

# Tips and Ideas for Teaching in the Primary Classroom

**A guide for educators including:**

- Approaches to learning**
- Use of ICT**
- Communication**
- Behaviour Management**
- Additional Resources**

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# APPROACHES TO LEARNING

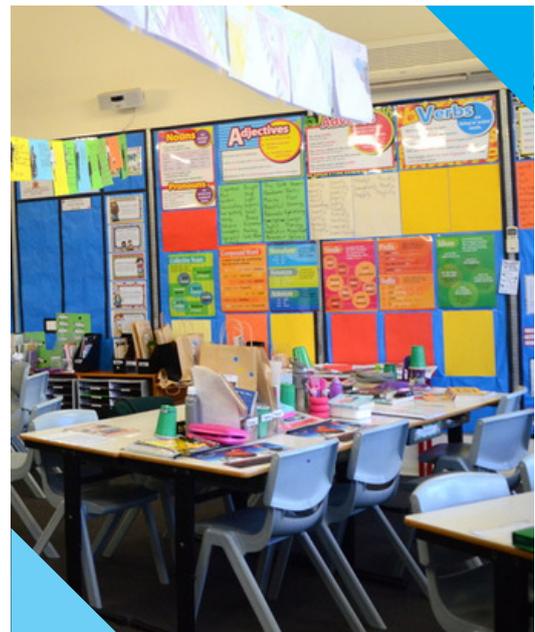
## Key Differences

*The pace of work tends to be different in the Primary setting vs. Secondary...*

- Expect to move from topic to topic or subject to subject; your sessions will be broken into approx. 30min increments and there will be set activities to try and cover for that topic/subject in that timeframe. Note that the students are probably quite used to their daily/weekly routines, so try to stick to these as closely as you can to ensure productivity and positive behaviour
- Try to stick any time parameters outlined in the lesson plans as much as possible - these often take into consideration any specialist subjects scheduled into the day as well, so everything needs to flow
- Due to the pass of the sessions and the nature of the work, prepare to model expected processes. Sometimes it will feel like you are 'giving students the answer', but this helps to ensure that the students will stay on track with tasks
- Expect that you will mostly teach to whole-class, rather than smaller groups, for example
- Primary-aged students tend to work at a slower pace and need tasks broken down for them a lot more than older students

*Moving from topic to topic can make it challenging to monitor individual students and to differentiate, so your use of space and movement are important considerations...*

- Try to circulate as much as possible
- Position yourself at different student tables to make yourself accessible to different students; move to them rather than them to you so that you can:
- Monitor behaviour
- Interact with students that might struggle to ask for help
- Offer equal time to students as much as possible
- Avoid chaos and stop students from swarming to you!
- Consider even outlining to students at the start of the day what it means when you stand in different areas of the room; 'When you see me standing by the whiteboard, it means that I'd like you to listen, because I'm going to explain instructions to you.'



# APPROACHES TO LEARNING

*Make sure that your approach to giving instructions suits the capacity of your age-group...*

- The younger the student, the less independent they'll likely be
- Try to be patient and expect that you'll need to repeat instructions. Give students time to process what they have been asked to so and consider asking students to repeat instructions back to you to ensure their understanding
- Make instructions easier to track by using visual cues, like checklists and pictures. Write overall learning objectives for sessions on the board, and then refer back to them at the end of the lesson to debrief, and to gauge progress and understanding
- Avoid giving more than 2-3 instructions as once and keep them short, e.g. 'Can you please all put your books away and then come and sit on the mat?'
- Whenever possible, relate instructions to things that have already been covered/things they already know

## Working with an aid...

- Expect to work with one or more integration aides during your day at a school
- The aide may not stay in the classroom with you; they may rotate between students depending on the need and the subjects/topics/type of tasks being addressed, or they might take particular students out of the classroom for a period to assist them with various interventions or individual learning plans.

## Sample aide roster:

Student Name	Session 1	Session 2	Recess	Session 3	Session 4	Lunch	Session 5	Session 6
<b>Jane (Grade 1)</b>	Jo (classroom)	Music	Jo (yard supervision)	Jan (speech pathology)	Jo (classroom)	Jo (yard supervision)	Classroom	P.E
<b>John (Grade 3)</b>	Music	P.E	Jarryd (yard supervision)	Jarryd (classroom)	Art			Jess (classroom)
<b>Jimmy (Prep)</b>	LOTE: Mandarin	Music	Jess (10 min check-in)		Jan (speech pathology)	Jess (10 min check-in)	Jess (classroom)	
<b>Jade (Grade 4)</b>	Classroom	Jan (reading intervention)		Classroom	Classroom	Jarryd (10 min check-in)	Jarryd Art	Jarryd (classroom)

- Allow time at the start of the day to collaborate with the aide; share what you know about the students, look over any student folders/communication books, break down the structure of the day and discuss your individual and shared approaches. Try to also have time at the end of the day to debrief with them
- Behaviour management is a shared responsibility with the aide. Communicate with them about what processes you're going to use together, e.g. if additional help is needed, who will leave the classroom? Use the school's behaviour management policy as a guide, or look for communication books or student folders at the start of the day

# APPROACHES TO LEARNING

## *Play...*

- Try to allow time during the day for students to have a 'breather' in between sessions by using ice-breakers; remember that, unlike Secondary students, Primary students tend to spend the majority of their day in the same space, which can cause them to become tired or disengaged more quickly
- Be prepared for learning to be more playful and hands-on. Be sure to communicate clear expectations for set-up and pack-up of any crafts, movement or furniture, outside time etc...to make sure the program stays on track and to encourage students to develop good routines for showing responsibility for their work and respect for their workspace
- A lot of students will have participated in play-based learning in their early education, and this is continuing more and more into Primary school. Play-based learning is stimulating and explorative, and helps students to connect ideas with real experiences
- **'Why play-based learning?' PDF**

## *Questions that you can ask...*

- How will the teaching be structured today; team teaching, individual classes?
- How does this school approach the use of ICT? What technology is provided and used in the classroom I'll be in today?
- What are the expectations and processes for communicating feedback to the teacher I've replaced? What about with parents?
- Whereabouts are crafts and other resources stored? Will I need to provide anything myself?
- Are there any students in my class that participate in alternative programs?
- What are the processes for transitioning students between lessons, i.e. movement from the classroom to the specialist classroom?
- Who should I refer any issues or questions to? Who is best to seek support from if behaviours prove challenging?
- What is the process before and after school; am I expected to supervise school pick up?



# USE OF ICT

## *What to expect...*

- Be prepared for different schools to have different attitudes to ICT and for it to be used in different ways, i.e. some schools will have 1:1 devices, BYOD, and interactive whiteboards, projectors or TVs in each classrooms, and other schools will use ICT minimally, such as their being a separate space entirely (computer pods) for dedicated ICT sessions
- Allow time for modelling or instruction of the use of ICT before students move into completing activities. For example, you may need to walkthrough a program with the students before you send them off to complete an online quiz, or you might have some whole-class discussion time to talk about online research approaches before the class begins a project. Even turning the device on can be a challenge for some!
- Based on the school's day-to-day processes, you may not be given a designated laptop for your own work. As a precaution, try to take along your own device. This will be a time-saver as well; rather than needing to take the time to learn how a different device works, you'll have your own. Consider using your Hot Spot in place of needing permission to connect to the school network
- Treat digital writing processes the same way you would handwriting; practice proof-reading and editing; it's easy for students to become complacent on systems that employ predictive text

## *Using ICT as a resource...*

- Consider what you can project instead of write on the board to save time and ensure things can be displayed clearly
- Created a great mind map on the board, or want to collate students' ideas/results/notes? Try taking a photo of the material and emailing it to yourself to retain a digital copy, create print outs, or save to a shared drive
- How about using ICT to the climate of the classroom; Youtube can be great for finding tracks to play as you're reading aloud to make things more engaging, more meditative moments, to give a 5-minute warning before the end of a session etc...

## *ICT for learning and for play...*

### **Movement & Mindfulness Activities**



### **Audio Books & Online Books with Graphics & Animations**



### **Crossword & Boggle Generators**



### **Literacy & Numeracy Resources**



### **Just Dance**



### **Quizzes & Activities**



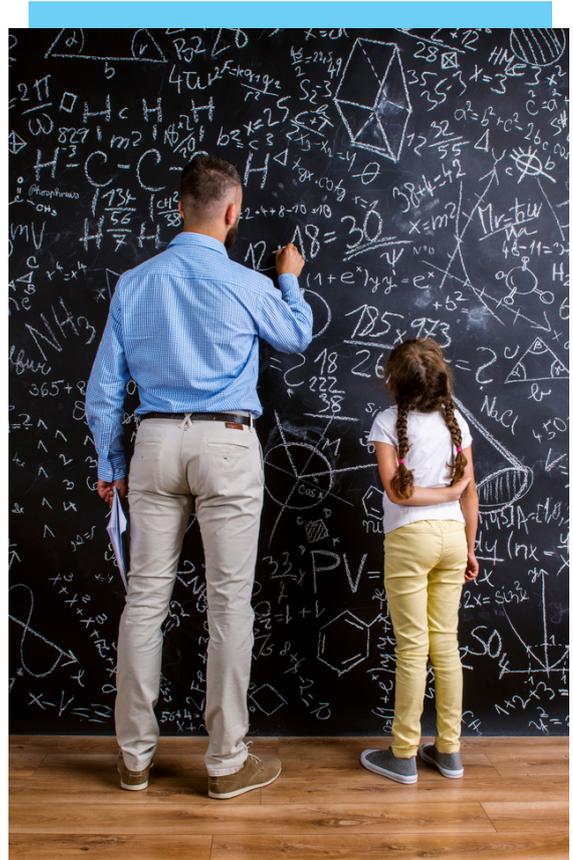
# COMMUNICATION

## *ICT for learning and for play...*

- Use for discussion and other sharing activities. The structure is a great equaliser and helps all students to feel like they can contribute. It also helps everyone to be visible to you for behaviour management purposes!
- Let students know at the start of the day when and how circle time will be used, for example to debrief at the end of the session, to mark the role, to do a getting-to-know-you activity or a mood check-in, or to chat about the order of the day.
- The class might even have suggestions for how circle time is usually run in the class; perhaps the teacher nominates people to speak, they might simply take it in turns clockwise, or after one student speaks, they pick the student to go next etc... sticking to their regular routine as much as possible is important
- Use role-call to get to know the students. For example, instead of saying 'here', each student might answer with their favourite food, or an adjective to describe themselves
- When running circle time to initiate discussion about topics or subjects the students will then be doing activities on, try to keep categories broad so that everyone feels like they can contribute. Also let students know that it's OK to 'pass' if they don't feel like sharing with everyone, or give them an alternative way of submitting an answer. Help all students to feel involved by using inclusive language; 'How do we all feel about going to music class later today?'

## *Building a relationship...*

- When students arrive in the morning, greet them at the door. Try to individualize this by asking them a question, creating a signature gesture or nickname with them that you can then refer to throughout the day...
- Use time outside of the classroom to interact with students, such as on yard duty. Be prepared to interact with parents as well; it might be part of a school's daily routine for the classroom to be 'open' before school and for parents to accompany the student in and have a chat with you
- Invest time in seeing how else you can contribute to the school community, particularly if you've been to the school several times. They might have a fete or working bee coming up; events like these can be a great opportunity to get to know families better and for you to better understand the values or priorities of the community



# COMMUNICATION

*Make sure things are age-appropriate...*



- Be sure to talk at the students' level; due to their age, they are likely to have less understanding of sarcasm, jargon, and hypotheticals.
- Be conscious of the way that you use humour and rhetorics to ensure that students understand your meaning and intention. The last thing you want is for a student to get upset at something you mean to be funny!

*End of day...*

- Ensure that you have time at the end of the day for the class to assist with pack-up; leave the room as you found it
- Make sure that you return your classroom key to the front office
- Accompany students to the pick up area and/or wait with students during parent pick-up (if this has been indicated as part of your duty)
- Leave detailed feedback for the classroom teacher. It's often easiest to do this throughout the day, as opposed to all at once at the end of day - there can be a lot to talk about after being with the same group all day!
- If you've replaced a teacher as part of one allocated Professional Practice Day, that teacher may actually be on site while you're there. If so, try to make time to debrief with them face-to-face at the end of the day



# BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

## *Keep it simple...*

- Set expectations at the start of the day and keep them visible during the day so that you can refer to them continually. Consider non-writing based reminders, such as gestures or images, to enhance the way that students can remember and respond to your instructions
- Outline negative actions clearly and keep consequences specific; 'Tom, if you don't stop taking Charlie's pencil, I'm going to ask you to move seats.'
- Give students options to reinforce that their behaviour is ultimately their choice; 'Claire, I need you to keep working so that you can your project. Would you like to you like to do this with Maddie, or by yourself?'
- Encourage students to keep themselves accountable. Mood Cards - represented by green, yellow, and red (for example) coloured cards or cards worded with adjectives (perhaps students write their own, or the class comes up with ideas at the start of the day; 'confident', 'stressed' etc...) - can be a great prompt for students to reflect on and communicate where they're at throughout the day
- Creating an environment where students can support each other's positive behaviour is beneficial too. Consider selecting 'captains' for different activities that encourage the rest of the class to follow instructions, e.g. 'Jessica, can you please help to make sure that everyone has their laptop out while I write some notes on the board?' this can be a great way to get a more challenging student on side, by keeping them occupied and giving them a special responsibility

## *Using Restorative Practice...*

- Rather than simply punishing a negative behaviour with the removal of privileges, having students complete mundane/irrelevant tasks, or employing punitive punishments, many schools are using approaches related to Restorative Practice/Justice to build positive behaviours
- The approaches move away from merely dictating to the student 1) why what they did was wrong and 2) what they need to do differently in the future, and instead support the student to build the skills to reflect upon the cause and effect of their behaviour
- Restorative Practice/Justice encourages conversation so that the student can identify their feelings and helps them to navigate the negative outcome of their behaviour. Creating this supportive dialogue helps keep things solutions focussed and helps to restore or maintain relationships
- Restorative Practice/Justice can also be used as a mediation tool to support disagreements or negative behavioural outcomes that may have occurred between multiple students
- Find examples of questions to help with these interventions here:  
<https://www.restorativepractices.org.au/resources/>

# BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

## *Building Emotional Intelligence...*

- Many learning contexts, such as International Baccalaureate (PYP) schools, focus their behavioural interventions around supporting students to understand their behaviours positively. This can be a great approach to educate students, when they're at an age where they may have difficulty regulating their own emotions and reactions. Students should be positioned to create meaningful goals for future behaviour
- Language should be geared towards encouraging self-reflection, thinking critically, and challenging assumptions.
- Interventions should be inquiry driven and value-centred to preserve the student-teacher relationship and connect advice with purpose, e.g. 'Approaching the situation this way will be more respectful/better communication/more co-operative...'
- Social and emotional well-being are at the forefront of interventions and work to foster engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness, happiness, and self-satisfaction.
- Centring on emotion and feeling is facilitated by guiding students through the RULER model of behaviour intervention;

**R**ecognize the moments when the emotion is presented

**U**nderstand the cause and consequences of the emotion

**L**abel the emotion accurately

**E**xpress the emotion appropriately

**R**egulate emotions effectively



# BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

**But what if the student struggles to identify their own feelings and the cause and effect of their actions?**

## *Social stories...*

- This behaviour management tool helps to guide the student to interpret the emotional reactions and thought processes of others through a visual or written guide
- The story can be wholly created by the student, in cooperation with the teacher, or through the filling in of a template, depending on the age and state of mind of the student
- If a student in your class generally requires support with their behaviour, they will likely have an example or template of their social story in their student folder – that is, if that's a strategy that works well for them!
- Find examples of social stories here:



<https://www.abaresources.com/social-stories/>



<https://www.autismspeaks.org/templates-personalized-teaching-stories>

## *Use rewards as a form of feedback for positive behaviour...*

- Learn about the system the class follows and try to continue this, e.g. the students will be disappointed if you didn't know about their table points system, and they lose a day of opportunities to add to their points tally!
- Smiley-face system; each student starts the day with 3 smiley-faces next to their name. Those with faces remaining by the end of the day get 5 mins free time for every face they have left
- Mentioning positive behaviour to a student can be its own reward. Be specific when giving the feedback;  
"Who can show me their best listening skills?" "Thanks \*student\* for sitting up with your legs crossed and showing me whole body listening", "I love seeing the students that have come straight to the floor without talking, showing me they are ready to learn!"

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Teacher for a Day CRT Resources**
- **Teachers Pay Teachers CRT Teaching Ideas**

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT VIDEOS

- **The power of reading aloud. This series was created by Anna Manuel, an anzuk Educator and Head Storyteller at Heads and Tales Storytelling**
- **5 Things that Create Story M.A.G.I.C; Magic, Asking Questions, Gestures, Interaction, Crafts, Music**
  - **Asking Questions**
  - **Gestures**
  - **Interaction**
  - **Crafts**

## ANZUK RESOURCES

- **Classroom Management**
- **Science**
- **Physical Education**
- **Mathematics**
- **English**
- **Health & Wellbeing**

