

Do good lessons promote students' attention and behavior?

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Students are better able to regulate themselves in lessons that they consider to be particularly well implemented. This is the conclusion

drawn from a study by the DIPF | Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education, [published](#) in the journal *Learning and Instruction*.

The link between teaching quality and [self-regulation](#) tends to be particularly true for pupils who have problems controlling their behavior and following lessons, for example due to ADHD symptoms.

Good teaching is characterized by the teacher leading the class through the lesson without disruption, encouraging the students to think, taking an interest in them and supporting them individually. The better the teacher is at this, the better the students will be able to regulate their behavior, for example by paying attention, cooperating and adhering to the class rules.

As a result, they learn better. This link, which has already been established in research, has now been examined in more detail in this daily diary study and evaluated with the help of multilevel analyses.

It became clear that the quality of teaching has an impact not only on self-regulation overall, but also in each individual lesson, as Dr. Friederike Blume, lead author of the now published study, summarizes the results.

"When teachers are particularly good at [classroom management](#) and providing student support in a lesson, students are better able to regulate their behavior. When these two characteristics of good teaching are not working well in a lesson, students also reported that they were less able to concentrate and engage."

Cognitive activation, the third characteristic of good teaching, was hardly relevant for self-regulation. Therefore, the personal relationship between teacher and [student](#) is particularly important, emphasizes Dr.

Blume.

This is especially true for students who have difficulties with self-regulation, such as those with [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder](#) (ADHD).

"Many teachers find it difficult to establish a [positive relationship](#) with children with ADHD symptoms," says the educational researcher.

"However, our study showed that in lessons where children with self-regulation difficulties felt particularly supported by their teacher, they were more likely to report being able to concentrate better and follow class rules.

"It is therefore worth taking a positive approach to these children in the classroom and showing a genuine interest in them, as this can reduce the pressure on teachers in the long term and bring more calm to the classroom."

The DIPF researcher also recommends that teachers ask their students for feedback on their teaching from time to time. Although this is still a taboo for many, it can provide valuable information on how to better tailor their teaching to the needs of individual students.

A total of 64 pupils in years 5 and 6 took part in the study. They did not necessarily belong to the same school or class, but were recruited through an email appeal to music schools, sports and leisure centers, for example.

At the start of the study, the children completed a questionnaire about general information such as their [grade level](#) and type of school, as well as how they rated their self-regulation skills. Over the next three school weeks, the children answered daily questions about the last lesson of each day.

The questions related to the quality of teaching (e.g., support from the teacher, disruptions in lessons, stimulation of reflection), as well as their ability to regulate themselves in that lesson (e.g., attention, impulse control, motor activity).

The links between the individual lessons and the corresponding daily entries were evaluated using multilevel analysis. Among other things, the results were analyzed on an intrapersonal level, which allows conclusions to be drawn at the level of the individual child. In addition, interpersonal associations were examined, which allows conclusions to be drawn about all participants together.

Limitations of the study

Studies with such an elaborate design, involving daily diaries, always aim to collect data in as short time as possible. As a result, teaching quality was only measured here on the basis of only few statements, which certainly do not cover all the characteristics of good teaching.

Future studies should therefore take a closer look at classroom interaction processes to explore which features of teaching are particularly beneficial, especially for children with stronger ADHD symptoms.

Furthermore, future studies must show whether the results found here apply to all subjects or only to certain subjects, and the role of different teaching methods.

More information: Friederike Blume et al, It counts in every single lesson: Between- and within-person associations of teaching quality and student self-regulation, *Learning and Instruction* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.learninstruc.2024.101908](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2024.101908)

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