CLASSROOM PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

PURPOSE
The way that the classroom environment is managed has a significant impact on student learning. Seemingly small procedural practices can also save time and energy. This tool reviews basic administrative principles that can be applied to improve teaching and learning in the classroom.

DESCRIPTION
Although learning will never happen in a perfectly ordered, lock-step way—there will always be some measure of chaos, confusion and uncertainty—good classroom management skills can insulate the confusion centers on the learning, rather than on the administration of the process.

Classroom management refers to organizing and structuring classroom policies and procedures to:
1. Create/maintain a good learning environment
2. Establish shared expectations and assumptions
3. Manage the housekeeping aspects of the class
4. Save time and energy to focus on instruction

First Impressions Count
The first communication, the first request, your initial greeting, the way you introduce the class, the experience students have the first day—all of these things are critical to establishing good classroom management. You will win or lose your students during the first week—sometimes even in the first few minutes—of the semester.

Related Practices:
• Consider memorizing student names before the first day of class. Then greet them at the door.
• Think of your students as disciple leaders in training. Treat them accordingly.
• Allay probable student fears.
• The first day is the course. Don’t use it to just talk about the course. Dive in.

Be prepared and ready
Students read a lot into the readiness of an instructor. They will extrapolate expectations for their own readiness, establish expectations for their roles in learning and peer teaching, and determine the reliability of the instructor based on this.

Related Practices:
• Articulate the learning outcomes of each activity or assignment to students beforehand.
• Clear, detailed, written assignments.
• Provide the rubrics that will be used for assessing each assignment beforehand.
• Provide examples of actual student work that

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reflect the form and quality desired.

- Use templates, graphic organizers, and such to guide student work appropriately.
- Refer students to details in the syllabus.

**EXAMPLES**
The specific examples of implementing these principles and practices are limited only by an instructor’s imagination and creativity. There are several techniques, however, which have become almost classics through wide-spread and successful use. A few to consider are listed here:

**Attendance**
- Students pick up named folders as they enter class. Remaining folders are marked as absent.
- Each folder is used to return graded homework and to collect assignments for grading.
- Silent roll-taking while students work.
- Short one or two-minute quiz at the beginning of class. Note who takes it.

**Learning and Using Student Names**
- Memorize first and last names. It’s easier.
- Have students write strange facts about themselves. Link a strange fact to their name as a mnemonic.
- Name tents for the first several weeks.
- Students assigned to teams that sit together throughout the semester.
- Class-time activity to help students learn names.

**Forming and Re-forming Groups**
- UNO cards are helpful in that they have both a number and a color. Group students first by the number on their card, then by the color.
- For long-term teams, study student profiles and either group or disperse similar students.
- For paired work, require students to work with every other student before the semester ends. Give them a list to keep track.

**Getting the students’ attention**
- A silent hand signal early in the course.
- A bell or other unique sound.
- Two and one minute warnings.

**Tracking participation**
- Jotting notes on a seating chart.

- Writing notes immediately following class.
- Using names when responding to student comments; it helps remember who participated.

**Random name selection**
- Student names on a pencil, pop-cycle stick, or piece of paper and draw from a cup.
- Use gaming dice to choose the order of team participation.

**TIPS**
- Visit other classes. For improving classroom management skills, few things can top visiting the classrooms of other instructors. Seeing how others structure and run their classroom, the procedures and techniques they use, can be powerful.
- Use the Learning Model. Structuring your classes according to a Learning Model pattern lets students know what to expect each day and saves time spent explaining new procedures (See tools about Learning Model Architecture).

**PITFALLS**
- Contrived methods. Sometimes these techniques can seem juvenile and off-putting to college students. Let them in on the joke by admitting this, but explain the usefulness and purpose of the technique.

**KEY ARTICLES**

**OTHER RESOURCES**
- Blog on Classroom Procedures
- Power Teaching Video

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