it has made, saying that it has transformed relationships between the children and their class.

From: Margaret James, Headteacher, Ellistown Primary School, Leicestershire

R time has had a most significant impact on the personal and social development of the children at Ellistown School. Our children enjoy the R time activities, and are developing a wider circle of people they can work with, play with and be supported by. It has reduced the amount of 'falling out', as children are able to negotiate with each other and respect each other's views. Behaviour has greatly improved. Our children are now able to co-operate better and lessons involving collaborative work are far more successful as our children have both the language and the skills to work together productively.

No longer in Year 6 do we hear "I don't want to work with you". Boys have no problem working with girls, negative body language is reduced and the improvement in the classroom is tangible.

R time takes up such a small amount of time but has a massive amount of impact. It is one of the best things any school could introduce.

From: David Kershaw, Year Seven Tutor & Head of Science, Da Vinci Community College, Derby

R time has truly changed the way I teach. It is the only initiative I have come across which teaches and models things which we expect children to learn to do, but never teach them.

Is SEAL being lost in the "Theme Park?"

The SEAL Primary National Strategy is one of the most exciting initiatives to come out from the DfES over recent years...but is it having its desired effect?

Children's social development and emotional well-being are vitally important if we are to enable children to achieve their maximum potential. SEAL is a programme which aims to develop the underpinning skills that help promote self esteem, positive behaviour and effective learning. It focuses on **five social and emotional aspects of learning**, from this point referred to as the **five SEALS**:

SEAL supports the excellent work going on in the many schools that give systematic attention to the social and emotional aspects of learning through their whole-school ethos; initiatives such as Healthy Schools, Circle Time, buddy systems or Rtime; and the taught PSHE and Citizenship curriculum. The materials found in SEAL help

children develop skills such as understanding another's point of view, working in a group or pairs, sticking at things when they get difficult, resolving conflict and managing worries.

The materials are organised into **seven themes**:

New beginnings.

Getting on and falling out.

Say no to bullying.

Going for goals.

Good to be me.

Relationships.

Changes.

Each theme is designed for a whole school approach and includes assemblies and suggested follow-up activities in all areas of the curriculum. These themes will lead to interesting discussions, debate and revelations, helping the participants to come to terms with some of the important and fundamental aspects of growing up. However, the impact will be less significant if the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning aren't explored, valued, discussed and applied to the whole process.

There is a concern that the **seven themes** can become more prominent than the **five SEALS**. It is vital that there is a balanced approach. It can be too easy to teach to the seven themes allowing them to mask the importance of the **five SEALS**, which need to be placed back at the centre of this very important initiative. If we just teach the themes we are 'short changing' ourselves as well as the children we are working with.

The **five SEALS** need to be examined a little more closely to understand how they underpin the seven themes. If the programme is not used appropriately then its effectiveness as a means of promoting positive behaviour and effective learning will be diminished.

What do the five SEALS encompass?

1) Managing feelings:

Children will experience many feelings as they move through their childhood and adolescence into the realms of adulthood. There are eight key feelings: Anger, Sadness, Fear, Enjoyment, Love, Surprise, Disgust and Shame, to which all other feelings are related - e.g. Shame is related to embarrassment; Fear is related to anxiety etc.

It is important that these emotions are explored and recognised as part of the 'growing up' experience. The sooner children can identify these emotions the easier it can become to deal with them.

Rtime creates opportunities for children to become familiar with these feelings, helping them to come to terms with managing them. It teaches skills, which enable children to *manage their feelings*. These skills include

acceptance, respect, valuing differences in others and how to handle conflict situations.

2) Motivation:

How can we foster and promote motivation? The following list will help identify some of the factors that will encourage motivation.

a) **Setting goals.** All the Rtime activities have goals that the children work towards - ranging from acceptance of their partner to establishing a working relationship that enables the designated activity to be achieved in the most productive of ways.

b) **Finish what you start.** The Rtime process itself is neatly contained in a beginning and end format - from the initial greeting to the formal thank you. In addition to this the activities themselves, designed to be brief as well as easily achievable for children of all abilities, have a defined starting and finishing point. The Rtime activities are fun and easily completed providing an in-built success/ feel good factor with every child having the opportunity to succeed and make their own contribution within each session.

c) **Socialising with others who have a similar interest.** By its very nature the Rtime process creates opportunities to socialise with your partner. The activities require the participants to become involved in a shared experience through discussion, doing a practical task together or using their imaginations together.

d) **Seeing the practical application of something learnt.** When children have 'owned' something that they have been taught and can use this learning in practice, this is a motivating experience. Many of the Rtime activities enable this to happen

e) **Taking risks.** The very fact that the children work in random pairs could constitute a risk element. However, in all the evaluation carried out on the Rtime programme, the excitement and enjoyment of working with someone you might not choose is something children really enjoy and they certainly rise to that challenge.

f) **Celebrating and rewarding achievement.** The plenary part of the Rtime sessions provide opportunities for the outcomes of the children's work to be acknowledged by adults and their peers. When they can see that their contributions are being listened to and valued this will be motivational.

g) **Having fun.** Enjoying, as well as having a good working knowledge of a given area of work will motivate children. Rtime is an area of work that almost without exception brings real enjoyment as well as fun.

3. Empathy - or the art of being in someone else's shoes.

There are three important ingredients of an empathic nature:

- i) The ability to want to understand others.
- ii) The willingness to be understood yourself.
- iii) The attitude to allow 1 and 2 to influence your actions, words and thoughts.

A simple example from an Rtime session. (Year 3):

The children were asked to greet their randomly given partner with an hello used in conjunction with the name of the child. One of the girls raised her hand and said she had a problem that her partner could not speak any English. Her remedy was to offer to shake her partners hand as a way of overcoming the language barrier yet still enabling both children to greet one another.

For children to begin the process of empathy there needs to be opportunities for the children to engage with one another. For only by getting to know others can children begin to explore and come to terms with the ability to communicate and relate and a level beyond the very superficial. Rtime creates a safe process that enables the children to feel comfortable and confident with their work partners. As their confidence grows so does the willingness of children to relate with others they would not naturally choose to be with. The children are enabled to understand their own and others feelings, seeing things from the viewpoints of others - *leading to empathy.*

4. Self awareness:

A simplistic view of self awareness can be best explained in four ways:

- a. Getting to know about self.
- b. Getting to know about your strengths.
- c. Getting to know and come to terms with your limitations.
- d. Knowing enough about yourself that you can adapt and make changes.

As you grow in self awareness, you will better understand why you feel what you feel and why you behave as you behave. That understanding then provides the opportunity and freedom to change those things you'd like to change about yourself and create the life you want. Without fully knowing who you are, self acceptance and change becomes more difficult.

5. Social skills:

The whole Rtime philosophy is about teaching, modelling and appreciating social skills. A socially well-adjusted child will almost certainly be a valued member of society. First and foremost Rtime is predicated on the importance of building accepting, respectful friendships between the children. Via the activities it models ways for the children to support one another, enabling children to succeed in one-to one relationships - *leading to social skills.*

What is key in promoting good social skills?

Effective communication.

Effective communication involves listening, questioning, understanding and Responding in an appropriate way. To know that communication is a two way process. Communication is not just about the words used but also the manner in which they are spoken, the body language and above all the effectiveness with which listening takes place. To know how to listen to others making them feel valued and involved.

Rtime not only expects and demands these skills but also teaches them, recognising for many these skills need to be taught and refined as well as caught and developed.

Through the emphasis on random pairing, with appropriately structured activities that rely heavily on the spoken word, the participants quickly appreciate the need for effective communication. This is not forced but often happens as a necessary 'by-product' of the need to get the best from the designed activities whether they are talking, pretend or practical ones.

The ability to be comfortable in the company of others:

Equally important in the developing of social skills is the ability to feel at ease in the company of others. This situation can be brought about in a number of ways and all help to create an atmosphere of trust, respect as well as self worth.

In its most simplistic form there are three ways that can help you to relax with others

- i) Organise yourself so you can feel comfortably physically.
- ii) Organise yourself so you can relax mentally.
- iii) Organise yourself so you can make decisions that will help you as well as others.

So how can the process and practise of Rtime help children to be comfortable with each other?

One of the key factors in creating a relaxed atmosphere is to set clearly Identifiable ground rules that all the children need to know and work with.

The key rule for Rtime is: **'To show good manners at all times'**. This rule underpins the whole Rtime approach. This well-established ground rule is taught, modelled valued and used by all and quickly creates an acceptance that having good manners is not only beneficial but also 'cool'. The whole issue of good manners can be explored and developed, depending on the age of the children, creating an environment that enables the majority of the children to feel comfortable knowing that they and their peers are working together as one.

As part of the 'getting to know' philosophy of Rtime the children are not only encouraged to share ideas, thoughts, knowledge, resources and activities, there is also the necessary ingredient of sharing about themselves. This can be done through all the 5 different component parts of R time and becomes an essential ingredient of creating that friendly classroom ethos so clearly verbalised in the statement; **'Thanks to R time I've now got friends I don't even like'**. (Karen, aged 9 years)

How does Rtime help to address the five SEALS?

Rtime basically is an approach, a process, which enables the SEAL themes to be explored in a way that will teach the SEAL skills at the same time as the themes are being addressed.

Rtime has 5 component parts and each of them have in-built opportunities to maximise the potential of the **five SEALS**. In fact. As Rtime is a process, so are the **five SEALS**.

1) **Random Pairing:** By definition this will help children to, first and foremost, develop their social skills. This is not, as some may think, a throwing the children into the deep end, it is a support mechanism enabling children to be effective in their communication. It will help children to share about themselves as well as creating the relaxed atmosphere in which to do so. (Key opportunity to experience **Social Skills**; though others will also be practised).

2) **The Greeting Time:** Where the children are asked to demonstrate their 'Sharing, Caring and Staring' (Appropriate eye contact). Once again children are being asked to use and develop their social skills as well as starting to explore the whole issue of managing feelings (After all they could be with someone they don't want to be with, or they are disappointed they weren't with their best friend etc.) (Key opportunity to experience **Empathy**; and **Managing Feelings**; though others will also be practised).

3) **The Activity time:** Whether it be a practical approach, or a talking emphasis, or an imaginary exploration the children will touch on a range of experiences - many being found in the motivating section of SEAL. The children will be set goals that they will work on together. They will be encouraged to finish what they start. As they work together there will be the realisation that the shared activity will almost certainly help in promoting a positive working relationship. The children will start to take 'safe' risks with each other as they begin to explore their own knowledge, talents and interests in working towards the successful completion of the given task. (Key opportunity to experience **Motivation**; though others will also be practised).

4) **The Plenary:** Creates a wonderful opportunity for the facilitator of the session to tease out some of the vital contributions made by the children as they work together in a structured as well as non-threatening environment. Where better to highlight the empathetic nature of the way the children worked together. Or how the strengths of individuals enabled the group to tackle the task so successfully. (Key opportunity to experience **Empathy**; though others will also be practised).

5) **The Thank You:** The best meals will often leave a pleasant feeling long after they're finished. What better way can the children feel good about their successful partnership than with a pleasant and positive parting? Once again the social skills are highlighted by the way the children say their farewells, again exploring some of the key emotional aspects of successful citizenship. (Key opportunity to experience **Self-awareness**; though others will also be practised).

The Rtime process has much to commend it and in the hands of aware practitioners the necessary focus on promoting the **five SEALs** will not be left to chance.

The **five SEALs** matched to the Rtime process (using an activity from R time to Support SEAL) What kind of activity is this? Talking activity This activity supports the Say No to Bullying SEAL theme. Resources The anti-bullying poster S.T.O.P. (*at the back of the R time to Stop Bullying book*). Random Pairing Children are paired randomly

Managing Feelings (Surprise)

Motivation (Taking risks)

Social Skills (Socialising with others) Introduction I'm really pleased to be with you today - (*insert partner's name*).

Managing feelings (Enjoyment)

Motivation (Taking risks)

Empathy (Makes your partner feel comfortable and able to join in).

Self-Awareness (coming to terms with self).

Social Skills: (Ability to feel comfortable with others; effective communication). Activity Remind the children that **S.T.O.P** means two things:

a) A definition of bullying: **Several Times On Purpose**.

b) A response: **Start Telling Other People**.

What sort of things does a bully do?

Where does a bully do those things?

Who should we tell that can help us?

Give the children thinking time, as well as discussion time, for each of the three questions.

Managing Feelings (This subject can evoke a range of feelings).

Motivation (Setting a goal; finishing what you start; socialising with others with a similar interest; good subject knowledge).

Empathy (Listening and understanding another's point of view)

Self-Awareness (Get to know about your strengths).

Social Skills: (Effective communication).

Plenary where in the school can we put these

S.T.O.P. signs?

How big shall we make them?

Do you think they will help?

Empathy (Ability to understand others and the circumstances that individuals may experience).

Motivation (celebrating and rewarding achievement; application of knowledge)

Conclusion I think the signs will be really helpful - *(insert partner's name)*.

Self awareness (by working together one's strengths and limitations are appreciated and confronted)

Motivation (Finishing what you have started)

Social skills (Effective communication).

Rtime resources:

Rtime Main Manual - price £60. This has 210 R time activities for all ages from Nursery to Year 6. It contains the theoretical background to R time, how to use the R time Questionnaire, and how to use R time to achieve its full potential.

Rtime to Support SEAL - price £55, contains 168 R time and extension activities matched to the seven SEAL themes, for all ages from Nursery to Year 6.

Rtime to Stop Bullying - price £30 has a range of activities and assemblies which support the Say No to Bullying SEAL theme.

Rtime to support transition from Primary to Secondary School - price £30 contains a range of activities, for Years 6 and 7, exploring the excitements, challenge and concerns involved in this key transition. It supports the Changes and New Beginnings SEAL themes.

Training:

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