

A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



Dr.P.Balasubramanian

Head and Chairperson, Department of Commerce and Management,
School of Arts and Sciences, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Kochi
Campus, Kerala

Introduction

The classroom environment is one of the most important factors affecting student learning. Simply put, students learn better when they view the learning environment as positive and supportive (Dorman, Aldridge, & Fraser, 2006). A positive environment is one in which students feel a sense of belonging, trust others, and feel encouraged to tackle challenges, take risks, and ask questions (Bucholz & Sheffler, 2009). Such an environment provides relevant content, clear learning goals and feedback, opportunities to build social skills, and strategies to help students succeed (Weimer, 2009). The present study represent about the learning style, characteristics, strategies to overcome the steps of learning behavior and analysis of positive learning etc.

Positive Learning is a management strategy that enables education to flow in a smooth and natural form. Through implementation of strategies, students will be integrated into the learning process and fell that they have a vested interest in what they learn and how they learn it.

A positive learning environment is one of the most critical components of a skills-based health education classroom. A positive learning environment is created when you value participatory teaching and learning and when there is trust and rapport among students and between yourself and students. To establish trust that leads to true participation and engagement in learning, you first need to set the stage by establishing a learning environment in which all students feel valued, safe, and supported.

Characteristics of positive learning environment:

Students feel physically and emotionally safe. They see the classroom as a place where they can be themselves and express themselves and their ideas without judgment.

Students know that they are valued and respected, regardless of other factors such as ability, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, or religion.

Students have ownership and input related to class structure and expectations. This can range from creating spaces specifically for student use to having a class discussion to establish norms and expectations.

All students are challenged to achieve high expectations, and all students receive the support necessary to meet those expectations.

Standards of behavior are established and are consistently and equitably enforced for all students.

Class structure provides multiple and varied opportunities for students to experience success.

The teacher gets to know all students and uses that knowledge to create meaningful experiences.

There is a positive rapport (relationship) between the teacher and students and among students in the class.

Creating a positive learning environment begins with the teacher's self-reflection, continues with planning, and then is ongoing and dynamic during the implementation of the curriculum. Maintaining a positive learning environment is a work in progress - you must always consider how to maintain a positive learning environment and must be thoughtful about how the learning environment is perceived by students.

The best time to start developing a positive learning environment in your classroom is during the first days, weeks, and months of the school year—but it's never too late to get started. Below, we'll explore positive action strategy, and several simple tips, that teachers, educators, and even parents, can use for creating a positive, productive learning environment for students. By implementing these strategies, you'll be able combine the need for positive learning environments that foster improved academic performance, with the ability to promote students' social and emotional wellbeing and progress inside and outside the classroom.

Step 1 - Make learning relevant

The more relevant a topic or subject is to students' own success and happiness; the more engaged they'll become in the learning process. On a whole, when teaching math, science, social studies, even history, find ways to adapt the lesson or lecture to the interests of students. It's also helpful to discover the interests, talents, and learning styles of each student if possible. As resources permit, adjust teaching methods and strategies to meet the needs of students on an individual basis and you'll see students become more attentive and engaged.

Step 2 - Develop a Code of Conduct

If students don't have a clear and agreed upon understanding of positive and negative behaviors, it's difficult to create a positive learning environment in the classroom and at school. The first step to establishing a code of conduct is to ask students how they like being treated. From this question students should be able to brainstorm a list of behaviors they believe are respectful, kind, fair, and appropriate. At this point, together students and teacher should be able to agree

that treating others the way we each want to be treated is the best code of conduct, and should set the stage for appropriate classroom behaviors.

Step 3 - Employ a Positive Actions Curriculum

While it would be nice if all students shared the same understanding of positive behaviors, they don't. Children come from diverse family, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. All these influences, and others, shape students' perspective of what's appropriate, and what is not. It's important that students are taught positive behaviors in a consistent and systematic way at school and in the classroom. Developing a *Positive Action* curriculum is one of the most effective ways to teach and instill in students positive behaviors. Positive action curriculum should teach students:

- That positive actions lead to a good feeling and positive self image.
- Positive actions such as nutrition, property exercise, and sleep that lead to a healthy body.
- Positive actions such as problem-solving, decision-making and thinking skills develop the brain and make us smarter.
- Positive actions such as kindness, living the Golden Rule, and being respectful allow us get along with others.
- Positive actions such as time management and managing our emotions help us better manage our own affairs.
- Positive actions such as admitting mistakes and taking responsible for our actions allow us to be honest with others and ourselves.
- Positive actions such as goal setting lead to personal growth and improvement.

Positive actions lead to positive behaviors, which help children feel good about themselves and others.

Step 4 - Help Students Develop Intrinsic Motivation

Feeling good about themselves is an intrinsic motivator to students—especially elementary age students—and positive actions help children feel good about themselves. So, how do you help students consistently engage in positive actions? First, actions are always preceded by thoughts. Second, actions and behaviors are typically consistent with thoughts. Third, feelings, children experience about themselves, are based in large part by their actions. Helping students learn that by changing a negative thought to a positive they can produce positive actions, and that positive actions will help them feel good about themselves is a power full intrinsic motivator.

Step 5 - Reinforce Positive Behaviors

Recognizing and reinforcing positive behaviors is one of the most effective ways to produce positive actions in students, strengthen intrinsic motivation, and create a productive and positive learning environment. Certificates, stickers, toy prizes, tickets, tokens and other reward systems are great ways to recognize students and reinforce positive behavior and achievement in the classroom. However, it's also important to help student make the connection between positive behavior and the good feeling it produces (not just the physical award). As students make that connection between positive behavior and good feelings, and continue producing positive actions, they'll feel good about themselves, the intrinsic motivation is strengthened, and students will continue producing more positive actions and exhibiting positive behaviors.

Step 6 - Always Respond With Positivity

Positivity is a key component a positive learning environment. Interacting with students in a positive manner, exhibiting positive behaviors, and maintaining a positive attitude is one of the most important steps for creating a positive learning environment and producing successful students. Regardless of the situation or circumstance, there is always a way to respond to and interact with students in a positive way. Teaching students how to communicate and interact with each other in a positive manner is also key to fostering a positive learning environment in the classroom. Positivity is one of the most powerful agents of change for establishing and maintaining a positive learning environment at school and in the classroom.

Tips to build Positive Learning Environments:

1. Get to know each student.
2. Start with Relationships.
3. Be Enthusiastic.
4. Stay Optimistic.
5. Treat Each Student As If They Were Your Own Child.
6. Establish Positive Parent Relationships.

A Learning Environment Analysis:

Take a day or two to be an observer in your own classroom, or invite a colleague to partner with you in reciprocal classroom observation. It is helpful to conduct at least two observations: one on a day when you perceive things to be going smoothly and another during a high-stress period when you feel particularly overwhelmed—for example, around testing or report card time. Obviously, if you're working alone, you can't just stop teaching to observe your class, but take a step back whenever possible and record what you see (for a technology-assisted boost, film the class period). Then answer the following questions:

- **What is the ratio of time students spend off task to time students engage in authentic work?** To make this data collection manageable, pause every 10 to 15 minutes and simply observe how many students are actively engaged and how many are off task. Alternatively, you could closely observe just a small sample of students throughout the entire period.
- **How many times each hour do you encounter a student behavior issue?**
If it is too challenging to chart the behavior of each student, you can choose a sample of the class to observe.
- **What are some of the precursors to these behavior issues—that is, events that occur just before the problems arise?**

Remember to keep a full observation stance, and try not to leap to judgment. Keep in mind various "factors of mass distraction" that may contribute to problems, such as people entering or leaving the room, noise level, students' seating locations, and time of day. You might also want to note the affect or mood of students as they come into class that day.

This stage is about asking questions and uncovering the root causes of the problems that impede learning and engagement in your classroom. Engaging in this process with a partner after the class has gone for the day should prove helpful. The Encore section of this publication provides further questions to explore.

In conducting this classroom "autopsy," you should be able to pinpoint the moments when teaching and learning are most effective, analyze what leads to these moments, and find ways to create more of these experiences. As for the less productive moments you identify, the following strategies will help you create an environment that is more conducive to engagement and learning.

College Classrooms of Mystery and Enchantment

As students enter a virtual or brick-and-mortar learning environment, they form a cognitive impression of that space and experience an associated emotional response, just as Harry Potter did when he entered his Divination classroom. People's preference for specific environments appears to depend on their cognitive impression. Kaplan and Kaplan²² suggested four cognitive determinants of environmental preference:

- *Coherence*, or the ease with which a setting can be organized cognitively
- *Complexity*, or the perceived capacity of the setting to occupy interest and stimulate activity
- *Legibility*, or perceived ease of use
- *Mystery*, or the perception that entering the setting would lead to increased learning, interaction, or interest.

Conclusion

Lastly, I have deliberately suggested a learning environment from the perspective of a teacher, as the teacher has the main responsibility for creating an appropriate learning environment, but it is also important to consider learning environments from the learners' perspectives. Indeed, adult or mature learners are capable of creating their own, personal, relatively autonomous learning environments.

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