



Foreign Language House Rules: Top Ten Tips for Behavior Management in the Foreign Language Classroom

- 1. Establish Trust & Rapport.** Many behavior problems come from places of anxiety or even fear in students. Ask the students as a class or even individually to trust you, your knowledge, and your experience. The persistently negative student can be won over if she trusts you and if you let her know that you will teach and explain everything she needs. Once a disruptive student has a positive, one on one exchange with you his behaviors often improve. For students, getting to know you is seeing you as a human being.
- 2. Pace and Manage a Steady Flow of Activities.** Class disruptions tend to happen during any gaps between instruction, activities, and class work. If you transition clearly, but smoothly from activity to activity, students won't have any time to be disruptive. Keeping students busy from the start with a bell ringer activity, until the end with a re-cap decreases the odds that disruptions will occur.
- 3. Circulate Among Students.** The more you move around and the closer you get to students and their interactions the more of a real, tangible presence you are. Walk in and around student seating arrangements and areas in a constant, flowing nature. A walking, circulating teacher tends to have a well run class.
- 4. Seating Charts.** This is the most basic, first step of classroom management. But, we often forget about them, especially in the secondary grades. Student socializing and other distractions come from student-proximity to other distractible students.
 - *Boy-Girl seating.* As unpopular as it is, it can quell noise and distractions.
 - *Four-Corners.* Place your behavioral showmen far away from each other: one in each corner.
 - *Group seats or desks around a center space in the room.* (if possible)
 - Do most of your instruction from this front and center place.
 - *Change seating arrangements as frequently as possible* (if possible). Different seating arrangements for group work, individual assessments, and lesson presentation keep students on their toes.
- 5. Incentives for Good Behavior & Positive Participation.** Students need concrete, tangible incentives or rewards for behaving positively and for participating. These need to vary by age group.
 - Participation and/or grade points for grades 6-12
 - Give out tickets or tokens for any and all positive behaviors. The student with the most tokens at the end of a week wins an age appropriate reward: homework pass, extra participation points, stickers, stamps, and treats.
 - Designate class helpers based good behaviors.

6. **Set Clear Behavioral Goals for the Class.** When a substantial group of students present distractions it is time for you to give the class the "My goals for you this class are to . . ." chalk-talk. Some goals could be:

- Eliminating student cross-talk during class
- No interrupting
- No English during target language time
- No entertaining of other students
- Dampening attention seeking behaviors

Write the goals on the board and ask a student to summarize them. If students have adequate language proficiency, present them in the target language as well.

7. **Logical, Negative Consequences for Negative Behaviors.** See the Love and Logic book series. Negative consequences should be immediate and smaller rather than larger, **and there should be** a logical connection to the misbehavior.

- Deducting one or two daily participation points
- Asking for a small amount of the student's social time at school: a few minutes of a break, recess, or a free period.
- Student can do a chore for the classroom for a short time period.

8. **Address Individual Behavioral Issues Individually**

- Always talk with a distractible student one on one, away from the other students.
- Ask the student to come and see you outside of class to discuss the why's of her behaviors
- Ask questions rather than dictate and mandate: "Hi. What's going on? Tell me about what happened when . . ."
- Listen impartially; you are on the student's side
- Make behavioral expectations clear, but achievable: "I need for you to keep your hands to yourself and for you to not turn around and chat while I'm explaining."
- Let the student know exactly what the negative consequences are. "If you do continue to struggle with interrupting and our signal isn't working, I'll need for you to stop by and help me to clean the white board."

9. **Make a Ring Leader into a Class Leader. This is the best and most interesting way to make a connection with an often talented individual.**

- Can you help me out with something?
- I've noticed that you're respected around here, how about . . .

10. **Stay Close to the Problem Spots.** There are no sleeping dogs in a classroom, at least below grade 10! Students need to know that you will be next to them physically in a number of minutes. Watch the problem areas, let them know you're watching, and then go over and be in the problem spot at unpredictable times.