



Beginning Teacher Resource

Managing the Classroom

One of the greatest challenges for beginning teachers is creating an environment focused on learning and teaching. It's more than managing the behaviour of students, it involves creating an optimal classroom environment where learning and teaching can take place effectively.

Factors that impact the learning environment

- Physical factors e.g. noise levels
- Social factors e.g. relationships, peer to peer and teacher to peer
- Emotional factors e.g. stress, attitude and school culture

Tips for creating an effective learning environment

- Open-mindedness
- Increased self-awareness of the impact of your decisions
- Creative thinking and advocating for innovation



There are three areas that influence the creation of an effective classroom learning environment:

1. Structure

Structure refers to organisational practices, routines, and procedures that form a platform for daily activities. Structure involves tangible issues like the physical layout of the room and can influence classroom dynamics.

2. Instruction

Instruction refers to the delivery of content using your knowledge of students, how they learn, the subject content and how to teach it. When students are engaged in their lessons, disruptions are minimal.

3. Correction and Consequences

Correction refers to the approaches and strategies teachers use to guide and promote constructive student behaviour. Consequences can be as immediate as correcting misbehaviour when it occurs.



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Teachers need to be consistent, insistent and persistent when it comes to the application of classroom rules and consequences.

Each school should have in place their procedures related to rules, consequences and routines. Keep a copy for reference.



There are six strategies that can be used to create an environment focused on learning:

1. Negotiate class rules

- Make class rules consistent with school rules.
- Involve students where possible (the students' age level will impact the level of their involvement).
- Identify appropriate behaviours and translate them into positively phrased rules.
- Focus on important behaviour.
- Keep the number of rules to a minimum (4-6).
- Keep the wording simple and short.

2. Identify, acknowledge and reward positive behaviour

Positive behaviours are often overlooked. Reinforcing good behaviour with a positive consequence encourages students to keep up the good work.

Acknowledge positive behaviour when noticed through praise (for example, 'Jan you're being a great listener today') and tangible awards such as implementing an award system within the classroom.

3. Identify consequences for non-compliance

The consequences for inappropriate behaviour need to be directly and logically related to the behaviour. Give students an opportunity to correct their behaviour.

Examples of consequences include loss of privileges, time-out, detention and contacting parents (check with school processes). Ideally there are a small number of negative consequences that are sequentially administered.

4. Explicitly teach, model, demonstrate, practice and review the rules

To establish an optimal classroom environment it is vital to:

- Explicitly teach the rules: explain, model, demonstrate;
- Discuss reasons for the rule as students are more likely to follow a rule if they understand the rationale behind it;
- Clarify acceptable and inappropriate behaviour and provide examples of behaviours that make or break each rule as this will help to clarify expectations;
- Review positive and negative consequences and discuss the rewards and the specific consequences that will be used;
- Display rules in a prominent place.



There are six strategies that can be used to create an environment focused on learning:

5. Consistently uphold agreed classroom rules

- When rules are not being upheld provide a warning to give the students time and space to correct the behaviour without any consequence. If the warning is not heeded, immediately give the negative consequence.
- Stick to the negotiated consequences.
- When the rules are being upheld, reward/recognise positive behaviours.
- Apply the consequences and rewards fairly to all students.

6. Develop a set of standards for quality and quantity of work

Students should have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in terms of the quantity and quality of work produced.

- Show examples that demonstrate your expectations.
- At the beginning of each lesson indicate what needs to be completed.
- Make it clear to students that they are responsible for their own learning.
- Ask older students to set a goal for themselves each week/fortnight/month to improve the quality and quantity of their work.
- Establish rewards for quality and quantity of work produced.
- Show students how their work is worthwhile and connects to things important to them including other learning and interests.

Have a question?

Contact us:

E: teachertalent@det.nsw.edu.au

P: 7814 3881.



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