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Classroom Dynamics Tips

CLASSROOM CONTRACTS

EXPLICIT CONTRACTS (often found in syllabi)

- Weekly classroom topics
- Reading assignments, when to read each piece
- Writing assignments, dates due
- Exams, dates
- Rules about late papers, absences
- Often, grading percentages

IMPLICIT CONTRACTS (often unspoken; many could be discussed)

- Who talks in this classroom; when; how long; how do they get the floor?
- Who sets the agenda, how shared is it?
- Is this a place for competition or collaboration?
- Is it safe to make mistakes, to fail?
- What is success in this classroom? how is it measured? how is it achieved?
- What are the boundaries between student and teacher? between student and student?
- What levels of learning are featured: intellectual, emotional, experiential, ethical?
- What styles of learning are emphasized: structured? open?
- What is the big agenda? What is the story line of the course? What are the underlying questions?
- What will be learned? Are students asked to learn facts, to think through problems?
- Why is the professor doing what he/she is doing when he/she does it?