

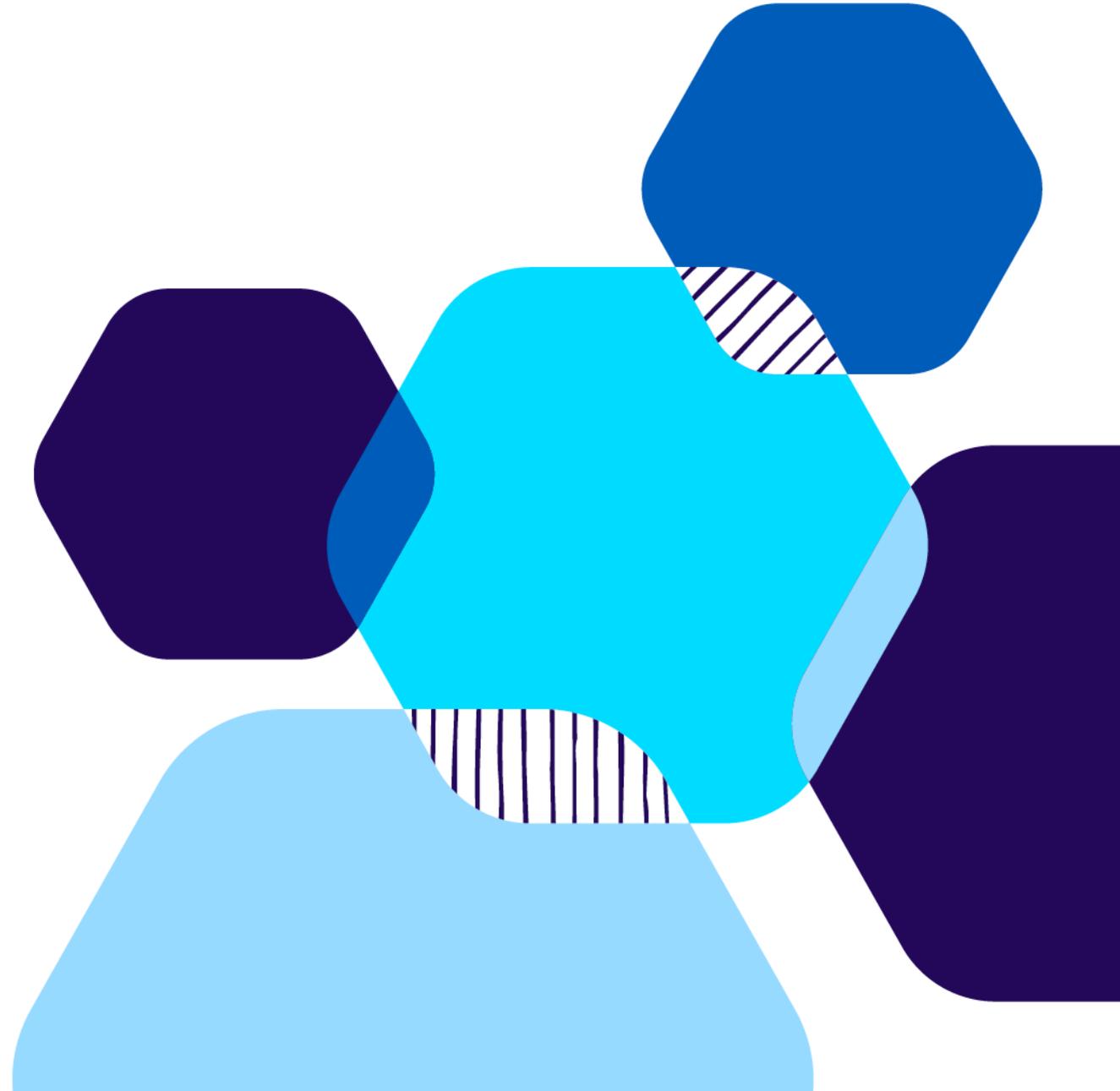
TeachingEnglish

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# Managing the classroom: overcoming challenging situations

Mary Akinyi Tago, Clement Ayim, George  
Kanyama and Emmah Kanyembo  
Saturday 28th March 2026

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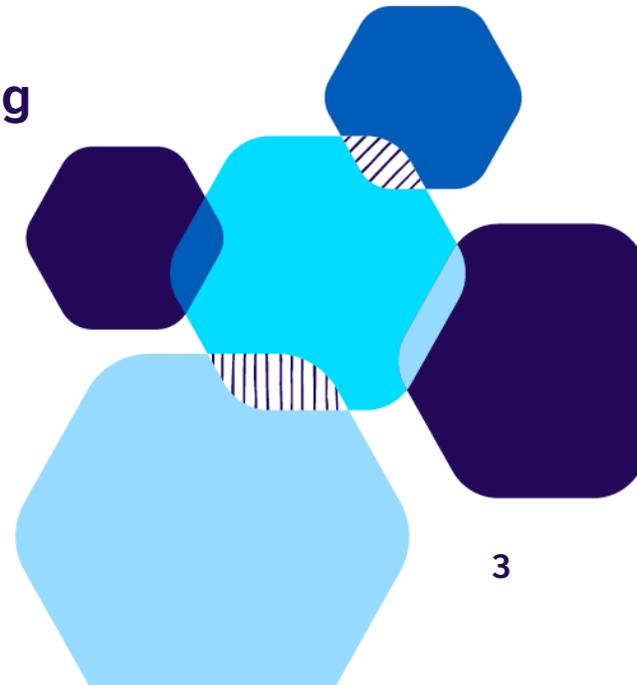
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## Pre-webinar polls:

1. How important do you think a supportive classroom environment is for language learners?

- a. Extremely important **100%**
- b. Somewhat important **0%**
- c. Not very important **0%**
- d. Unsure **0%**

2. Which aspect do you believe most contributes to a supportive class community?

- a. Clear expectations and rules **19%**
- b. Cultural sensitivity and diversity **37%**
- c. Peer support and collaboration **37%**
- d. Something else **7%**

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# About the speakers

**George Kanyama is a secondary school English language teacher with sixteen years of experience. He is passionate about teacher development, assessment and learning technologies. George is a member of IATEFL, a Hornby alumnus with a BEd in English from the University of Zambia and MA in TESOL from the University of Warwick. Currently, he is serving as a Head of Department, a national school certificate examiner in the English language and President of the Language Teachers' Association of Zambia.**



**Mary Akinyi Tago is a Kenyan teacher who teaches English and Literature at Bar Union Secondary School. She also facilitates effective English language teaching in various English professional teachers' groups.**



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## About the speakers

**Kanyembo Emmah is a dedicated secondary teacher and Librarian at Bulangililo Secondary school in Kitwe, Zambia, with 3 years of experience in teaching English language.**



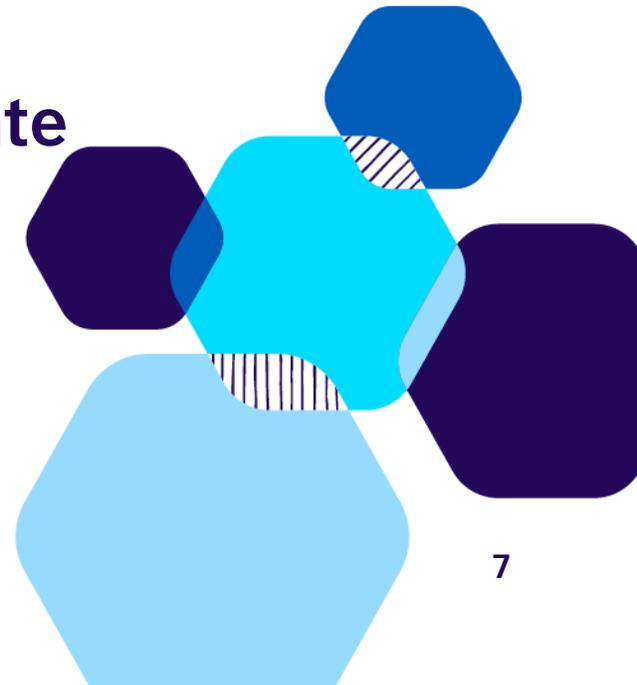
**Clement Ayim is an English teacher from Ghana, currently teaching at Suhum Senior High Technical School. With over 10 years of experience in both public and private sectors, he specializes in integrating digital tools into language learning and classroom management. Clement holds a Master of Education in Measurements and Evaluation, a Bachelor of Education in English Language, Diploma in Basic Education, TEFL, CEFR, and EF-SET. Clement is an astute CoP leader, active member of IELTA Ghana and American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL).**



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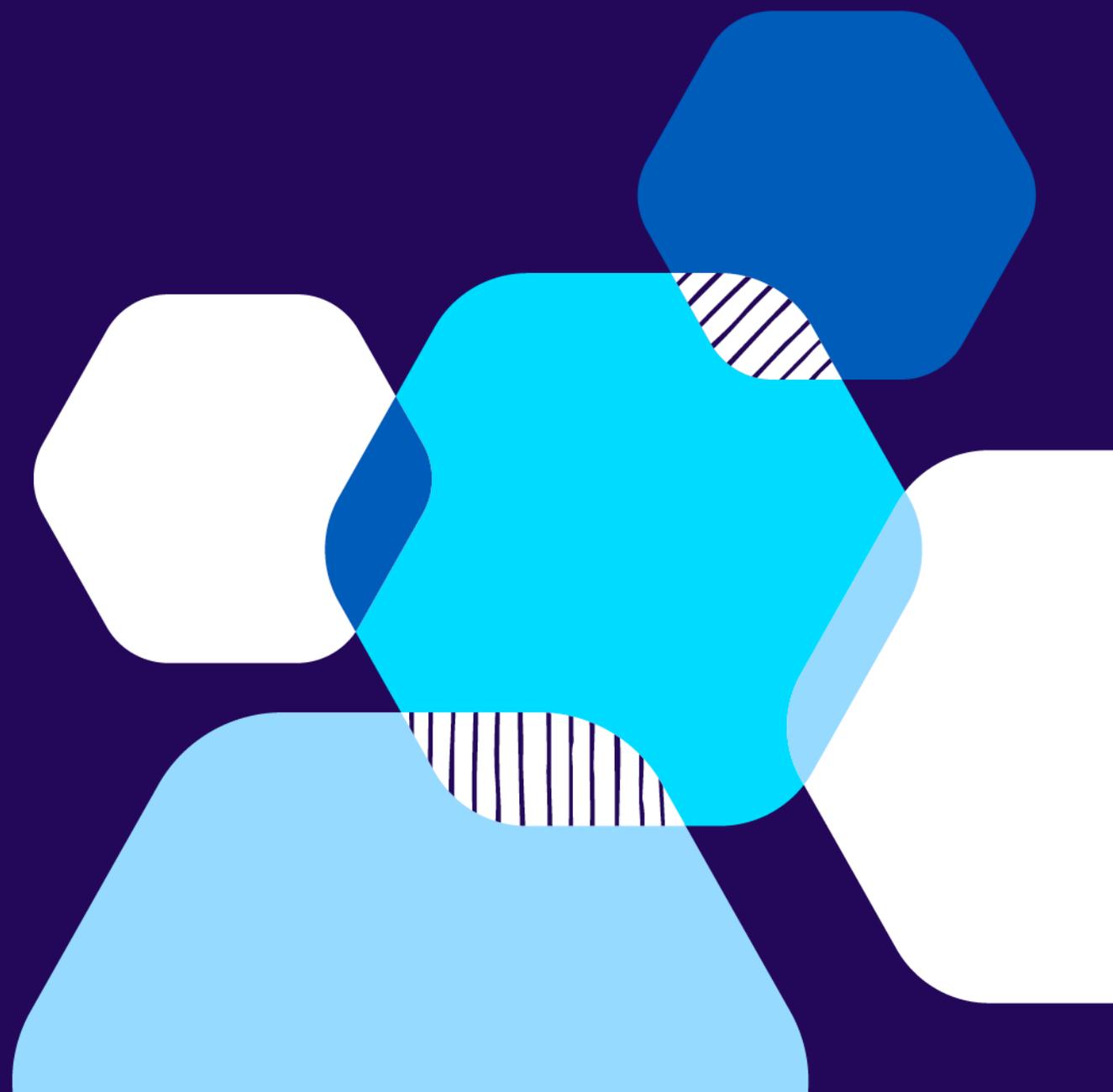
# Objectives

- To share practical, research-informed strategies for managing disruptive, diverse, and high-pressure classroom situations
- To strengthen teachers' emotional intelligence, decision-making, and resilience skills in order to maintain a productive, inclusive, and learner-centered environment during challenging moments
- To identify key challenges in large classes and co-create solutions with students
- To understand the significance of a supportive class community and explore practical strategies for collaboration and communication



# Effective lesson transitions

George Kanyama

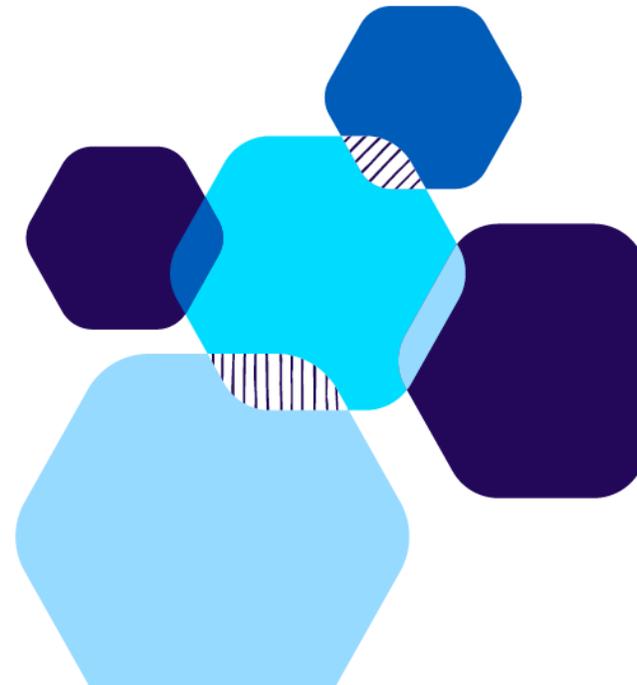


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# Effective Lesson Transitions – Why do they matter?

- Maximise instructional time
- Reduce disruptive behaviour
- Support calm, focused learning
- Essential in African and global classrooms
- Require clear communication and consistency

How can you plan for effective transitions before, during and after the transitions?  
Please answer in the chat

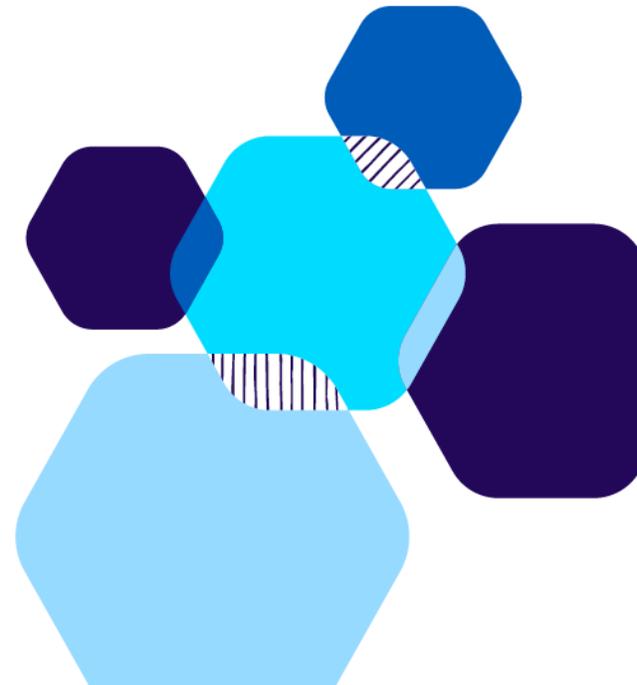


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# Before the transition

## Plan & Prepare

- Teach transitions as routines
- Model and practise until automatic
- Minimise unnecessary transitions
- Prepare materials in advance
- Give advance warnings
- Use clear signals

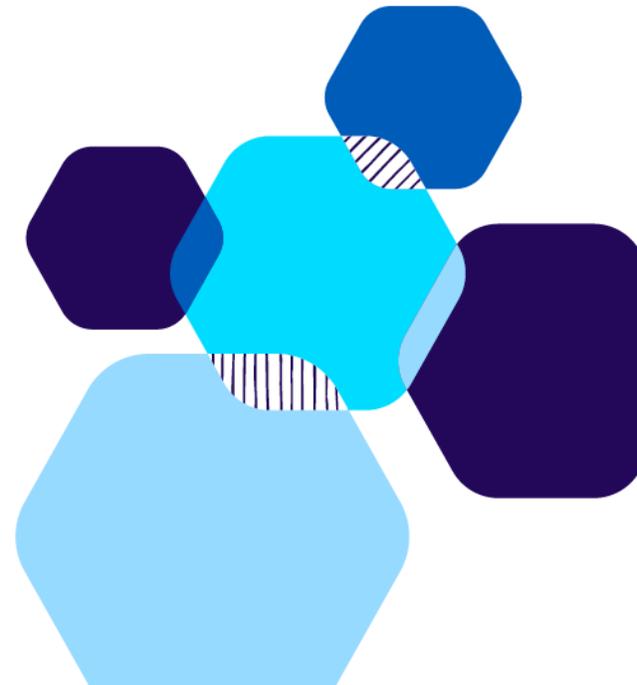


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## During the transition

# Execute & Monitor

- Use consistent cues
- Give short, clear instructions
- Keep learners engaged
- Use proximity and eye contact
- Supervise actively

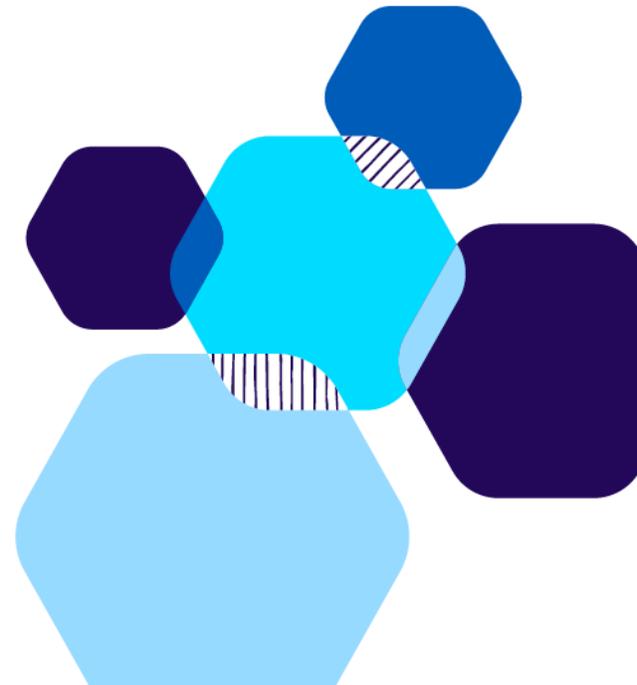


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# After the Transition

## Reinforce & Improve

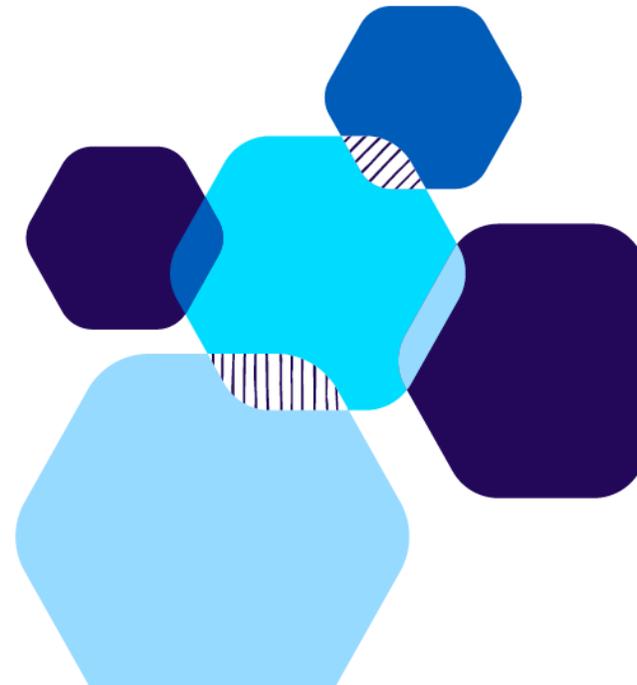
- Praise successful transitions
- Give specific feedback
- Reteach routines if needed
- Reflect with learners



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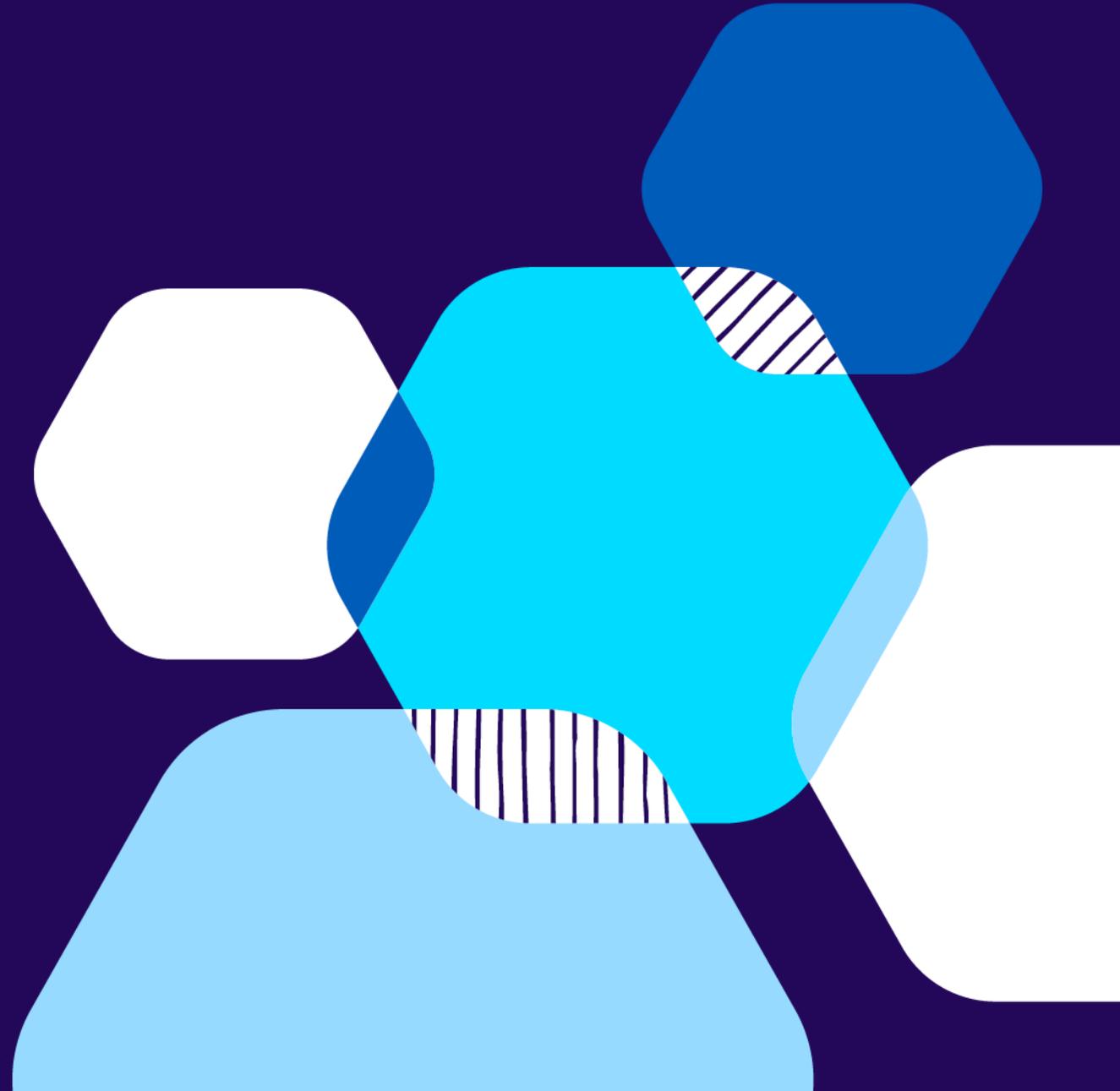
# Context-Responsive Strategies

- **Crowded classes: use designated spots**
- **Limited resources: use simple tools**
- **Multilingual learners: rely on visuals**
- **Consistency over equipment**



# Classroom management with large classes

**Mary Akinyi Tago**

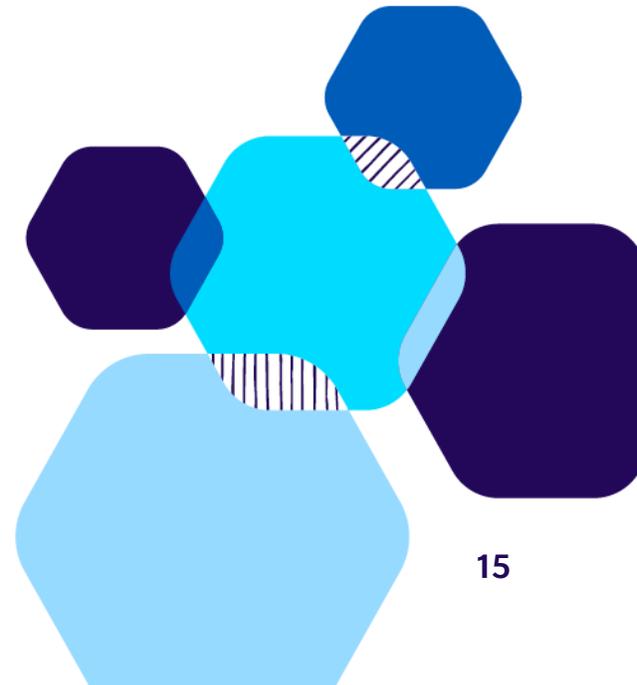


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# What are large classes to you? And what are the biggest challenges with large classes?

How many students are in your largest classes?:

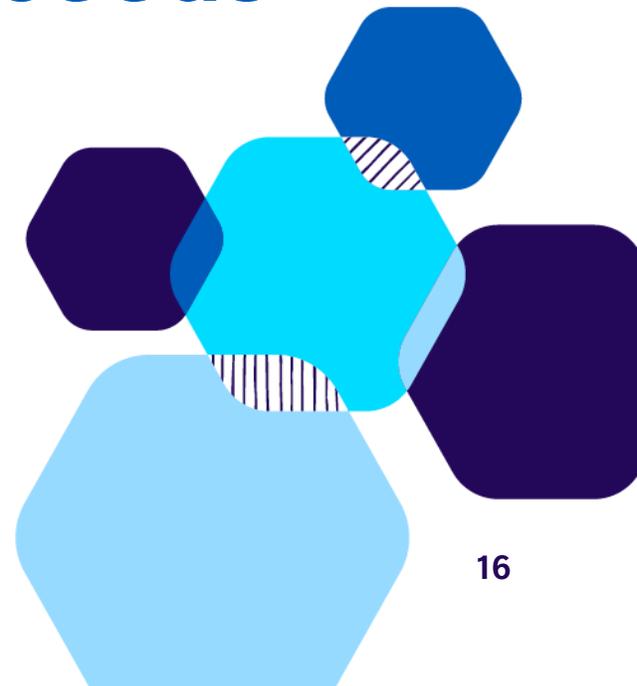
- a) Under 30
- b) 30 – 50
- c) 50 – 80
- d) Over 80



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**One of the most challenging things in teaching is classroom management. With classes that can surpass 40 students, creating an engaging and effective learning environment can feel overwhelming.**

**In one word, what is the biggest challenge you face when the student count exceeds forty?**

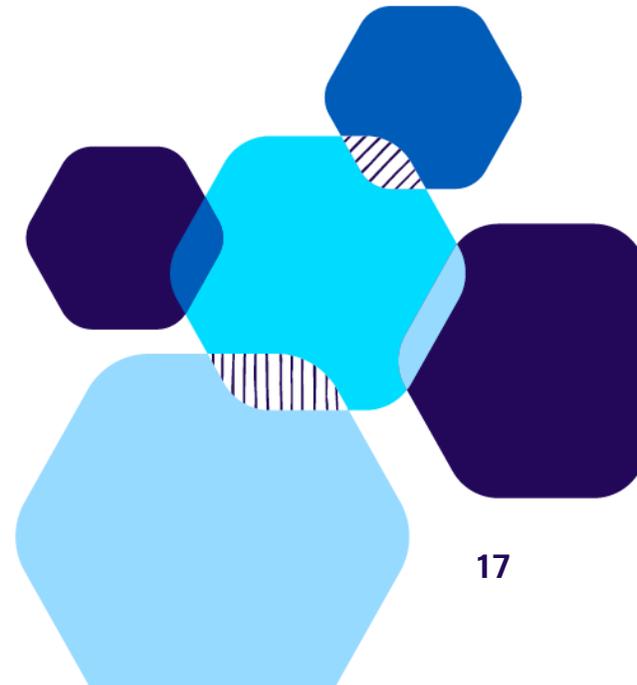


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# Challenges encountered in teaching large classes:

- A. Discipline
- B. Engagement/Motivation
- C. Feedback
- D. Limited space
- E. Language
- F. Exhausting
- G. Resources

**Which is the biggest challenge  
for you?**



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Think back to your own time as a student  
Did you ever feel **'invisible'** in a large group?

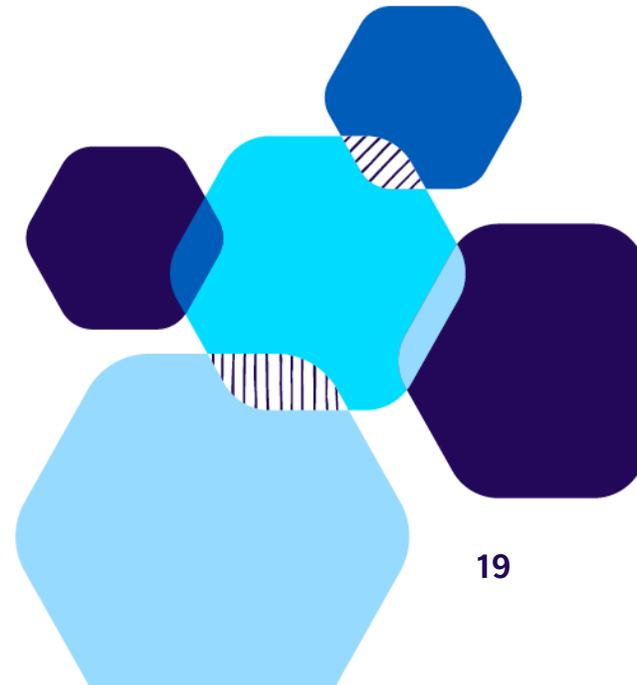
What was the one thing a teacher did – or could  
have done – to make you feel **'seen'**?

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## Large class management strategies:

- A. Set classroom rules from the very start**
- B. Establish effective classroom routines and procedures**
- C. Use effective feedback mechanisms**
- D. Build classroom community**
- E. Build relationships with your students**
- F. Positive reinforcement and recognition systems**
- G. Leverage technology**

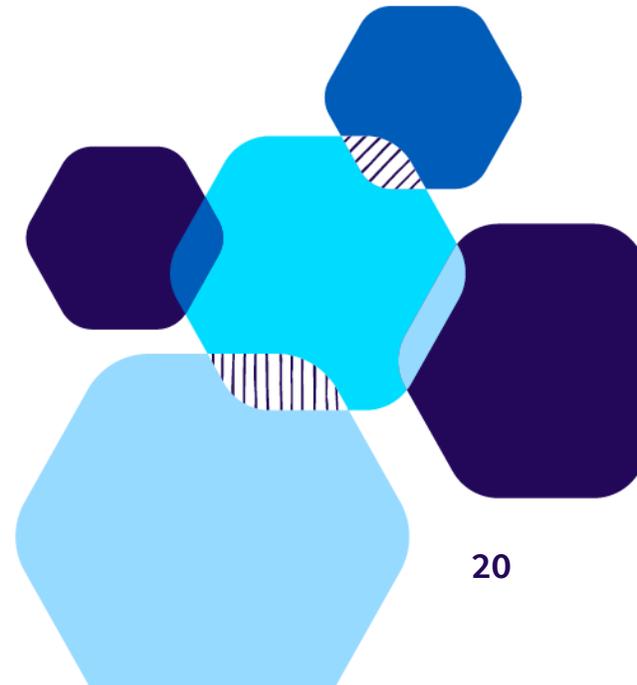
**Which do you need to work on most?**



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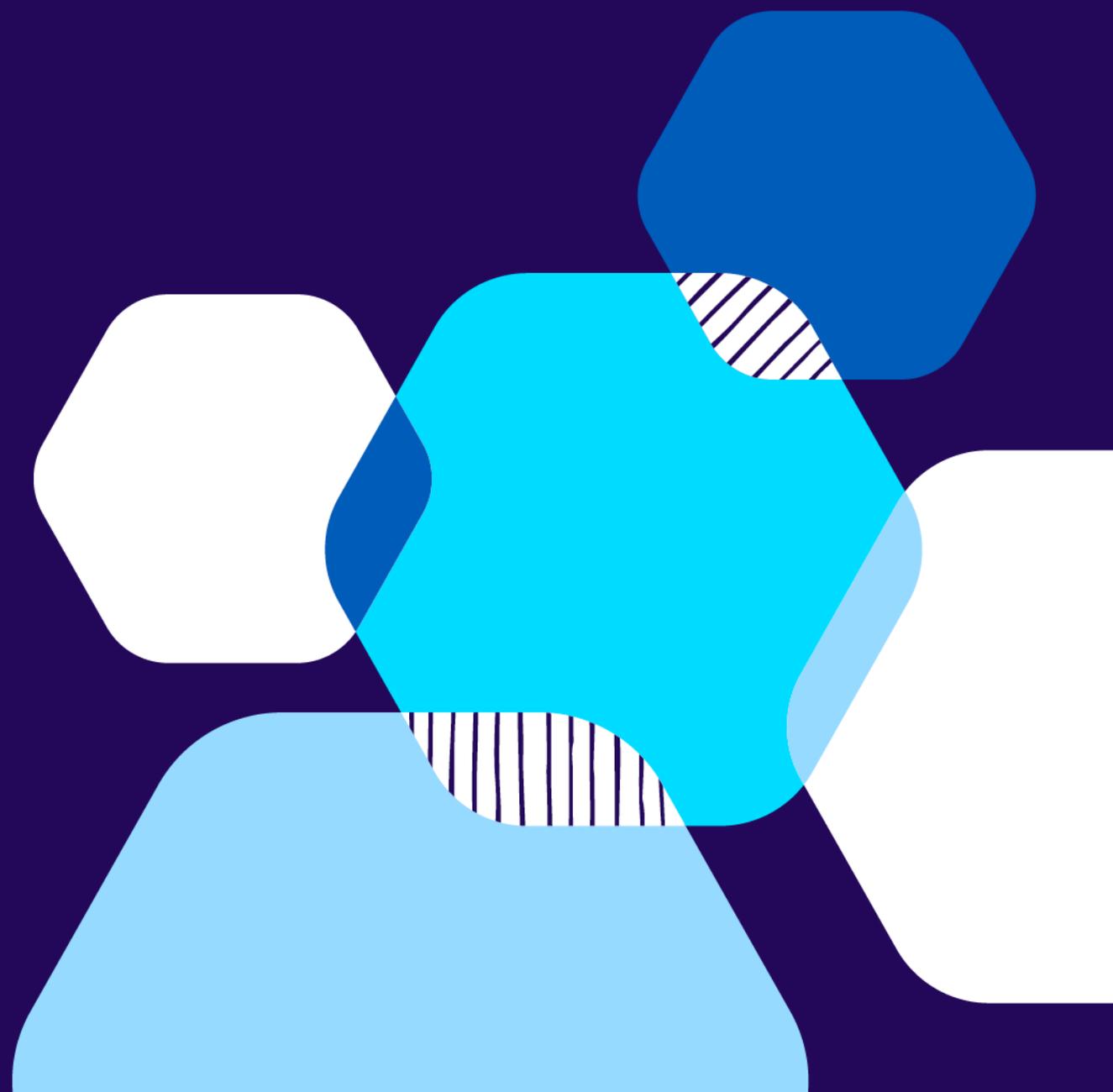
## Practical Tip

**Plan well and create a welcome atmosphere with strict rules and procedures that students agree to. This will make your teaching much easier.**



# Creating a supporting class community

**Clement Ayim**



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# The Importance of a Supportive Class Community

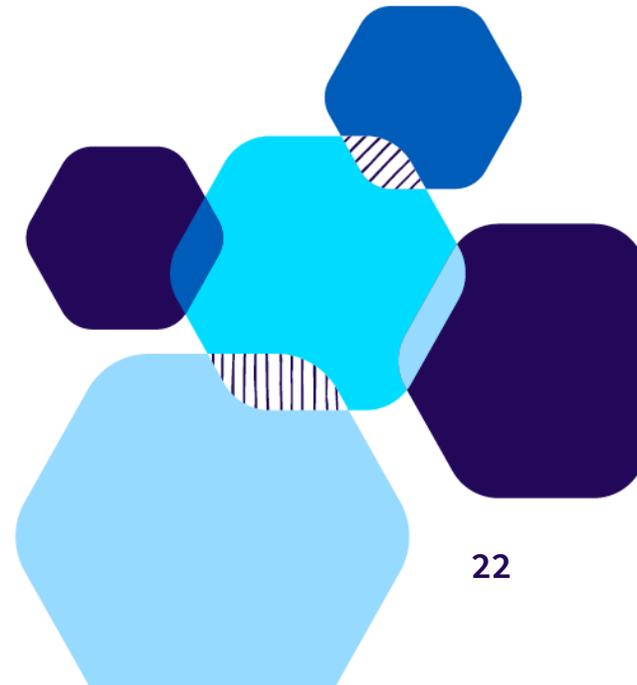
It enhances:

**A. student motivation**

**B. participation and engagement**

**C. language acquisition**

**Which is most important?**



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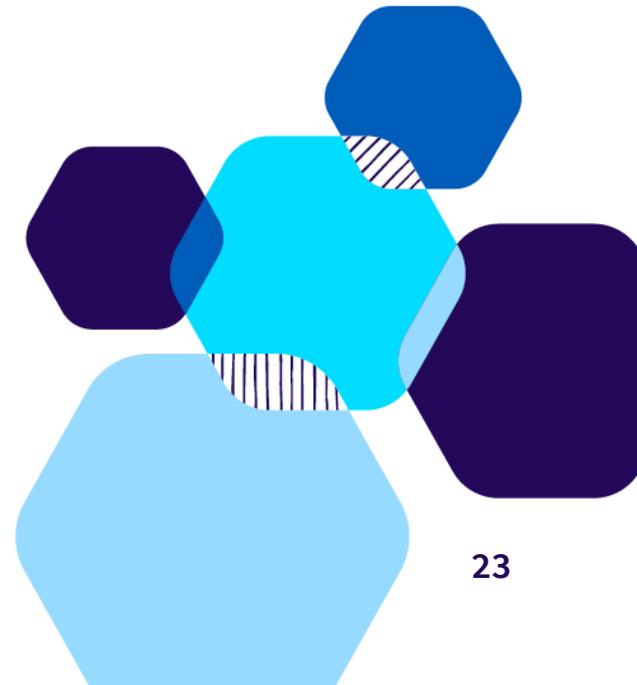
# Establishing Clear Expectations

**Importance of clear rules and expectations.**

## Strategies:

- **Co-create classroom rules with students.**
- **Use positive reinforcement for adherence.**

**Example: “In our first class, we will brainstorm rules together.”**



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# Promoting Peer Support

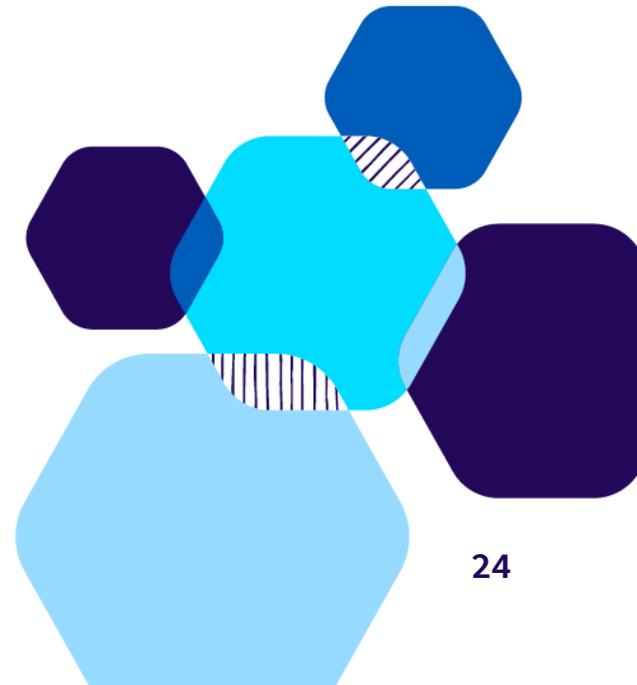
## Benefits of peer learning:

- Encourages collaboration.
- Enhances language acquisition.

## Strategies:

- Pair work and group activities.
- Peer feedback sessions.

## Example Activity: “Think-Pair-Share.”



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# Integrating Team-Building Activities

Team-building activities foster relationships.

## Suggested Activities:

- Icebreaker games (e.g., Two Truths and a Lie).
- Collaborative projects (e.g., class magazine).

*NB: Tie activities to language learning objectives*

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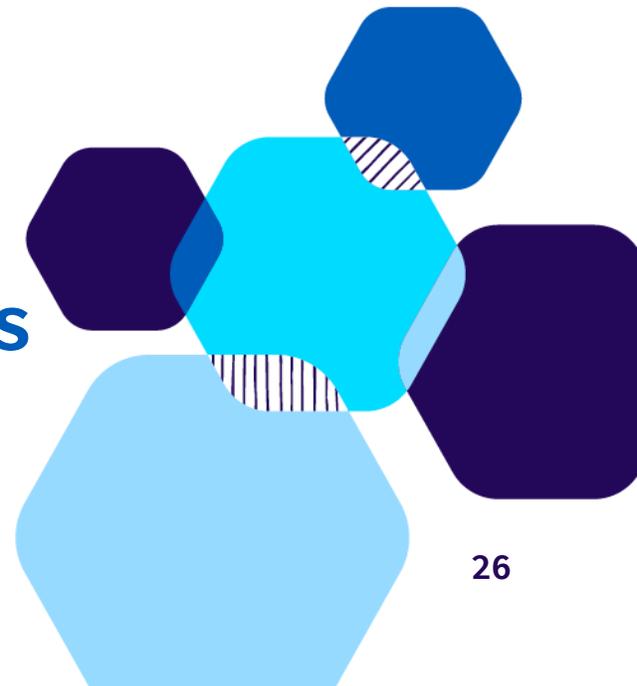
# Creating a Safe Space for Expression

Need for students to feel safe expressing themselves.

## Strategies:

- Normalise mistakes as part of learning.
- Use anonymous feedback tools.

Example: “Weekly feedback circle for anonymous sharing.”



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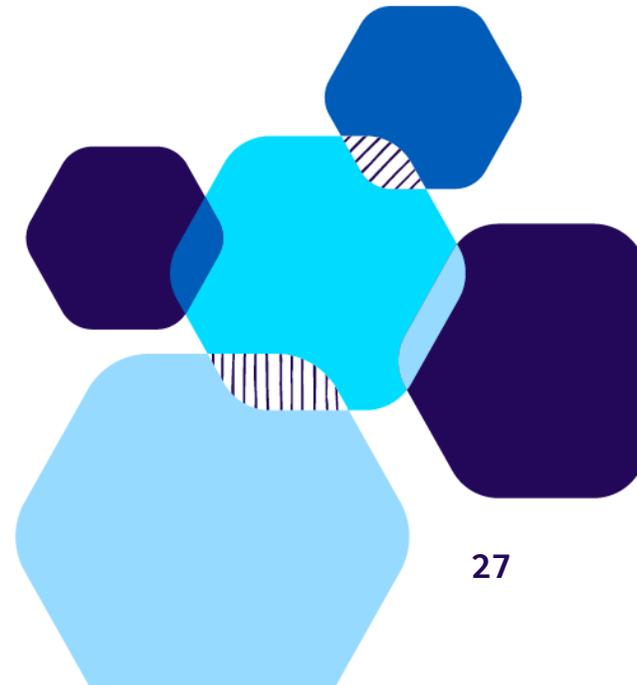
# Cultural Sensitivity and Diversity

Importance of recognising and valuing diversity.

## Strategies for cultural sensitivity:

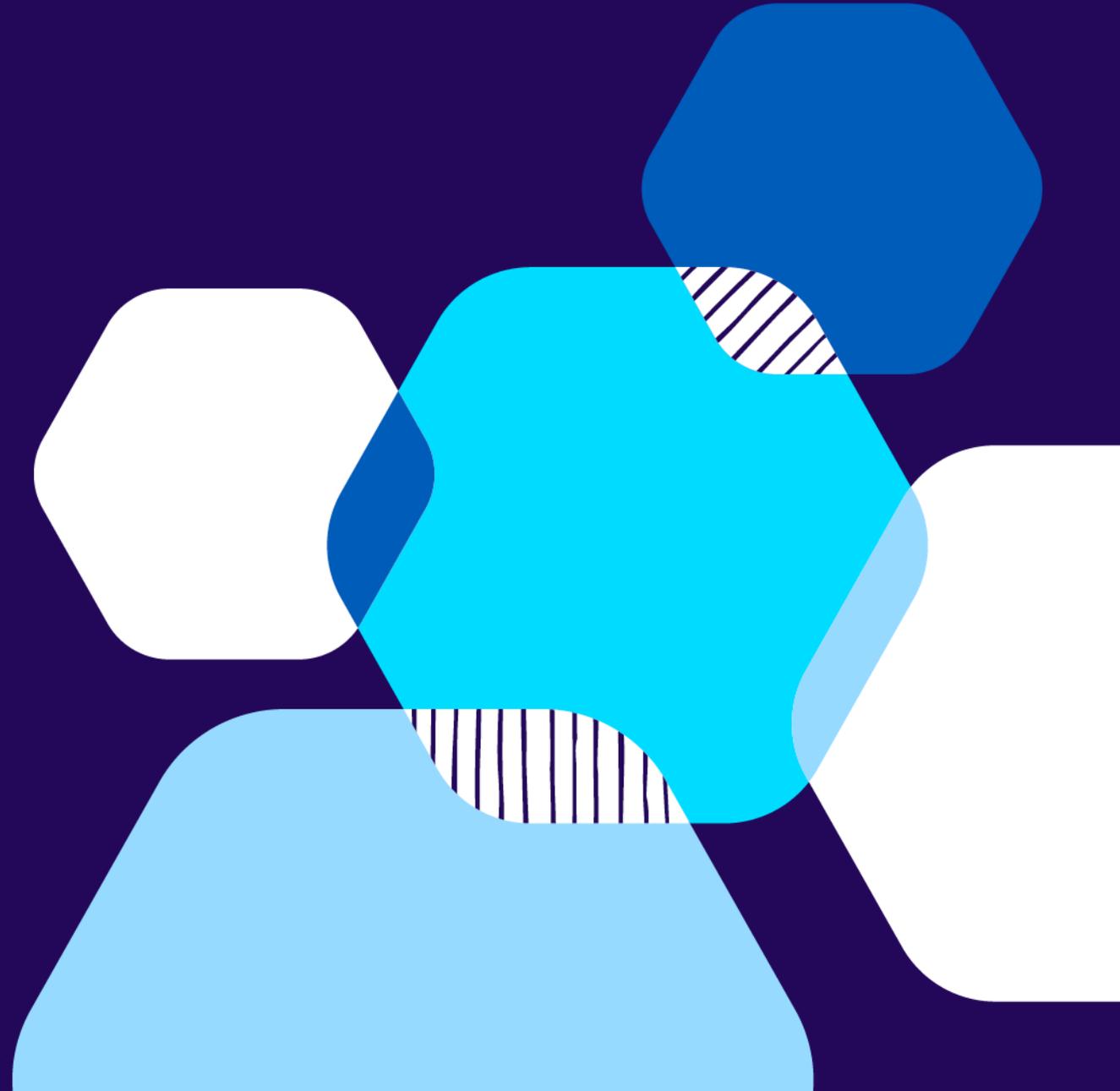
- Celebrate different cultures through themed lessons.
- Encourage students to share their backgrounds.

**Example Activity: “Cultural Show-and-Tell.”**



# Managing misbehaviour in a classroom

**Kanyembo Emmah**



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# How can we manage misbehaviour?

- Classroom management is a delicate art, and dealing with misbehavior is an inevitable part of teaching
- Effective class management promotes a positive learning environment, and support students in developing self-regulation skills
- Let's look at some practical approaches to managing misbehavior in the classroom

**What are the causes of misbehaviour in class?**

**And what can we do to help?**

**Ideas in the chat please**

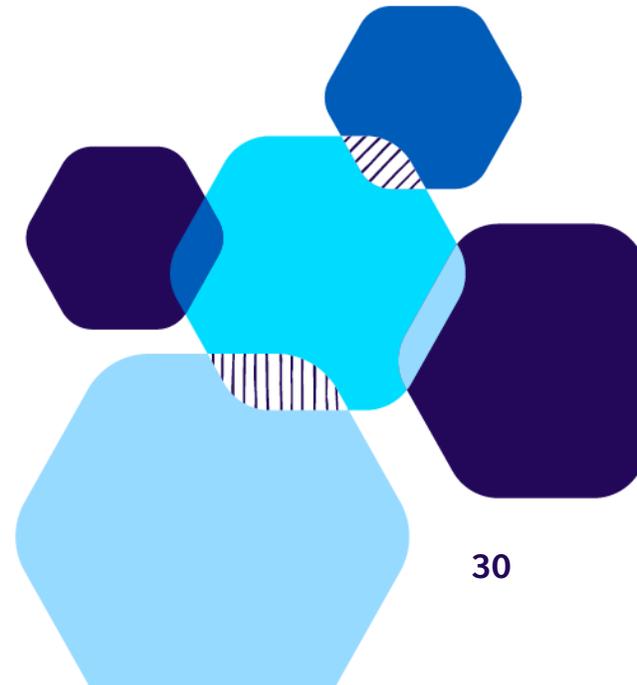
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# Understanding misbehaviour

You need to identify the cause of misbehavior before you choose how to respond.

Here are signs you can look for which might tell you the cause of the misbehavior.

1. Attention seeking
2. Boredom or lack of challenge
3. Frustration or emotional issues
4. Developmental stages



# Please match the reasons for misbehaviour with the strategies in the chat:

Reason for misbehaviour	Possible strategy
1/ Bored / not challenged enough	a) Stay calm and composed / increase teacher proximity eg. move to sit next to that student / use non-verbal hand signals
2/ Seeking attention	b) Use facial expressions / provide students with choices to give them a sense of autonomy and control
3/ Emotional state	c) Change tasks / use learner-centred methodology
4/ Developmental stage	d) Identify root cause / offer emotional support and a listening ear

# Do you agree?

Reason for misbehaviour	Possible strategy
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3/ Emotional state	c) Change tasks / use learner-centred methodology
4/ Developmental stage	d) Identify root cause / offer emotional support and a listening ear

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# Takeaway tips – before our Telegram discussion on Friday

- Please try out some ideas from our webinar in your classes, and note down further ideas on the same topics to share with others at our discussion

You might also like to look at these TeachingEnglish resources:

- Supplementary activities for large classes:

<https://africa.teachingenglish.org.uk/skills/professional-development-resources/supplementary-activities>

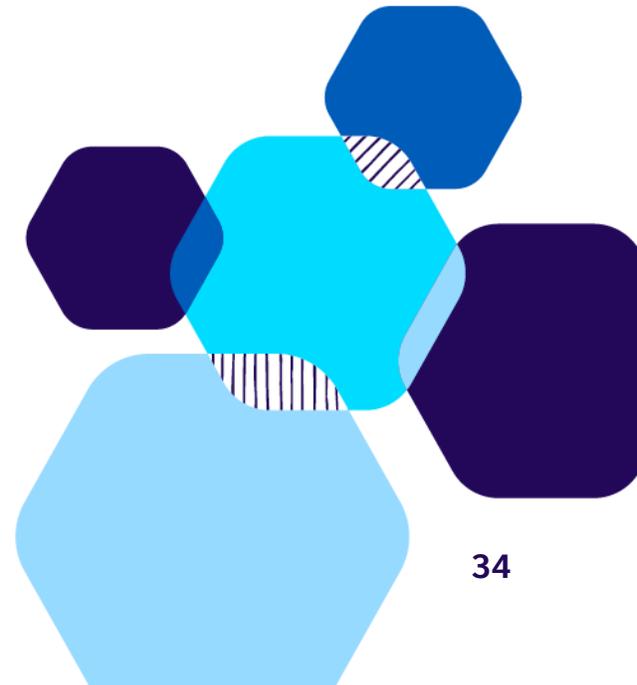
- Webinar recording: managing communicative tasks in large classes:

<https://africa.teachingenglish.org.uk/skills/webinars/communicative-tasks-large-low-resource-classrooms>

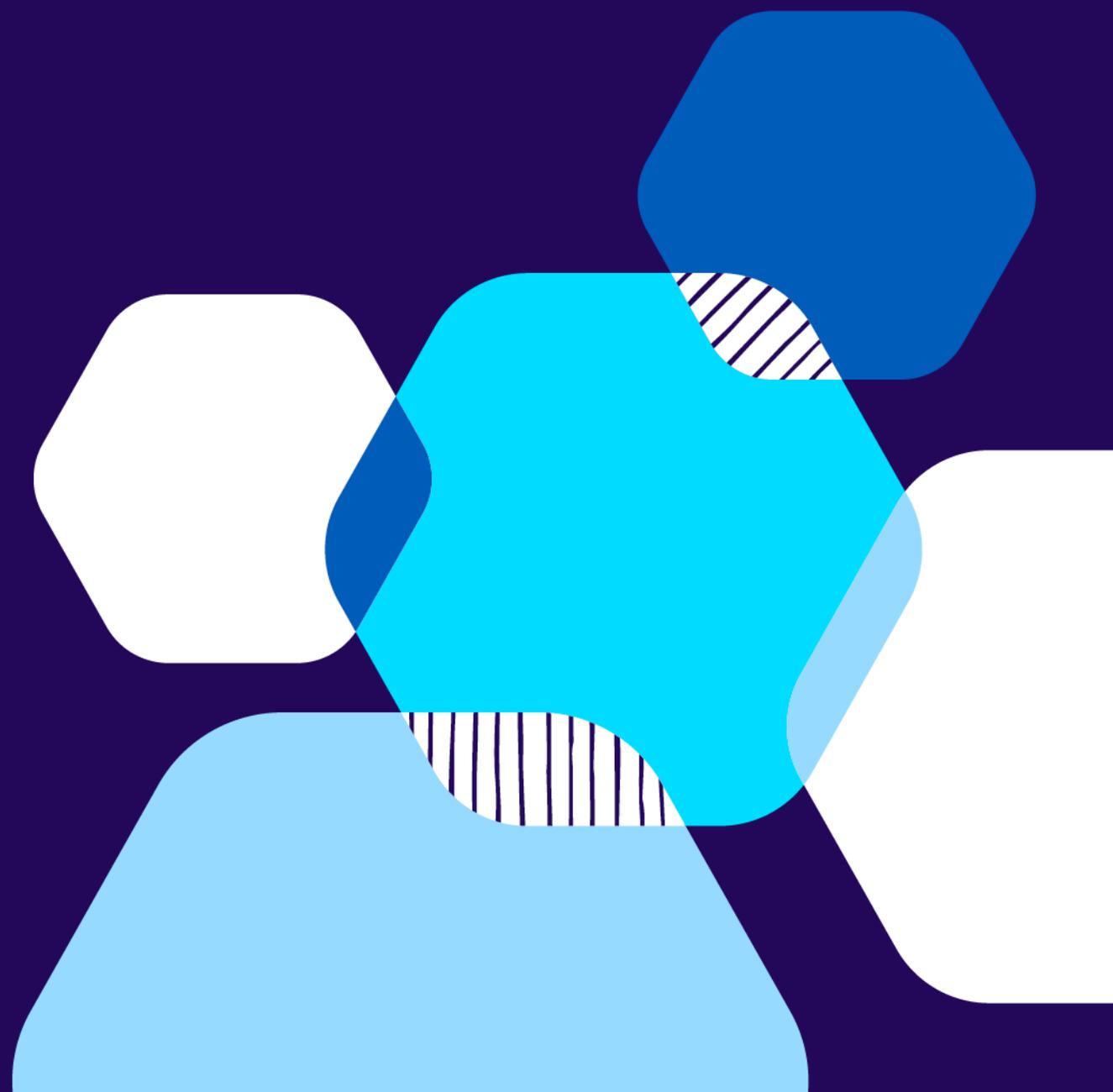
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# References

- ‘The Students classroom of Choice: Giving Students What They Need to Succeed’ by J. McGowan and John A. B. McGowan
- “The Role of Peer Support in Language Learning” (Journal Language Teaching and Research)
- “Building a Supportive Classroom Community” (Educational Psychology Review)



**Thank you**  
**Any questions?**



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