



Strategies to Support a Positive School Climate

Quality Instruction

Quality instruction, as defined within the TTFM survey, is aligned with the model of instruction set out by Anderson (2004) and includes measures of effective learning time, relevance, and high-yield teaching strategies.

- Effective learning time pertains to teachers' use of classroom time, such as whether classes are well organised and important concepts are taught well.
- Instructional relevance refers to whether classroom instruction is purposeful and meaningful to students' everyday lives.
- High-yield teaching strategies refer to teaching practices that have positive effects on student learning.



Why is it important?

- A critical element associated with student learning gains is teachers' effective use of class time (Scheerens, 1992).
- When students view classroom content as relevant, they have greater motivation to study for that course (Frymier & Shulman, 1995).
- Monitoring the effectiveness of one's own professional practices is crucial to fostering high-quality instruction (Hattie, 2009).

In Practice

Schools can support student learning by training educators to emphasise the knowledge and skills that most contribute to teacher effectiveness.



What can schools do?

To foster quality instruction, schools can adopt in-service teacher development programs to promote strategies that can be adapted to different students and situations.

These strategies can include:

- During teacher-centred instruction, ensure that students are sufficiently engaged in their own learning. This can be facilitated by training educators to regularly stop and pose questions, thereby training students to be alert and engaged in case they are called upon.
- Offer detailed guidelines for assignments that clearly establish standards for success that are attainable for all. Provide coaching so teaching staff can effectively communicate these stable expectations and avoid ambiguous success criteria.
- Hold students accountable for meeting expectations and, when they are ready, offer opportunities for further growth through student autonomy. Support educators in this respect by demonstrating how to properly implement guided practice activities to ensure quality student work.
- Use student performance indicators to inform instructional practices. Remind educators that evaluations have a two-fold purpose: assessing student work and providing opportunities to adjust approaches to teaching.
- Encourage teachers to build-in opportunities to observe student work and provide assistance when needed. For example, to keep students on task and provide informal opportunities to monitor their work, educators can circulate while students at work.
- Reward and acknowledge students who follow instructions and apply themselves to classwork. This can involve praising students for a job well done.
- Regularly check for student commitment to learning. Student feedback questionnaires can help in this regard, as the data can be reviewed with fellow colleagues to determine the best path forward.

By using these student-oriented approaches, teachers can develop practices that highlight the role students play in their own learning (Anderson, 2004).



In the Classroom

Teaching strategies cover a wide range of techniques. Common themes that permeate effective teaching practices include:

- Clearly communicating the intentions of each lesson as well as the criteria for successful learning.
- Using classroom discussions to demonstrate how to use cognitive strategies, including summarising, questioning, clarifying, and predicting.
- Soliciting and seeking feedback related to criteria for success, progress towards goals, and new challenges.
- Explicitly teaching students how to plan their work, approach a learning task, monitor their comprehension, and evaluate progress.

Each of these practices underscore teaching strategies that lead to higher student performance (Hattie, 2009).

References

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