

Learning Environments

Breakout Session-2009 Durant
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Brainstorm:

- Think about your favorite teacher in school.
 - How did his/her room look?
 - How did you feel when you were in that class?
 - Do you remember things he/she taught you?

WHY????????

What does your classroom say
about you?

How does this one look to you????



Physical Environments

- Safety
- Order
- Arrangement
- Resources

Arrangement

Examples

- Whole group/small group WHY??
- Who is sitting where? WHY??

It should be meaningful arrangements that assists in student learning.

Make it Comfortable

- Students learn better when the environment is comfortable to them.

Temperature

Lighting

Attitude

Safety and Order

- Procedures
 - Saves time to maximize learning time
 - Makes students comfortable (they know what to expect)
- Rules and expectations
 - Give them ownership of classroom expectations
 - Allow them to help design the classroom rules
 - Classroom contracts

The Rules...

- Limit your classroom rules
- Give students a chance to help create
- Talk about consequences together
- Be sure you follow school rules along the way.
- Make sure you stay consistent

Classroom Contracts



Include Everyone!



Make it Their Space



Ways to improve the Classroom Environment

- Music
- Affirmations
- Plants, Flowers
- Books/Resources
- Wall Charts
- Student Work

There can be TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING.
Don't overdo it!

Emotional Environments

- Risk-free learning environment
- Respectful
- Inclusion
- Encouraging
- Empowering

Risk-Taking

We want our students to take risks throughout the learning process. It helps them become more independent.

If your classroom environment is non-threatening to them and they are not afraid of failure, they WILL get more authentic learning through exploration and trial & error.

Error/Mistake Correction is as easy as ABC

- Acknowledge their attempt
 - *Good try*
 - *That's possible*
- Build their confidence
 - *Share your past mistakes*
- Encourage their Courage
 - *I can see why you might say that*
 - *That is so close*

Correction Tips

- Use a color other than red to correct papers. Some say use green for GO when red usually signals STOP.
- Write little notes about what is RIGHT instead of just commenting on what is wrong
- Stickers/Happy Faces

Factors that threaten learning

- Afraid of feeling dumb in front of peers
- Intimidated by peers
- Does not feel supported
- Offended by peers or teacher
- Ridiculed or Criticized
- Embarrassment from low scores

Factors that Encourage Learning

- Risk-free learning environment where mistakes are encouraged and are considered part of the process.
- Encouragement instead of Criticism
- Patience instead of threats
- Praise instead of ridicule
- Non-threatening environment

What can you do????

- Recognize their strengths and differences in a positive way
- Encourage risk-taking
- Teach them to work both independently and collaboratively
- Speak “to” them, not “at” them

RESPECT

Respect is a two-way street. If they see that you have it for them, they will give it back to you and to each other.

You are a model to your students.

Intellectual Environment

- Strategies-make sure you teach to every student.
- Procedures
- Resources

Your teaching style dictates the amount of learning that takes place in your room. It doesn't just happen. It is intentional.

IMPORTANT

You don't have to re-invent the wheel.

Just be thinking about what you already do and the reasons behind it.

If you weren't an accomplished teacher, you wouldn't be doing this. Do what you know.



Brainstorm

Take a minute and list some of the things you do to make your learning environment a positive, inclusive place for your students.

Writing about YOUR learning environment

Be Descriptive and Analytical

Don't just tell what you
do...tell why you do it.

This is not the time to be humble...

Take ownership of YOUR classroom learning environment.

You have worked hard to set up a positive, stimulating place where students can be successful. You need to take credit for it.

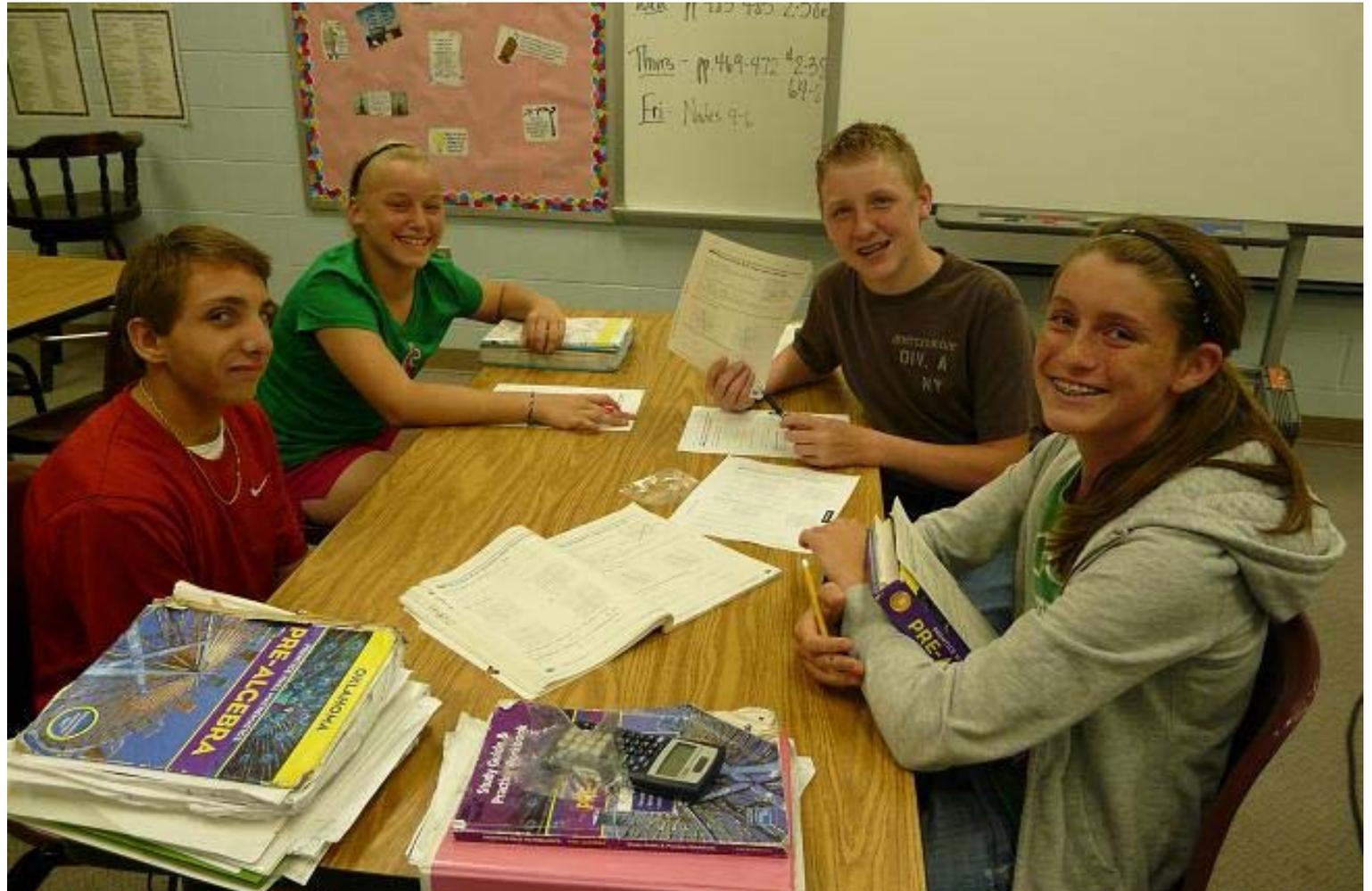
Evidence, Evidence, Evidence

Remember that the assessors do not know you or your teaching. The only glimpse into your classroom they get is through your writing.

Be sure you show them evidence that your room is a productive place where kids want to come to learn.

Remember...

It's all about the kids



Good Luck on Your
Journey