



Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Research emphasises that when students feel safe and valued, they are more likely to engage actively in their learning, leading to improved academic performance. A supportive and safe learning environment promotes inclusivity and respect for diversity, helping students develop social-emotional skills and positive relationships and contributes to the holistic development of students.

Supporting student participation

Supporting student participation is crucial for teachers in Australia as active participation in the classroom fosters a sense of belonging and engagement, which are essential for students' overall well-being and academic success. When students are actively involved in their learning, they are more likely to develop critical thinking skills, retain information better, and perform well academically. Additionally, participation helps students build confidence and communication skills, which are vital for their future endeavours.

Teachers in Australia employ a range of evidence based strategies to support student participation effectively. It is a requirement for teachers in Australia to create and maintain an inclusive classroom environment where all students feel valued and respected. This involves using teaching methods that cater to different learning needs and encourage every student to contribute for example, group discussions or interactive activities.

Building positive teacher-student relationships is a key factor in promoting student participation. When teachers establish trust and show empathy towards their students, it creates a safe and supportive learning environment. This encourages students to take risks, ask questions, and engage more deeply in their learning. By demonstrating genuine interest in their students' perspectives and providing constructive feedback, teachers can motivate students to be more active participants in their education fostering academic and personal growth.

"I am very big on allowing students to explore their own interests. As an English and humanities teacher covering history, politics, business, and geography, there are parameters set around the curriculum. However, I allow students to explore their interests within those parameters. For instance, in Year 7, we look at ancient civilisations. I've taught classes focusing on ancient Egypt for a significant amount of time, just on one culture. Over time, I found that students like to be given a choice. So, I'll do a taster of four or five different ancient civilisations and let them choose what they want to study. This gives them a sense of ownership and allows them to explore their interests, resulting in better learning outcomes. They are driven by their curiosity, not just by what I'm telling them to learn. This approach helps them see their individuality as a strength, not a weakness. I encourage them to ask questions and find answers, fostering life learning skills beyond the curriculum"

Highly Accomplished Teacher - Secondary

Managing classroom activities

All teachers are required to develop effective classroom management for maintaining a safe and productive learning environment for the wellbeing of students, colleagues and self. In Australia, school systems typically set out clear expectations through their policies and as a result schools typically have a consistent school wide approach to classroom management.

By setting clear expectations for behaviour and learning, teachers create a safe and supportive environment where students know what is expected of them. This includes managing classroom activities by establishing clear rules and routines from the outset. This approach provides students with a predictable structure, which helps minimise disruptive behaviour and maximises learning time. These rules and routines are often developed in collaboration with students to ensure a shared understanding and commitment. Additionally, teachers use cues and signals to facilitate smooth transitions between activities, reducing downtime and keeping students focused on their tasks.

Another key strategy is the use of explicit instruction and modelling of appropriate behaviours. Teachers demonstrate the behaviours they expect from students, such as active listening, respectful communication, and collaboration. This modelling helps students understand and adopt these behaviours, making them more likely to exhibit them in the classroom. Teachers also provide regular feedback and reinforcement to encourage positive behaviours and address any issues promptly. By consistently applying these practices, teachers can maintain a well-managed classroom that supports student engagement and learning.

Teachers in Australian classrooms actively engage students in their learning to prevent disengagement and behavioural issues. They employ a variety of teaching methods, such as group work, hands-on activities, and interactive discussions, to cater to different learning needs and keep students interested. By making learning activities relevant and engaging, teachers can capture students' attention and motivate them to participate actively. This engagement not only enhances learning outcomes but also helps maintain a positive classroom atmosphere conducive to learning and growth.

"While we plan lessons for perfection, unexpected challenges arise. Part of planning should involve considering, 'What could actually go wrong?' Being proactive helps us manage the unexpected. Discussing strategies with colleagues helps us be proactive. We might each choose different approaches and having a Plan D in case something goes wrong. Talking openly in a safe space is vital. In a respectful environment, we share ideas openly without fear. We put all ideas on the table, and each of us makes choices based on our circumstances and what's best for our students."

Highly Accomplished Teacher - Secondary

Managing Challenging Behaviour

Challenging behaviour in classrooms impacts both the learning environment and the well-being of students and teachers. Addressing challenging behaviour promptly and effectively is a requirement for teachers in Australia and vital for maintaining a positive learning environment. Using proactive strategies such as setting clear expectations and reinforcing positive behaviour will help prevent behaviour issues. When behaviour issues arise, it is important to address them calmly and respectfully. Implementing restorative practices to help students understand the impact of their actions and develop better behaviour patterns is crucial in managing challenging behaviour and a vital aspect of modern teaching practice in Australian classrooms.

To manage challenging behaviour, Australian teachers employ a variety of strategies aimed at creating a positive and supportive classroom environment. One effective approach is the implementation of clear behaviour management plans that outline expected behaviours and consequences for misconduct. Teachers also use proactive strategies, such as positive behaviour support, which involves recognising and reinforcing appropriate behaviours to encourage their recurrence. Additionally, professional development sessions on behaviour management principles help teachers stay informed about best practices and equip them with the skills needed to handle challenging situations.

Building strong relationships with students is another crucial strategy for managing challenging behaviour. When teachers establish trust and show empathy, students are more likely to feel understood and respected, reducing the likelihood of disruptive behaviour. Teachers also engage students in meaningful and engaging activities that cater to different learning needs, which helps maintain their interest and promotes a positive and productive learning experience for all students.

"I think being an active listener is crucial. Knowing that all behaviour is a form of communication means that unsavoury behaviour, whether verbal or written, should be dealt with immediately. Any subsequent education involves restorative practices to ensure respectful and open communication, making students, staff, and families feel safe. Sometimes kids say things without really knowing what they're saying. They've picked it up from somewhere, and there's a lot of copycat behaviour. They don't understand, so there's a disciplinary process and an educational process."

Lead Teacher - Secondary



Maintaining Student Safety

Managing student safety in Australian classrooms is paramount as it directly impacts students' well-being and academic success. A safe learning environment allows students to focus on their studies without fear of harm or disruption, fostering a positive atmosphere conducive to learning. When students feel secure, they are more likely to engage actively in classroom activities, participate in discussions, and take intellectual risks, all of which are essential for their growth and attainment.

Teachers in Australia employ various strategies to manage student safety effectively. One fundamental approach is the establishment of clear rules and routines that outline expected behaviours and consequences for misconduct. These guidelines help create a structured environment where students understand what is expected of them, reducing the likelihood of disruptive behaviour. Teachers also use positive behaviour support techniques, such as recognising and reinforcing appropriate behaviours, to encourage a safe and respectful classroom atmosphere. By consistently applying these strategies, teachers can maintain order and prevent potential safety issues.

Teaching students how to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) safely and responsibly is vitally important in our modern world. Key to this is understanding and implementing workplace policies on the use of ICT and digital safety to protect students' privacy and ensure that digital tools are used ethically and help prepare students for the challenges associated with the digital world.

Further to this, teachers actively engage in building strong relationships with their students to promote a safe learning environment. By showing empathy, understanding, and respect, teachers can create a sense of belonging and trust among students. This relational approach not only helps in managing behaviour but also ensures that students feel comfortable reporting any safety concerns. Additionally, teachers are trained to identify and address potential safety risks promptly, whether they are physical hazards or signs of bullying and harassment. Through these proactive measures, teachers can effectively manage student safety, ensuring a secure and nurturing educational experience for all students.

"Psychological safety is paramount. I will role model to students what an inclusive and positive environment looks like. I use high impact well-being strategies in my planning, promoting self-efficacy. Explicit instructions on how we enter and leave the classroom are essential. I can't overemphasise how much being explicit adds to students' safety. They know what's coming, which helps with the flow of what's happening. Being consistent is also crucial. Students can't go into one classroom where certain behaviours are acceptable and then into another where they're not. Having staff on board with non-negotiables and being consistent with those is important. Having a consistent structure at the beginning and end of lessons, incorporating high impact well-being strategies, and building relationships with students are key. As a teacher from another country, it's important to get to know the students, build relationships, and consistently enforce non-negotiables."

Lead Teacher - Secondary

Take action: Student engagement

[Watch AITSL's In the Classroom video](#) to see how Daniel establishes a safe and collaborative learning environment for students. The students actively demonstrate their understanding and consolidate key concepts with their peers.

