

Managing Disruptive Classroom Behaviors Workshop Reflection

Title of the workshop: Managing Disruptive Classroom Behaviors

Purpose statement: After the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Learn practical skills, theory and examples of how the tools can be applied in their classrooms.
- Effectively work with disruptive students in the classroom setting.
- Explain the basic concepts of motivational enhancement therapy (or motivational interviewing) as applied to the classroom.
- Discuss the dos and don'ts when working with students who are frustrated and unmotivated.
- Learn the importance of establishing early classroom rules and etiquette to “get out ahead” of potential violent and disruptive behaviors.

Lead presenter: Dr. Brian Van Brunt and Dr. Barbi Honeycutt

Date: 10/22/2012

Location: Online

Number of people attending the workshop: ~20

Reflection (e.g. what you've taken from the workshop, how you will incorporate what you've learned in your teaching, how you feel your teaching can be improved given information shared in the workshop, etc.):

The workshop was completely online and utilized the forum feature on moodle for discussion. To start off the discussion, there was a video presentation by Dr. Van Brunt that went through powerpoint slides that focused on ways to deal with disruptive behavior in the classroom. This was a short and informative video, lasting an hour and a half with multiple examples of how to deal with student behavior that could be classified as annoying, dangerous, and/or disruptive. The first step in dealing with potentially disruptive student behavior is to ensure a learning environment that is not conducive to disruptive behavior. This would involve setting classroom expectations early and having clear rules for violation of disruptive behavior. Implicitly, this involves treating students with respect and establishing authority so the students will respect you and manage their behavior. There is a tradeoff of being an authoritative teacher and having engaging classroom discussion, so a key component is to ensure the teacher is not so authoritative that it dampens discussion.

After this presentation, the workshop focused on having a discussion on the forum of instances encountered with disruptive behavior in the classroom and how to effectively correct these disruptions. In my experience, I have always made a conscious effort to establish authority early in a course and have had only a handful of instances where students have been disruptive. One such instance was that a few students would always talk for the first few minutes in my class as I would begin the lecture with a short

description of the material that we would cover. I did not find this to be particularly distracting because all of what I discussed at the beginning of class was written on the board anyway. It was not until I read my course evaluations that I found out from students that they found this disruptive. Through discussion about this topic, I received great input from others on how to deal with this in a positive manner such as: catching students before/after class so as to not make an example out of them in class, jokingly asking the students to “join us” for discussion, and engaging all students in the class before beginning lecture with questions directed at them. Unfortunately, it became clear to me that these could only be effective for me if I know that disruptive behavior is occurring and I need to be able to identify it.

The identification of disruptive behavior on my part can be helped by creating a more open discussion within class. It is clear to me that my authoritative stance has hindered potential class discussions so that I can understand if students feel there is disruptive behavior going on. Since this workshop, I have attempted to try and find a balance between being authoritarian compared to “their friend”. Some of the ways I have tried to be less authoritarian to my students is to engage in small-talk before class, ask questions directed towards activities outside of the classroom, and by requesting input from students on examples they would like me to use in class. So far, I have been able to have a more open discussion within my classroom and it does not appear to hinder my credibility or authority in running the class. I have always feared losing control of a class and erred on the side of being too strict, which comes at the cost of being disconnected from the students. As I become disconnected with students, it is hard for me to identify disruptions but I have found engaging with the students to be great for managing the behavior of the class.