The learner-centered classroom

Handling assignments/paperwork (continued)
of the room, one student or team leader collects).

- How students will turn in makeup work if they were absent (special tray, give to the teacher, put in a special folder, give to the teacher aide).
- How you or students will distribute handouts (first person in each row, students pick up as they enter the room, a group member gets a copy for all members).
- How unfinished assignments can be completed (during lunch or recess, turn in by the end of the day).
- How late work will be graded (no penalty, minus points, lowered letter grade, zero, drop so many homework grades during a marking period).
- How and when students will make up quizzes and tests (same day they return to school, within 24 hours, within the week, before school, during lunch or recess, after school).

- How late projects will be graded (no penalty, minus points, lowered letter grade, no late work accepted).
- How students are made aware of short- and long-term requirements.
- How students are made aware of how they will be evaluated and given the grading scale or rubric ahead of time.
- How you establish due dates for major assignments, allowing several weeks in advance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

NYSUT offers a variety of materials to help new members. Your union can make these items available at strategic times during the year.

For more information about your union and how your colleagues can help you build a successful career, contact your union representative or your local president.

This information comes from courses offered by NYSUT and its Education & Learning Trust. If you are interested in having an ELT seminar in your area, ask your local union leader to schedule a seminar by calling ELT at NYSUT headquarters in Latham, 800-528-6208.

Your classroom’s climate can either enhance learning or serve as a barrier to learning. From day one, you set the tone for the year ahead. Begin by creating a learner-centered environment:

- Involve students in the decision-making process.
- Help students structure the curriculum to meet their interests.
- Stimulate their love of learning.

Here are some ideas that will help you create a student-centered classroom right from the beginning of the school year.
The learner-centered classroom

Starting the year out right

Teaching is hard professional work. Creating the learning environment and planning and implementing the organizational systems for you, your students and your classroom is very complex.

The following suggestions will assist you in organizing your thinking and planning procedures that will help create a student-centered environment as you begin the school year.

Beginning your class

Think about the following:

- How you want students to enter and leave your classroom.
- What information you want on the board so students begin to work immediately.
- The type of seating arrangement and configuration that you will use (assigned seats, open seating, cooperative group seating).
- How you want to get your students’ attention to start the class (the school bell system, a raised hand signal).
- How your students behave during the school day.
- How you want students to enter and leave the classroom.
- How you will have students stay after school to finish tests or assignments.
- How and when students sharpen pencils.
- How students are recognized to speak in class (raised hand, teacher calls on students, talk out).
- How students should work with other group members first).
- How and when students may leave their seats.
- How students get help from the teacher (raise hands, put name on the board, ask other group members first).
- How students get supplies they are missing.
- What the acceptable noise levels are for discussions, group work and individual seat assignments.
- How students should work with other students or move into cooperative groups (moving desks, changing seats, noise level, handling of materials).
- How students are recognized to speak in class (raised hand, teacher calls on students, talk out).
- What behaviors you want students to demonstrate during presentations by other students.
- How students get materials or use special equipment.
- Arrangements for students to stay after school to finish tests or assignments.
- The procedures to follow with students during fire or disaster drills.

You need to think about how you will manage the flow of paper — papers you distribute and papers you will collect from your students. Consider these points as you plan:

- How students will turn in assignments (put in a specific tray or box, pass to the front (continued on back)