

Inclusive Teaching Practice

Participant's Book



Source: VSO Image library

Module 5: Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Module 5: Creating a positive learning environment

Overview

This is the **fifth of fifteen modules** that look at how we create a positive Inclusive Learning Environment for all. You will see how inclusive teaching practices encourage, develop and use the 21st century skills of critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity. These modules are for any educators or those studying in education in Myanmar. The terms student and learner are used interchangeably throughout the module.

Module number	Module title
1	What is an Inclusive School, Classroom and Teacher?
2	Knowing your learners
3	Planning learning outcomes for all
4	Participating through learner centred approaches
5	Creating a positive learning environment
6	Effective questioning and feedback
7	Active participation
8	Peer, co-operative and collaborative learning
9	Supporting students' emotional and social wellbeing
10	Legal framework and policies around Inclusion in Myanmar
11	Supporting all students through differentiation
12	Identifying specific learning difficulties
13	Supporting all learners with differences or disabilities
14	Positive behaviour management
15	Assessment for student achievement

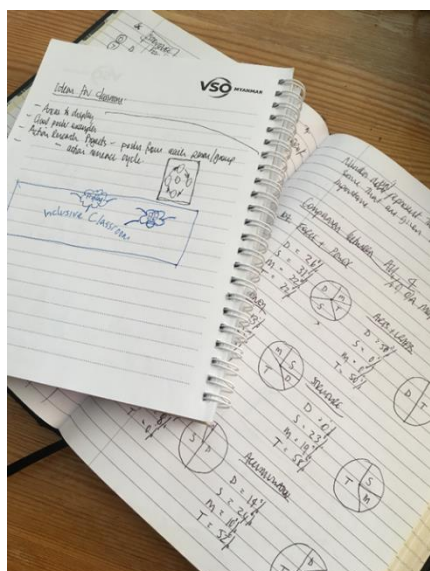
This module helps you to think about how to create a positive learning environment. It breaks down the interactions that you have with learners and the impact that has on how they feel in the environment. The module also explores the physical space you create and the routines that you put in place.

You will also be asked to record your reflections in a learning journal, so it is important to make detailed notes and think carefully and deeply about your current and future practice. This CPD module also encourages you to develop communities of practice between yourself and your colleagues. This will support and extend your own use of inclusive practices in your teaching and will help your student teachers build on inclusion in their learning and future professional practice.

Learning Journal

It will be useful to record your reflections in a learning journal throughout the module.

A learning journal can be digital (e.g. using Word or Google Docs) or on paper. You can also take photos of your learning journal pages if you want to share your thoughts with others. It is important that you record your thoughts and ideas so that you can remember and use them later in activities and in your own teaching.



Here are some useful tips for a good learning journal:

- Use headings and dates for all your journal entries.
- Use the activity number for reflections linked to that activity, e.g. Activity 1.1
- Add references to any other resources you find that help you.
- Record answers to activities.
- Write reflections about your learning.
- Make notes of new vocabulary.
- Identify topics you want to learn more about.

Source: Rose, N. (2018) Personal Learning Journals

The important thing is that it is easy for you to use. You can take notes which answer simple questions like these:

What did I learn today?

How can I use
this in my work?

Was this easy or difficult? Why?

How can this help
me / my student
teachers?

What else do I need to learn about this topic?

These questions follow the LEARN- APPLY- REFLECT model which is used in education globally. You can return to this journal as you progress through your CPD journey and reflect on your progress.

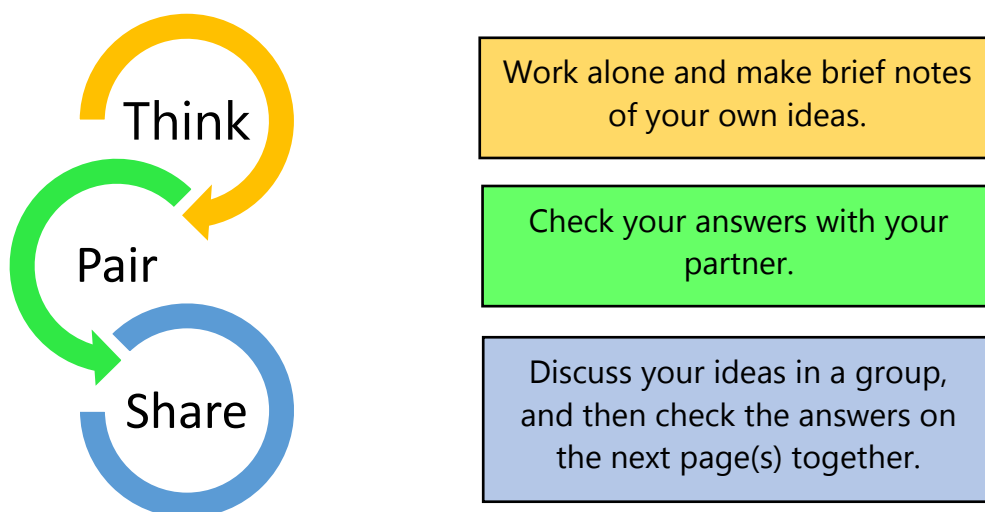
Study tips

Take your time to work through the activities, rather than trying to complete the whole unit at once. Set yourself a timetable and choose a time to work through the tasks, then check and compare ideas with colleagues. Finally, remember to make notes in your learning journal as you go. This will help you remember more about the skills and knowledge you develop as you complete these units.

Working alone or with colleagues

This unit is designed for self-study. The answers can be found after each activity. However, if possible, **we recommend working in a pair or group** so you can share ideas, ask questions, check your work, and give feedback.

If you work in a pair or group, we recommend using **Think / Pair / Share** for each activity.



Learning outcomes for module 5

By working through this module, you will be able to:

1. identify and evaluate elements of a positive learning environment.
2. identify and explain strategies so that all students can participate.
3. discuss the influence that teachers have in creating a positive learning environment.
4. Plan ways to create a positive learning environment for ALL learners.

1. Introduction


The previous module introduced the concept of using learner centred approaches in your classroom, where the learner takes responsibility for their own learning - this is very different to traditional teacher centred approaches. You explored the differences between the traditional teacher centred approach and teaching in the modern classroom to facilitate development of 21st Century skills in all learners. You also considered how to use group management techniques to encourage the effective participation and collaboration of all learners.

This **fifth module** introduces the idea of creating a **positive learning environment**, which builds on previous inclusive practices and modules. It looks at encouraging the participation of all learners by considering how positive the learning environment is in the school and in the classroom where they learn.

You will be asked to:

- ✓ Read about 'creating positive learning environments, questioning and feedback.'
- ✓ Watch videos and provide some analysis.
- ✓ Complete activities either alone, in pairs or in small groups.
- ✓ Answer an end of module quiz.
- ✓ Reflect on your experience and knowledge.
- ✓ Make a promise to your learners.






You are encouraged to read 'Managing Inclusive Learner Friendly Classrooms.' **Booklet 5** Section 5.2 and 5.3. There is a Myanmar version available. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000137522> (Creative Commons). Access it via the UNESCO website using the step below.

	Document code: KH/2008/ED/TLK/43 (khmer) ISBN: 92-9223-032-8 Collation: 7 v. in case Language: English Also available in: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> العربية, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> বাংলা, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bahasa Indonesia, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> kar, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ಕನ್ನಡ, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> မြန်မာ, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> اردو Year of publication: 2004 Type of document: book	<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Myanmar version </div>

Or read Appendix 1 – a **simplified reading text** adapted from **booklet 5** above (**simpler read**).

The module will take **approximately 8 hours to complete**. Take your time to ensure it is an enjoyable learning experience.

Key to symbols

	Activity – this is work you need to complete .
	Question/s – please answer the questions.
	Reflection – think carefully about how you feel about this.
	Learning Journal – please write your answers in your learning journal.
	Read – please read the text provided. Make any notes you like.

1.1 Link to previous learning – module 4 (learner centred learning)



Think back to module 4. Read the following three definitions and decide which one best describes a **learner centred approach**.

Definition 1

Student centred learning is an approach in which teachers control the learning process. Students can decide who they work with, but it must be within the classroom with their colleagues. Students work mainly alone on answering lists of difficult questions. Students do a creative project in the 5th grade. Collaboration between students is sometimes encouraged but this is limited to two or three times a year.

Definition 2

Student centred learning is an approach in which students can influence or decide the content of learning activities, resources, materials, place and pace of learning. Students are placed at the centre of the learning process which supports inclusion. The facilitator encourages and provides students with opportunities to learn independently, in pairs and groups. Learning is planned with the student and facilitator, regularly monitored with feedback and revised throughout activities. Students are encouraged to think deeply to develop 21st Century Skills. It is about developing communication skills, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration skills.

Definition 3

Student centred learning encourages collaboration when the whole class answer verbally together when asked questions by the teacher. The teacher lectures and demonstrates for 80% of the class. Students appear to like this as they sit quietly and passive without asking any questions. Activities set are boring and don't stimulate any creativity in the students. Students only learn to memorise answers.

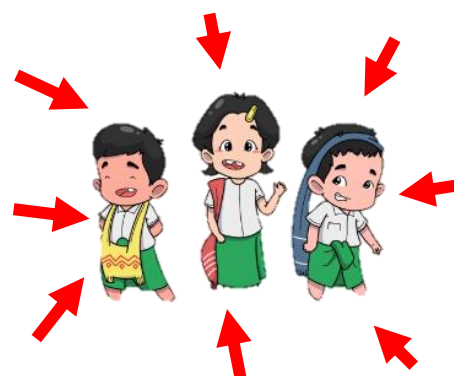
1.1– Answer

Best definition - 2

Note: there are lots of definitions for Learner Centred.

Points to notice:

- The lessons are student centred and planned around individuals.
- There is choice for the students.
- A variety of approaches – working alone, group work etc.
- 21st Century skills are developed.
- Activity is planned with the student, monitored, they are given feedback and developed.
- **Learners are always at the heart of learning.**



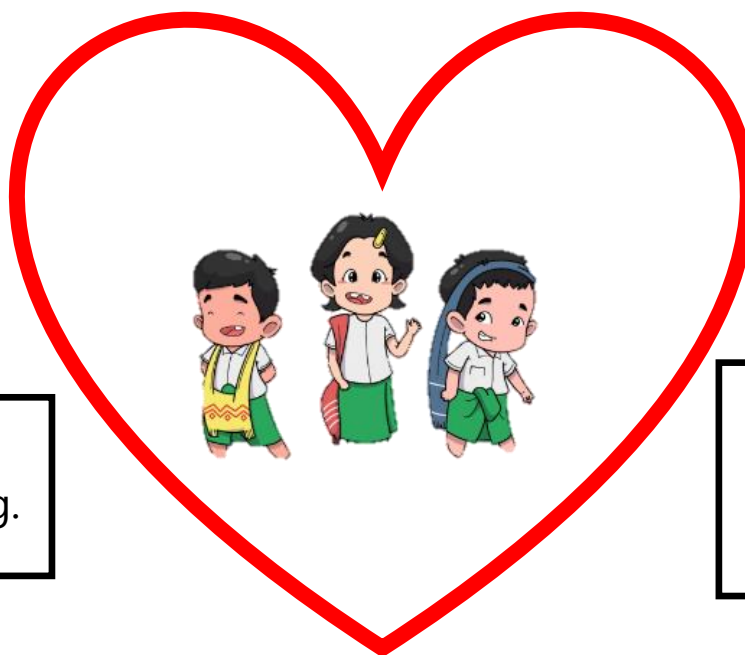
Source: www.myanmargraphic.com (free use)

1.2 Learners are at the heart of inclusive practice

Each of the previous modules have reinforced that the **learners are at the heart of inclusive practice** in teaching and learning. This page reminds you of the modules you have studied so far and the impact they will have on you as an educator and individual learners.

Module 1 - Inclusive
Schools, Classrooms and
Teachers?

Module 2 - Knowing your
learners & multisensory learning.



Module 3 - Planning learning
outcomes for all.

Module 4 - Participating through
learner centred approaches and
group work.

Inclusive practice is only effective if the teacher/facilitator has the right **ATTITUDE** and **VALUES**. The teacher needs to believe in putting the learners at the heart of learning, remembering they are people rather than numbers of students, treating individual learners fairly and equally.

2. Positive Learning Environment

This module continues to look at encouraging the participation of all learners by considering how positive the learning environment is in the school and in the classroom where they learn. An environment needs to be created so that learning can be effective for all students where they feel: happy, safe, interested, encouraged and valued, etc. By creating a positive learning environment, students can concentrate and think fully on what they are learning. Remember, learners always need to be the focus of analysis when thinking about inclusive practices – bear that in mind throughout, whilst thinking about how you value diversity in the classroom.

A

2.1 Self-assessment

R

REFLECTION: How well do you think you understand '**positive classroom environment**? Look at the scale below and identify the number that best describes YOU. Answer in your learning journal.

NOT well	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	VERY well
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You will be asked to do this again at the end of the module.

It is important to be clear about what is meant by the term '**positive learning environment**'. The following activity has been designed for you to become familiar with each of the words in the term.

Activity 5.1 – Positive Learning Environment Definition (15 minutes)



A

Read definitions of the words in the term '**positive learning environment**' and their synonyms.

Positive	Definition - constructive, optimistic, or confident.
	Similar words; - Practical, useful, productive, helpful, worthwhile, beneficial, effective, hopeful.
Learning	Definition - gaining of knowledge or skills through study, experience, or being taught.
	Similar words; - Studying, education, schooling, tuition, teaching, academic work, instruction.
Environment	Definition - the surroundings, conditions or setting or in which a particular activity is carried out.
	Similar words; - situation, setting, scenario, location, context, ambience, atmosphere, mood.

A

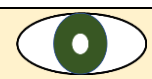
Using the definitions and synonyms above, write **your own definition** of what the phrase 'positive learning environment' means to you. Write your thoughts in your learning journal. Discuss with a colleague if you can.

W

A **positive learning environment** is...

2.2 Definitions of a Positive Learning Environment

5.1 Discussion - Positive Learning Environment Definition



The environment can be a mood, or a feeling created in the classroom by the teacher and students that makes learning easier or harder, motivating or disengaged, enjoyable or miserable for students. It can include the physical classroom and school and the way it makes students feel. Students are encouraged and feel confident to participate throughout the lesson in different ways. It is a safe place to communicate, take risks, ask questions, and improve themselves. It is about having a positive (can do) attitude, where learners are motivated, leading to high level outcomes.

R

Think about the environment that you experienced and **add any further details** to your learning journal.

W

Activity 5.2 – Case study - Hnin Nway's feelings (15 minutes)

Read the following short case study.



Short Case study - reflection

Hnin Nway is in the fourth grade and has had a new teacher (Aye Htike) for four months. She attends class each day and always loved to learn but the new teacher never uses her name and she has noticed that she never asks her questions, choosing other children to answer. Hnin Nway feels like the new teacher ignores her and doesn't show any interest in her work. It is having a negative impact on her learning and her self-esteem and Hnin Nway doesn't try very hard anymore. She is now concentrating more on being ignored than on learning which is making her unhappy. Unfortunately, Hnin Nway is not experiencing a positive learning environment. When students were asked to fill in a survey, it revealed that 25 out of the 45 learners in the class described similar feelings to Hnin Nway.

Think:

After reading about Hnin Nway's situation, close your eyes and imagine that **you are her** and you are in class with the new teacher (Aye Htike).

Think about

- a) what you would like the teacher to **STOP** doing.
- b) how it makes you **FEEL**.
- c) what you would like the teacher to **START** doing?

Complete each of the following sentences in the speech bubble.

STOP doing

I wish the teacher would stop doing...

Your FEELINGS

Teacher Aye Htike is making me feel...

START doing

I wish the teacher would start doing...



Write your thoughts in your learning journal. Discuss with a colleague if you can. You could practice saying it aloud.

When you

It makes me feel

Please can you

Adapted from: <https://www.myanmargraphic.com/> (Creative Commons)

2.3 Why is it important for educators to create a positive learning environment?

It is important to understand the teachers' role in creating a positive learning environment and the impact this can have on students' academic achievement and social and emotional wellbeing.

- A student's learning is affected by their environment.
- Creating a calm but interesting classroom stimulates learning.
- Schools and classrooms need to feel safe and welcoming.
- Students need to feel welcome and a sense of belonging in their educational setting
- Most children respond well to a routine to help them feel safe. The consistency provides them with a sense of security so they know what to expect which makes any new learning or changes easier. A visual timetable for the day would support this in a classroom with young students but older learners also like to know what will happen during a class or the day.
- The atmosphere in a setting should make a learner want to be present and participate.
- A positive atmosphere helps learners overcome other additional barrier

2.4 Positive interactions

In the recap of the modules studied so far, the phrase 'learners are at the heart of inclusive practice' was used. For this to be possible, the responsibility lies on the teacher who enables this practice, in their attitudes, values, how they behave (and how they make learners feel) and what they say.

In module 2, the focus of knowing your learner's links here to the importance of how teachers see their students and how effective and appropriate interactions are between them.

Interactions between teachers and learners are the most important way to create a positive learning environment.

Communication between the teacher and the learner needs to be encouraging and personalized, remembering they are people rather than numbers of students. This can be a challenge where teachers are responsible for large class sizes but the impact it has on learning is well researched.

Showing you care about your learners will help them feel that they are part of the school community and feel a sense of belonging. Positive behaviour might involve smiling at students, using a calm tone, greeting them by name, showing excitement and enthusiasm when students put effort into their work (rather than the end result). When we praise the efforts of learners, they are rewarded for the process and work they put in and supports them in recognizing and celebrating progress.

"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Maya Angelou



Image source: <https://pixabay.com/images/search/burma/?page=2&> (free)

Activity 5.3 – The importance of positive interactions (20 minutes)

Watch the following **short video** - Best Teacher Practices Positive Classroom Culture
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEZBBFUqJws>



Look at the list below of the positive interactions demonstrated by teachers in the video to create a positive learning environment for students.

Reflect

- How do these behaviours link with inclusive practice?
- How often do you interact in this way? Tick the boxes.
- Complete the table below reflecting on the impact of the teachers' interactions. The first three have been completed.

Interaction/behaviour	Impact/consequence	How often do I do this?
Greet students by their name	Students feel part of the community. You know them, recognise them and they feel welcome & involved.	
Show positive behaviour – smile, use a calm tone, excitement, enthusiasm	It feels like you want all students to be there. You are excited about the learning which motivates them.	
Show you care by using supportive language	Students feel like you care about their learning, so they take more care and pride in their work.	
Acknowledge students' emotions "I can see you are excited about this task."		
Deal with challenges using humour and move on quickly		
Listen to students' ideas		
Validate what students say		
Ask students to elaborate and show interest in students' ideas		
Praise learners when they use learning methods well (e.g. multiplication facts to solve a word problem).		
Provide specific encouragement/feedback		
Recognise students' effort		
Start natural, comfortable and relaxed conversations with students.		
Demonstrate vulnerability and uncertainty, e.g. that you might not know how to spell a word		
Use phrases such as 'I wonder...' 'What do you think?'		

Activity 5.3 answers– The importance of positive interactions

You may have other ideas for the impact and consequences of the behaviours listed in the table. If so, you can discuss them with a colleague.

Interaction/behaviour	Impact/consequence	How often do I do this?
Greet students by their name	Students feel part of the community. You know them, recognise them and they feel welcome & involved.	
Show positive behaviour – smile, use a calm tone, excitement, enthusiasm	It feels like you want all students to be there. You are excited about the learning which motivates them.	
Show you care by using supportive language	Students feel like you care about their learning, so they take more care and pride in their work.	
Acknowledge students' emotions "I can see you are excited about this task."	Students feel comfortable to say if they are worried, are stuck or need help.	
Deal with challenges using humour and move on quickly	If there is not a reaction or a fuss, children could feel more comfortable.	
Listen to students' ideas	If students' are given time to express their ideas, they are more likely to contribute and take a more active role in their learning.	
Validate what students say	This can be a motivator. It shows students that they are understanding.	
Ask students to elaborate and show interest in students' ideas	This enables students to develop ideas, express opinions and develop critical thinking skills.	
Praise and positively reinforce desired learning strategies	This will encourage students to use the strategies that teachers have taught.	
Provide specific encouragement/feedback	Students feel that the feedback is genuine, focussing on specific skills rather than "You are such a good reader."	
Recognise students' effort	When effort is praised over the end result, students are more likely to become more resilient rather than giving up if things get too hard.	
Start natural, comfortable and relaxed conversations with students.	This makes learners feel that their teachers like them, care about them and their learning. Children feel comfortable.	
Demonstrate vulnerability and uncertainty, e.g that you might not know how to spell a word	When mistakes are modelled, students are more likely to take a risk and not fear making their own mistake.	
Use phrases such as 'I wonder...' 'What do you think?'	This encourages learners to speak more and take a more active role in their learning.	

2.4.1 A sense of belonging

Learning and education is about developing the tools for someone to fulfil their potential.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs model (1943) is a theory of motivation which states that five categories of human needs dictate an individual's behavior. Those needs are physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs.

He argued that we need 'belonging' to fulfil our potential. Without a sense of belonging, we cannot feel valued, nor do we have the self-esteem that is necessary to set goals and achieve our potential.

This model will be explored further in module 9 when we discuss student's social and emotional wellbeing.

The step before human connection and interaction is the need to feel safe. In the next section we will explore the impact of the physical space in creating a positive learning environment. Safety is at the heart of that.

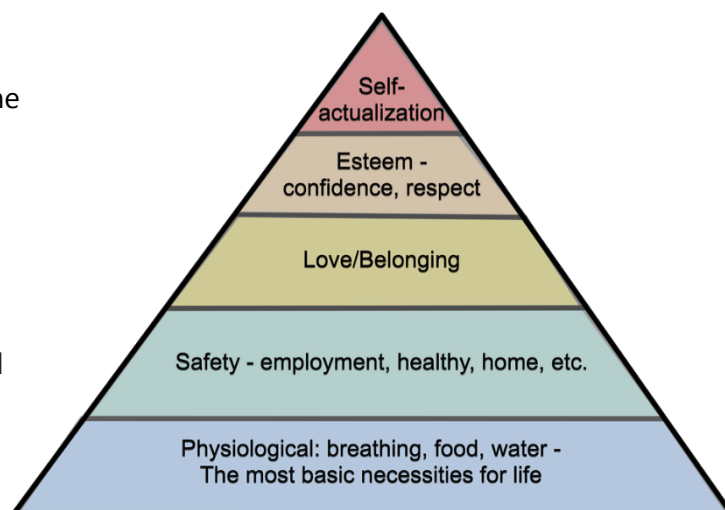


Image source:

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html> (Creative Commons)

2.4.2 The physical space and resources

Inclusive teachers who have a positive attitude think about their students, the physical space and the resources they use. Their classrooms are stimulating, even if learning materials are limited and furniture is poor quality. The classroom can be well ordered, clean and made interesting. Teachers should review their learning resources and equipment to think about how best to use them to make the learning environment positive for all.



Image source: <https://pixabay.com/illustrations/burma-myanmar-classroom-boy-girl-5204371/> (free use)

A

Activity 5.4 – The importance of getting the physical space right (15 minutes)

You were asked to review your learning resources and equipment and how best you use them to make the learning environment positive for all.

Q

W

- What do you think these learning resources might be?
- What do you think you can do to the physical space to make it more inviting to learners?
Write a list in your learning journal.

- **Think** about how they contribute to creating a positive learning environment.
If you are working with a colleague, share and compare.



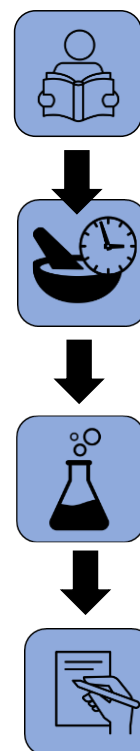
Suggested responses to Activity 5.4

- Room to move - Children need to move safely around their classroom for changes in learning activity. For children with physical difficulties is very important that they can access areas in the classroom. When putting children in groups it is essential to include all diversities.
- Light, Heat and Ventilation – think about hot sunshine on children. Think about moving out of stuffy classrooms into fresh air. Does the classroom have enough natural light? Use fans when available.
- Space to learn - is there enough space for students to sit and learn? Rotate where children sit. Ensure all children can see and hear by thinking about the seating plan. Can there be any flexibility in how students learn or are the tables and chairs fixed?
- Learning corners – subject specific corners can be developed. Resources can be collected and created by children that can help stimulate their learning. Resources can help them learn concepts that can help link their daily lives to their communities.
- Display areas – organised areas to display children's work adds to their self-esteem. Seeing their work displayed can make them feel proud. It's also good place to engage them in peer to peer feedback – reviewing each other's work constructively.
- Class library – rural areas may not have a library. Create one easily by decorating a cardboard box and filling with books. Children can create their own books and feel proud. Those who find it hard to see can glue objects onto pages so they can feel and learn about them. It also allows them to experience how to care for books.

2.4.2 How routines can influence the learning environment

A **routine is a pattern** that learners can follow without too much thinking. This can free space in their heads to think about their learning.

- Routines represent predictability and security, which help students feel safe and confident. They are particularly helpful for students with specific learning difficulties.
- Effective routines improve behaviour and make certain practices normal, consistent and expected.
- Using strategies such as a visual timetable (see picture cards) enables teachers to share the plan for the day and can help students feel mentally prepared for what will happen next.
- In addition to regular procedures, routines can also be demonstrated in how we act or behave the way that teachers behave and respond towards their learners ensure that the environment is fair, inclusive and consistent, making it easier for students to meet educational setting expectations. When students repeat behaviours often enough (practise it) it becomes a habit.
- With younger students, it is valuable to practise routines at the beginning of the school year and will need positive reinforcement and practice. When routines are followed, pupils understand what happens and why.
- Consistency is key to establishing successful routines and creating a positive learning environment.



Activity 5.5 – Routines in place (15 minutes)

- What routines do you have in place?
- What impact do you think they have on how learners feel in your class?
Write a list in your learning journal.
- **Think** about how they contribute to creating a positive learning environment. If you are working with a colleague, share and compare.

Image source: <https://thenounproject.com/search/?q=lunch+time> (Creative Commons)

Activity 5.6 – How a learning environment can be improved (15 minutes)

Below is a series of ideas for educational settings that can support a positive learning environment. It might be helpful to group them into categories, such as routines, interactions and physical environment.

Think about the **ideas, questions, comments, and suggestions** below and sort them into the appropriate list. Some could fit into more than one category. One example has been given.

Classroom routines

What do late arrivals need?

Physical environment and resources

Interactions

Ideas, questions, comments and suggestions for educational settings.

1. Are there enough interesting display spaces for student's work?
2. How are resources given out and stored?
3. Welcome children at the door, by name, as they enter
4. Can you work with parents and community to protect classrooms from damage?
5. Is there room to move around the class?
6. What are acceptable noise levels in class?
7. Is there a visual timetable available?
8. Provide constructive feedback to help learners improve
9. What to do when learners have finished an activity?
10. What do late arrivals need?
11. Is there enough light, heat, ventilation - fresh air?
12. Encourage students to ask and answer questions
13. Is there a seating plan that rotates learners?
14. Are fans used when available?
15. Mistakes are explored and made into learning opportunities

Activity 5.6 answers– Areas where the positive learning environment can be improved

Other ideas have been added to consider and discuss with colleagues.

Classroom routines

What do late arrivals need?
How are resources given out and stored?
Peer support – when to use it?
What are acceptable noise levels in class?
Is there a visual timetable available?
What to do when learners have finished an activity?
Do learners know how to answer questions?

Interactions

Make the environment calm and interesting
Welcome children at the door, by name, as they enter.
Encourage students to ask and answer questions
Provide constructive feedback to help them improve.
Spend a few minutes sharing thoughts/feelings
Mistakes are explored and made into learning opportunities

Physical environment and resources

Have a class library
Are there extra white boards/flip charts / wipe boards or a suitable writing surface?
Have moveable desks and chairs for different activities
Can you work with parents and community to protect classrooms from damage?
Can you work with parents and community to make a variety of multisensory resources?
Have learning corners or areas for specific subjects?
Are there enough interesting display spaces for children's work?
Is there room to move around the class?
Are there any learning corners in class?
Are there display areas for class projects?
Is there enough light, heat, ventilation - fresh air?
Are fans used when available?

Please include any of your own examples in the categories above.

Activity 5.7 – Positive learning environment Case Study (30 minutes)

The following case study provides important ideas to help with the development of a positive learning atmosphere. **Read** it and **think** about **how the teacher worked hard to create a positive learning atmosphere for all students.**



Daw Soe Phyu, an experienced teacher, teaches a group of 9-year old learners in a basic education school in Hlegu.

Identify the important words or phrases in the case study and write them in your learning journal. Once identified notice which of the three categories they fit into.



- Classroom routines
- Physical environment and resources
- Interactions



CASE STUDY

Individual learners were greeted by the teacher saying “Mingalaba, I’m so pleased to see you at school today”; each time using the learner’s name. Her personality was happy, expressive, and interested in the students.

Daw Soe Phyu created high levels of interest among all the students. This started when they arrived in the classroom and they immediately joined in singing the days of the week, the alphabet, numbers and so on. This slowly became more directed once they were all seated.

Girls and boys were mixed and seated around the room. When she had completed the class register, the teacher moved quickly into a period of questions and answers, using each student’s name.

The teaching activities were mixed – some were very active, some reflective, some listening to audio books and some creating a poster. She took objects from her rucksack and asked ‘what’s this Kyi Kyin?’. Sometimes she pointed to pictures on the wall display in order to prompt a student’s response. She often used first names to speak to individuals and made many positive comments to individual students.

The classroom had students’ work displayed. Each student had individual feedback on their work. This identified ‘what they had done well’, ‘what needed to be improved’ and ‘how they could improve it’. The seating and desk arrangements were flexible. Some were sat on a mat on the floor, others at desks doing pair work. Plants and other items were used to add interest. Students, as part of the lesson, were asked to work in groups of three and answer questions about the ‘plants they could see from the playground.’

Activity 5.7– Answers to the Positive learning environment Case Study

Notice how the learners are at the **heart of the lesson**. The bold words or phrases are the important ones. Check how many you identified and take note of the ones you might have missed.

Individual students were **greeted** by the teacher saying “**Mingalaba, I’m so pleased to see you at school today**”; each time using the **student’s name**. Her personality is **happy, expressive, and interested** in the students.

Daw Soe Phyu **created high levels of interest** among **all** the students. This started **as they arrived** in the classroom and they **immediately joined in singing** the days of the week, the alphabet, numbers and so on. This slowly became **more directed** once they were all seated. **Girls and boys were mixed** and **positioned around the room**. Having completed the class register, the **teacher moved quickly** into a period of **questions and answers**, using **each student’s name**.

The **teaching activities were mixed** – some were **very active, some reflective, some listening** to audio books and some **creating a poster**. She took **objects from her rucksack** and asked ‘**what’s this Kyi Kyin?**’. Sometimes she **pointed to pictures** on the **wall display** in order to prompt a **student’s response**. Much use was made of **first names** to speak to individuals and there were many **positive comments** made by the teacher to individual students.

The classroom had **students’ work displayed**. **Each student** had **individual feedback** on their work. This identified ‘**what they had done well**’, ‘**what needed to be improved**’ and ‘**how they could improve it**’. The **seating and desk** arrangements were **flexible**. Some were **sat on a mat on the floor**, others at **desks doing pair work**. **Plants and other items** were used to **add interest**. Students, as part of the lesson, were asked to **work in groups of three** and **answer questions** about the ‘**plants they could see from the playground**.’

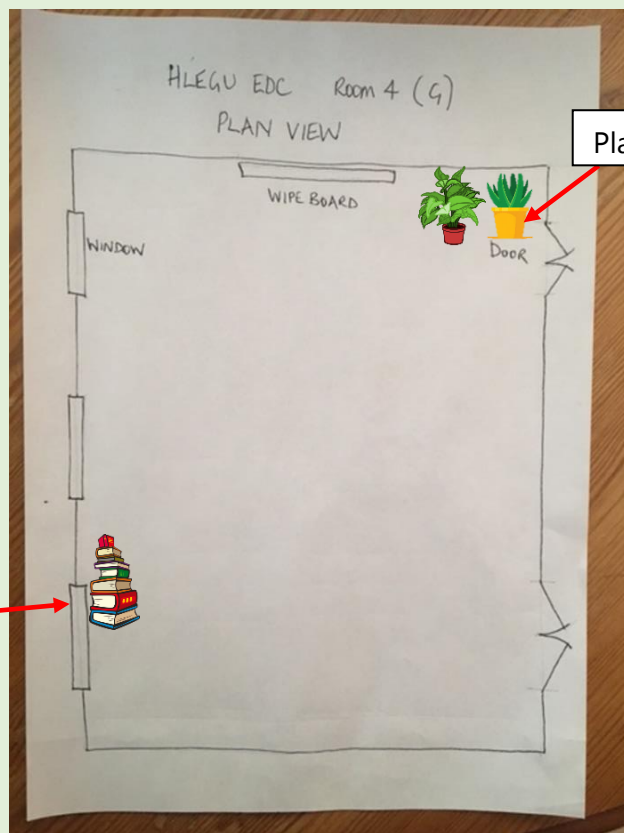
Activity 5.8 – Develop ideas to create a positive learning environment (30 minutes)

This activity asks you to think about what **YOU** need to do to develop a positive learning environment in your own classroom. Think back to module 1 (Activity 1.8 – what makes an inclusive classroom) where you drew a classroom in your learning journal (see diagram below).

- 1) **Draw** your classroom again.
- 2) **Think** about all the previous activities in creating a positive learning environment. Think about inclusive practice and the different needs of learners. Consider what the learners could see, hear, smell and feel in a PLE, using the previous notes.
- 3) **Draw, write or stick** pictures to show your ideas in developing a positive learning environment. Two examples are given.



Class library



Adapted from: <https://publicdomainvectors.org/en/free-clipart>

2.5 Self-assessment for Positive Learning Environment

REFLECTION: How well do you think you understand '**positive classroom environments**' now?

Look at the scale below and identify the number that best describes YOU. Answer in your learning journal.



3. Wrap up

In this module you have:

1. explained why creating a positive learning environment is crucial to learner outcomes and effort.
2. discussed ways to create a positive learning environment.
3. developed your own ideas and plans.
4. reflected on the influence that teachers have in creating a positive learning environment.
5. planned ways to create a positive learning environment for ALL learners.

Key points from this module:

- Creating a positive learning environment has a significant impact on learners academic outcomes and their social and emotional wellbeing (we will focus on social and emotional wellbeing further in Module 9).
- The attitudes and values of teachers and their interactions with learners have a significant impact on the learning environment and experience for students.
- The physical environment (space, light, air flow) affects how students feel in class.
- Establishing routines and systems into daily practice will provide predictability and security, helping students feel safe and confident.



4. End of module 5 quiz

Please answer the following questions in your learning journal. You can attempt as many times as you like to reach 100% pass. Some questions require more than one answer.

Q1 - Which of the following help to create a positive learning environment? (choose 3)

- a) Having daily routines for students to follow
- b) Providing feedback on student's work every six weeks.
- c) Calling your favourite students by their names.
- d) Providing a warm welcome for every student as they arrive in class
- e) Making sure the class is quiet and students stay seated in the same place.
- f) Encouraging students to ask and answer questions

Q2 – Which routines might help to create a positive learning environment? (choose 2)

- a) Asking learners to come into class in a calm way every morning. They might get started with a task on the board whilst others arrive.
- b) When class ends, students all rush out. Most of the time chairs and desks get knocked over and someone usually gets hurt.
- c) When the teacher asks for hands up, the same children are selected to keep the pace of the lesson moving. Those children always seem to know the answers.
- d) Teachers smile at the students and encourage them with their learning. Students know that there will be time to reflect on their learning at the end of each lesson.

Q3 – What can teachers do with the physical classroom space to create a positive learning environment?

- a) Create a clean, bright and organised working environment.
- b) Ask students to bring in lots of things from home.
- c) Only allow students to use the books and materials that don't cost too much.
- d) Put up lots of posters of cute animals.

Q4 – Which of the following describes a positive learning environment?

- a) A classroom where everyone performs well on tests set.
- b) A classroom where everyone is always happy.
- c) A classroom where everyone feels a sense of belonging.
- d) A classroom where students are always silent.

Q5 – In an inclusive and positive learning environment, the diversity of students is ...

- a) Disregarded
- b) Punished
- c) Discouraged
- d) valued

Answers - end of module 5 quiz

Answers in **bold**

Q1 - Which of the following help to create a positive learning environment? (choose 3)

- a) Having daily routines for students to follow**
- b) Providing feedback on student's work every six weeks.
- c) Calling your favourite students by their names.
- d) Providing a warm welcome for every student as they arrive in class**
- e) Making sure the class is quiet and students stay seated in the same place.
- f) Encouraging students to ask and answer questions**

Explanation - Creating a Positive Learning Environment involves not only the school and classroom environment but also the positive relationships built between the teacher and students. The environment can be made interesting, safe and enjoyable for all students by including: water for drinking, natural materials such as plants, displays of student work and by allowing flexibility of where and how they work. Also, positive relationships between the teacher and the student can make a student feel valued and welcome to the learning environment – so they will want to attend school.

Q2 – Which routines might help to create a positive learning environment? (choose 2)

- a) Asking learners to come into class in a calm way every morning. They might get started with a task on the board whilst others arrive.**
- b) When class ends, students all rush out. Most of the time chairs and desks get knocked over and someone usually gets hurt.
- c) When the teacher asks for hands up, the same children are selected to keep the pace of the lesson moving. Those children always seem to know the answers.
- d) Teachers smile at the students and encourage them with their learning. Students know that there will be time to reflect on their learning at the end of each lesson.**

Explanation - Routines represent predictability and security, which help students feel safe and confident. Effective routines improve behaviour and make certain practices calm and consistent. If students start the day in a calm way and are encouraged to get started with work, the tone is set for the day. If students know that there will be an opportunity to reflect on their learning, they will see that the lesson/learning is continuous, that they can back to it and have another try.

Q3 – What can teachers do with the physical classroom space to create a positive learning environment?

- a) Create a clean, bright and organised working environment.**
- b) Ask students to bring in lots of things from home.
- c) Only allow students to use the older books and materials.
- d) Put up lots of posters of cute animals.

Explanation – It would be unfair to ask students to bring items in from home as some may not have the ability to do that and the posters of animals might look nice but a teacher would have to consider the impact they have on teaching and learning. If we show students how to use and respect resources, they will take care of them, therefore only allowing them to use older books or materials does not give the right message – that we trust students and that they can use the best materials the school has to support their learning. Most spaces allow for light, can be cleaned and organised to allow students to study.

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Q4 – Which of the following describes a positive learning environment?

- a) A classroom where everyone performs well on tests set.
- b) A classroom where everyone is always happy.
- c) A classroom where everyone feels a sense of belonging.**
- d) A classroom where students are always silent.

Explanation – A positive learning environment does not mean that everyone must be positive and look happy at all times (including the teacher). Not all students will perform well on tests all the times, for a variety of reasons. It is important that all students feel like they belong and feel welcome and valued in class. The classroom may be silent at times but at other times students maybe working in groups (module 4) and discussing their learning.

Q5 – In an inclusive and positive learning environment, the diversity of students is ...

- a) Disregarded
- b) Punished
- c) Discouraged
- d) valued**

Explanation – ALL students, regardless should be made to feel valued by their teacher.

5. Improving teaching and learning

Activity 5.9 Improving your own teaching practice. (30 minutes)

It is important to reflect on your answers to the activities you completed earlier.

Scenario – Your Head of Department asks to meet you to ask about what you do to create a positive learning environment. They ask you to think carefully about the following questions.

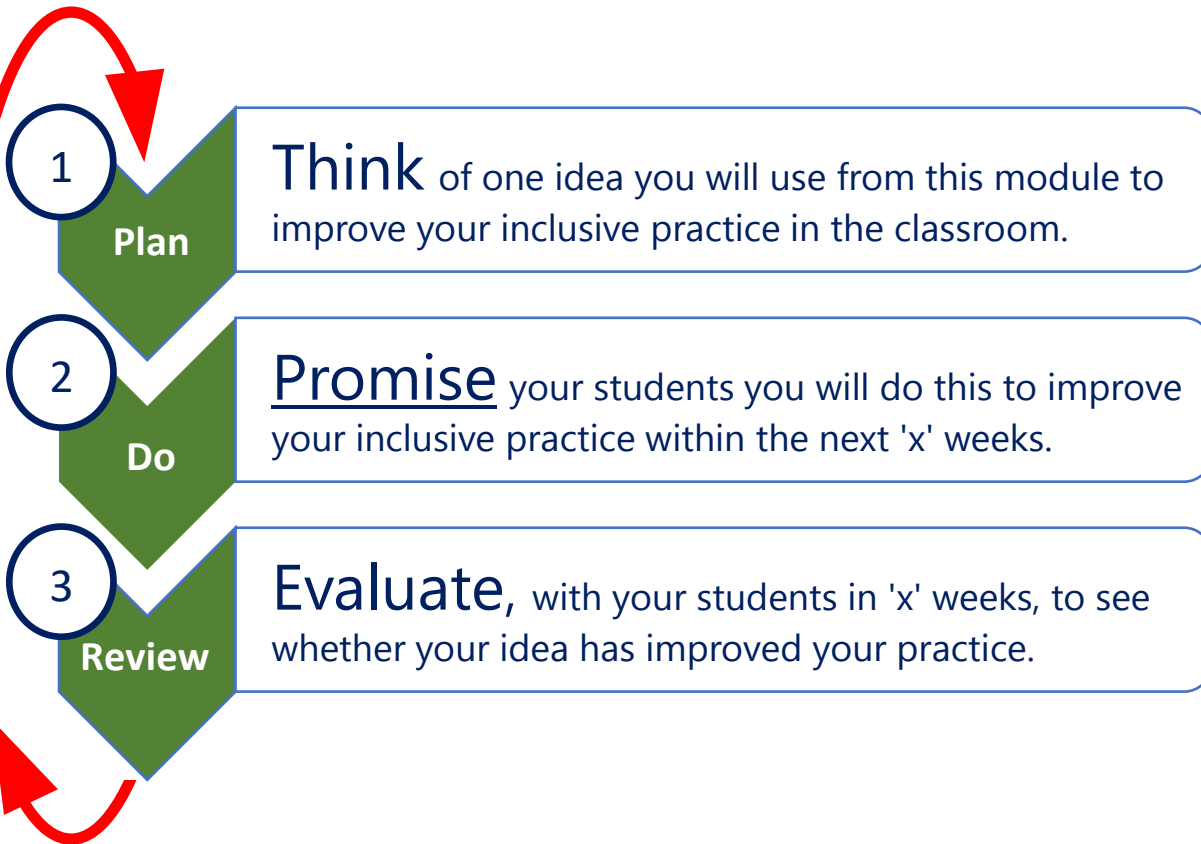
Make notes in your learning journal:

What do you do to create a positive learning environment for the learners in your class?

- How do you show learners that you value them as an individual learner by the interactions you have? What do you say and do?
- How to you organise the physical space?
- What routines do you have in place that enable learners to feel safe and comfortable?

Your 5th PROMISE to your STUDENTS

A



W

Please add your 5th promise to the section in your learning journal entitled 'Promises.'

Each module contains one promise you will make to your learners: you will make 15 promises in total.

References

Children's Literacy Initiative (2018) - Best Teacher Practices Positive Classroom Culture
YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEZBBFUqJws>

McLeod, S (2020) Simply Psychology – Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>

UNESCO (2015) 'Managing Inclusive Learner Friendly Classrooms.'
Booklet 5 Section 5.2 and 5.3.

Available online at:

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000137522>

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Appendix 1

Text 1 (easier version) - Adapted passage from **booklet 5** of Embracing Diversity – Managing Inclusive, Learner Friendly Classrooms.

Abridged - Creating a positive learning Environment

In modules 1, 2, 3 we have looked at;

1. what inclusive practice is
2. **teaching planned with all students in mind** by knowing your learners, using inclusive and multisensory resources, writing good learning outcomes and thinking about step-by-step learning.

In module 4 we began looking at

3. **lessons encourage the participation of all students** through the learner centered approach (LCA) and organising effective group work.

This module continues to look at encouraging the participation of all students by considering the **environment** at school and in the classroom. The environment needs to be created so that **learning** can be effective for all children. The emphasis is on **learning rather than teaching**. By creating a positive learning environment, children can concentrate and think fully on what they are learning. How can we do this?

Classroom routines

Using regular classroom activities help children to start work quickly well at the beginning of their school day. A **routine is a pattern** that children can follow without too much thinking. This can free space in their heads to think about their learning.

Some examples of routines that can be developed are;

- What do late arrivals need to do?
- How are resources given out and stored? – have a rota so children know when and how.
- Visual timetable
- Peer support – when to use it
- What to do when they have finished an activity?
- What are acceptable noise levels in class?
- How to answer questions

Children should help develop the classroom routines so they are involved in their learning..

1) Why is a classroom routine important to help create a Positive Learning Environment?

Making the best of available resources to create a positive learning environment

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Successful teachers maintain an **interesting learning environment** for **all** children. Their classrooms are **exciting and stimulating**. Even if learning materials are limited and furniture is poor, the classroom can be well ordered, clean and made interesting. Teachers should review their learning resources and equipment to think about how best to use it to make the learning environment positive for all.

Ideas include;

- Moveable desks and chairs for different activities
- Extra chalk boards/flip charts or a suitable writing surface
- Enough interesting display spaces for children's work
- Learning corners or areas for specific subjects
- Work with parents and community to protect classrooms from damage
- Work with parents and community to gather or make a variety of multisensory resources

2) Why is it important for teachers to review the resources in their school and classrooms?

Physical Space

Room to move - Children need to move safely around their classroom for changes in learning activity. For children with physical difficulties is very important that they can access areas in the classroom. When putting children in groups it is essential to include all **diversities**.

Light, Heat and Ventilation – think about hot sunshine on children. Think about moving out of stuffy classrooms into **fresh air**. **Rotate** where children sit. Ensure all children can see and hear by thinking about the seating plan. Use **fans** when available.

Learning corners – subject specific corners can be developed. Resources can be **collected and created** by children that can help **stimulate** their learning. Resources can help them learn concepts that can help **link their daily lives to their communities**.

Display areas – organised areas to **display children's work** adds to their **self-esteem**. Seeing their work displayed can make them feel proud. It's also good place to engage them in **peer to peer feedback** – reviewing each other's work constructively.

Class library – rural areas may not have a library. Create one easily by decorating a cardboard box and filling with books. Children can **create their own books and feel proud**. Those who find it hard to see can glue objects onto pages so they can feel and learn about them. It also allows them to experience how to care for books.

3) What 2 areas from above do you need to think about more carefully?