

Creating Classroom Norms

“Research shows that students are more civil when given the opportunity to develop their own rules and sanctions” (Davis, 2009, p. 48).

According to Nilson (2010), “Some instructors have reduced incivilities by having their students collectively draw up a classroom-conduct contract, or set of rules for behavior to which they will agree” (p. 75). To create norms for your class, follow this process:

- On the first day of class, facilitate a discussion designed to develop classroom norms by asking students to share behaviors that genuinely bother the members of the class. While you should encourage students to create the list, you may also contribute one or two behaviors to it (Nilson, 2010, p. 75).
- Take notes during the discussion and use them to create a set of classroom norms to share with your students during the next class session. Ask students if they want to make any final modifications or if the list is complete with all norms they think should be followed in the class. If you make any tweaks, share the final list with students during the next class period.
- Once the list is considered to be final, post it to your course site. If any issues arise during the semester, use the norms list to remind students of the rules for behavior they agreed to at the start of the semester.