Creating a Positive Classroom Environment

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Treadwell Middle School
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BRAINTEASER

THINK of a number from 1 to 10

MULTIPLY that number by 9

If that number is a 2-digit number, ADD the digits together

Now SUBTRACT 5
DETERMINE which letter in the alphabet corresponds to the number you ended up with (example: 1=a, 2=b, 3=c, etc.)

THINK of a country that starts with that letter

REMEMBER the last letter of the name of that country
- THINK of the name of an animal that starts with that letter
- REMEMBER the last letter in the name of that animal
- THINK of the name of a fruit that starts with that letter
Are you thinking of a Kangaroo in Denmark eating an Orange?
SUCCESS by DESIGN, not by chance.
Objectives

Teachers will gain a deeper understanding of...

- How to structure the physical environment
- How to structure the emotional environment
- **The role of self-esteem in the classroom**
Structuring the Physical Environment

Structuring the Physical Environment

- Desk arrangements
- Student placement
- Classroom decoration
- Music in the classroom
Desk Arrangements

- Desks in groups, with students facing each other, can help stimulate student discussion.
- Desks in single or double rows are good for demonstrations and independent work.
Desk Arrangements

- Desks in u-shapes are recommended where possible ¿WHY?
- Desks in workstations are suited for students who have developed self management skills

[Images of classroom setups]
Desk Arrangement

- Remember, all seating arrangements should accommodate an inclusive learning environment.
- Some classrooms may require free and quiet spaces to facilitate learning.
Student Placement

- Place easily distracted students away from each other, doorways, windows and areas of high traffic
- Preferably, place to one side of the classroom, close to the front
- An inclusive classroom should place students in areas of the class best suited to their needs
Classroom Decoration

- **Students like to see their own work displayed, even in High Schools**
- Class-made posters help students develop a sense of belonging to the classroom
- Plants and animals can have positive effects on the classroom

¿WHY?
Music in the Classroom

- Music can be a great addition to any classroom
  - Use as reward
  - Create positive mood
  - Helps broaden musical experiences

- In inclusive classroom music can:
  - Comfort/calm and help focus (some students)
“It is the teacher’s responsibility to value each and every one of the students in their class, so that each student feels special and important.” (Groundwater-Smith et al, 1998, p. 95)
Structuring the Emotional Environment

- The bond between a teacher and student is important.
- A bond with the teacher can encourage, inspire, and greatly assist a student. ¿WHY?
Knowing You

- Who you are
- What you stand for
- What you will ask them to do
- What you will not ask them to do
- What you will do for them
- What you will not do for them
Strategies

- Greet students personally
- Make frequent eye contact
- Do not negotiate rules and routines with students
- Acknowledge positive behaviors
- Use positive language
- Interact with students outside the classroom
- Minimize embarrassment
- Use humor
- Use class meetings
Self-esteem Defined

- An individual's sense of their value or worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself.
- A favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the self.
Self-esteem Pop Quiz

- A) Increasing a student's self-esteem will result in increased achievement.
- B) Increasing a student's achievement will result in increased self-esteem.

¿WHY?
Increased self-esteem does not result in increased achievement.

(Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2005, p. 84)
(Craven, Marsh & Burnett, 2003)
(Hattie, 1992)
Group 1: What causes good and bad grades?

"I can be proud of myself."
"I can do this."
"I am better than most of the other people in this school."
"I am satisfied with myself."

Students who did not improve were thinking: "I'm ashamed of myself."
"I don't deserve to be in college."
"I'm worthless."

BOTTOM LINE: Hold your head--and your self-esteem--high.
Group 2: What causes good and bad grades?

"I need to work harder."
"I can learn this material if I apply myself."
"I can control what happens to me in this class."
"I have what it takes to do this."

Students who did not improve were thinking: "It's not my fault."
"This test was too hard."
"I'm not good at this."

BOTTOM LINE: Take personal control of your performance.
By the end of the course, the average grade for students in the first group dropped below 50 percent -- a failing grade. The average for students in the second group was 62 percent -- a D minus, which is poor but still passing.
“6 percent of Korean eighth-graders surveyed expressed confidence in their math skills, compared with 39 percent of U.S. eighth-graders. But a respected international math assessment showed Koreans scoring far ahead of their peers in the United States, raising questions about the importance of self-esteem.” (washingtonpost.com, 2006)
Self-esteem Breakdown

- **Earned Self-esteem**: develops when students have accomplished something worthwhile or behaved in a personally or socially responsible way.
  - A product of achievement, not the cause
  - Achievement leads to self-esteem  (McGrath, 2003)

- **Global Self-esteem**: a general sense of pride in oneself.
  - Not necessarily a reality-based evaluation
  - Self-esteem leads to achievement  (Shokraii, 2005)
Implications for Teachers?

- Don’t disregard self-esteem
- Focus on techniques that will result in increased earned self-esteem
- Don't shield students from feelings of sadness, frustration, and anxiety when they lose, fail or make mistakes
- Teach resiliency and self-control
Strategies

- Pro-social values
- Coping skills
- Courage
- Managing feelings
- Social Skills
- Goal achievement (SMART)
- Evidence-based self-knowledge

(McGrath, 2003)
Be the Teacher

In order to establish a positive emotional environment in your classroom, you must first arrange the room in a manner that will facilitate your long term goals. The physical space is the groundwork for the type of classroom you run.

WHY?

The Information:
You are the teacher of a class. The class is relatively small being comprised of 12 students. Within the class you are aware of students with the following circumstances:

Student A - ADHD tendencies, constantly seeking attention and going off task in class.
Student B - Identified as having cognitive delays, 3 years behind class. Involved in peer-assistance program.
Student C - Physical disability and is confined to a wheelchair. Top performing student.
Student D - Diagnosed Asperger’s. Only likes to sit next to student B.
Student E - Extremely shy, does not like to work in groups, exhibits poor task management skills.

The Task:
You have three options for your classroom arrangement: rows, groups or u-shape. Decide which arrangement would best suit this class. Discuss your reasoning as a group.
So What’s Up With…..?

Creating a Positive Classroom Environment

Suggest ways teacher can structure the Physical Environment.
Suggest ways teachers can structure the Emotional Environment.
Self-Esteem: Earned vs. Global
Share with colleagues strategies that have been effective in your class.
### Rigor Continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Modeled</th>
<th>Shared</th>
<th>Guided</th>
<th>Independent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KWL</strong></td>
<td>Students are recording group responses on a KWL chart. Teacher prompts student responses. All students are lead by teacher to take notes on the KWL chart. (Students copy what teacher writes.)</td>
<td>Students independently complete a KWL chart. Most students are lead by the teacher; some work collaboratively to produce the KWL chart.</td>
<td>Students share KWL charts with a peer in order to learn from one another. Some students are lead by the teacher; most work collaboratively. Students produce independent KWL charts in groups.</td>
<td>Students use a self created KWL chart to reflect upon the previous lesson and process ideas for their next learning goals. All students work independently; the teacher acts as a facilitator. (Students re-teach and evaluate what they have created.)</td>
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<td><strong>Think-Pair-Share</strong></td>
<td>The teacher will model how to comprehend a selection by read aloud and using the Think-Pair-Share strategy. Teacher models by using a script with topic and questions.</td>
<td>The students will practice the Think-Pair-Share strategy using an assigned guiding question. The teacher models, facilitates, and gives specific questions to guide the discussion.</td>
<td>The student will continue to use Think-Pair-Share with minimal teacher guidance. Teacher support is available. Students identify problem(s), generate discussion, and report to the larger group.</td>
<td>The student will continue to use Think-Pair-Share by formulating their own questions at and independent level. Students lead discussion by generating questions, and developing presentations. A writing component may be added for formative assessments. Think-Pair-Write-Share</td>
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<td><strong>Frayer Model</strong></td>
<td>Teacher models to students. (Whole Group) Teacher would model the characteristics of using a Frayer Model. Demonstrate how to use the different quadrants of the Frayer Model, while students take notes</td>
<td>Students complete as a group or independently. Teacher will give students the opportunity to demonstrate if they understood the Frayer Model through guided practice.</td>
<td>Students are using the Frayer Model to independently complete an academic or content specific vocabulary assignment. All students at this level should be able to illustrate a variety of Frayer Models to define words, ideas, or concepts.</td>
<td>Students use the Frayer Model to independently complete an academic or content specific vocabulary assignment. During the course of the unit of study, students work together in cooperative groups to revisit and refine the Frayer model with new learning. Students can comfortably use the Frayer Model without the teacher’s guidance and confidently facilitate a classroom demonstration.</td>
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**Lagniappe....A Little Something Extra**

**What do you notice about the Rigor Continuum?**