

Innovative Educators

Supporting Academic & Professional Growth In Higher Ed

Managing Disruptive Classroom Behavior: Strategies for Creating A Safe & Dynamic Learning Environment

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How often do you experience disruptive classroom behavior?

- A. Never
- B. A few times in my career
- C. Once per year
- D. Once per semester
- E. A couple times in a semester
- F. Every class meeting
- G. Multiple times per class meeting

Overview & Objectives

Develop an overall
philosophy of classroom
management that
promotes a positive
learning environment

Implement effective
strategies that reduce
behavior problems and
create and sustain a
dynamic learning
environment

Classroom Management

- A plan and explicit procedures that allow the instructor to provide an environment that:
 - is safe
 - creates an opportunity to learn
 - promotes student motivation



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What if I told you...

During this workshop, no MULTI-TASKING:


- NO checking email
- NO reading an article
- NO surfing the Internet
- NO talking to a coworker
- NO eating or drinking
- NO working on lesson plans
- NO cleaning your desk
- NO getting up
- NO going to the bathroom



How would you feel?
What would you do?

DON'T Just Say

- Classroom management is NOT simply just saying "No"
- Punishment requires constant vigilance and must be applied consistently in order to be effective
- Can invoke negative responses such as anger, resentment, fear, avoidance, or dislike of instructor or subject matter
- Students may only comply when being watched; won't learn internal control of behavior
- Provides attention for undesirable behavior which may inadvertently reinforce it




Shift Focus from
Managing Bad Behavior

↓

to Promoting Learning

motivation | , mōtə 'vā sh ən |
noun
reason(s) one has for acting or behaving in a particular way




"Why aren't my students motivated?"

Why aren't my ~~students~~ motivated?

"For what *are* they motivated?"

- Miller and Rollnick in *Motivational Interviewing: Preparing People for Change*

What motivates the
adult learner?



{Write your answers in the chat box}

Three Important Drives

1. Autonomy
2. Mastery
3. Purpose



- Daniel Pink
(*Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*)

Common Reasons for Bad Behavior

▪ Autonomy	▪ Struggle for Power
▪ Mastery	▪ Fear of Failure
▪ Purpose	▪ Boredom/Attention

Autonomy & Authority



- Embrace your “Legitimate Power” and leverage your “Referent” and “Expert” Power
- Be flexible and offer options
- Create participatory and collaborative environments and assignments
- Encourage exploration
- Increase accountability and self-motivation through participation points/quizzes that require/demonstrate advance preparation

Image courtesy of Kittikak / freestockphotos.net

Engagement vs. Compliance

*“Management is great if you want compliance.
But if you want engagement, **self-direction** works better.”*

- Daniel Pink

(Engagement presupposes compliance.)

Mastery & Instruction

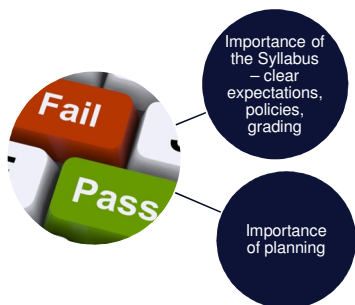
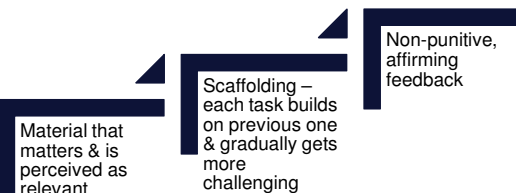


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Mastery & Instruction



Purpose & Clarity



- Evaluate tasks, methods, assignments
 - Practical, relevant, meaningful
 - Not busy work
- Communicate the value of and rationale for tasks, assignments
- Be clear about instructions & expectations
- Identify intrinsic motivators other than grades

Image courtesy of Stuart Miles / freestockphotos.net

How do YOU promote autonomy, mastery, and purpose?
How do you **engage** your students?



{Write your answers in the chat box}

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First Day of Class

Set the tone on Day 1

Model expected behavior (e.g., be on time, be prepared, listen)

Give students a taste of what they can expect

Engage students right away

Set expectations verbally and in writing (in your syllabus and post online, e.g., D2L)

What else do you do on the First Day?



{Write your answers in the chat box}

Suggestions for Your Syllabus



- Include specific expectations and consequences for behavior
- Administer a syllabus quiz as the first assignment and again as extra credit prior to a major assignment (to encourage review of the instructions/expectations)
- Sign a contract

Suggestions for Your Syllabus

- Discuss the rationale for each rule
 - "The following rules will help us to establish and maintain a safe, positive learning environment: ..."
 - "Reduce distractions to your neighbor by leaving your cell phone off."
 - "I will return your graded work within two days so I need you to turn it in on time."

Suggestions for Your Syllabus

- Include the use of pronouns (rather than passive voice) to make it clear who is responsible for what
 - "I will review in class what will be covered on the test. You must be present in class to receive the review sheet."
- The tone of your syllabus should convey instructor enthusiasm, mutual accountability, and that you are approachable and reasonable

Suggestions for Your Syllabus

Use rewarding, affirmative language rather than negative, punishing language



NO: "Late papers will be penalized 20%."

YES: "If you turn in your paper late, you can only earn a maximum of 80% of the available points."

YES: "If you turn in your homework early, you will receive a 2% bonus."

Suggestions for Your Syllabus

- Avoid excessive use of the words "Don't" and "No"
- When "No" is unavoidable, have a little fun
 - "Dr. Norwood's Top 10 Pet Peeves"
 - Top 10 Things Professors Do That Annoy Their Students"



Image courtesy of Pabum / iStockphoto.com

One does not simply



pack up early

HW: Modify a Portion of Your Syllabus

- Select a section of your syllabus and evaluate the language – consider reviewing with a colleague.
- How could you change the language to be more positive?
- Where can you clarify your expectations and frame them in "what you will do" rather than "what you won't do" language?

What other things should be included in your syllabus to promote learning?



{Write your answers in the chat box}

Practical Tips for Engaging Your Students



- Learn and use their names
- Get to know something about them (and use it in your examples/illustrations)
- Make eye contact with as many as possible
- Move in close

Practical Tips for Engaging Your Students



- Make your classroom a welcoming environment
- Be fair and consistent
- Respect diverse student backgrounds and opinions
- Ask questions, promote discussion
- Teach to a variety of learning styles

Redirecting Disruptive Behavior

- Consider your role in the problem behavior
- Immediately ask the student to stop the behavior
- Talk to the student privately (in the hallway or after class)



Talking to a Disruptive Student

- Remain calm, respectful, and mindful of personal space and body language
- Be specific about the problem behavior
- Let the student know the impact their behavior has on teaching and learning
- Listen to their response
- Restate your expectations/desired behavior

Handling Inappropriate Comments

- Consider your role in the problem behavior
- What kind of language do **you** use? Are your comments disrespectful or inappropriate in any way?
- Nip it in the bud and ask them to refrain
- Talk to student privately, calmly, respectfully, specifically



Handling Side Conversations

- Consider your role in the problem behavior. Do you listen without interrupting?
- Make eye contact with the talkers
- Move in close and stand next to the talkers
- Ask a direct question
- Remind students that only one person speaks at a time
- Wait until side conversations stop before continuing

Handling Digital Distractions

- Nip it in the bud and ask them to refrain
- Remind students that devices are distracting
- Make eye contact
- Move in close
- Ask a direct question
- Utilize their devices in class for specific activities
 - PollToGo.com, tweet a question



Referrals for Conduct Violations

- You have the right to require students to conform their behavior to the Student Code of Conduct
- If the disruptive behavior continues, you have the right to ask a student to leave your class
- Contact campus security if necessary
- You don't have the right to prohibit a student from ever returning to class (due process)

Referrals for Conduct Violations

- Report conduct violations to the appropriate administrator
- Inform your department chair
- Document the incident(s)



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Emerging Aggression (Sokolow et al, 2009)

1. **Hardening** – Becoming more distant and argumentative; lack of understanding and empathy; may avert eye contact
2. **Harmful Debate** – Becomes fixated on own point of view; highly competitive; distrustful; no interest in others' perspective or finding common ground; engages in frivolous arguments just for the sake of arguing
3. **Actions vs. Words** – Leaving argument behind; takes action without consulting others; appears detached and self absorbed; withdrawing from others; developing concerning behaviors

Behavioral Intervention Teams (BITs)

- Multidisciplinary group that meets regularly and tracks "red flags" over time
- Detects patterns, trends, and disturbances in individual or group behavior
- Receives reports of disruptive, problematic, or concerning behavior or misconduct

(NaBita, 2014)

Behavioral Intervention Teams (BITs)

- Conducts an investigation and performs a threat assessment
- Determines the best avenues for support, intervention, warning/notification, and response
- Deploys resources and coordinates follow-up

Reflection and Practice



Do you have an overall philosophy of classroom management that promotes a positive learning environment? What is it? How has it changed over time?



Identify one or two new strategies you can implement to reduce behavior problems and create and sustain a dynamic learning environment.

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