

CRTE workshop

Dealing with Classroom Challenges

By

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Workshop Outcomes

- (1) Exchange ideas about how to build community;
- (2) Identify strategies to manage common classroom issues;
- (3) Understand strategies and policies for addressing some instances of problematic behavior or needs.

Create a positive classroom experience

- Establish reasonable and clear expectations in advance.
- Define conduct standards and etiquette for discussion
- Model expected behavior
- Keep your relationship with students friendly but professional
- Be well-prepared for each class

Create a positive classroom experience

Tips:

- Learn and use student names
- Collectively establish rules
- Draw up a "contract" on classroom behavior
- Challenge your students intellectually, not personally
- Vary activities to address different interests and learning styles
- Include quiet or shy students and balance contributions by the most vocal students
- Avoid any situation that could be perceived as favoritism or exclusive, even if it is not



But still,
there are disruptive behaviors....



- In general, disruption and obstruction include behavior that interferes with, disrupts, or prevents normal classroom functions or activities.
- Disruptive behaviors can range from mildly distracting to clearly disorderly, violent or dangerous.
- Who decides what is disruptive?

What are common classroom challenges?

Working with a partner, consider common classroom challenges

- (1) List the kinds of student behavior that can potentially limit classroom learning. Share your list with your partner and discuss.
- (2) With your partner, cross out any items that can be resolved with the strategies from the beginning of the session.
- (3) With the items that remain, identify the likelihood that this problem would exist in a classroom. (once a semester? a year? a teaching career?)

Mild but Common Interventions

- (a) Entering late/leaving early
- (b) Phone use
- (c) Filming, photographing or taping the class
- (d) Side conversations
- (e) Sleeping
- (f) Dominating conversation
- (g) Rambling

- What shall we do to deal with these problematic behaviors?



Authority / Knowledge challenging behaviors

- a. Indirect resistance (*e.g.*, some students did not prepare problems for discussions for several times)
- b. Direct resistance (*e.g.*, one girl jumped onto table while other students were doing experiments.)
- c. Disagreement with all that is said

Special Case: Lab Challenges

➤ Safety issues!

- Students need to pay attention to safety instructions.
- Some labs use potentially hazardous materials/ bacteria. So students must be familiar with lab protocols before they start experiments.



If you believe inappropriate behavior is occurring...

- Start by cautioning the whole class
- Correct innocent mistakes and minor first offenses gently, without ridiculing students' remarks
- Speak to an individual student about disruptive behavior *after class*
- Consider informing the class that students may be disciplined for disrupting behavior
- A student should be asked to leave class if he or she engages in disruptive behavior that impedes your ability to teach the class productively
- If the student is persistently disruptive refer him/her to Student Judicial Affairs (SJA) for disciplinary action.

The best offense is good defense!

Most issues can be resolved when instructors and students actively create an inclusive and engaged classroom environment.

In unusual situations...

- (1) Trust your instincts
- (2) Discuss concerns with peers, faculty and support staff, with care about anonymity
- (3) Document (write down) occurrences

References

- **Dealing with Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom** Adapted with permission from Kathleen McKinney, Illinois State University at <http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/resources/teachTopics/disBehav.php>
- **Establishing Classroom Etiquette and Dealing with Disruption** *University of California, Merced, Office of Student Judicial Affairs*

Thank You!