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"...culture change can't be achieved through top-down mandate. It lives in the collective hearts and habits of people and their shared perception of "how things are done around here." Someone with authority can demand compliance, but they can't dictate optimism, trust, conviction, or creativity.

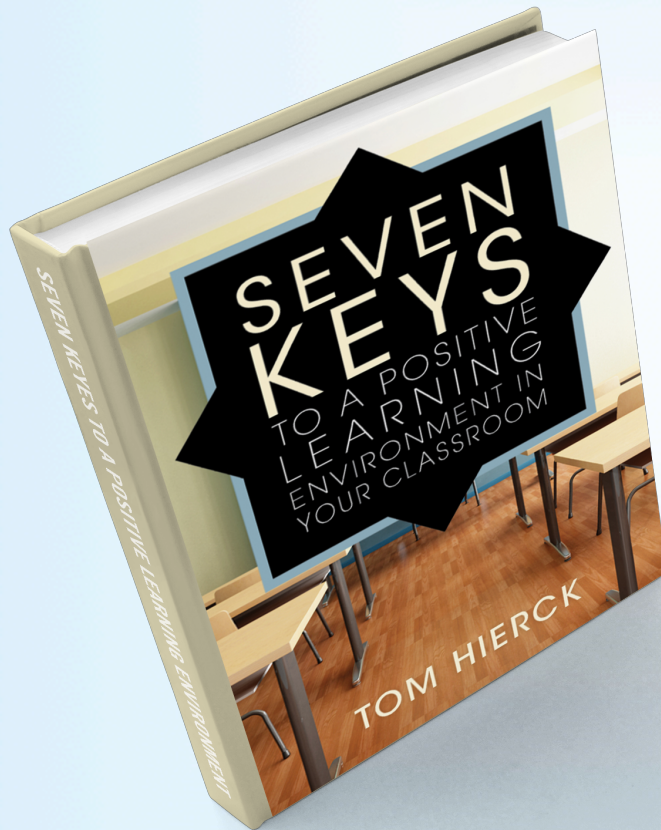
Walker & Soule, HBR 6.2017

**Do you watch
students enter your
school and believe
that collectively, we
hold the keys to
unlock their
learning?**



This book was written with an eye towards describing the steps necessary for **ALL students to experience academic and behavioral success.**

Seven Keys to a Positive Learning Environment



1. **Classroom expectations**
2. **Targeted instruction**
3. **Positive reinforcements**
4. **Data-driven decisions**
5. **Differentiation and enrichment**
6. **Collaborative teams**
7. **Connection to the school-wide system**

A Must-Have Attitude

Creating a positive classroom learning environment is messy, uneven, complex, and necessary for all teachers to engage in.



A Must-Have Attitude

At its most rewarding, it provides opportunities for teachers to have rich dialogue with their students as they collectively work to create environments that produce high levels of success for *all* students.

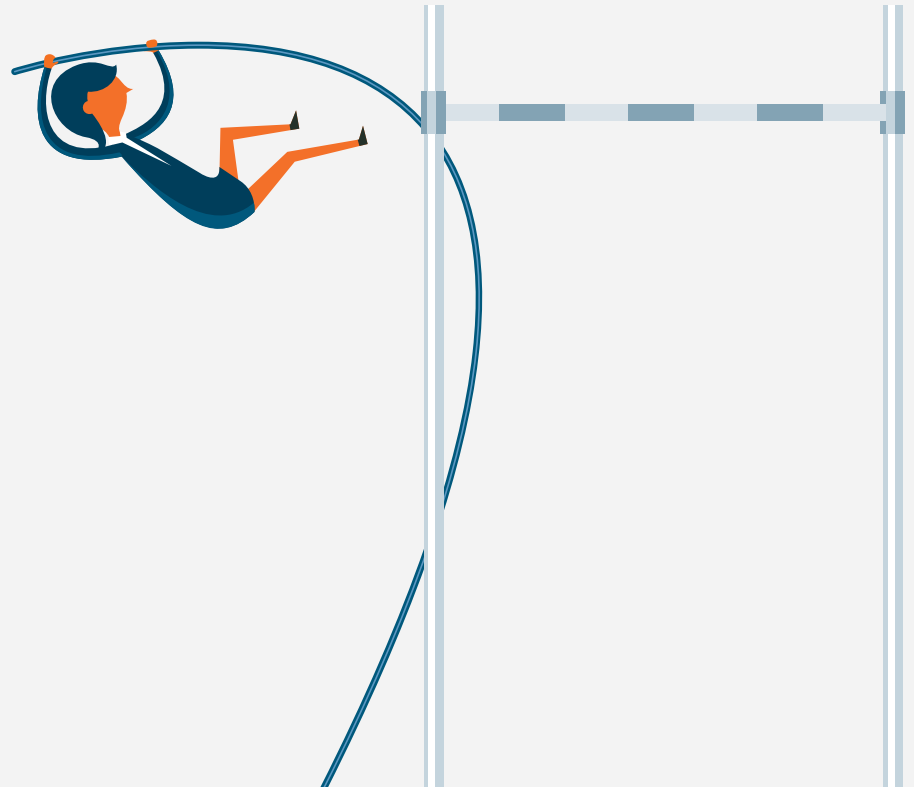
A Must-Have Attitude

At its most challenging, it creates frustration for teachers as they deal with factors related to demographics, home characteristics, and the existing school culture. At both extremes, maintaining a focus on the learning environment is critical.

CHAPTER 1

Start by asking: What is the end goal?

This step in creating classroom culture is not about lowering the bar but rather clarifying what it will take to clear the bar.



Creating a positive classroom structure requires...

- All students are valued and expected to make significant gains in their learning.
- Factors that may inhibit successful gains are temporary obstacles and challenges.
- All staff members accept responsibility for all students: students in other classrooms, students in other grade levels, students with disabilities, and students who speak another language at home.

Creating a positive classroom structure requires...

- The status quo is never accepted; students' expectations are set appropriately and staff members recognize continuous improvement as the habit of great organizations.
- Change is an opportunity and all variables are considered.
- School leaders and educators view adult behaviors as having the most effective and significant influence on student learning and behaviors.

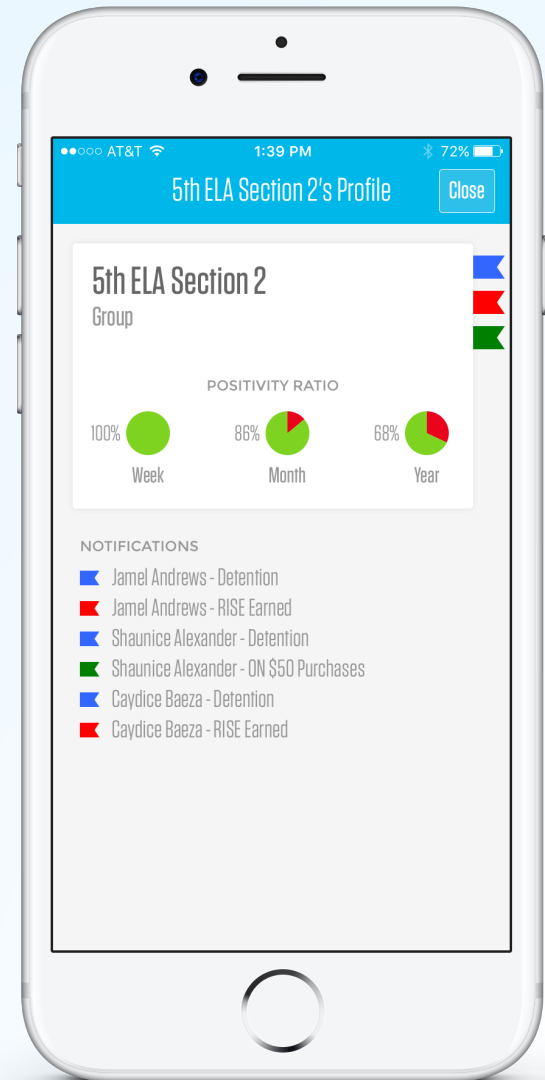
The Three R's

RIGOR

RELEVANCE

RELATIONSHIPS

How much time does
your school spend on
cultivating relationships?





Resilience

Despite the widespread belief that individual grit, extraordinary self-reliance, or some in-born, heroic strength of character can triumph over calamity, science now tells us that it is the reliable presence of at least one supportive relationship and multiple opportunities for developing effective coping skills that are essential building blocks for the capacity to do well in the face of significant adversity.

Key 1

Expectations or Rules?

Expectations serve as guidelines that are important not only in the classroom but, more often than not, also in life beyond the classroom's four walls.

Expectations guide student responses academically and behaviorally. Expectations have an emphasis on lifelong learning and an eye toward growth.

Rules, on the other hand, tend to be specific and are often responses to previous negative outcomes.

Rules are attempts to guide student responses, but tend to be reactionary and often do not bring about the desired change.

Fixed or Growth?

Students with the growth mindset were significantly more oriented toward learning goals. Although they cared about their grades, they cared even more about learning.

Blackwell, Trzesniewski, and Dweck (2007)

Fixed or Growth?

Students with the growth mindset showed a far stronger belief in the power of effort. They believed that effort promoted ability and that was effective regardless of your current level of ability.

Fixed or Growth?

Students with the growth mindset showed more mastery-oriented reactions to setbacks, being less likely to denigrate their ability and more likely to employ positive strategies, such as greater effort and new strategies, rather than negative strategies, such as effort withdrawal and cheating.

Cause	Possible Remedy
Schedule	
Clutter	
Tasks	
Focus	
Breaks	



Key 3

Positive Reinforcement

What are the attributes of feedback?

Direct to Correct to Connect

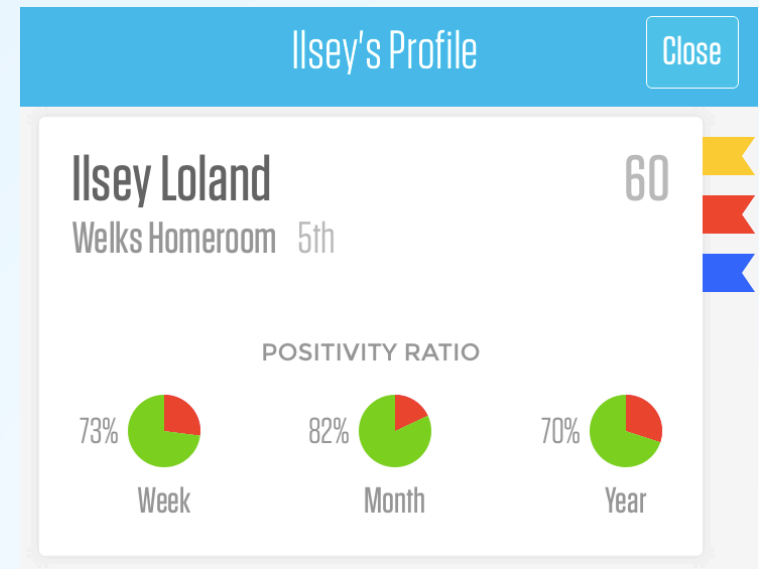
In the *direct* approach, the teacher simply tells the student what to do and indicates (or administers) the consequence.

In the *correct* approach, the teacher moves away from the rush to exacerbate the problem and toward the learning opportunity.

In the *connect* approach, the teacher is not thinking about consequences but is totally immersed in the learning opportunity the calling-out challenge presents.

Power of Positivity

Creating the **optimal learning environment** for students is all about the **balance** of positive, praising interactions to redirecting, corrective ones.



What's the optimal ratio?

Behaviors in the Positive School Culture Inventory

Showing pride in school	Collaboration
Organization	Leadership
Taking pride in one's work	Cooperation
Being prepared	Love of learning
Helping others	Using time wisely
Perseverance/resilience	Caring
Making good choices	Self-reliance
Kindness	Active listening
Using appropriate communication	
Making an insightful comment	
Going above and beyond	

Feedback

Feedback has no effect in a vacuum; to be powerful in its effect, there must be a learning context to which feedback is addressed. It is but part of the teaching process and is that which happens second — after a student has responded to initial instruction — when information is provided regarding some aspect(s) of the student's task performance.

Timperley, 2007



Key 4: Data-Driven Decisions

Why is **YET** the most important three letter word in education today?



Data or Evidence?

What's the challenge?

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Antecedent</i>	<i>Behavior</i>	<i>Consequence</i>	<i>Possible Function (Why is this behavior occurring?)</i>

ABC is a direct-observation tool that teachers can use to collect information about why a student is not demonstrating proficiency for a behavior.

Key 5:

Differentiation and Enrichment

What are your
strategies?

A continuum of strategies, developed and aligned with classroom expectations, exists to support the teacher in working to improve and individual student's or group's behavior . The strategies help the students learn to behave and succeed in the classroom. Alternative strategies are in place for escalating levels of misbehavior.

Gathering evidence
of proficiency is
important — not to
make excuses, but to
make plans.

Key 6 : Collaboration

As part of the collaborative team, you're either getting better at your job or helping someone else get better.

There are no excuses, just variables. Your teams focus on what you can control instead of what you can't, that is, outside factors such as issues at home, parental support, socioeconomic challenges, and language.

You and everyone on your staff understand that every child is "your" child, and the failure of any one of them is not an option.

Collective Commitment...

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- There are no excuses, just variables. Your teams focus on what you can control instead of what you can't, that is, outside factors such as issues at home, parental support, socioeconomic challenges, and language.
- You and everyone on your staff understand that every child is "your" child, and the failure of any one of them is not an option.

Data Teams



SEL

1. Self-awareness is the ability to recognize one's own emotions, interests, strengths, and limitations.
2. Self-management refers to the ability to regulate one's own emotions and manage daily stressors.
3. Social awareness refers to the capacity to take other's perspective and to appreciate similarities and differences.
4. Relationship skills are when individuals exhibit pro-social behavior and demonstrate positive social skills in order to develop meaningful relationships.
5. Responsible decision making refers to the capacity to make ethical decisions and develop appropriate solutions to identified problems.

The research says...

Research indicates that social competency is a strong predictor of future success .

Teachers measure social competency skills when the subjects are in kindergarten.

Students receive scores on a range of social behaviors, such as whether they can resolve peer problems, listen to others, share materials, cooperate, and display helpfulness.

Zins and Elias (2006)

Genuinely effective schools — those that prepare students not only to pass tests at school but also to pass the tests of life — are finding that social-emotional competence and academic achievement are interwoven and that integrated, coordinated instruction in both areas maximizes students' potential to succeed in school and throughout their lives.

Key 7: Connection to the School-wide System

In many respects, the three-step process serves as a communicative device between teacher and student. Established expectations for behavior that promote a positive learning environment make clear what is needed for the highest levels of teaching and learning to occur in a classroom. Based on those expectations, students are held accountable for their choices in hopes that with feedback, students can adjust behaviors that align with established expectations.

(D. Mrozik)

Administering Consequences	Discovering Causes
Stops the behavior quickly; seeks immediate relief.	Slowly stops behavior; delays relief.
Teaches what not to do (direct).	Teaches what to do (connect).
Decreases self-concept or belief that "I am bad."	Increases the self-concept or belief that "my behavior is bad; I am not bad."
Decreases positive attitudes toward school and schoolwork.	Increases positive attitudes toward school and schoolwork.
Causes withdrawal (task completion, tardy, truancy, dropping out).	Promotes enhanced participation and closing of behavioral gaps.
Causes aggression (against property and others)	Decreases likelihood of aggression.
Teaches students to respond in a punitive and angry manner.	Teaches students to recognize the positive learning in each situation.
Actions can harm or destroy the student-teacher relationship.	Actions can enhance the student-teacher relationship.



"To succeed as a team is to hold all of the members accountable for their expertise."

—Mitchell Caplan

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Heart of Education

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Thanks for the gift of your time!