

Teacher Assessment on Performance Standard 7: Positive Learning Environment

TKES Quick Guide

HOW CAN A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT ENHANCE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT?

An effective teacher provides a well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and encourages respect for all. All of these components are part of a positive learning environment consisting of a classroom management/structure and climate that support academic achievement.

Classroom management is based on good discipline, effective routines, smooth transitions, and ownership of the environment. Effective teachers implement good classroom management to establish order, engage students, and elicit student cooperation, all for the purpose of creating an efficient learning environment.

Another aspect of classroom management is the structure of the classroom involves physically orienting the classroom, preparing and organizing the materials, and framing lessons in a logical, coherent manner.

A classroom with quality management and structure helps a student to feel safe.

Another aspect of feeling safe comes from a positive classroom climate where risk-taking is welcome, engagement is the norm, and authentic conversations occur. The classroom climate is the shared perceptions of the learners, which can range from warm and welcoming to cold and indifferent. Teachers who make the effort to engage in positive interactions with students, who use authentic conversation to learn about their students, and who establish a classroom based on mutual respect have a tremendous impact on student success. Characteristics of a nurturing, healthy learning environment for students include: (1) psychological safety, (2) a positive self-image, (3) feelings of belonging, (4) purposeful behavior, and (5) a sense of personal competence.

“Academic success for students begins with a trusting and mutually respectful relationship between student and teacher, extends to classroom order, and culminates in a safe and supportive school climate.”

Cornell, D. G. & Mayer, M. J. (2010). Why do school order and safety matter? *Educational Research*, Vol. 39, No. 1.

AN EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

A positive learning environment depends on classroom management / structure and a climate for student success.

- *Classroom Management / Structure can be described as:*
 - ✓ *Identifying and communicating desirable behavior*
 - ✓ *Consistently applying rules and procedures*
 - ✓ *Monitoring student behavior*
 - ✓ *Taking preventive rather than reactive management actions*
 - ✓ *Pacing class activities and transitioning between tasks smoothly*
 - ✓ *Maximizing instructional time*
 - ✓ *Keeping students on task*
 - ✓ *Making learning meaningful*
- *Classroom Climate for Student Success includes:*
 - ✓ *Cooperation among teachers and students*
 - ✓ *Common interests and values*
 - ✓ *Pursuit of common goals*
 - ✓ *A clear academic focus*
 - ✓ *Well-organized and well-planned lessons*
 - ✓ *Explicit learning objectives*
 - ✓ *Appropriate instructional pace*
 - ✓ *Being respectful, supportive, and productive*
 - ✓ *Modeling by teachers*
 - ✓ *Classroom talk practiced by students*

Teachers who establish classrooms that are caring, supportive, safe, challenging, and academically robust help define a positive learning environment.

- *Physical Arrangement of the Classroom – Functional floor plans with teacher and student work areas and optimal use of furniture and materials.*
- *Discipline and Routines – Classroom rules and procedures are established early in the school year.*
- *Organization of Learning Activities – Classroom activities are academic with smooth transitions.*
- *Engagement of Students – Effective questioning and challenging, but interesting, activities keep students engaged and accountable.*
- *Maximizing Instructional Time – Disruptions are at a minimum and the most is made of every instructional minute.*
- *Communication of High Expectations – High expectations are set for all students and support is provided to achieve the expectations.*
- *Care and Respect – Learning environment reflects a rapport based on trustworthiness, fairness, caring, respect, and enthusiasm.*