

EDUC 335 Reading in the Content Field: Secondary

Concepts addressed:

ESTABLISHING CLASSROOM RULES

Rules are guidelines that help to make things go smoothly and productively, they help to establish and maintain a positive learning environment. While secondary level teachers may assume their students are old enough to display appropriate behavior, even older students do not always know what you expect from them. In addition, teachers all have their own set of expectations and levels of tolerance.

Consider the following when establishing classroom rules:

- When setting classroom rules, be sure to work within the existing school or district rules.
- Post your rules and make parents/guardians aware of them through a mailing that is sent home. In addition, create a handout for students detailing your classroom rules.
- State rules in a positive manner, for example, instead of stating "Don't write on the desks" say "Show respect for the property of others."
- It is recommended to have about 5 rules. Having too many rules is confusing to students and makes it more challenging to remember and adhere to them.
- It will be your decision to involve your students in making classroom rules. The research suggests that teacher validity is enhanced when the teacher assumes the initial role when it comes to rule setting. It may be better to involve students in the modification of rules at a later day when they have demonstrated their understanding and respect for the rules.
- It is important for you to adhere to classroom rules as well. Model the behaviors you want students to have.
- Rules should be realistic and enforceable as well as easy to understand and logical.
- Teach your rules as part of your curriculum. Design a lesson plan, explain the behavior, model it, and have students practice it.
- Periodically review the rules and make adjustments when and where necessary.
- If rules are broken, and they will be, deal with it immediately, waiting only confuses students and your rules lose credibility.
- Focus on your rules especially during the first few weeks of school.

Here are some examples of rules appropriate for the secondary level classroom:

- Bring your materials to class every day.
- Be working on your opening assignment when the bell rings.
- Be prepared to do your best in class each day.
- Help your classmates and yourself by respecting the rights of all students to learn.

ABOVE ALL, BE FIRM, FAIR, and CONSISTENT!