

APPENDIX B:

Classroom Teaching Tips

Establishing Classroom Ground Rules

There are several ways to establish classroom ground rules. Ground rules help create a safe and comfortable classroom atmosphere for learning together, solving problems, and communicating feelings and ideas. Three ways to generate classroom ground rules are:

- Preferred: Have the students generate the ground rule list. This process empowers them and gives them ownership of the list. Ask them to think about what is needed to ensure a safe environment where students can feel comfortable discussing challenging and sensitive topics. If students have difficulty coming up with ground rules, or do not come up with a particular ground rule you feel is important, provide prompts or add to the list and ask for consensus.
- Alternative: List ground rules you commonly use in class, then ask students for feedback and any additional ground rules. When a student proposes a new ground rule, ask the rest of the class if they agree to it. If most do, add it to the list.
- Alternative: List ground rules and ask whether all rules are agreeable.

Sample Classroom Ground Rules

The following sample ground rules will help students feel connected with their peers and confident about expressing themselves during classroom discussions and group work.

We will:

1. Listen to questions actively and respect others when they are talking. There are no “stupid” questions.
2. Honor privacy; avoid disclosing private matters or eliciting private information from others. Speak from the third person, e.g., “people say” and “What if someone who....” instead of divulging one’s own or anyone else’s personal experience. Because there can be no guarantee of confidentiality in a classroom, we will never share any confidential information about ourselves or anyone else in a classroom setting.
3. Participate actively in classroom discussions and activities and have the option to “pass.”
4. Use correct terminology at all times during classroom discussions and activities, including role-plays.
5. Ask questions for clarification if confused.
6. Take turns speaking.
7. Use the anonymous classroom “Question Box.”

Teacher Note: It is important to set a ground rule for how classroom questions and discussions will be managed. Do you prefer that students raise their hands so you can call on them? Or would you like students to “pass the microphone” by speaking only when they are holding a designated object, such as a stuffed animal or other safe object. Thus when students have a question or want to share an opinion they ask for the object.

The “Question Box” is optional but recommended. It is a place where students can place anonymous questions they might be fearful or hesitant to ask in class. It also gives teachers time to think about or research answers to challenging questions. To create a Question Box, cut a slot in the lid of a shoebox. It’s nice to decorate the box (e.g., with wrapping paper, newsprint, comic strips, etc.) or ask for a student volunteer to decorate it. Display the Question Box in the classroom and inform students that they can drop anonymous questions in there at any time. If you have space in your classroom for multiple Question Boxes, you can label them accordingly, e.g., Question Box for Period 7, Ms. Smith. To encourage questions, you may wish to distribute index cards periodically to all students and ask each to write a question, fold the card, and place it in the box. Any students who don’t have questions should write “One thing that is important to know about [the topic being covered] is...” Thus all students contribute something to the discussion. It is helpful to tell students a day or so in advance that you will be asking for questions so they can think about what they want to write. Before the next class, sort the questions and consider how you want to handle them. Instead of answering all questions yourself, consider reading some of the questions aloud and asking the class how they would respond.

Classroom Management Strategies for Reinforcing Ground Rules

1. Post the ground rules where students can see them during the entire class period. Use newsprint or large poster paper so that students can refer to the list.
2. Number ground rules so you can refer to them quickly: “Number 7!” This concise reminder saves time and prompts students to check back to the ground rules list.
3. Model the ground rules with the class. For example, ask students to raise sample questions using ground rule #2 for clarification. Be certain that students understand, practice and adhere to using third person statements for all questions and classroom discussions.
4. Adhere to the ground rules consistently. If you don’t, it may be difficult to enforce them later.
5. If ground rules are routinely broken, review the list with the class for understanding. If a student asks an inappropriate question (e.g., one that discloses personal information), allow the student to rephrase. However, if the behavior persists, have a private conversation with the student and follow the school’s ladder of referral in adherence to the *Discipline Code*.
6. Revisit the ground rules occasionally and add any new items to the list as necessary.

How to Host Guest Speakers

Guest speakers bring current events to life by telling students about their experiences, agencies, or programs. They should supplement not supplant your HIV/AIDS lessons. Students get the chance to talk to a person they might not otherwise get to meet, and to gain more insight into the issues they are studying. Guest speakers can be especially valuable during HIV/AIDS instruction. Guest speakers can enrich grade/age/developmentally appropriate instruction by addressing the following topics:

- A sexuality education professional can talk about why abstinence is the best protection against HIV.
- A teenager or adult can tell what it is like to live with HIV/AIDS.
- An HIV/AIDS counselor can report on how people with AIDS and their families cope and can introduce the class to an HIV/AIDS resource in the community.
- An HIV/AIDS activist can describe the process and experience of working for greater HIV/AIDS awareness, advocacy, and resources, and discuss how students can become involved.
- A doctor, nurse, or medical researcher can provide insight into the progress of HIV/AIDS treatment.

Inviting Guest Speakers

Identify and invite speakers by:

- Calling or writing to HIV/AIDS resources. (See Appendix E, “Resources for More Information and/or Counseling.”)
- Visiting HIV/AIDS resources in the school community, such as a clinic, hospital, or HIV/AIDS support group.
- Suggesting people featured in newspapers or magazines, on the Internet, or on TV or radio shows.
- Compiling a list of possible speakers. If possible, involve students in deciding whom to invite.

Teacher Note: Remember to obtain approval from your principal before inviting a guest to speak about HIV/AIDS or related topics. Meet or talk by phone with the guest speaker in advance to determine the appropriateness for the grade level. Examine presentation materials (e.g., outlines, slides, films, videos, brochures, handouts) with your principal at least 72 hours prior to the presentation.

Encourage Students to Participate by...

- Making Phone Calls: When a student calls an organization, hospital, clinic, or other HIV/AIDS resource, instruct him or her to:
 - State briefly, “I am a student at [name of school]. I am calling to request a guest speaker for my class.” Some organizations have an established “speakers program,” while others are not as accustomed to requests for a guest speaker.
 - Be polite but persistent. If you need help finding the right contact person, ask to be connected with the office of the organization’s director.
 - Follow the “five Ws” described below to help guide the conversation.
- Writing an Email or Letter to Guest Speakers: When students write an email or letter inviting a guest to speak to the class, instruct them to remember the “five Ws” of writing:
 - Who: Identify who you are. (“My name is _____. I am a student at _____ school in the ____ grade. My teacher, _____, is teaching us about HIV/AIDS.”)
 - Why: Why are you writing? (“I would like to invite you to speak to our class.”) Why did you choose this speaker? (“You have been a courageous example of how to live with HIV,” or “A representative of your agency can help us understand how an HIV antibody testing site works.”)
 - What: What do you want the speaker to do? What HIV/AIDS topic(s) should the speaker address? (“We would like you to speak about _____, and then answer students’ questions. If you have materials such as handouts, films, etc., please forward them via email at least 72 hours before your presentation so that our faculty advisor can review them.”)
 - When: When do you want the speaker to come? By what date should the speaker respond? (“Our class meets every Wednesday from 1:30 to 2:15 PM. Would you be available to speak to us one Wednesday next month? Please call or email [teacher’s name, phone number, and email address] as soon as possible.”)
 - Where: Type all letters, using school letterhead or including the school’s name, address, and phone number at the top of the page. Use clear email subject lines, e.g., Invitation to Speak at [Name of School]. Carefully proofread and spell-check letters and emails. Copy the principal on all emails or letters.

- Preparing for the Guest Speaker’s Visit:
 - Inform the speaker that you need to review his or her speech and presentation materials (e.g., outlines, slides, films, videos, brochures, handouts) at least 72 hours in advance of the visit, according to school and New York City Department of Education policies. You also need advance notice of any equipment needed (TV/DVD player, computer with LCD projector, etc.). Ask if the speaker needs directions or information about public transportation or parking.
 - Ask students to anticipate what the guest speaker will discuss, and research and prepare questions in advance.

When the Guest Speaker Arrives

Assign a student to greet the speaker at the main office, have the speaker sign the school guest book, and escort him or her to the classroom.

Instruct the class to:

- Listen carefully to the speech and add new questions to those they have already prepared.
- Listen to other students’ questions and the speaker’s answers, so they do not repeat a question that was already asked, and so they can expand upon the discussion.
- Be sensitive to the speaker’s feelings. Even if they disagree with a speaker or find the speaker uninteresting, they should be polite and considerate.

Teacher Note: The teacher should never leave the class unattended and must always be present during the guest speaker’s planned activities. Show the guest speaker the classroom ground rules, and express the expectation that everyone will honor them. For example, correct terminology should be used at all times, including role-plays.

Follow-Up

- Discuss the presentation and have students offer their opinions about what the speaker said.
- Explain anything that was not clear.
- Have students write a thank-you letter or email mentioning one or two things in particular that impressed them about the presentation.
- Consider inviting the speaker to return. Sometimes it is a good idea to invite a speaker back to discuss how things have changed in the intervening time, or to respond to specific questions.

Teacher Note: While these Classroom Teaching Tips are primarily for teachers’ use, they may also be photocopied for students’ use in student-peer leadership activities, projects involving student presentations, small-group work, debates, panel discussions, and special projects, especially those involving guest speakers and role-plays.

How to Brainstorm

Brainstorming = Letting Your Brain Rain Ideas

Brainstorming is a great way to tackle a problem by coming up with lots of possible solutions. Brainstorming frees the mind to be creative by letting all ideas come out, whether they seem sensible or silly, offbeat or predictable. During brainstorming, write down all the ideas without judging them, and talk about them later.

Too many ideas are killed by the words, “it can’t work.” Brainstorming takes students into the world of the imagination, where anything is possible.

How to Organize into Groups

Some activities require dividing students into two or more groups. Instead of dividing students by gender, try the following methods:

- Count off by twos, threes, or fours.
- Choose group assignments from a hat. On slips of paper write “Group 1,” “Group 2,” and so on. Or use stickers or drawings.
- Divide the class by alphabet. Form two groups of last names that begin with A-K and L-Z, respectively, or divide into smaller groups.
- Divide by birthday seasons to get four groups (1. December/January/February; 2. March/April/May; 3. June/July/August; 4. September/October/November).
- Divide by what color people are wearing (something blue, something red, both, or neither).
- Divide by odd-month and even-month birthdays. To form four groups, further divide by birthdays on odd and even days.
- Use a deck of cards to form four groups (hearts, spades, clubs, and diamonds). Or assemble by Aces, Jacks, Queens, and Kings.

How to Use Role-Plays in the Classroom

Prepare the Participants for Role-Plays

- State and explain the role-play goals and objectives.
- Align role-play ground rules to classroom discussion ground rules so that role-plays are done in a safe and supportive setting. For example, add to ground rules, “We will respect each other’s personal space while playing an assigned character or role, and refrain from physical contact.”
- Demonstrate role-play techniques and skills. For example, explain cues such as, “curtain, action, cut, freeze, rewind, pause, fast forward, etc.”
- Assign scenarios to groups and/or have students create role-play scenarios. Screen and approve the students’ scenarios, or request modifications.
- Specify that role-plays should culminate in a positive, healthy resolution.
- Assign roles for the participants.
- Give “audience” members a way to record their observations during the role-play. For example, the observers can complete a rubric on specific skills, interactions or responses to look for, and then use that to provide feedback after the role-play. Have students write questions they want to ask the actors at the end of the role-play, or have them ask questions of the characters as actors stay “in role.”
- Allow participants to practice their role-plays.
- Set a time limit. Role-plays should be brief to allow time for processing and feedback, and to assure that other groups can demonstrate their role-plays. For example, allow students four to seven minutes to demonstrate role-plays, plus three to five minutes for processing.

Implement the Role-Plays

- Set the scene and arrange the classroom and chairs so that everyone can see and hear the role-play.
- Involve as many students as possible. For example, have one student act as “narrator” to set the scene before the role-play, and have observers take notes as described above.
- Review communication goals and make certain that the actors are clear about their roles. For example, review delay tactics/refusal skills, using “I” messages, using assertive language, etc.
- Remind students that role-play is playing a character. Actors should use fictitious names for characters, not their own names or the names of anyone in the class.
- Begin the role-play with the word “curtain” (referring to a curtain rising on a stage) and say “end” when the role-play is over. Using these words will establish the role-play’s boundaries.
- Stop the role-play at any point; discuss and restart, if necessary. For example, freeze the role-play and model some skills for students, ask the characters to take a different path, or ask for a volunteer from the group to carry on where a character left off.
- End the role-play at the set time limit to allow time for processing/debriefing.
- Have students shake arms and legs after the role-play as if to “shake off the character” symbolically.

Process the Role-Plays

During the processing phase or class discussion, refer to characters in the third person. For example, ask actors how their characters felt or how they felt playing the character, rather than asking, “How did you feel?” In addition, ask the observers to describe what occurred during the role-play, assess the interaction between the characters, list learning points, and ask open questions to the whole class. First have observers and actors focus on what went well during the role-play. Elicit positive highlights and hold your own comments for after the actors and observers have expressed their feedback.

Sample general classroom processing questions are as follows:

Teacher Note: Role-playing is an effective way to help students internalize and express concepts of risk reduction. Ask another teacher for assistance if you are not comfortable or experienced with facilitating role-plays.

- Ask the actors and other class members such questions as:
 - What worked well in this role-play?
 - Which statements or strategies were most persuasive?
 - What are some other ways the characters could have responded?
 - What effect might additional characters have on this scene, e.g., parents, teachers, friends, police officers, younger children, community members?
 - What alternative choices could the characters have made?
- In addition to class discussion, other ways to follow up on role-plays are:
 - As an in-class activity or as a homework assignment, have students write a “sequel” to the role-play. This might be in the form of a paragraph, a dialogue involving the same and/or new characters, a soliloquy for one of the characters, a short story, a “news interview” of one or more characters by a fictitious reporter, etc.
 - With the authors’ permission, share the “sequels” with the class, e.g., stories can be read aloud, dialogues acted out, etc. Follow up with class discussion.
 - In subsequent class sessions, have students suggest other situations involving the characters; the same actors can recreate their roles, or other students can be given a chance to perform.

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS		
IDENTIFY THE DECISION TO BE MADE.		
LIST THE POSSIBLE CHOICES.		
Option 1:		
Option 2:		
Option 3:		
EVALUATE THE CONSEQUENCES.		
	Positive Consequences	Negative Consequences
Option 1:		
Option 2:		
Option 3:		
MAKE A CHOICE.		
EVALUATE YOUR CHOICE.		