



Teaching techniques for a sense of control

Establishing Routines

A classroom routine creates stability in a child's day. A schedule that is predictable coupled with a structured environment lends to a child's feeling of security and control.⁹ There are simple activities that can aid in establishing a routine such as greeting students by name in the morning as they enter school, going over the class schedule and lesson objectives each day, and beginning and ending each day in the same way, such as with a brief class meeting to discuss what students have learned and upcoming topics.¹⁰ Also, offering positive messages at the very end of the day and telling students that you will be happy to see them tomorrow adds another positive element to the routine. For younger grades, this could be in the form of a song that has encouraging words.¹¹



9 "Preventative Approaches". US Office of Special Education Programs (2000). Accessed January 2011. Retrieved from: <http://www.specialconnections.ku.edu/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/specconn/main.php?cat=behavior§ion=main&subsection=classroom/preventive>; Cummings, C.B Winning Strategies for Classroom Management. Virginia: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.

10 Elias, M.J. (2003). Academic and Social-Emotional Learning. *International Academy of Education*. France: SADAG

11 UNICEF. (2009). The Psychosocial Care and Protection of Children in Emergencies: Teacher Training Manual.

Ideas for how to effectively establish routines:

1. Visual Timetables

Use images effective for EAL students and children new to the UK schooling system. Include times, locations, and duration for lunch and break times, and what time school starts and finishes. Talk through the timetable each morning to start the day. Translations could also be added to each card.

2. Greetings

Use songs or call and responses like “Good morning, Year 7... Good morning, Miss____” to help with language acquisition. Learn about the ways to say “hello” and “good morning” in your students’ languages. Explore cultural norms from their countries of origin (e.g., men and women do not normally shake hands with each other in Afghanistan). Use greetings games to help with language acquisition, learning names, and building confidence when talking to other students.

3. Entering and Exiting the Classroom

Have clear procedures such as lining up outside or standing behind your chairs to reduce chaos and opportunities for confrontation/bullying. Students need to feel safe and calm in order to start learning effectively. To incorporate brain building into this activity, you can mix it up asking students to line up in alphabetical order, height order, or birthdays to get them thinking before they enter the room.

4. Seating Plans/Groups

Having a clear seating plan that doesn’t change takes the stress away from finding people to sit with. Having set groups to work with can help create strong peer relationships and build communication skills. Working with the same people creates some predictability and a sense of stability. Use brain building games to get students focused before lessons begin.

Suggested Techniques For Preparing A Safe Place To Land

Establishing Consistency

ORIENTATION IN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY



Orientation around the school campus should be given in an understandable way to newcomers to show amenities like toilets and dining halls but also services like the school counsellor, reception and bus stop – using translators, if possible. A basic school map with translations or multilingual signs can be a great help to newcomers. Students should be paired with a student on a similar timetable for the first few weeks until they can navigate the school independently. Students should be directed to support services and facilities like prayer rooms, if appropriate.

BUDDY/MENTORING SCHEMES



Mentoring schemes work best when they are properly structured with aims and objectives, are overseen by staff with regular check-ins, and reward students for taking part. Students should be paired up by a staff lead. A clear structure and objectives for the programme should be shared with students, parents, and other staff. Staff should carefully oversee the programme, meeting regularly with students involved in pairs and in groups. A strong focus on social emotional learning competencies can be embedded using the IRC games bank and lesson plan bank. Rewards and certificates should be given to amplify the significance of the programme. Before the programme starts, all mentees should receive foundational training about the services the school provides, how to report safeguarding issues, brief information about the student, and key steps to being an effective mentor.



VISUAL TIMETABLE

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SEATING PLANS AND WORKING GROUPS

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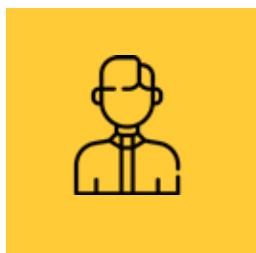
EXIT CARD AND SAFE SPACE

Provide children with an exit card and explain to them that if they are feeling overwhelmed or panicked they can show the card to any teacher and they will be given time in a designated safe space with a member of staff to calm down. This space should be equipped with mindfulness posters, toys and objects to calm down, drawing facilities and a member of staff trained with Psychological First Aid Training – see Future Learn's website for the free course at www.futurelearn.com.



EMBED SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The IRC provides an SEL Games Bank and Lesson Plan Bank for use in schools. SEL is proven to help mitigate against the impacts of toxic stress to help children recover. It is also useful for preparing all children to become emotionally intelligent adults who can cope with stress and adversity. The IRC resources focus on conflict resolution, brain building, social skills, perseverance and emotion regulation. Take time to read through the free resources and use them in assemblies, classroom activities, PE, and break times to teach SEL in a fun, interactive and effective way.



ASSIGNED PASTORAL STAFF WITH TRAUMA TRAINING

Ensure as many staff as possible have completed online Psychological First Aid training (available for free on Future Learn) and trauma-informed practice training (such as the Healing Classrooms Approach). Pastoral staff and safeguarding leads should be completing regular trauma training and have a strong awareness of refugee experiences to ensure children's needs are being met. This can be done by reaching out to local refugee support groups or national organisations. Mindfulness should be used with children across the school alongside social emotional learning games and lessons (use the free games and lesson plans from the IRC). Pastoral staff should also be seeking to build strong ties with new families, using translators if necessary to ensure children's lives outside of school are safe and that families know how to access basic services such as healthcare, English language support and employment opportunities.



CONSISTENT ROUTINES

Ensure you have clear routines in the classroom for greeting students (try using home languages too), reviewing the visual timetable for each day, checking in with pupils, lining up and entering the room calmly, classroom roles (e.g. book monitors), activities at break and lunch to facilitate friendships and calm transition between lessons using buddies.

Positive Classroom Discipline



CO-CREATING CLASSROOM RULES

Engaging students in understanding and creating rules to govern classroom behaviour can support a sense of control and positive learning environment. Establishing clearly-defined classroom rules that compliment class routines boosts a sense of stability and calmness in the atmosphere. Included in such guidelines are clearly-identified consequences for any rule breaking. By actively involving students in the creation of classroom rules, it will likely increase their adherence to the defined boundaries as they feel a sense of ownership and stronger incentive to cooperate.¹² When students feel that they have a voice in the way the classroom is run, they are more likely to take responsibility for self-monitoring classroom behaviour. Another component is that disciplinary measures should be applied consistently and in a manner which prompts students to think about and learn from their mistakes. For example, a teacher or other staff member can meet with a student involved in a disruptive behaviour to discuss what the student felt before and during the incident, why they made specific choices, and alternative actions they could have chosen.¹³



5 CORE RULES

Having students choose rules gives a sense of control and ownership over the classroom. By keeping the list focused, it allows all students to remember the rules. Guide the discussion around acceptance, respect, and compassion to help students to choose rules that make the classroom a healing, safe space. Allow students to vote on rules to teach democracy, community building, and empathy.



THE CLEAN SLATE

Mistakes are forgiven — every lesson offers a fresh start and chance to succeed. Provide a safe space for children to grow and learn. Refugees may display certain behaviours in response to trauma — vital teachers may move on from these every lesson and see the potential for change. Focus on emotion regulation games and lessons as a solution, rather than punishment and a hostile classroom.

12 "Preventative Approaches". US Office of Special Education Programs (2000). Accessed January 2011. Retrieved from: <http://www.specialconnections.ku.edu/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/specconn/main.php?cat=behavior§ion=main&subsection=classroom/preventive>

13 Pasi, R.J. (2001). Higher Expectations: Promoting Social Emotional Learning and Academic Achievement in Your School. The Series on Social Emotional Learning. New York, NY: *Teachers College Press*.

CLEAR AND CONSISTENT CONSEQUENCES



Students aware of boundaries are more likely to feel calm and in control of their behaviour. Students lose faith in rules and consequences if they are not applied consistently and fairly. Dedicate a lesson to deciding fair consequences for students who break the rules.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL



Never assume that refugee children will not succeed or not be intelligent due to education gaps, language barriers and potential trauma. We must set high expectations for all of our students and identify ways to fill any learning gaps they may currently have. The EAL Academy strongly encourages schools to place refugee children in high ability sets or on high ability tables so they can see good models of learning and use of English. Placing new students in nurture groups or on tables with children with SEND mean they won't be academically challenged appropriately and miss out on learning opportunities that other students in their year are getting. Students in higher sets can provide more support to new students, as can teachers, as their existing students are more independent.

MEANINGFUL PRAISE



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PERSONAL GOALS



Refugee students have been disrupted in monumental ways. Many have gaps in their education and may not have been given space to think about their future and goals. Teaching children to set achievable goals for themselves serves to increase their self-efficacy which leads to improved task performance and an increase in motivation. Consider setting goals in a holistic rather than purely academic way, focusing on social skills, feelings, behaviour and participation to encourage the child's inclusion in your school community. E.g. I will try to take part in one game at lunch time; I will use the breathing exercise if I feel overwhelmed; I will put my hand up to give a suggestion today. Remember that even the smallest steps can be huge for children who have experienced so much.