Effective Classroom Practices

Environmental Management

Environmental management relates to the physical aspects of the classroom learning space including the people in it. The elements of classroom physical space and positive climate are interdependent and are a prerequisite for the effective implementation of the eight evidence based Positive Behaviour for Learning classroom practices.

Why create a positive classroom environment?

- When teachers know and use positive and preventative management strategies, many of the commonly reported minor classroom behaviours can be avoided (Sprick, et. al).
- Effective classroom management is a key component of effective instruction, regardless of stage level, subject, pedagogy or curriculum (Scheuermann & Hall).
- There is no doubt that academic learning time, or the amount of time that students are actively, successfully and productively engaged in learning, is a strong determinant of achievement (Fisher & Berliner, et al).

Academic learning time can be increased by using classroom management strategies that impact on:

a) Instructional Time - The amount of time allocated to the lesson.

b) Engaged Time - The amount of time the students are actively engaged in learning.

Well managed classrooms

Five strategies have been identified as being more effective than others in creating well managed classrooms. Through the examination of 150 studies, the United States National Council on Teacher Quality identified the following five strategies as being most effective:

- Engagement - foster and maintain student engagement by teaching interesting lessons that include opportunities for active student participation.
- Rules - establish and teach classroom rules to communicate expectations for behaviour.
- Routines - build structure and establish routines to help guide students in a wide variety of situations.
- Praise - reinforce positive behaviour, using praise and other means.
- Misbehaviour - consistently impose consequences for misbehaviour.

Physical space

Organising the physical space will include attention to:

- Layout of learning space to allow movement, access to resources and defined areas for working.
- Lighting, ventilation and temperature control.
- Seating arrangements and plans.
- Storage of student, teacher and class resources.
- Displays of student work.
- Posting expectations and routines.
- Schedules and timetables.

In preparing for a positive physical environment the following points need consideration:

- What should your classroom look like?
- What kinds of activities will be taking place in your classroom?
- Where will students be seated?
- How will students access resources?
- How will you regulate movement/supervise/interact?

### Relationships

Creating a positive climate in the classroom requires attention to the interactions between teachers and students.

The use of preferred adult behaviours include:

- Proximity.
- Active listening.
- Eye contact.
- Pleasant tone of voice.
- Smiling as well as using the student's name.

The teacher-student relationship is the fundamental element of classroom climate.

"I have come to a frightening conclusion: I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized." Haim Ginott (1972)
References


For further support or information:

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