

CLASSROOM CULTURE

Classroom Expectations

Creating a positive learning environment for every student

Clear classroom expectations help students feel safe, respected, and prepared to learn. In an ASL classroom, expectations also create an environment where visual communication can thrive. When students understand how the classroom operates from the very beginning, they are more likely to participate with confidence.

Strong expectations help students communicate effectively, stay engaged, respect one another, and create a positive learning environment.

Seven Expectations to Set

Introduce them a few at a time rather than all at once on day one.

01 Create a Visual Learning Environment

- Keep sightlines clear.
- Make eye contact before signing.
- Ensure students can see the teacher and one another.
- Reduce unnecessary distractions.

02 Voice On vs. Voice Off

Explain when voice may be used and when students are encouraged to communicate visually. Help students understand that ASL is a visual language, and that both confidence and communication develop over time.

03 One Signer at a Time

Encourage students to allow one person to sign at a time, so everyone can follow the conversation and practice receptive skills.

04 Respect the Deaf Community

Teach students to value Deaf culture, respect different communication styles, and appreciate ASL as a complete language.

05 Partner Work

Rotate partners regularly so students become comfortable communicating with many classmates and build a stronger classroom community.

06 Technology Expectations

Use ASLdeafined and other technology as learning tools. Encourage students to stay focused and avoid distractions during class.

07 Mistakes Are Part of Learning

Create a classroom where students understand that making mistakes is a natural and valuable part of learning a new language.

Paul's Best Practice

Model the expectations you want to see.

When students observe patience, respect, eye contact, encouragement, and enthusiasm from their teacher, they are much more likely to demonstrate those same behaviors.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- ✗ Introducing too many rules at once.
- ✗ Correcting every small mistake.
- ✗ Inconsistently enforcing expectations.
- ✗ Focusing on rules more than relationships.

Three Quick Wins

- ✓ Teach expectations through activities instead of lectures.
- ✓ Review expectations often during the first few weeks.
- ✓ Praise students when they demonstrate positive classroom behaviors.

Reflection

A few weeks in, ask yourself:

Do my classroom expectations encourage students to communicate with confidence and treat one another with respect?

Continue Exploring

Continue setting up your classroom with these Teacher Resources:

- ▶ Classroom Management Tips
- ▶ Building Classroom Community
- ▶ 25 Ice Breakers for ASL Classes
- ▶ Reviewing Without Boring Students
- ▶ The First 30 Days

Classroom expectations are not about controlling students. They are about creating an environment where every student has the opportunity to communicate, learn, and succeed.

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