

**GLCA: Teaching Writing to Multilingual International Students in a Small Liberal Arts Setting, College of Wooster, November 1-3, 2019**  
Inclusive Classrooms and Student Agency Module, *Dr. Tamara Stasik*

**6. Student Activity-- Classroom Rights and Expectations**

All students deserve a space where they can be both comfortable and challenged, where they know they will be respected free to explore new ideas and concepts as well as examine long held beliefs. This activity sets up an inclusive atmosphere that privileges students' knowledge, collaborates with students as co-constructors of knowledge, and establishes a critical dialogue with students about their own expectations of what is acceptable classroom behavior and linguistic activity, "creating classroom norms reflective of diversity" (Salazar, Norton, Tuitt, 2010).

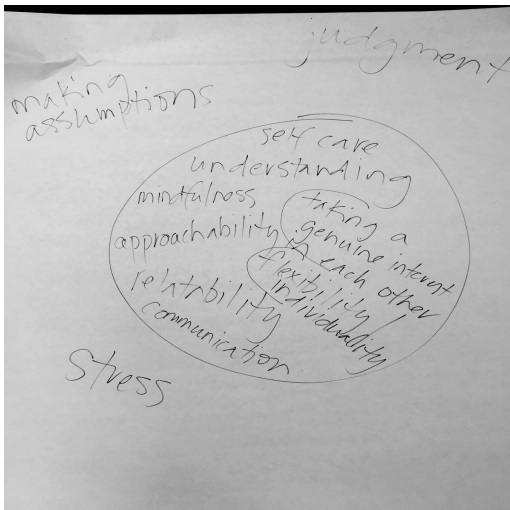
**Faculty Planning:** This activity focuses on interpersonal awareness and inclusive pedagogy as identified in the [Practices for Inclusive Classrooms](#) handout using Salazar, Norton and Tuitt. An excellent overview is [Recognizing and Addressing Cultural Variations in the Classroom](#) (Carnegie Mellon) specifically the section "Suggestions for instructors" that provides advice for making expectations explicit on grading, discussion, faculty/student roles, classroom etiquette.

Imagine your ideal classroom: what would be your inclusive classroom norms for communication? Eg: the right to be heard, be respectful yet still critical, calling-in rather than calling-out, attentive listening, what's shared in class stays in class/confidentiality; humility; empathy etc. How can you communicate this to your students?

**Student Activity**

Level: First Year Students, Bridge Programs

Activity: During the first week of class, block some time to discuss what makes a successful college student. Invite student perceptions of what makes an inclusive classroom. Draw a large circle on the board, or large poster/paper, and discuss the symbolic meaning of a circle. Ask them what things they want to keep inside the circle (classroom) and leave outside the circle.



You can begin with concrete specifics (students often start with rules they have learned before, "no phones, no gum chewing," etc) but encourage them to share what makes them feel safe, supported, and respected. If language is not mentioned, make a few suggestions to consider. Often a discussion of "English Only" rules will ensue.

After the circle is filled, reiterate that you will create an "agreement" (I try to avoid contractual language, as that invites other power issues) or "course rights and expectations" that you will then ask all students

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to read through, and agree with (invite any changes) and then sign and hand back to you. This formalizing of the initial activity shows that this is an endeavor that you take seriously, demonstrating caring and respect for everyone's desired behaviors and expectations.

It is also important to discuss consequences if anyone fails to respect the class norms (including you). This can often take some negotiation or clarification between your course objectives and their expectations. When an infringement occurs, be sure to invite discussion and facilitate dialogue between students using the framework; and revisit the norms if the class wants to revise them.

Alternative: Create a version of the rights and expectations as part of your syllabus/course policies and procedures, invite their input and revise accordingly.

The typed agreement below is clear, but creates a very [contractual form](#) that some may feel is too "regulatory" and the repeated phrases "we will" somewhat domineering. The image above is an example of brainstorming, could be added to, revised, and posted in the classroom or online.

**Classroom Rights and Expectations Agreement**

**Human rights and responsibilities of both teacher and student**

**Classroom etiquette: Our mutual expectations for each other**

1. We will listen to each other respectfully
2. We will not speak while others are talking
3. When we disagree with someone, we will critique that person's ideas in a respectful and constructive manner
4. When other people's perspectives are different from ours, we will try to understand them rather than simply criticizing them
5. We will try to remain open-minded and self-aware
6. We will try to help each other
7. We will avoid stereotypes and humor that are disparaging of others
8. We will intervene politely with gentle reminders when class members are being disrespectful or unfair to others
9. We will try to speak English in the classroom for this English language course. We understand that we might at times have language [fatigue](#) need a moment to confer in another language.

**Students have a right to expect . . .**

1. Students have a right to expect that I will hand them a [course syllabus](#) with clearly stated:
  - o Course objectives ("What are we trying to learn in here?")
  - o Assignment descriptions ("What do I have to do to pass?")
  - o Specific due dates ("When do I have to have it done?")
  - o Grading policies ("How will I be graded?")
2. Students have a right to expect patience and effort to understand them.
3. Students have a right to expect class sessions will start on time and end on time.
4. Students have a right to expect opportunities to discuss course components (assignments, lectures, presentations, exams) outside of class time.
5. Students have a right to expect constructive feedback on drafts of papers submitted for me to review (if those drafts are submitted well in advance of due dates).
6. Students have a right to expect that papers will be graded and returned within two weeks (provided they were turned in on time).
7. Students have a right to expect re-evaluations of work that they think may have been graded unfairly or improperly.

**As professor and TAs, we have the right to expect that..**

1. students will arrive on time and prepared (completed homework)
2. students will [stay actively engaged](#) for the entire class period and participate
3. students needing clarification or assistance will ask for it
4. students will turn in assignments on time
5. students will immediately inform me when extenuating circumstances affect attendance
6. students will only use technology for class purposes; online dictionaries only with permission
7. students will follow the university code of academic integrity (no cheating or plagiarism)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_