

# Classroom management: Creating and maintaining positive learning environments

## Professional learning discussion guide

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation

### Introduction

This professional learning discussion guide is designed to help teachers and school leaders engage with CESE's literature review 'Classroom management: Creating and maintaining positive learning environments'. It will help participants consider the implications of the review's findings for their school and teaching contexts. A range of discussion questions and activities are provided. Facilitators are encouraged to select questions that best suit the needs of their participants, school context and available time. The session can finish with coaching-style questions that encourage participants to plan their next steps to put this PL into action.

### Roles

- **Facilitator/timekeeper** – leads discussion, participates, and keeps the process moving.
- **Participants** – work individually or in small groups to consider the questions, share their thoughts, and participate in activities.

### Resources

1. Copies of the CESE Classroom management literature review.
2. Copies of this Professional learning discussion guide.
3. Additional stationery if desired – for example, whiteboard markers, post-it notes, butcher's paper.

### Process

#### Before you start

- Share the document with participants in advance. Ask that they read the literature review ahead of the session.
- Select questions and activities from the list on the following pages. Consider how you will run each selected question or activity with your group. You could use a mix of:
  - whole group discussion
  - individual reflection then sharing
  - small group discussions
  - post-it notes or whiteboard markers to write up ideas and responses.

#### During the session

- Introduce the session to participants, including the purpose of the session and how it connects to your school and teaching context.
- Lead participants through the professional learning activities and discussions.
- Complete the session with the 'Next Steps' activities.

#### After the session

- Follow-up with participants on their next steps – how did they progress implementing their next steps?

# Classroom management – discussion guide

## Questions and activities

These questions are designed to facilitate discussion of CESE’s Classroom management literature review. Your facilitator will lead you through some of these questions and activities.

1. **What are your initial thoughts and response to the literature review?**
2. **What are the ‘main takeaways’ for your own teaching practice?**
3. **Which main points are most relevant to our school context?**
4. **If we were to ask a focus group of the following people to describe typical classroom management practices in our teaching context, what do you think each group would say? For example, what do you think they would say that we are already doing well, and what would they say could improve?**
  - Students
  - Parents and families
  - Teachers
5. **Think of a teacher you have worked with who is a highly effective practitioner for classroom management. What characteristics or practices makes this teacher a strong example of an effective classroom manager? How do they relate to the findings of this literature review?**
6. **The literature review draws a distinction between classroom management and behaviour management. What are the differences between classroom management and behaviour management?**
7. **The literature review identifies key classroom management strategies from research. Re-read the section(s) allocated to you by the facilitator. For each strategy:**
  - a. Identify the key points from research for this strategy.
  - b. Describe how this strategy could look in practice in your teaching context.

Strategy	Key points from the research	The strategy in practice
<b>Preventative strategies</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive classroom environment (p. 7)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Student-teacher relationships (p. 7)</li> <li>◦ Emotional and social competence (p. 8)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Structured instruction (p. 9)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Opportunities to respond (p. 9)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Rules and routines (p. 10)</li> <li>• Pre-corrections (p. 10)</li> <li>• Active supervision (p. 11)</li> </ul>		
<b>Responsive strategies</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correcting inappropriate behaviours (p. 11)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Identifying student needs (p. 12)</li> <li>◦ Ensuring students understand corrective responses (p. 12)</li> <li>◦ Consistent and expected responses (p. 12)</li> <li>◦ Remaining calm (p. 13)</li> <li>◦ Responding proportionally (p. 13)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

8. **Positive reinforcement is often cited as a solution for classroom management, but the literature review notes that the research on positive reinforcement is mixed.**
  - a. What do some proponents of positive reinforcement cite as reasons that support its use as a key feature of classroom management strategies?
  - b. What do some critics say are the limitations of positive reinforcement in practice?

9. **Effective classroom management is strongly associated with improved learning and wellbeing outcomes, such as student achievement, engagement and positive behaviour.**
- If our school was to improve our classroom management practices, what else might change as a result?
  - What data sources could we use to understand the impact of our changes? Consider different measures such as student achievement, or surveys such as *Tell Them From Me* or our school's own survey and feedback processes.
10. **Classroom management is identified in CESE's *What works best* publication as one of the most important classroom practices that can improve student achievement.**
- Refer to the [What works best publication](#) – what does the research say about the connection between classroom management and student achievement?
  - How does classroom management affect things like time on task or orderly lessons? How do these connect to student outcomes?
11. **Classroom management and related factors are identified in the School Excellence Framework.**
- Review the [School Excellence Framework](#). Which specific factors relate to effective classroom management, either directly or indirectly?
  - Where would you place our school on the framework against the descriptors? What evidence would you use to support your self-assessment?
12. **What implications does this literature review have for our whole-school wellbeing and classroom management strategies and processes?**

## Next steps

13. **Based on today's professional learning discussion, how could you use these research findings to modify your classroom management practices? What changes could be made in the next week?**

Change to be made	Action needed	Resources needed	Likely impact of implementation

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