

Intensive Training and Practice (ITaP): Climate for Learning 1

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The initial interactions with a class or individual students provide a crucial opportunity to establish a positive climate for learning. Research consistently shows that early clarity around expectations, routines and classroom norms is fundamental to effective classroom management and student engagement (Coe et al., 2014; Bennett, 2017; Education Endowment Foundation, 2021). These foundations – including classroom routines, curriculum expectations and positive relationships – create an environment in which all students can thrive.

Effective classroom cultures do not develop by chance. Even when routines align with whole-school expectations, they must be explicitly taught, practised and reinforced by every teacher. During the first days of placement, it is therefore essential to observe how experienced colleagues establish these routines and relationships, so that you can begin to develop your own consistent and purposeful classroom practice.

Key References:

- Coe, R., Aloisi, C., Higgins, S., & Major, L. E. (2014). *What Makes Great Teaching?* Sutton Trust.
- Bennett, T. (2017). *Creating a Culture: How school leaders can optimise behaviour*. DfE.
- Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). (2021). *Improving Behaviour in Schools*.
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/behaviour>

Task	What did you notice? What will you use? <i>Record brief notes on what you observed, why it was effective and any ideas you will adopt in your own practice.</i>
Whole school	
Read the school's Behaviour and Reward Policy and discuss it with your mentor to ensure you fully understand the policy and are ready to use it.	
Observe a start of term assembly, taking note of how students enter and leave the hall; what staff are doing before, during and after the assembly and the key messages in the assembly.	
Conduct a climate walk with your mentor, visiting various areas of the school to visit lessons and observe how teachers are establishing expectations with their class.	
Complete a break duty with your mentor. How do staff positively interact with students during breaktime? If students are not following expectations, what happens?	
Walk around the school. How are the school values displayed to the students? Are there reminders of the school behaviour policy? Is there evidence of the rewards policy in action?	
Classroom based	
Observe your mentor teach a first lesson with a new class. • How are expectations communicated? • Which routines are explicitly taught? • How does the teacher respond if expectations are not met? • What language does the teacher use? • Which routines would you adopt?	
Observe different teachers at the start and end of the lesson: how do they make a prompt start to learning? How do they control the end of the lesson so that departure or transition to another activity is orderly?	

Observe how the class enters the classroom (in between lessons or after a break).	
What activities do tutors/class teachers use in their initial encounters with students to build relationships?	
Discuss seating plans with your mentor. How do they design their seating plan(s)? What is the rationale behind it?	
Observe how staff recognise and reinforce positive behaviour. What praise or rewards are used? How specific is the praise?	
Observe transitions within lessons. How does the teacher move students from one activity to another without losing learning time?	
Observe how teachers respond to low-level disruption. What do they say? What do they avoid saying? How do they maintain relationships whilst reinforcing expectations?	
Observe how teachers adapt routines for students with SEND or additional needs whilst maintaining consistent expectations for the class.	
Individual	
Prepare for your first teaching experiences. Scripting, and thinking about what we are going to say before we are in the moment, can be incredibly useful. Script exactly what you will say to: • greet the class • gain attention • explain expectations • introduce the lesson • transition into learning	

Plan how you are going to end your lesson to ensure an orderly end to the class. Think about how long the end of lesson routine will take, how you will dismiss students and how you will say goodbye and thank the students for a good lesson.	
Look at the class list(s) for the class(es) you will be teaching so you can start to learn the names of students.	

Reflection Having completed these tasks: • Which routines do you think are most important to establish from lesson one? • Which strategies will you definitely use in your own teaching? • Which aspects do you feel least confident about and would like to discuss with your mentor?
