

How to Teach Rules and Procedures

Guidelines for Teaching Rules and Procedures

When students know what you expect from them, it is easier to teach your material.
It is not too late to reconsider your rules and procedures.

What is a rule? What is a procedure?

Rules refer to **general expectations** or **standards** for **classroom behavior**. The purpose is to create a strong expectation what is or is not acceptable. Some **examples** are:

- Bring materials to class
- come to class on time
- Listen to students when they are talking

Ideally, you should start teaching your rules on the first day of school and continue reviewing them throughout the year putting a special emphasis on the first month.

Procedures refer to a specific **activity** and **methods** for accomplishing daily routines.

Some **examples** are:

- policy for handing in late assignments
- policy for coming in late
- policy for working in groups

How should you go about teaching rules?

- Say the rule clearly.
- Discuss why the rule is important
- Provide both positive and negative examples of the rule
- Don't overdo this one, but discuss the consequences
- You should have a few rules (3-4 should be enough)

Teaching Procedures

- Explain the procedure and the reason for it.
- Demonstrate or describe it.
- Provide ample opportunities to practice
- Give feedback whenever necessary

Remember the three R's: review, repeat, reinforce. In meeting with anyone who helps in your classroom is a viable place to bring up the objectives and rules that you wish to bring into your class.

Teacher Support and Classroom Organization

Teaching rules and procedures is a big part of classroom organization.
Brush up on your classroom management tactics and skills.

Procedures for Teaching Rules

Effective classroom management begins when a teacher knows the particular types of disruptive behavior s/he wants to curb and the types of positive behavior s/he wants to promote.

This decision has important implications for new and in-service teachers in particular. Deciding on effective rules and procedures is important in establishing teacher credibility.

Students challenge teacher authority when they are simply told the rules. Rules need to be thoughtfully planned so that a teacher can easily and practically enforce them and they will be taken seriously.

Rules should not be taught in isolation. “Rules and procedures should be developed in conjunction with teaching strategies that help students meet their personal and academic needs” (Cangelosi 1993).

Rules teaching and enforcement goes hand in hand with positive reinforcement and feedback. There are cases however when these two elements do not effectively operate together and will not generate a positive classroom environment for learning.

A Few Tips to Work By:

- The teacher should respect the students
- The teacher should understand them and treat them maturely

Teaching the rules does not imply only communicating them but also maintaining them. From my own personal experience, I have found that it is better to work with the students than from above terms. In practical terms, this means, communicating your expectations to them of how you expect them to work in class and behave from the beginning of the lesson to the end.

And then there is that something **extra** that strengthens a great bridge of trust and cooperation between student and teacher. In practical terms, it is a worthwhile investment to build a code of conduct or rules together with the students.

I have come to the conclusion that for a beginning teacher, teaching the rules is telling the students the rules while a more experienced teacher shares her expectations with the students and builds the rules together with the students.