Dealing with Classroom Challenges and Ensuring Community

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With Laura Martin, a 2008 author of this presentation
Workshop Outcomes

• Recognize a range of teaching styles, in particular facilitating a teacher-centered and student-centered classroom

• Exchange ideas about ways to share policies, build community and manage common classroom issues.

• Identify instructional strategies that 1) foster a respectful and inclusive classroom and thereby 2) reduce classroom issues or problematic behavior
What can we do to create an inclusive and engaged classroom?

Brainstorm: 5 minutes

Working with a partner, consider your best and worst discussion section and/or lab experiences in terms of student learning and behavior

(1) Identify what made the good ones good
(2) Identify what compromised the others and offer a solution

Add your ideas to the board
What can we do to create an inclusive and engaged classroom?

• Learn and use your students names, ASAP!
• Collectively establish rules for discussion on the first day of class
• Challenge your students intellectually, be clear in your expectations, share your reasons and tell them, in words and actions, how you will help them to succeed
• Avoid long periods of lecturing. Structure the class so students are thinking and doing
• Vary activities to address different interests and learning styles
What can we do to create an inclusive and engaged classroom?

- Actively work to include quiet or shy students and work to balance contributions by the most vocal students (assign roles, use “think first” approaches)
- Consciously work to avoid any situation that could be perceived as favoritism or exclusive, even if not.
- Generate and maintain respect for yourself by always coming to class prepared! (have a teaching plan focused on specific outcomes and know your subject)
What are common classroom challenges?

• Brainstorm 5 minutes

(1) What behavior can limit classroom learning?

(2) How common has this behavior been in your academic experience? (either as a student or teacher)
# Classroom Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mild but common behaviors</th>
<th>Authority / Knowledge challenging behaviors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Dominating conversation</td>
<td>(a) Disagreement with all that is said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Rambling</td>
<td>(b) Direct resistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) Shyness</td>
<td>(c) Indirect resistance</td>
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<td>(d) Side conversations</td>
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The best offense is good defense!

Primary goal = To establish a classroom environment that promotes active student engagement and respectful behavior.
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>

The best place to start, of course, is to try to prevent disruptive behavior in the first place; something that is only partially under instructor control. Here are some suggestions:

- Include course and behavior norms and expectations for students and instructors in our syllabi.
- Discuss these norms and expectations on the first day of class. Tell students you expect that they will act appropriately, but that you always like to remind students of these norms.
- Serve as role models and exhibit the types of behavior we expect from students.
- Share control and responsibility with students in the class asking them on the first day what the norms for classroom behavior should be, and adding their ideas to your list.
- Draw up a "contract" on classroom behavior and ask students to read and sign it the first week of class (this can also include that they agree to attend class, participate, be prepared…).
- Be extra tough on all matters the first day and week to set the "tone." You can always be flexible and nurturing later.

If disruptive behaviors occur despite your efforts at prevention, you must act in some way and as early/quickly as possible. Otherwise, you can "lose control" of the classroom (not that you want all the control, but you want some), frustrate other students, and create a hostile learning environment.

Mild Interventions

- Walk over to the talkative students and conduct class standing right next to them.
- Stop whatever you are doing and wait (as long as it takes) for students to quiet down while you look at the disruptive students. Then begin again.
- Direct firm, but not derogatory, comments to the disruptive students during class. Ask if they have a comment or question. Ask them to be quiet. Let them know they are being unfair to their peers.
- On a given day when this behavior occurs change what you are doing. Break students in to groups for some work. Call on these and other students to come forward and lead discussion.

Extreme Classroom Interventions

- Spend some time in class discussing the whole situation openly and honestly with all the students. What do they think? Tell them how you feel. Ask how they think things should be handled.
- Note who the disruptive students are and speak to them after class or ask them to come to your office hours. Explain why/how you find them disruptive, find out why they are acting that way, ask them what they would be comfortable doing. Tell them what you want to do.
- Discuss the disruptive behavior in private outside of class with some of the concerned and non-disruptive students. Ask for their assistance in maintaining a positive classroom environment. Flattery goes a long way!
- Inform the student outside of class that their disruptive behavior does not fit your criteria for participation and that their grade will be lowered if it does not stop (this one can be tricky in terms of what your syllabus says and how you handle it).
- Ask the student(s) to leave the classroom for that class period.
UC Merced Police Department

How to Prepare for and Respond to a Shooting Incident or Other Violence

The potential for a shooting or other violence exists on every university campus throughout the United States. Although the possession of firearms, explosives and other weapons on our campus is unlawful, their availability and past national and international incidents dictate the need for a response plan, in case a shooting or other violent attack occurs. This type of incident is unpredictable, and your immediate response depends on the situation you face. The following guidelines are developed based on best practices.

BEFORE AN INCIDENT

Program your cell phone to speed dial 209-CAT-COPS (209-228-2677)
Think about what you would do and discuss preparation with others in your area.
Become familiar with all exits of rooms you enter.

If you are concerned about someone’s behavior, immediately tell someone.

Campus Resources

For Everyone:

- Police (24 hours) **209-CAT-COPS (209-228-2677)**
- **TIP-LINE 209-CAT-TIPS (209-228-8477)** (24 hours anonymous)
- Student Response Team (SRT) members
  - Le’Trice Curl - 228-7881
  - Al Day - 228-4305
  - Allan Grimsby – 228-7862
  - Debra Kotler – 228-4266
  - Mike Parish – 228-4215
  - Greg Spurgeon - 228-2990
  - Or 24 hours 209-228-2677

For Faculty:

- Assistant Dean and/or Dean
- Academic Personnel 209-228-7948

For Staff:

- Supervisor
- Department Head
- Human Resources 209-228-8247
- Student Affairs (If student is involved)

For Students:

- Faculty, Lecturers and TAs
- Staff
- Office of Student Life **209-CAT-LIFE (228-5433)**
- Counseling Center 209-228-4266
- Resident Assistants 209-228-4663 or (209-228-2677 24 hrs.)
How To Respond in Case of a Shooting or Violent Incident

IF A SHOOTING or VIOLENT INCIDENT OCCURS IN A BUILDING

DO NOT PULL THE FIRE ALARM

If it is safe, exit the building immediately. We recommend the following:

- Move away from immediate path of danger.
- Take protective cover.

THEN

- CALL "9-9-1-1" from a campus telephone, or 209-CAT-COPS (209-228-2677) from a cell phone, or use a Blue Phone
- Give the dispatcher the following information:
  - Your name
  - Exact location of the incident
  - Number of shooters or other Violent people (if known)
    - Identification or description of the shooter/s, or violent person/s
    - Number of persons who may be involved.
    - Your exact location
    - Injuries to anyone, (if known)
- When you reach a place of relative safety, stay down and do not move. Do not peek or raise your head in an effort to see what may be happening.
- Police dispatchers are trained to obtain the necessary and required information for a proper emergency response. STAY ON THE LINE UNTIL THE DISPATCHER TELLS YOU TO HANG UP.
- Wait and listen for directions from the police.

If you CANNOT safely exit the building, the following actions are recommended:

- Go to the nearest room or office.
- Close and lock the door.
- If possible, barricade the door with heavy furniture.
- Turn off the lights.
- Close the blinds.
- Seek protective cover and stay on the floor.
- Keep quiet and act as if no one is in the room.
- Do not peek out the door or windows to see what may be happening.
- Do not answer the door.
- If safe to do so CALL "9-9-1-1" from a campus telephone, or 209-CAT-COPS (209-228-2677) from a cell phone.
- Stay where you are until contacted by police. FOLLOW POLICE DIRECTIONS

Phone calls, other than for emergency purposes, should be made only after the police have authorized the calls. A phone call to friends or family will bring onlookers, and concerned loved ones to the campus, perhaps unnecessarily placing more people in danger.