



CLASSROOM VIDEO • VIEWING GUIDE

TEACHING STRATEGY: CONTRACTING

Overview

In this classroom video, English language arts teacher Jonathan Dee creates a classroom contract with his students during the first week of the school year. Contracting is the process of openly discussing with your students the expectations about how classroom members will treat each other. It is an effective strategy for making your classroom a reflective community. Reflective classroom communities are places where explicit rules and implicit norms protect everyone's right to

speak; where differing perspectives can be heard and valued; where members take responsibility for themselves, each other, and the group as a whole; and where each member has a stake and a voice in collective decisions. These types of classroom communities are usually created through deliberate nurturing from students and teachers who have shared expectations about how classroom members will interact with one another.

Questions to Consider

1. At **1:02**, Mr. Dee comments, “I think with any activities in the first week or two of school, there’s that unknown. Students don’t necessarily know me, and I have 80 students. I can’t possibly know their attitudes and personalities just yet. I think I’m always a little nervous: Will students take this seriously? Will they understand why it’s important to have a reflective classroom?” What does Mr. Dee say and do in this lesson to address these concerns?
 2. At **2:22**, Mr. Dee asks, “What would happen if—myself included, I’m in this class—what would happen if people started breaking expectations in our contract?” Why is it important that Mr. Dee includes himself in the class?
 3. At **5:39**, a student says that “being thoughtful” should be included in the classroom contract. Mr. Dee asks, “What does that look like, ‘being thoughtful’?” Why do you think Mr. Dee asks this question?
-

Featured

Jonathan Dee

Teacher

8th Grade

Cameron Middle School
Framingham, MA

Video Goals

- **Witness** how the creation of a classroom contract can be used during the first week of school to help cultivate a reflective classroom.
- **Consider** choices the teacher makes as he uses the strategy that render the lesson more effective.
- **See** the Contracting teaching strategy in action.

Lesson Resources

- [Teaching Strategy: Contracting](#)