

Classroom Management

Matthew Rynbrandt

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Michigan State University

PowerPoint modified from Dr. Jeff Bale

My assumptions

- That there is a spectrum of experience as language teachers.
 - ❖ Context (school or university, lead teacher or teacher assistant, etc.)
 - ❖ Length of service (a few months to many years)
- That what made you a successful language teacher at home may not automatically make you a successful language teacher here.
- That classroom dynamics in the U.S. may not be the same as in your country.

Goal for this session

- **To help you feel Comfortable, Competent, and Confident in your new classroom**
- Two questions to guide our work:
 - ❖ “What should I expect from U.S. students?”
 - ❖ “How do I organize my classroom and my lessons to best support language learning?”

Classroom Setup—Lecture Hall



Classroom Setup—Tables



Classroom Setup—Individual Chairs



What should I expect from U.S. students

- Which 3 adjectives describe the “typical” university student in your country?
- Which 3 adjectives do you think would describe the “typical” university student in the U.S.?
 - ❖ This activity doesn’t work if you are not honest in responding - so ...
 - ❖ **DON’T BE POLITE—BE HONEST!**
- Write them down on the paper provided to you.
- Then share them with a partner at your table.

What should I expect from U.S. students

- Extra motivation because you are here
- The potential for different attitudes towards:
 - ❖ Rewards for doing work
 - ❖ Who works for whom
 - ❖ Technology (cell phones, laptops, etc.)
 - ❖ Attendance and punctuality
 - ❖ Others

Above all else: LEAD BY EXAMPLE!

Some principles to consider

- **Be prepared**
 - ❖ Think about how you will respond to certain behaviors *before* you experience them.
- **Be explicit**
 - ❖ Tell your students *in advance* what you expect from them.
- **Be understanding**
 - ❖ Think about why a student did what s/he did before acting.
- **Be consistent**
 - ❖ If you say you'll do something on the syllabus or any other official class documents, then you have to do it.
- **Be confident**
 - ❖ You are the expert. Good advice: “fake it until you make it.”

The connection between classroom management and language learning

- What do we know about effective language learning activities?
 - ❖ Learners need to have language input that is slightly above their current proficiency level (Krashen's "i+1")
 - ❖ Learners need lots of opportunities to use the language for meaningful, relatable reasons
 - ❖ Learners need lots of opportunities for interaction
 - ❑ ... sometimes with learners at their own level
 - ❑ ... sometimes with more proficient speakers

Scenarios

- On your desk are 4 scenarios that are fairly common in the university language classroom.
- At your tables, work with a partner and divide the 4 scenarios between you so that each group has a different scenario.
- Use your sheet to take notes. First, think about what you would do. Second, reflect on this situation and think about what you could learn from it as the teacher.
- Be prepared to summarize your discussion to the rest of the group *in 2-3 sentences at the most*.
- After 20 minutes of discussion, we will look at possible reactions to each scenario.

Example Scenario

It is the end of the 2nd week of class and John has come late to the majority of classes so far this semester. The rest of the class has generally been on time.

What do you do?

Would you:

- a) Not say anything yet. It's early in the semester and his behavior may change.
- b) Make a general announcement to the class explaining how disrespectful it is to be late.
- c) Take him aside and ask if there is a problem. Explain the consequences of continued tardiness.

Scenario 1

Would you:

- a) Give Nelia an extra credit assignment worth the same amount of points as the missed exam.
- b) Explain to Nelia the difference between her situation and Rana's situation.
- c) Explain to Nelia that her priority should be school, not work.

Reflection

Scenario 2

Would you:

- a) Pause the slide show and ask the students to use each of the first 10 new words in a role play with a partner.
- b) Clap your hands together and ask them to sit up and pay attention.
- c) Stop the lesson. Ask them what is wrong and why they aren't paying attention to the material.

Reflection

Scenario 3

Would you:

- a) Explicitly teach the commands again in English. For the first week after the midterm, emphasize the commands and say them much slower than usual.
- b) Go back to giving directions and commands in the target language and then in English.
- c) Continue to use only the target language and meet with the students who do not understand outside of the class to explain.

Reflection

Scenario 4

Would you:

- a) Be sure to call on Shawn in class every day so that he will at least participate in class a little bit.
- b) Tell Shawn that his grade will suffer if he does not participate in class.
- c) Make Shawn a group leader in the next assignment. Have him responsible for representing the group to the class. Praise him (and his group) for their work.

Reflection

General advice

- Confirm the problem before reacting
 - ❖ Is your lesson too hard? Too boring? Too...?
 - ❖ Is there a valid reason the student is acting that way?
- General reminders—teach your expectations!
- I-messages
 - ❖ Consider: “You’re being disruptive.”
 - ❖ Versus: “I find it distracting when you talk over me. If you have a question about what I’m saying, can you please ask me directly?”
- Discuss with student individually outside of class
- Ask for ideas from your more-experienced colleagues

Recap

- What should I expect from U.S. students?
- How do I manage my classroom to best support language learning?
- Have questions or need more info?
 - ❖ Contact me at rynbran1@msu.edu
 - ❖ View the Classroom Management Module on the Foreign Language Teaching Methods website from University of Texas–Austin

<http://coerll.utexas.edu/methods/>