



Comprehensive System of Learning Supports



"Every child deserves a champion; an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best they can possibly be."

"Kids don't learn from people they don't like."

-Rita Pierson 2013

Every Student Needs a Champion Video:

<http://bit.ly/2vFnLF1>

Check us out on the web:

[Illinois Classrooms in Action](http://www.classroomsinaction.org)



Setting Classroom Norms

Setting classroom norms is not just about setting classroom rules to be followed by students. Norms are "an agreement among members of a classroom or school about how they will treat one another," according to Gary Borich, Professor of Educational Psychology at The University of Texas at Austin. There are three types of norms—Safety and Health (no shoving), Moral Norms (help peers), and Discretionary Norms (clean your desk before leaving for the day).

As the school year begins educators are working on the first two stages of group norms— Forming and Storming. Forming is where students are anxious to be accepted so they behave carefully around their new classmates. Storming is when the dominant students start to lead groups of students and others are trying to figure out their roles. This could be a positive or negative "leading" by the dominant students. Holding class meetings and discussions

around what is expected within the classroom can be the best way to outline the expectations of the norms. Have students identify what would be safe and unsafe choices, how to help others, and what it means to follow the set rules. Educators must establish this as quickly as possible, but be aware that all students bring different experiences to the classroom. Attending to classroom conflicts quickly as a group will help students understand what is expected when the situation might occur again.

The next two stages are Norming (confident and independent) and Performing (productivity). Once past the storming stage students will become confident and independent in their actions within the classroom. They have a sense of understanding how to behave and what choices are unacceptable. When students come together to work their productivity will now increase because they have the same understanding of what is expected.

Creating a Positive Classroom Climate Resource

'Our positive class' posters were designed to support educators integration of developmentally appropriate student self-management of behavior within the four elements of positive culture and climate. (Safety, Relationships, Learning Expectations and Environment.) The reverse of these posters is offered as a blank canvas for classroom teachers and students to tailor the social and emotional learning (SEL) standard language into their own positive classroom culture and climate agreements.

Posters can be downloaded or purchased here:

<http://www.ilclassroomsinaction.org/sel.html>



Do you have a "Roxanne" in class?

Mr. Richard Curwin, educational author, wrote of a young girl named Roxanne. Her outward appearance looked like she was character from Mad Max— spiked orange/purple hair, tattoos, all black makeup and piercings. She is in high school, but think about other grade level "standouts" in classrooms. Mr. Curwin was asked, "How would you handle her?" "Talk to her", he said and so he did. He asked her a question—Are there any teachers who you listen to, follow directions, show respect and learn from?" and why? Her answer:

Because she's stupid. She thinks I can get a job someday, that I may even be able to go to college, or be a good mother because I know all the things not to do. (She started crying.)

I ain't going to college and I ain't getting a job. I'll never be a mother. I'm a dead girl. In prison when they write your name on the wall, you die, and my name is there. I know I'm going back. But that teacher believes in me, and man, it really, really matters.

Believing in our toughest students can be the key to helping out toughest students. It is not easy, or quick to achieve, but something we must show in our actions not just our words.

FIVE WAYS TO REACH OUT

1. **Stop using rewards**— this implies the need to be paid for doing something, opposite of believing.
2. **Encourage effort more than achievement** - Every student can try to do their best, not all can achieve unrealistic goals.
3. **Give second, third and fourth chances** - Mistakes are part of the learning process, not just for academics, but also for behavior. Teach them the skills to overcome their behavior choices.
4. **Don't say "you failed", say "you haven't done it yet."** - students can see hope if they know that no matter what they do, they can still do better.
5. **Increase opportunities to learn** - Children who need recess the most are the first ones to lose it. Being removed from these activities make students less able to learn how to handle social situations in the future. Students can't get better if they have no opportunity to practice.

Read the entire article here:

<http://edut.to/2vFFs7r>