

Ruple: Teaching Health Careers Education

Ten Rules for Classroom Management

1. **Begin with a clear definition of what you expect.** Do not make the mistake of going into a classroom without a clearly defined set of rules. Usually these rules are spelled out in writing for students in your syllabus. Students will assess you and decide quickly what they can and cannot do in your classroom. Begin as the authority, and avoid having to “get tough” later in the semester.
2. **Be fair.** Adult students have a keen sense of what is and is not fair. If you want to be respected, respect your students. Treat all students equitably, making sure that even if your star pupil breaks a rule, the result is the same.
3. **Don’t let disruptions become big interruptions.** When problems arise, deal with them immediately; move quickly to prevent a loss of class momentum. If students are talking out of turn, ask one of them a question to try to get the class back on track; if they are uncooperative, ask them to leave the classroom. Every time you have to stop teaching to deal with disruptions, you deprive the serious students who want to learn.
4. **Do not discipline students in front of other students.** Every confrontation produces a winner and a loser. You have a responsibility to maintain order, but you do not have the right to embarrass students in front of their peers. Do not make “an example” out of one student’s behavior. Deal with problems in a confidential manner. Demonstrate a willingness to help the student overcome the problem and get back on the learning track.
5. **Use some humor.** Sometimes a good laugh is all it takes to get the focus back on the teaching activity at hand. However, do not confuse good humor with sarcasm. While humor can quickly diffuse a situation, sarcasm leads to escalation and hurt feelings. Use good judgment. What you think is funny might be offensive to some students.
6. **Expect every student to be an active learner.** Expect that your students will be stellar and that most likely they will attempt to live up to your expectations. Continually remind your students of your expectations in terms of behavior, participation, and accomplishments. For example, you might say, “During this case study discussion in class, I expect you to respect others’ opinions and listen to what each person has to say.”
7. **Pack your classroom time with activities and information.** Classroom time should never be a void. By not filling the time devoted to the subject, you are telling the students you do not care about their time *or* the subject.

8. **Be dependable.** Consistently enforce your rules. Do not ignore rule breakers one day and then overreact the next day. Students should be able to expect the same behavior from you every day, or they will lose respect for you as a teacher.
9. **Make all rules clear.** Keep it simple—and *clear*. Students should understand what is and is not acceptable. Make sure students understand the consequences of breaking the rules from the very start of the classroom relationship.
10. **Start clean every day.** Start each class with the expectation that students will abide by the rules and will do the work expected of them. Do not make assumptions about students' behavior. This does not mean that a student who has a history of problems gets a clean slate, but it does mean that each day they get the chance to start fresh.

Adapted from Kelly, M. (n. d.) Top 10 tips for classroom discipline and management.
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<http://712educators.about.com/od/discipline/tp/disciplinetips.htm>