

Setting Ground Rules in Class: Lesson Plan

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Intention: To establish a good learning environment that meets the needs and desires of the students and that will enable students to hold each other and themselves accountable for the norms of their community.

Population: Intermediate ESOL conversation class

Preparation:

- Discuss: What are rules? Brainstorm examples.
- What happens if you break a rule (in xyz setting)? Who enforces it?
- What are rules of the Welcome Project? (review program policies about attendance, etc.)

Implementation:

1. Ask students “What are *our* rules as a class? We are a community spending X hours a week together. What should we create as a list of rules or guidelines for how to treat each other?”
2. Write down what students say on newsprint where everyone can see it.
3. If the suggestions are very general (e.g. “Treat each other with respect”) try to elicit a specific example of what that might look like.
4. Ask students to make edits if they see errors in grammar or spelling (though this is not the main focus of the activity).
5. After class, type up the rules, make copies, bring to the next class, and distribute them.
6. Pair students for a reading activity. Have each student alternately read the rules out loud to each other.
7. After they practice, ask if everyone agrees with the list and if there are things they want to revise or add. (Decide in advance how you will make the decisions—by consensus? By majority?)
8. Make a list of the revised rules. Post on the wall during each class so they can easily be referred to.
9. Ask students to sign the rules to suggest a contractual obligation.
10. Develop a custom of students giving a copy of the rules to any guest or new student who comes in; the new students can also be asked to sign the rules, and the guests can agree to the rules while they are in the classroom. This facilitates development of cohort and makes the rules a living thing.
11. Periodically, as class progresses, review rules to see if they need to be modified.

Classroom Snapshot:

Students have referred to the rules in passing, most notably referring to the cell phone rule (students are not supposed to have their phones on during class). It has become apparent, however, that it is helpful for students to be allowed to use iPhones to look up definitions and spelling.



Conversation Class Tuesday and Thursday 6 – 8 Class Rules

- Don't smoke in class.
- Music is ok.
- Cell phone – don't use your phone in class. Turn it off.
- Drinking water is good.
- If you can't come to class, call Lisa 908-310-8986
- Try to come to class on time. If you need to leave early *sometimes* it's ok.
- If you don't have someone to watch your kids sometimes, it's ok to bring them.
- Don't speak your native language in class.
- If you're very hungry in class, it's ok to eat. Can collect money to buy pizza or other *healthier* food.
- It's ok to invite guests to come in. It's best if we know ahead of time before they come.
- If we are having a conversation as a full group, everyone should participate.