

Reflecting on Instructor Behaviors That Impact Classroom Civility

Read each statement and then circle the frequency with which you exhibit the behavior. Learn about the impact the behavior can have on students and, if you circle “sometimes” or “rarely” for any statements, consider the suggestions to ensure you are contributing to the classroom civility.

Statement	Frequency	Impact on Students	Suggestions
I am well-prepared for my classes.	Always Often Sometimes Rarely	Not being prepared can lead to downtime in the classroom, leaving an opening for disruptive behavior to take place.	Be prepared by having materials and handouts organized and ready. Go to the classroom early to set up technology and have a backup plan if it’s not working. Have a few short activities that can be used to engage students if you need to take some time to get organized.
I arrive for class on time.	Always Often Sometimes Rarely	Being late to class communicates to students that tardiness is acceptable and that they are not your priority.	Plan ahead. Let students know if you are going to be late. Ask a colleague or student to post a sign indicating how late you are going to be if that is the case.
I end class on time.	Always Often Sometimes Rarely	Repeatedly ending class late tells students that you do not respect their time. Ending class early communicates that the class may not be worth their time.	There are times when an early dismissal is warranted. In these situations, give students your rationale for ending early (“You all worked really hard today...” “You have quite a bit of reading for next class, so I will let you go early to get a head start...”). If you do need to keep students beyond the end of class, be sure to let students know why and how long you are expecting to keep them. Then allow students to leave if they have other obligations.
I address student disruptions promptly.	Always Often Sometimes Rarely	Not addressing disruptions promptly can allow low-level disruptions to build and can frustrate students who are not being disruptive. The longer you let the incivility continue, the higher the level of response you will have to take later.	Be aware of the environment in the classroom and address disruptions with the lowest level of intervention possible. Use proximity and move frequently throughout the room. If your class is large, engage TAs in this task as well.

I actively engage students in various activities throughout the class.	Always Often Sometimes Rarely	Disengaged students can lead to disruptive behaviors such as the inappropriate use of technology and side conversations.	Plan interactive lectures and activities that engage students throughout the class period.
The material I cover in my classes is necessary and appropriate to the needs of the students.	Always Often Sometimes Rarely	Work that is too easy can lead to bored students, while work that is too difficult can frustrate students and lead to disruptions.	Implement formative assessment techniques that allow you to meet students' instructional needs.
Students find me approachable.	Always Often Sometimes Rarely	Balance authority with approachability to create an instructor persona that encourages civility.	Chat casually with students before and after class. Use student names. Assume a relaxed posture in the classroom. Nonverbally, you can communicate your respect for and interest in students by making regular eye contact, speaking with energy and enthusiasm, listening to them intently without interrupting, standing with an open body posture, and smiling frequently.
Students see me as the authority figure in the classroom.	Always Often Sometimes Rarely	Balance authority with approachability to create an instructor persona that encourages civility.	Stand and move throughout the classroom while teaching. Refer to your own scholarship in class where appropriate. This establishes you as an authority on the subject and elevates you in your students' eyes.
I regularly ask students for feedback on how things are going from their perspective.	Always Often Sometimes Rarely	When instructors ask students for feedback and act on it, their engagement and buy-in to the class increase, which often leads to a more cooperative classroom.	In larger classes, feedback can be solicited by identifying three or four different students each week to meet with to discuss how things are going. In smaller classes, ask students for written feedback.