

Promoting Civility in the Classroom

Preventing incivility and disruptive behavior

- Set a strong first impression (confident, authoritative)
- Establish clear expectations for behaviors (e.g., civility statement in syllabi, first week classes, and on blackboard)
- Provide examples of acceptable and unacceptable behavior
- Routinely clarify expectations for your class
- Role model desired behavior and positively appreciate those who role model them

Interventions when disruptive behavior occurs

- Lead the class in a stretch break (it wakes sleepy students, interrupts disruptors, regains a starting point for which to make general class expectation reminders)
- Provide a five minute class break then address with students individually
- Pass the student a note (during movies, other student speeches)
- Ask for the class to complete a reflection assignment while you discretely ask to speak with the student out in the hallway
- Use professional tact and ask the student to end the behavior immediately indicating that it is disrupting your ability to teach or that it is distracting other students from learning

When meeting with students

- Review class policies and syllabus beforehand
- Remain calm and... LISTEN to the student
- Do not take remarks personally
- Explain why the behavior is inappropriate and possible consequences for continued action

Resources

- Consult with
 - Other faculty
 - Your Academic Dean
 - Counseling staff
 - The Dean for Students (2363)
 - Campus Police (2552)



*When students consistently disrupt your classroom or severely disrupt a class submit a Waubonsee Intervention Form (WIF) to initiate the student conduct process.

Contact Scott Peska, Ed.D. Dean for Students at Waubonsee Community College for more information regarding this handout at speska@waubonsee.edu

Example of a possible classroom civility statement:

In this class we will hold ourselves to the highest standards of academic and personal integrity, and will uphold a safe and conducive learning environment for all. Built on a foundation of self and mutual respect, we will cultivate a safe and civil environment that is free from physical or emotional harm, free from distractions and disturbances that may interfere with instruction or learning, and free from individual or group degradation.

Classroom Expectations of Students in the Classroom

To create a civil, safe, and conducive learning environment you, and all students, should:

- Attend each class.
- Arrive early or on time. If you must enter late, do so quietly and take the first seat available. Do not disrupt the class by walking between the class and the instructor.
- Stay for the entire length of the class. Leaving early is generally not permitted. If you know in advance you need to leave a class early, inform the instructor prior to class.
- Refrain from side conversations with other classmates while the instructor or another student is speaking.
- Show respect for your peers and for the instructor. Do not use electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, tablets for non-educational activities (e.g. facebooking, texting, games).
- Wear appropriate clothing that is not distracting or disruptive to others. Clothing that is too revealing or unwashed clothing that has strong odors can hinder others ability to stay focused and learn.
- Refrain from eating in class. If you must have a snack, make sure it is not noisy, messy, or food with a strong odor.
- Stay focused on class material during class time. Sleeping, doing work for another class, reading the paper, are unacceptable and can be disruptive.
- Pack up only when the instructor indicates is permissible. Do not pack backpacks to leave until the instructor has dismissed the class as this can be disruptive.
- Clear any visitors with your instructor ahead of time.

Consequences of Inappropriate Classroom Behavior

As the instructor, I reserve the right and have the responsibility to take appropriate action when I observe an instance of incivility or inappropriate classroom behavior. The form of intervention taken will depend on the nature of the misconduct observed.

This material was modified from <http://www.sunyjc.edu/current/classroomcivility>



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