CULTIVATING THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT
Understanding Student Incivilities
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STUDENT INCIVILITIES
• Any speech or action that is disrespectful or rude (Berger, 2000)
• Contrary to the wellbeing of the classroom community, including behaviors that distract ..., disrupt ..., discourage ..., and derail … (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010)
• Disregard and insolence for others, causing an atmosphere of disrespect, conflict, and stress (Clark, 2008)
• Speech or action that is disrespectful or rude (Clark & Springer, 2007)
• Any action that interferes with the harmonious and cooperative learning atmosphere in the classroom (Feldman, 2001)
• Discourteous or disruptive behavior verbal and nonverbal student behaviors enacted toward others (Morrissette, 2001)

LOW INTENSITY
• Sleeping
• Talking
• Daydreaming
• Inappropriate clothing
• Tardiness
• Leaving early
• Acting bored/disinterested
• Disapproving groans/signs
• Challenging instructor
• Dominating discussion
• Being unprepared
• Technology abuse
• Failing to participate

What negative student behaviors have you observed in the classroom or other learning environment?
**High Intensity**

- Sending inappropriate emails
- Intimidation (e.g., verbal abuse, death threats)
- Personal comments or verbal attacks against instructor
- Academic Integrity Violations (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, etc.)
- Unjustified complaints to an instructor’s superior (e.g., department chair, dean).
- Unwarranted negative feedback on an instructor’s teaching evaluation.

**Consequences**

- Interruption of the overall teaching process:
  - Limits student collaboration
  - Reduces participation/enthusiasm in classroom discussions
  - Affects student’s confidence in the instructor
  - Motivates additional incidents of student incivility
  - Causes stress, discontent, lack of confidence, and burnout among instructors
  - Decreases student note-taking and attentiveness
  - Student’s affiliation with and respect for the institution may decrease, and impede retention.
  - Fear, anger, hostility, and resentment may develop between instructor and student.

**Situational Factors**

- University Administration
- Academic Term
- Undergraduate courses versus Graduate courses
- Required courses versus Elective courses
- Large enrollment courses Public research institutions versus Private institutions
- Specific Academic Discipline (e.g. Nursing, Business, Health Sciences)
- As institutions increase sales and marketing, students perceptions of themselves as customers increase.

**Mental/Emotional Issues**

- Psychiatric disorders
- Medication
- Physical/Mental Illness
- Emotional challenges
- Emotional immaturity/poor problem solving skills
- Attention-seeking
- Redirected aggression
TECHNOLOGY
• “Digital natives” or “Net Generation”
• Multitasking is a way of life and staying connected is essential (Galagan, 2010)
• Heavy reliance on impersonal forms of communication = few skills for professional interactions (Hernandez & Fister, 2001)

NARCISSISM
• Characteristics:
  • Self centered, lacks empathy, feels entitled to special privileges, difficulty seeing how their disruptive behaviors affect others, responds strongly to criticism or threats to their self-esteem, and can result in resentment, aggression, and a desire for retaliation (Twenge, 2006)
  • More prevalent among business students
    • (Bergman & Daly, 2010; Brown, Sautter, Littvay, Sautter, & Bearnes, 2010)

CONSUMERISM
• Students view faculty as service providers
• Students expect professors to reward effort as opposed to performance
• Customers are always right (Nordstrom et al., 2009)
• Millennial Generation
  • Born between 1982 and 2000
  • College matriculation: 2002 - 2020
  • Largest generational cohort in history
  • Will impact higher education as significantly as the Boomer generation
  • Characteristics: Choice, Control, Immediate Gratification
    • (Rickes, 2009; Howe & Strauss, 2007)

ENTITLEMENT CONSTRUCTS
• Low personal responsibility: Attribute problems in learning to inadequacies of the instructor or system
• Expectation of recognition for effort: Expect to receive an A or B if they have completed the minimum requirements (Campbell & Chowning, 2009)
• Control over learning: Education should be entertaining and there should be grade curves
• Product value of education: Students believe they should receive passing grades and a good job because they have “purchased” an education by paying tuition
INSTRUCTOR-RELATED FACTORS

• Instructor Demographics
  • Young, female, low-status, and minority instructors face the greatest challenges. Knepp (2012)

• Prompts:
  • Little or no student involvement in classes
  • Surprising students with unannounced assessments
  • Arriving late to class or cancelling class without notice

• Unrealistic expectations of students
• Public humiliation
• Cutting students off
• Unclear syllabus
• Ignoring students questions
• Condescending remarks
• Arrogance
• Lack of responsiveness
• Lack of clarity about expectations
• Lack of immediacy

STRATEGIES

• Use Self-Disclosure – controversial
  • Amount, valence and relevance important

• Increase Nonverbal Immediacy

• Increase Instructor Credibility
  • Competence, caring, trustworthiness

• Engaging Learning Environments

• Use Positive Reinforcement

• Emphasize institution wide academic code (E.g., LSU Code of Student Conduct)