

**POST-CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS
WORKSHOP SESSION SUMMARY
NIEHS NATIONAL TRAINERS' EXCHANGE
MARCH 2007**

1. Session Title and Presenter's Contact Information:

“Attitude adjustment: Dealing with disruptive students”

Al Brown, R.S., M.P.A.

Director, Environmental Research Initiatives
Arizona State University Polytechnic campus
Environmental Technology Management
7001 E. Williams Field Road
Mesa, AZ 85212
Tel: 480-727-1320
E-mail: al.brown@asu.edu

Hal Berkowitz, M.Ch.E.

Director, Office of Environmental Technology
Arizona State University Polytechnic campus
Environmental Technology Management
7001 E. Williams Field Road
Mesa, AZ 85212
Tel: 480-727-1323
E-mail: hal.berkowitz@asu.edu

2. Workshop Summary

The objective of this session is to provide instructors with ideas on how to minimize classroom disruption caused by unprofessional behavior exhibited by a student. The first thirty minutes of the session include a review of communication basics, and understanding anger. Mr. Brown also presents a list of the most common classroom distractions and discusses methods to prevent them and; and finally, how to respond to distractions that do take place. Mr. Hal Berkowitz then leads the class in small group discussions to identify additional distractions and to develop appropriate mitigation strategies for the selected bad behaviors.

3. Methods

The session begins with a brief lecture to help instructors understand the emotional origins of anger and how to deal with it in a public setting such as a classroom. The lecture also includes a summary of prevention and mitigation techniques for common disruptive student behaviors. The worst case scenario of an angry, potentially violent student is also discussed.

Following the introductory lecture, Mr. Hal Berkowitz divides the class into four small groups. Each group is provided with a hand out which contains examples of disruptive behavior. The group is asked to identify three examples of disruptive behavior which they consider the most important. Each group then presents their examples and they are posted on a flip chart. The presenter then picks four of the examples listed and assigns one of the four to each group. The groups are provided with another handout which gives examples of responses to disruptive behavior. The groups are then instructed to determine the best response. Each group presents their responses and all groups join in the discussion on how they would respond to the unprofessional behavior.

4. Main Points

Key lessons from the session

- It is important to recognize the preferred communication and learning method for each individual student. Most students will increase their level of attention and cease to be disruptive if they are reached through their preferred communication approach.
- An angry student can be calmed through the instructor's ability to demonstrate "emotional intelligence". This approach is disarming and quickly garners a high degree of respect from the entire class and often the angry student.
- Prevention of disruptive behaviors is the best strategy.
- Preventive measures include establishing class rules, demonstrating leadership, treating the students with respect and dignity and having a positive attitude.
- Mitigation techniques include taking actions to immediately stop the disruptive behavior, changing the class structure or format, separating students, and removing a disruptive student if the situation warrants a removal action.
- Worst case scenarios include threats of violence, intoxication and sexual harassment. Instructors must take a zero tolerance stance for these behaviors and report the student to the sponsoring organization.

Examples of: Responses from the participants

Participants in the session identified the following behaviors as the most common examples of classroom disruption that they encounter:

- Refuses Instructions
- Jumps Ahead of Flow
- Inattentive/ Distractive

- Sidebar Conversation
- Constant Excuses For Coming Late
- Insulting Each Other
- Excuses For Lack of Performance
- Fall Asleep
- Insensitive to Diverse Population
- Sexual Harassment

Examples of Four disruptive behaviors assigned to each group: Participants in the session identified the following four bad behaviors for further discussion:

- Insensitivity
- Sidebar Conversations
- Lateness
- Inattentiveness

Examples of responses by each group: participants developed the following strategies for dealing with each problem:

INSENSITIVITY ---

If a possible misstatement,

Passive Questioning:

- "What do you mean...?"
- "Please clarify..."

If intentional,

- Call a beak
- Talk to the person in private

If not complying:

- Remove person from the class
- Be aware of your liability
- Refer person to a counselor
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SIDEBAR CONVERSATIONS ---

- Maintain Eye Contact
- Population/ Culture specific response
- Confront during break
- Move parties apart
- HTTP = HW Workers
- Assert your authority as the trainer

LATENESS ---

- Ground rules
- Mutual Expectation
- Post the rules
- Advise that important activities are at beginning and end
- Talk to the individual (in class)

- Don't punish the entire class

INATTENTIVENESS ---

- Develop a lesson plan that keeps people participating
- Can discuss with the person in private
- Assess whether it is health related
- Tolerate if it is not disruptive
- Ask the person a question

Several participants stated that they wanted to stay longer to continue the discussion.

5. References

Goleman, D., The Emotional Intelligence of Leaders, Leader to Leader, Fall 1998.

Arizona State University, Student Counseling Services

6. Workshop Handouts/ Resources

Goleman, D., The Emotional Intelligence of Leaders, Leader to Leader, Fall 1998.

List of 11 common disruptive behaviors

General tips for dealing with disruptive behavior

Interventions for specific disruptive behaviors

Power point slides