

The Invisible Student

Thanks to Don MacKenzie for this class management strategy that helps take the pain out of keeping students informed of missed work.

Basically, the teacher keeps a binder and a folder in a file cabinet drawer and students can consult it to find what has been missed in a class. Just now, in my class, the binder only records handouts, but the system could be expanded to include brief descriptions of classroom work if that is available.

Here's how it works.

1. A binder and a folder, each labelled "Invisible Student," are placed in the classroom.
2. Each day, when something is handed out, a dated copy of it is placed in the binder. This is an original and students are asked not to remove it.
3. All extra copies of a handout are placed in the folder.
4. Students are instructed to consult the invisible student if they miss a day. They find out what is missed by looking in the binder, they get a copy of what was missed from the folder.

The teacher might also include an attendance binder with a page layed out for each student to write reasons for absence. If such a record is kept up, it can help keep track of legitimate absences that might otherwise simply go unexplained. The teacher needs to draw the binder to the attention of students regularly to ensure upkeep.