Establishing Expectations for Working Together Upfront

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Materials needed: Handout, that includes your version of the example provided below. Feel free to borrow / adapt anything that I include in my example. The document has evolved greatly over the last five years of my using it.

Learning challenge addressed/predictable outcome: It is easier to refer back to stated expectations when they are violated, than to have to instill expectations after a violation has occurred. Providing students with tips for working effectively with you, at the start of the semester, gives them a sense of your teaching style and clearly articulates what works and what doesn’t as you embark on your fifteen weeks together. Depending on what a professor chooses to include:

- Active engagement for better learning
- Improving public speaking skills
- Increase students’ comfort with each other
- Help instructor understand what students don’t understand and/or how prepared they are for class
- Creates a positive classroom environment – with instructor as facilitator/”guide on the side”
- Better learner outcomes
- Helps students to articulate their questions.

Best used for: This is suitable for all class settings.

Learning objectives/skills fostered: Trust, teamwork, partnership.

What to do / how to do it: At the beginning of the semester, in conjunction with my syllabus, I distribute a document called Instructions for Working Effectively with Professor Yost which I use to the set the tone for the kind of classroom culture I seek to create with the students, beyond the information contained in the course syllabus. Click here for sample syllabi language you can adapt.