Making your Minutes Count
How to maintain a classroom conducive to language acquisition.

Marcela Kerns and Scott Benedict

What Kids Need...

In Order to build a classroom community, all kids need...
✓ to feel and believe they are capable and successful.
✓ to know they are cared about by others.
✓ to realize that they influence people and events daily.
✓ to remember to look for ways to help others.
✓ fun and stimulation.

WHAT KIDS NEED.

CAPABLE AND SUCCESSFUL.

Students need to feel and believe they are capable and successful.
By bringing kids up, instead of putting them down, you empower them to succeed. Instead of pointing out their mistakes or challenges, celebrate their successes and what they did right.
Kids gain confidence and feel capable when they are able to complete a task. Giving them these opportunities builds them up.

CARED ABOUT.

Students need to know they are cared about by others.
Not only do we need to assess their comprehension level, but also their confidence (swag) level. By taking this time, students know that we care about them and are more teachable.
When we take the time to get to know our students through language and give them positive attention, they are more engaged, they’re more responsive, they know that they are more than just a grade, and therefore are less likely to seek negative attention.
Some examples would include:

- Handing out a student questionnaire at the beginning of the year.
- Having students make name tags with one adjective that describes them or a talent they have.
- Asking personalized questions about the students in the target language.
- Using nicknames that develop naturally (not given out or chosen in one swoop).
- Being observant of the students.
INFLUENCE PEOPLE AND EVENTS.

Students need to realize that they influence people and events daily.

Respect students’ time by giving them time to clean up and pack up their belongings so that they don’t feel stressed going into their next class. By modeling this respect of time, students are made aware of how their time-management can effect others.

Love and Logic. By giving choices about behavior, activities, and consequences, you’re placing control back into the students hands and this teaches them that all choices have logical consequences.

Acknowledge good behavior publicly. Using your voice, participation points, stamps, or other public acknowledgements lets students know that what they do matters: “Thank you for helping me,” “I like how you have your pencil out and are prepared,” “I like how you’re using your Russian/Japanese/Mandarin/French/German/Spanish in class.” Handing out participation points or awarding class points to reward behaviors you want to continue.

Model teamwork. We need to model teamwork so that each member knows how their work or lack thereof affects the rest of the team.

Planners/Calendars. Having students maintain planners allows them to manage their time better and share that with parents so that parents don’t have to worry about schoolwork getting done.

Reflection questions are a great way to let students think about how what they do affects others: “What was one thing this week you did to help the class learn better?”, “What was something another student did that helped you learn better?”, “What was something another student did to make you feel better about yourself?”, “What was one thing that you did to make another student feel better about themselves?”.

HELP OTHERS.

Students need to remember to look for ways to help others.

Empowering students as classroom helpers or by giving them classroom jobs, you instill a sense of pride and accomplishment and give students the opportunity to feel needed. Look for ways to involve challenging kids so that they experience making a positive difference in someone’s life. Delegating classroom tasks to students, not only builds community, but also gives students a sense of responsibility and purpose.

FUN AND STIMULATION.

Students need fun and stimulation.

Stress is lowered when students are laughing and having fun.

You can make class more fun by using nicknames, showing them that you’re having fun, using call and response, and including games.

When you include games, they should be to review information or introduce new information.

Having students respond both vocally and physically to things happening in the classroom keeps them engaged and having fun.
STUDENT INTEREST INVENTORY

Profe __________________
Language ____________
Year ________________
Period _________
Class ________________

Name __________________ Spanish Name ____________________
Year: ___________ Age: _______ Birthdate: ____________________
Address: ___________________________________________
Phone Number: ___________________________________
Book Number: _________________________

Parent(s)/ Guardian(s):
Name: __________________  Name: __________________
Address: __________________  Address: ______________
Home Phone: _______________  Home Phone: ____________
Work Phone: _______________  Work Phone: _____________
Cell/ Pager: _______________  Cell/ Pager: _____________
Age: _______  Age: _______

My Spanish teacher last year was: __________________________________________
What I like to do most at home: ____________________________________________
These are my favorite hobbies: _____________________________________________
These are my favorites:
Book: __________________  T.V. Show: __________________
Movie: __________________  Food: ___________________
Singer/Group: ____________  Song: __________________
Class/subject: ____________  Teacher: __________________

If I had one wish I would want to: __________________________________________
If I had a million dollars I would: __________________________________________
If I had no money at all I would: __________________________________________
This is what one of my teachers did last year that I really liked: _______________
This is what one of my teachers did that I really didn’t like: ___________________
One of my goals this year is: _____________________________________________
One of my life goals is: _________________________________________________

From the files of IFLT/NTPRS Facebook Group
My hero is:
Something about me that no one else knows is:
My expectations of this class are:
I am taking this class because (be specific):
What are you willing to do to achieve your goals in this class?

Use the rest of this page to tell me about yourself. Define yourself, what’s going on in your life and your philosophy of life as best you can. Who are you?
## Classroom Job Sign-up Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Participation Points Earned</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Extinguisher</strong></td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom Reporter</strong></td>
<td>50 points</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Videographer</strong></td>
<td>20 points</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Library Managers</strong></td>
<td>15 points</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Floor Fanatics</strong></td>
<td>25 points</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Errand Runner</strong></td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paper Prince/Princess</strong></td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Staff On Deck!” Shouter</strong></td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mad Hatters</strong></td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Illuminator</strong></td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Behavior Manager</strong></td>
<td>15 points</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wizard of Words</strong></td>
<td>20 points</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foley Artist</strong></td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Extinguisher</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for monitoring Profe’s use of English. If Profe uses English, other than for an explanation or school business, for more than 5 seconds, the English Extinguisher tosses the soccer ball at Profe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom Reporter</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for summarizing what we did in class in the Official Class History Book for absent students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Videographer</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for videoing various classroom activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Library Managers</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for keeping the bookcase organized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Floor Fanatics</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for keeping the floors clean at the end of class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Errand Runner</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for any class errands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paper Prince/Princess</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for passing out and collecting any student papers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Staff On Deck!” Shouter</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for shouting “Staff on Deck!” when an adult enters the room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mad Hatters</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for making sure the hats are organized on the rope at the end of class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Illuminator</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for turning on/off lights as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Behavior Manager</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for marking down class points when necessary in the appropriate columns (Profe vs clase).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wizard of Words</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for keeping track the number of times Profe uses your assigned word in class and giving that to Profe at the end of each class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foley Artist</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for making APPROPRIATE sound effects during class stories.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What can I buy with my participation points?

Do you have a ton of participation points and don’t know what to do with them? Why not spend them on some really cool stuff?

You can either pay with your earned participation points (each one counts as 1 point) or, if you have at least 95 points in the grade book, you can pay with grade-book points (but you cannot go below 70 points in the book).

If you have any ideas for other cool rewards, please let me know!

When you want to buy something, stop by before or after class, fill out the form telling me which reward you want and pay up! It’s that easy!

¡Buena Suerte!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Reward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 points</td>
<td>Good call home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 points</td>
<td>Wear a hat for a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 points</td>
<td>Sit on a yoga ball for a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 points</td>
<td>Sit at Profe’s desk for a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 points</td>
<td>Profe buys you a candy bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 points</td>
<td>You can eat in class ONE day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 points</td>
<td>You can choose your seat for one month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95 points</td>
<td>Drop-a-Quiz Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 points</td>
<td>Throw a whipped-cream pie at Profe!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Name ____________________________________________________

I wish to spend my points on...
☐ good call home (25pts) you will need to fill out good-call-home slip.
☐ wear a hat for a week (35pts)
☐ sit on a yoga ball for a week (45pts)
☐ sit at Profe’s desk for a week (55pts)
☐ Profe buys you a candy bar (65pts)
☐ one-day eat-in-class pass (75pts)
☐ choose-my-own seat pass - 1 month (85pts)
☐ drop-a-quiz pass (95pts)
☐ throw a whipped-cream pie at Profe! (100pts)

I’m using...
_____ participation points (please staple to this form)
_____ participation points from the grade book (can’t go below 70pts)