

Practices for Setting Clear Class Expectations

Navigating through ambiguous class expectations has the potential to negatively impact student engagement and achievement (Blair, 2017). It is impossible for students to know or adhere to class expectations on behaviors, assignments, and assessments if expectations are not clearly expressed from the first day of class.

Here are some practices for setting clear class expectations:

- **Create Organized Instructions** - Class syllabi are considered [instructional learning tools](#) or what Rumore (2016) calls “operator’s manual[s]” that set the tone for the course. Your syllabus should be well-organized, comprehensive, easy to read, and convey information regarding course requirements and expectations. *Remember:* Expectations go both ways; so, be sure to state your expectations too!
- **State Frequency and Forms of Feedback** - [Early and frequent feedback is essential](#) (e.g., class discussion, written comments, rubrics) and provides an opportunity to build support for students and construct learning opportunities as they adjust to their unfamiliar learning environment (Blair, 2017). Setting clear expectations about the frequency of feedback can increase interest of learning and reduce ambiguity.
- **Enhance Effective Student-Teacher Communication** - In a recent study, Amadi and Paul (2017) revealed that for students, effective student-teacher communication improves social interaction with peers, improves collaborative learning, and increases problem-solving for multi-task questions. To enhance effective student-teacher communication, consider the following suggestions:

- **Establish clear student learning outcomes** - Setting clear [student learning outcomes](#) communicates the desired behavior or outcome of the class. Well-written learning objectives should be SMART, which includes specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and time-defined.
- **Be an active listener** - The practice of active listening requires paying attention to the student with minimal distractions and intentions to understand and learn (Graham, 2010). For online classes, establishing your visibility could be one way of becoming an active listener. As a part of your syllabus, it would be beneficial to remind students that you are available through phone or videoconferencing.
- **Call students by preferred names** - This practice may seem obvious, but using students’ names communicates respect, acknowledges students’ presence, and promote inclusivity (Glenz, 2014).
- **Provide individualized feedback** - Practice providing personal feedback that reinforce the content, increase students’ confidence, identify students’ strengths, and provide ways to help them improve their mistakes (Blair, 2017).
- **Get feedback from your students** - In addition to the end-of-the-course evaluation, give students an opportunity to provide anonymous feedback on your lessons, activities, etc. This practice will help you to identify “what went well” and “what are some areas of improvements.”

References

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