

Survey Question

1. This teacher treats me with respect

Australian Professional Standard

Professional Knowledge Domain

Standard 1: Know students and how they learn

Standard 1 focus areas:

- 1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds
- 3.1 Establish challenging learning goals
- 4.1 Support student participation
- 5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgments

What does this sound like in the classroom?

"This teacher listens to what we say and cares about what we think. Some teachers pretend to listen, but it's whether or not they follow through that counts."

Why is this important?

Mutual respect between teacher and student must be created to ensure that there is an opportunity for optimal learning. Respect in the classroom is also related to the level of control in the classroom, as evidenced by the extensive Measures of Effective Teaching study (2008) of over 3,000 teachers. A recent Western Australian study (2014) of teachers revealed that 39% of respondents felt that they spent 20% of their classroom or work time on managing student behaviour. This is equal to one full day each week! Depending on the age of your students, you may be able to allow them to set class boundaries or guidelines, a strategy that will both empower and keep them accountable to their own 'rules'. Do as you say you will do. It can be frustrating when someone 'moves the goalposts' on us without consultation. Inform (or even involve) students in any changes of plan to help garner their respect.

What strategies have been shown to work in the classroom?

An accomplished teacher will be able to create an environment in which it is okay for students to fumble and make mistakes; acknowledging this is a valuable step in the learning process. A supportive climate in the classroom and a belief in the student's ability can have a lasting impact. Many of us will fondly remember an influential teacher who 'believed in me' and afforded a safe, positive and caring classroom that becomes a precursor to effective learning. Frequently remind students that you believe in them and know that they can succeed: if they can't do something yet, with hard work they will eventually get it (Beaudoin, 2008).

The classroom climate is set by the teacher and by the broader school community. Ensure that you consistently model positive behaviours, including patience, sense of humour, courtesy and manners (Backes & Ellis, 2003). Take an interest in the students' lives beyond the classroom, and work even harder to get to know "difficult" students (Bott, McCormick, Shaw 2011).

Respect should be dished out democratically in your classroom. Avoid disproportionately seeking input from selected students, as other students may perceive the relationship as favouritism and lose respect for you and the student identified as the "teacher's pet" (Whittaker, 2012). Treat every student with your best student in mind. Always respond to misconduct in a deliberate way, mindful of the likely outcome of the confrontation. Wherever possible, avoid reprimanding a student in front of their peers and take some time to plan your message and deliver it in a calm manner. Seek to understand the possible reasons for any misbehaviour and emphasise the impact of the student's misbehaviour on the feelings and experiences of others. Emphasise opportunities and the expectation for the student to exhibit the right behaviours in the future (Whittaker, 2012).

What three things can I try in my classroom tomorrow?

1. Greet each student individually - if not at the beginning, at some point during your class.
2. Notice and comment what's right with a student, rather than just focusing on what's wrong.
3. Smile! This may seem self-evident, but a smile can be a powerful signal of your mood and attitude towards your students.

What opportunities are there for collaboration with my colleagues?

Ask a colleague to observe your class and how the students respond to opportunities for comment. This may be as simple as giving your colleague a copy of your class roll on which they can 'tally' the number of times each student speaks or puts their hand up in your class. They may be able to identify students who are feeling engaged in the learning activities and contribute to discussion. You may wish to ask individual students after class to ascertain why they are reluctant to contribute and seek to work with them to remedy this.

Where can I find out more?

Video

- Rita Pierson: Every kid needs a champion
- Children Full of Life

Referenced articles, books and other great reads

- Backes, Charles E.; Ellis, Iris C. (2003) Techniques: Connecting Education and Careers, v78 n5 p22-25 May 2003
- Beaudoin, N (2008). A school for each student: personalization in a climate of high expectations. Larchmont, N.Y.: Eye On Education
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- Giani, Matt S. and O'Guinn, Christina M. (2010), Building Supportive Relationships as a

Foundation for Learning, from Youth in the Middle,
http://jgc.stanford.edu/docs/YiM_WA3_Building_Supportive_Relationships.doc

- Gates Foundation: Measures of Effective Teaching, 2008
- Quinlan, Denise (2011). 24 Ways to Like a Difficult Child. Retrieved from <http://positivepsychologynews.com/news/denise-quinlan/2011120219925>
- Whitaker, T. (2012) (2ed.) What Great Teachers do Differently: 17 things that matter most: Chapter 14 Base Every Decision on the Best People