

Unit 1: How We Learn in Our School Communities

WEEK 1 Day 4

Text Talk

Drafting Classroom Agreements 1

This lesson offers a suggestion for establishing classroom expectations and agreements, moving from more concrete (“Use quiet voices”) to more abstract (“Show respect”) over the course of two days’ conversations. The goal is to end up with a short list of agreements that every member of the learning community can hold to. In keeping with the content of the unit, the focus of these discussions should be on how we best learn in school, as individuals and in the group, rather than strictly on behavioral expectations.

Big Ideas	We all learn. We can learn different things, in different ways, for different reasons. Communities can include and support all learners.
Weekly Question	How do we want to work and learn together this year?
Content Objective	By recalling my experience, I can identify and write agreements about features that are important for making our classroom a good place for all of us to learn. (W.1.2.b)
Language Objective	I can build on each other’s comments about what can make our classroom a good place for all of us to learn. (SL.1.2.a, SL.1.2.b)
SEL Objective	I can collaborate with my classmates to create inclusive classroom agreements. (Decision Making, Social Awareness)
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* agreement: something that two or more people agree is true* community: a group of people who share space and ideas* include: to make someone or something part of a grouprule: a statement about what is or is not allowed
Materials and Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● chart paper and markers <p>On the top of the chart paper, write the question, “What will make our classroom a wonderful place for working and learning?” Add an eye and an ear as visual cues for what a classroom might look and sound</p>

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	like.
Opening 1 minute	<p><i>We are going to spend a lot of time in this classroom together as a community. As we begin our school year, let's think together about what will make our classroom a wonderful place for working and learning. What do we want our classroom to feel like? What do we want our classroom to look and sound like? Today we will begin to write down some class agreements for how we want things to go while we're in the classroom.</i></p> <p>Write the word "Agreements" underneath the question on the chart paper.</p>
Text and Discussion 38 minutes	<p>Note: In this first lesson, jointly construct the text: a rough draft of classroom agreements. This new text will be revisited and refined in the following lesson.</p> <p><i>First, we are going to do a one-minute walk-around to notice what our classroom looks like.</i></p> <p>Have children stand up to walk around. Direct children to follow a prescribed path around the classroom, or allow them to fan out and move independently. Set a timer for one minute.</p> <p>While children are walking, encourage them to notice everything they can in the physical environment, including furniture, materials, and anything hanging on the wall.</p> <p>After one minute, signal children to return to the meeting area.</p> <p><i>What did you see that gives us an idea for a classroom agreement? For example, I see that ____ [the colored pencils are sorted by color in their jars and with their points up]; this makes me think about how I hope we will all take care of materials.</i></p> <p>Collect children's ideas, and compose any agreements that begin to take shape. Remind the children that these are rough-draft agreements.</p> <p><i>Now, think to yourselves about what it sounds like when you are in a good place for learning. Turn and talk to your partner about this: What does it sound like when you are doing your best learning?</i></p> <p>Circulate around the group to listen in to partner conversations. Prompt children as needed, such as:</p> <p><i>You are talking about the volume of noise in our classroom. That's important. Are there also specific things you'd like to hear, such as words you'd like to hear people saying?</i></p>

	<p>Bring the group back together, and harvest some ideas. Again, record agreements that begin to take shape, such as those concerning noise/voice volume and use of specific language.</p> <p>Children may further express ideas about how classroom community members treat each other. Facilitate this discussion according to the needs of the group, being certain to listen carefully to the children’s ideas about the learning environment that they desire and that they are willing to commit to. Encourage children to build on each other’s ideas, modeling accountable talk.</p> <p>Resist creating a list of Don’ts—things the children should not do—even though these are often children’s initial ideas about rules. Returning to the question, <i>How can we make our classroom a wonderful place for working and learning?</i> and emphasizing agreements over rules will help steer away from this impulse.</p>
Closing 1 minute	<i>I can see that you really want to make our classroom a wonderful place for all of us to learn. Let’s try out our new agreements for a couple of days. Then we’ll take another look and see if we want to revise or add anything.</i>
Standards	<p>W.1.2.b: Gather information from provided sources and/or recall information from experiences in order to answer questions.</p> <p>SL.1.2.a: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).</p> <p>SL.1.2.b: Build on others’ talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.</p>
Ongoing assessment	<p>Watch children as they move around the space, and note how they navigate the physical environment and other children’s bodies.</p> <p>Pay attention to which children volunteer to contribute to the discussion and how they do so. Do children build on others’ comments?</p> <p>Listen for the language children use and the connections they make. Do children make decisions about agreements in an inclusive and supportive way?</p>