Creating Class Contracts

What is a Class Contract?

It is a document (or poster) created in collaboration with the students in your class. This can be used to set up norms for everything from overall classroom environment, to safety procedures, to grading criteria, to expectation for a specific lesson.

Class contracts allow students to have input in creating a productive learning environment. The contracts demonstrate to students that their thoughts and ideas are valuable and they can promote buy-in from all members of the class in monitoring and maintaining the agreement. Class contracts can be useful at the start of a school year in determining what the overall classroom norms, at the start of a project, or at the start of a lesson.

How do you create a class contract?

There are many ways to structure the creation of a class contract but the main ideas are below:

1. Ask students a focus question/s that will give you the responses to help craft the contract. For example:
   a. What does a productive classroom look like to you?
   b. What practices will ensure that everyone is safe during lab activities?
   c. What does participating in a lesson look like? How can we ensure that we are respecting the learning of all members of our class today?

   Sentence starters also work. For example:
   d. A quality presentation should include ..........  

2. Have students write about these ideas and then possibly share with a partner or group
3. Have students share out their ideas – you can call on volunteers or you can have students write down their ideas anonymously on post notes and stick them up at the front of the room
4. Record the ideas of students on the board, ask for contributions from all – check with students to ensure you are representing their ideas correctly
5. Add in your own thoughts as you see fit – you are a member of the class too 😊  
6. *Turn the list into a poster or document to post in the class, add to the class webpage, or give to each class member. You can even have students sign it. *(If you use this technique to create grading criteria then you can add points to each component and create a rubric)*

*This document can be used at a later time should you need to address undesirable behavior