

# Define the classroom culture

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Collaboratively develop a safe and caring culture and climate' from the Guide:

[Behaviour and learning](#)

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## **Includes:**

- Being culturally responsive
- Ask students what's important
- Consider approaches that support equity
- Review inclusive teacher language
- Reflective questions
- Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Collaboratively develop a safe and caring culture and climate](#)

Suggestion: [Define the classroom culture](#)

Date

15 May 2024

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/define-the-classroom-culture](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/define-the-classroom-culture)

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## Being culturally responsive

Can students bring their own experiences into the classroom and connect them to their learning?



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/111160942>

[View transcript](#)

Source:

[Te Kotahitanga \(NZ\)](#)

<http://tekotahitanga.tki.org.nz/Videos/Interviews/Changing-Maori-educational-experiences>

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## Ask students what's important



Source:

Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

[View full image \(2.6 MB\)](#)

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## Consider approaches that support equity

Students are very sensitive to teacher bias.

To ensure equitable participation in your classroom, include some of the following practices.

Note: Teachers must apply knowledge of a student's needs and sensitivities before inviting participation.

**Equity sticks:** Write one student's name per stick, place into a cup next to a second, empty cup for the "used" sticks. Each time you ask a student to run an errand, or take leadership, pull out an equity stick. Once they have participated, place their stick in the other cup, and keep on doing this until you've cycled through the class.

**Equity tracker:** Create a simple "tracker" with students' names on the left side and a column for each day of the week. Each time you call on a student or someone volunteers to speak, jot down a tally mark.

At the end of the week, add up your marks and analyse the data:

- Who is participating the most?
- Who is participating the least?
- What patterns of participation do I see with respect to race, gender, first language, learning ability, location in the room, etc.?

Use this data to set a small participation goal for the following week.

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## Review inclusive teacher language

How we communicate reflects our values and beliefs and makes them visible to others.

- ✓ Avoid negative commands, corrections, demands, and yelling.
- ✓ Review the language and terminology you currently use to identify students and discuss their progress, needs, and supports.
- ✓ Reflect on whether the current language is respectful, accurate, useful, supports high expectations, and aligns with values and beliefs.
- ✓ Check for deficit identifiers that lower expectations, affirm stereotypes, or are discriminatory.
- ✓ Open a discussion with students and whānau around the language teachers use. Identify words and phrases that are deficit-focused and together find language that is respectful and useful.

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## Reflective questions

Consider the following questions for your own context. Think about examples from your own practice.

To what extent are the identity, language, and culture of Māori students and adults evident in teaching and learning experiences within your classroom?

What opportunities do Māori students and adults have to share their knowledge and expertise within your classroom?

What does “genuine participation” look like for Māori members of your classroom?

Do staff maintain high expectations for children and young people, while also honouring their mana?

What does partnership mean in your classroom? What leadership roles do different students and adults take? How could this be enhanced?

How will you ensure all students receive equitable amounts of time, attention, and praise?

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## Useful resources



### Tātaiako: Cultural competencies for teachers of ākonga Māori

Read time: 29 min

Tātaiako is a starting point for schools and early childhood education (ECE) services developing cultural competence.

Publisher: Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand

[Visit website](#)



### 3 practices to promote equity in the classroom

Strategies to track participation so that everybody has a voice.

Publisher: Edutopia

[Visit website](#)



### Te Whatu Pōkeka

Read time: 1 min

A whole-school or classroom exercise with students, which looks at how students know they belong and how they feel valued.

[Visit website](#)

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