

LESSON 1. CREATING A POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE

The lesson familiarizes with the concept of a positive classroom climate in hybrid learning (offline + online). By the end of the lesson you will be able to:

- identify key features of a positive classroom climate in face-to-face and online settings;
- analyze how teacher behaviour and communication style impact learners' motivation and discipline;
- select and use appropriate online tools to foster a positive, respectful and supportive learning environment.

CONTENT OF THE LESSON:

□ SPARK:

1. Think about the following statements (individually, then discuss in pairs or breakout rooms):

- “Students learn best in classrooms where they feel safe, respected and valued as individuals.”
- “Discipline and warmth are not opposites; a teacher can be both firm and caring.”
- “In hybrid classrooms, climate is created not only by physical space, but also by the way teachers use digital tools and online communication.”

2. Reflect on the questions:

- What does *positive classroom climate* mean to you personally?
- Do you think it is easier or more difficult to create a positive climate **online** than **offline**? Why?
- Recall one class (as a learner) where the climate was very positive. What exactly did the teacher do?

□ INPUT:

1. Watch & observe (mini video task).

Teacher shows 1–2 short fragments from:

- *Edutopia* – “*Creating a Positive Learning Environment*” ([edutopia.org](https://www.edutopia.org))
- optionally: *Setting Up Your Middle School Classroom for Success* (Edutopia) ([edutopia.org](https://www.edutopia.org))

In hybrid mode: students watch the video clip **online at home** (LMS / Telegram / Google Classroom link) before the lesson.

While watching, note down:

- 3 teacher actions that help to create a positive climate;
- 2 things that could be transferred to **online** lessons (Zoom, Teams, Google Meet, etc.).

After watching, discuss in pairs / breakout rooms:

- Which actions would work best with *your* future learners?

2. Reading: What is a positive classroom climate?

A. Read the extract (adapted from Edutopia & other sources) about positive learning environments. (edutopia.org)

A positive classroom climate is a learning environment in which students feel emotionally and physically safe, respected and supported by the teacher and peers. It is characterized by trust, clear expectations, consistent routines, and warm interpersonal relationships. In such a classroom, students are encouraged to participate actively, take risks in using the foreign language, and learn from their mistakes without fear of ridicule.

In hybrid learning, classroom climate is built both **offline and online**. The way the teacher greets students in a Zoom call, responds to messages in the chat, gives feedback in LMS, or uses digital tools can all send powerful messages about care, respect and expectations. A positive climate supports not only discipline and order, but also students' academic, personal and social growth.

B. Fill in the gaps.

Use these phrases:

respect – trust – participation – clear expectations – emotional safety – online communication

1. A positive classroom climate is built on mutual _____ between teacher and students.
2. Students' _____ increases when they know that their ideas will be listened to and valued.
3. _____ helps learners know what behaviour and academic performance the teacher expects.
4. _____ means that students are not afraid of making mistakes and expressing their opinions.
5. In hybrid classes, the way the teacher manages _____ (chats, forums, messages) strongly affects classroom climate.
6. When students feel _____, they are more willing to cooperate and stay on task.

Check your answers with a partner.

3. Read the adapted extract (based on Penny Ur, 2009) and identify the key factors.

Some teachers may appear to have a 'natural authority', but what really matters are specific teacher behaviours that are available to anyone. These behaviours help create a disciplined yet supportive classroom atmosphere. They are not limited to traditional management skills, such as starting the lesson or getting students to raise their hands.

An appropriate **methodology** can make students feel that they are learning in a way that is right and useful for them. Good **interpersonal relationships** – mutual respect, empathy and goodwill – are essential. Careful **lesson planning** helps the lesson feel purposeful and organised. Finally, **student motivation** is crucial and can be enhanced by interesting and meaningful learning activities.

In hybrid classrooms, these factors remain the same, but the teacher also needs to think about **digital routines**, **online tools**, and **netiquette**. For example, clear rules for using microphones and chat, varied online activities, and timely feedback in the LMS can make learners feel supported and engaged.

To recap: some important factors that contribute to a positive classroom climate and are within the control of the teacher are:

- classroom management
- methodology
- interpersonal relationships
- lesson planning
- student motivation
- digital routines and online communication

4. Match the hints to the mentioned factors.

Look at the **PRACTICAL HINTS** and tick which factor(s) each one belongs to. (You may tick more than one.)

PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS ON POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE (offline + online)

1. Start the lesson (or Zoom session) with a warm greeting and a short, engaging opener.
2. Get attention (silence or “eyes on screen”) before you start speaking to the class.
3. Know and use the students’ names – in class and in the online chat.
4. Prepare lessons thoroughly and structure them clearly in your LMS (modules, deadlines, links).
5. Be mobile: walk around the class or use the “spotlight video” option to move closer online.
6. Make sure your instructions are short, clear and supported with visuals or text in the chat.
7. Make work appropriate to students’ age, level and cultural background.
8. Vary your teaching techniques: pair work, breakout rooms, polls, quizzes, mini-projects.
9. Anticipate discipline problems (e.g., camera off, side-chat) and agree on rules together.
10. Show yourself as a supporter and helper: respond to questions kindly, both in person and online.
11. Use humour constructively, without offending or excluding anyone.

12. Give timely, encouraging feedback in LMS (comments, emojis, short audio/video messages).

5. Create a table in your notebook (or a shared Google Doc):

| Hint № | Classroom management | Methodology | Interpersonal relationships | Lesson planning | Student motivation | Digital routines/online communication |
Tick which factor(s) each hint supports. Compare your tables in pairs.

6. Watch and reflect: Teacher–student relationships.

Before or during the lesson, watch Rita Pierson’s TED Talk

“**Every Kid Needs a Champion**” (TED, 2013). (YouTube)

Link: https://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion

A. While watching, answer:

1. Why does Rita Pierson say that relationships are essential for learning?
2. Which examples does she give of teachers who made a difference?
3. What sentences or quotes do you find especially powerful?
4. How can her ideas be applied to **foreign language teaching**?
5. How can they be applied specifically in **online or hybrid** classes?

B. After watching (pair / group work, offline or in breakout rooms):

- Share one concrete idea from the talk that you would like to try in your teaching.
- Discuss: “*Can you create a warm, human relationship with your learners through a screen?*” Give arguments and examples.

□ FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:

1. Case analysis: Classroom climate and teacher behaviour

Work in small groups (3–4) face to face or in a breakout room. Read the following situations and decide:

- What is the main climate problem?
- What might be the students’ feelings?
- How could the teacher respond to restore a positive climate?

a) In a Zoom lesson, the teacher begins the class without greeting students, immediately sharing a screen with a grammar exercise. Some students greet in the chat, but the teacher does not react. Cameras are off; participation is minimal.

b) In a face-to-face lesson, one student gives a wrong answer. The teacher says loudly: “No, wrong again! You never listen!” The rest of the class laughs. The student becomes silent and stops volunteering.

c) In a hybrid lesson, the online students complain in the chat that they cannot hear group work in the physical classroom and feel excluded from the activity. The teacher ignores the chat and continues working only with the offline group.

Group task: For each case, write a short “Teacher Action Plan” with 2–3 steps to improve classroom climate.

2. Online investigation: Strategies from practising teachers

Individually or in pairs, visit the Edutopia page

“32 Strategies for Building a Positive Learning Environment.” ([edutopia.org](https://www.edutopia.org))

Task:

- Choose *three* strategies you think are especially useful for foreign language teaching.
- For each strategy, write:
 1. a short summary (2–3 sentences);
 2. one idea how to adapt it to **online or hybrid** lessons (Zoom, LMS, messengers, etc.).

Share your ideas in a shared Google Doc or Padlet wall titled “*Positive Climate in Hybrid FL Classrooms*”.

3. Roles in a positive classroom climate

Return to the idea of learner roles (discoverer, questioner, recorder of information).

Complete the table:

Role	Ways to fulfil the role in a positive climate (offline + online)
discoverer	e.g. Teacher gives guided-discovery tasks (grammar patterns, vocabulary families) and allows time for students to explore examples in an online corpus or interactive worksheet.
questioner	...
recorder	...

Use these guiding questions:

- How can the teacher’s **attitude** and **responses** encourage students to ask questions freely?
- How can digital tools (Jamboard, online notebooks, shared docs) help students record and organise information?
- Which teacher behaviours *block* these roles?

After completing, compare your ideas with another pair.

4. Reflective journal (for trainee teachers)

After the lesson, write a short reflective journal entry (10–15 sentences) answering:

- What did I learn today about creating a positive classroom climate?
- Which teacher behaviours do I already have?
- Which behaviours or strategies do I want to develop?

- How can I use at least **one online tool** to support a better climate in my future lessons?

Upload the journal entry to the LMS or share with your instructor.

□ **ASSESSMENT ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. **Write 10 practical guidelines** for beginner teachers on how to create a positive classroom climate in hybrid learning.

Example starters:

1. Always start the lesson by greeting students by name, both in class and online.
2. ...

Criteria for assessment

- rationality – 0.5
- accessibility (clear, realistic, can be used by beginners) – 0.5
- relevance and clarity – 0.5

Total: 1.5 points maximum

2. Fill in the SAC. Revise the material if your learning is not well.

Nº	The key points of the lecture / lesson	Know	Know not well	Don't know
1	Definition and features of a positive classroom climate			
2	Factors that influence classroom climate (incl. online factors)			
3	Teacher behaviours that support or damage classroom climate			
4	Online tools and strategies for creating a positive climate in hybrid lessons			

Glossary:

classroom climate: the overall emotional and social atmosphere in the classroom, including relationships, routines and feelings of safety.

positive learning environment: a classroom context in which students feel supported, respected and motivated to learn.

netiquette: accepted rules of respectful and appropriate behaviour in online communication.

digital routine: a regular, predictable pattern of using online tools (logging in, checking announcements, submitting work, etc.) that supports learning.

empathy: the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

motivation: a reason or reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way.

For reading / viewing

1. Harmer, J. Practice of English Language Teaching. Longman, 1994. Unit 3, 4.
2. Ur, P. A Course in Language Teaching. CUP, 2009. Pp. 262–271.
3. Edutopia. Creating a Positive Learning Environment. (edutopia.org)
4. Vilson, J. Building a Positive, Trusting Classroom Environment. Edutopia, 2012. (edutopia.org)
5. Pierson, R. Every Kid Needs a Champion. TED Talk, 2013. (ted.com)