INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES



Establishing Norms

Students and teachers use this strategy as they work together to establish norms and expectations that will guide their interactions over the course of the school year or on a particular project or assignment.

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ESTABLISHING NORMS

Summary

This strategy is intended to help students and teachers co-create norms and expectations for their classrooms in a democratic fashion, providing a respectful space for discussion and collaboration. Norms are essential for groups tackling difficult issues or working collaboratively. Over time, norms can evolve—some may be added, while some may be modified or condensed. Constructing norms allows students and teachers opportunities to "build trust" as well as "clarify group expectations" (Wentworth, 2014, p. 138).

Procedure

1. Ask students to independently list what they need from the TEACHER for the class, project, assignment, etc. to be successful (student voice).
2. Give students time to share their thoughts with a partner or small group.
3. Solicit responses from partners or groups and record them.
4. Repeat steps 1-3 with students, now considering what they need from EACH OTHER for the class, project, assignment, etc. to be successful.
5. From the teacher's perspective, provide additional norms necessary for the success of the whole class.
6. Condense similar ideas and discuss any that raise questions or concerns.
7. Optional: Students and teacher can sign the co-created document, keeping in mind that it may evolve over time.

Modified from Wentworth, M. (2014). Forming ground rules (Creating norms). School Reform Initiative: A Community of Learners. SRI: Boulder, CO.