

Classroom Management Issues

Classroom management issues can be a problem, especially with new instructors. Students will pick up on an instructor's insecurity in the classroom setting and take full advantage of the situation.

If you are a brand new instructor, let your students know, and explain to them that the time spent in class is their time and that it is money out of their pocket if time is wasted in the classroom. The tests and assignments will still be scheduled and will cover the material whether it is covered in class or not.

Make sure you are prepared for the class before you walk in the door. Have lecture notes, a/v equipment and all necessary supplies ready before you actually need them. Position the a/v equipment where you need it and test it prior to the class time. If you are projecting a PowerPoint have it ready to go or if you are projecting any Internet sites have them opened and already projecting onto the screen. Arrange the classroom the way you want it; desks in a row, circles, etc., podium at the front of the class, in middle of a circle of desks, etc.

Have a solid plan of action and stick to it. This doesn't mean that there is no flexibility, it is a simple tactic that will help keep the entire class on track. Write on the erasable board or project on the screen the objectives for the day so the students will know what will be covered.

Some instructors start each class by reviewing the information from the previous class time by having the students answer several questions, either with or without credit.

Other instructors aim for ordered chaos by allowing some discussion of current health related issues. This may give some a chance to report on what they have seen or heard in the news and are anxious to share their information. Or if the students are in surgical rotation and the class is the first of the day, let the students briefly share what they observed, learned, and/or first scrubbed that morning.

It seems like there is always one student who tends to be the most difficult to control with gentle methods. This student appears to try to throw discussion off track and should be handled with firm tact. If that doesn't work, take the student aside and let him/her know that their efforts are appreciated, but their actions are disrupting the learning process for the other students. Suggest that he/she see you after class if they have off topic questions. I've also found that this statement works, "*we'll cover that when we discuss _____. I don't want to confuse everyone by discussing it now.*"

If the disruption continues refer the student back to the disruptive behavior policy in your student handbook. **(Policy example included)*

A. Problems and solutions - Examples

Problem 1. The Interrupter. He or She interrupts everyone without discrimination, no matter what the topic of discussion is.

Solution: The first reaction is to ignore "the interrupter", but this seems to make him/her even more determined to gain your attention. First ask if their comment or question is on topic. If not, let them know you'll address it after class on their (the student's) time.

Problem 2. Late arrivals.

Solution: Shut the door when you enter the room. Entry after that time is only allowed when YOU open the door. The student is tardy and the time involved counts towards their allowed

absence. You can also state in your classroom policies that “X” number of tardies count as an absence.

B. Time management:

Classes are either like a roller coaster or a ferris wheel. Things proceed at an accelerated rate or they plod along at a constant rate. Actually, time management in the classroom is a combination of both. It’s not bad if you finish something an hour early. Use this time for review and reflection of items covered in this section. Allow some free discussion on the subject.

The best way to handle time management issues is to adjust accordingly to each situation. One routine is to pick up new subjects before testing on the previous subject.(students hate this, but it keeps you moving along at a scheduled pace.