

Implementing Norms and Routines for Discourse

Overview of implementing norms and routines for discourse

Every content area has norms and practices for how people construct and share knowledge. These vary across subjects but often include establishing hypotheses, providing evidence for claims, and explaining one's reasoning to others. Teachers name these norms and practices, provide scaffolds, model, and offer opportunities for students to use the norms and practices. These norms and practices support students to engage productively in content-area learning.

We use the term “norms” to refer to a widely shared and accepted standard for work in a discipline. Subject-specific norms exist outside of individual classrooms and are often the standards of a discipline. This is not determined by a single teacher in a classroom, but by the broad community of disciplinary experts. It is through routines or practices that a norm is regularly carried out in a particular context and content area.

Advancing justice through implementing norms and routines for discourse

Norms, practices, and routines for discourse and work are important for supporting students to engage in content area work. They make explicit for students the ways of thinking and working that are privileged by the disciplines and help position students as competent sense-makers in the content area. However, teachers must recognize when and how norms and routines for discourse and work may marginalize children. Because content-area norms and routines often reflect dominant power and privilege, they can marginalize the skills and perspectives some students bring to classrooms. When choosing and implementing norms and routines for discourse and work, teachers should consider carefully which norms and routines to introduce, whom they privilege, and how to manage their use in ways that structure students' work equitably.



Decomposition of implementing norms and routines for discourse

Table 1: Areas of Work and Techniques for Implementing Norms and Routines for Discourse

Areas of work for implementing norms and routines for discourse	Techniques for implementing norms and routines for discourse
Investigating	• Examine norms central to the discourse and work of the field. • Identify norms and routines necessary for classroom discourse and work. • Investigate other established norms and routines in the larger school context for connections across subjects and classes. • Learn about students' prior knowledge of norms and routines.
Analyzing	• Understand relationships between disciplinary norms and social and political power. • Consider the social and power implications of establishing specific norms/routines in the classroom. • Prioritize, sequence, and pace the introduction of norms and routines across the year. • Anticipate challenges students might have enacting the norm/routine.
Introducing	• Name and explain the norm/routine. • Justify the norm/routine. • Demonstrate/model the norm/routine. • Create public artifacts to serve as shared resources. • Support students in making connections and distinctions between the disciplinary norm/routine and others in the school and beyond.
Practicing	• Provide repeated opportunities for students to enact the norm/routine with guidance. • Provide specific feedback to students on their use of the norm/routine. • Use scaffolds and supports as students practice.



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Maintaining/Revising	• Provide repeated opportunities for students to enact the norm/routine with guidance. • Provide specific feedback to students on their use of the norm/routine. • Use scaffolds and supports as students practice. • Reference artifacts and use cues to revisit norms and routines. • Acknowledge students' use of a norm or routine. • Recognize when a norm/routine is not working as intended and develop revisions/improvements. • Support students in making connections across multiple norms and routines as more are introduced. • Provide opportunities for students to reflect on the impact of the norm/routine on their individual and collective learning.



Visual representation of implementing norms and routines for discourse

