

Using the KonMari method in schools

Efficiency

Author and Netflix star, Marie Kondo's drive to declutter and simplify our lives is currently very popular. With life being busier than ever, working out what to do with all the 'stuff' is difficult and time-consuming. A cluttered workspace adds to our stress by distracting us, wasting our time finding things and polluting our subconscious by making us feel guilty about everything we have yet to do.

The KonMari style is particularly popular because it focuses on avoiding re-clutter as well as helping you declutter. Kondo is famous for using the key guiding question, "Does it spark joy?" She claims that when you use joy as your standard, you feel more confident in recognising and pursuing what makes you happy. Whilst I am not sure many resources or materials surrounding us "spark joy", it can be useful to simplify our workspace and declutter. Even though it may be low on your to-do list, organising your workspace can help you make small adjustments that could ultimately change your life.

While many of us may have spent the summer break tidying and sorting our homes with great success, often we struggle to transfer the same principles to our workplace. So how do you Kondo your classroom or school? Try following these steps, adjusted from the KonMari method:

The best way to find out what we really need is to get rid of what we don't.

Marie Kondo

1. Begin by visualising what you want your space to look like.
2. Sort by category, not location (maybe do this over a few days).
3. Follow the order of: books, papers, electronics, miscellaneous.
4. Hold each item and ask yourself, "Does this spark joy?" then thank and release anything that no longer meets this criteria.
5. After discarding, designate a spot for everything you keep.

If the order of sorting is not working for you (eg. it's hard to start with books because you hate the thought of throwing them away) then work through the categories in a different sequence. Kondo's method aims to help us work out three important things: what we want to surround ourselves with; what our idea of happiness is; and how these both apply to our work and relationships. Most importantly, stay focused on how you want to **feel** in your workspace. Use the steps if they help, but how you do it doesn't matter as much as ensuring your end goal remains in sight.

Other tips for successful decluttering:

- Store items vertically as much as possible to make them easy to access (especially papers and books).
- Use small, attractive boxes to store items in drawers and on shelves. This makes them easy to access and gives everything a home.
- After you've finished discarding and are ready to set up your ideal space, create a separate 'dumping ground' near, but not on, your desk - school life is hectic and all the decluttering principles in the world won't slow down the inevitable onslaught of the detritus of the day.
- Ignore sunk costs, a principle advocated by Seth Godin. He argues that when making a choice, the only thing to consider is what's going to happen in the future, not which investments you've made in the past.

Key points

The 6 basic rules of tidying:

Commit yourself to tidying up

Imagine your ideal lifestyle

Finish discarding first

Tidy by category, not location

Follow the right order

Ask yourself if it sparks joy

Ignore sunk costs:

We will always have bigger wish lists than budgets

It is not beneficial to keep things we aren't using purely because we once invested in those resources

NB. When discarding, do it discreetly. Avoid headlines like "School throws books out!"

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