



WHY CO-CREATE CLASS NORMS?

Class norms represent familiar ways members of a learning community interact with one another, created through implicit and explicit reinforcement. They can cover everything from academic expectations, how to communicate or disagree, behaviors to exhibit or avoid, collaboration expectations, etc. When students help create these norms, they understand and follow them better, setting the stage for productive and sustained engagement. Class norms can be revisited regularly, serving as a reminder before challenging classroom moments or when adherence seems to be slipping. Class norms can also serve as a model for small groups to set their own group norms for longer projects.

PLANNING FOR A CLASS NORMS DISCUSSION:

Class norms are most effective when agreed upon at the start of a semester and with an established cohort of students. Consider the scope of the guidelines you hope to co-generate. You might consider focusing the exercise on a standard set of categories, for example:

- attendance,
- preparing for engagement during class,
- collaboration with peers,
- responsiveness to feedback, and/or
- discussion etiquette.

Finally, determine in advance how you will amalgamate student responses into a final list. Your selected procedure may depend upon how much time you have available in and/or out of class. For example, you might: have a whole class discussion to clarify/justify/refine the list, collect student submissions via a survey and consolidate them into a final list, etc.

IMPLEMENTATION OF A CLASS NORMS DISCUSSION:

1. Share an overview of the purpose, importance, and value of setting class norms. You might also foreground the discussion with any “non-negotiable” guidelines or class policies that students should keep in mind.
2. Provide time for individuals or small groups of students to identify their ideas for class norms and expectations.
3. Collect submissions from individuals or small groups.
4. Consolidate the submissions into a final list of class norms.
5. Close the loop by sharing the final list of norms back with the class, and post them in a place where they can be revisited as needed (e.g., in eLC).