

# Attitude Adjustment: Dealing With Disruptive Students



Al Brown

And

Hal Berkowitz

Arizona State University

Western Region Universities Consortium

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

National Trainers Exchange

March 30, 2007

# Arizona State University, Polytechnic campus, Mesa, AZ



# Communication Basics

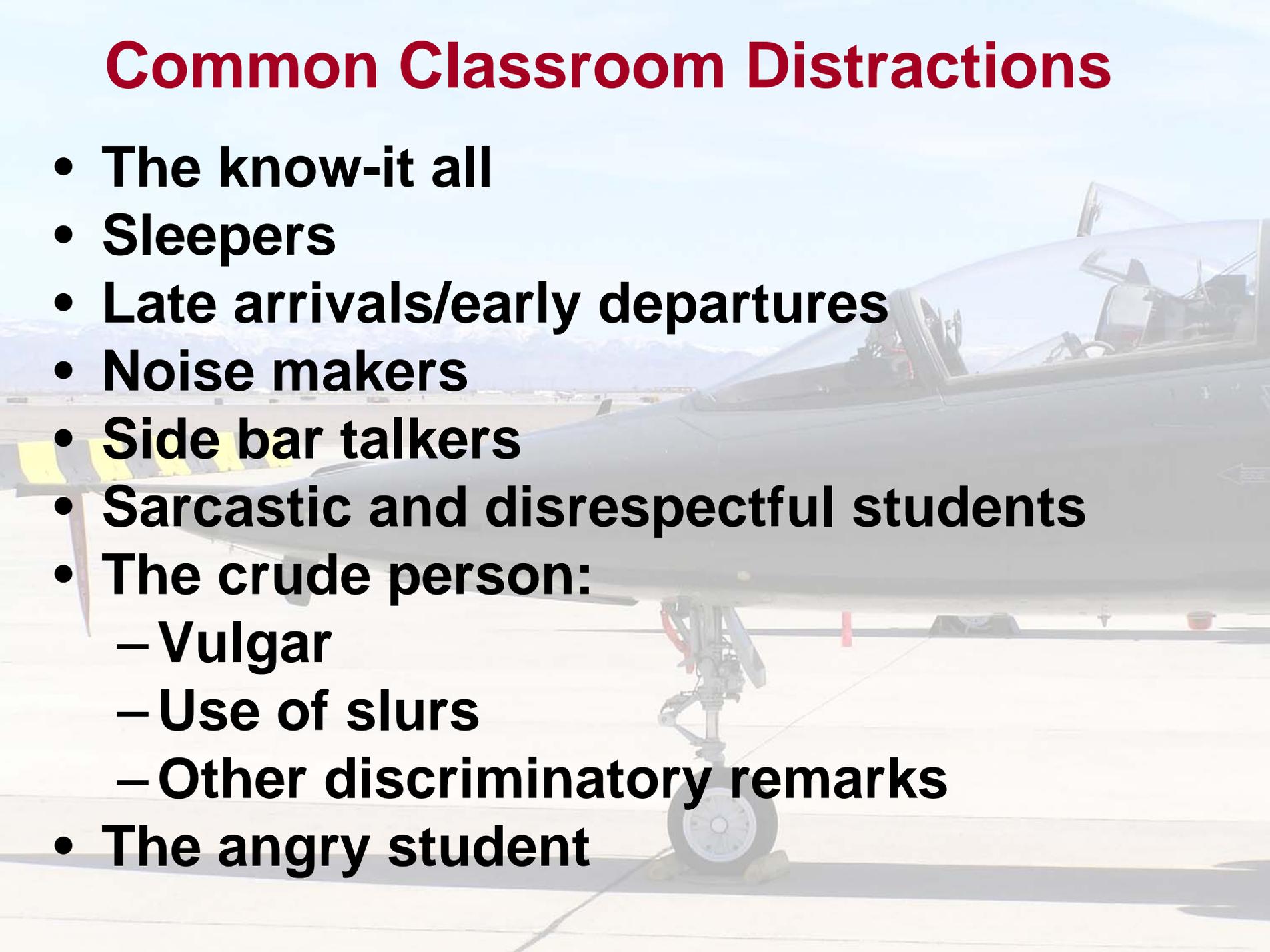
The background of the slide is a photograph of the ASU Technology Center building. The building is a multi-story structure with a light-colored, textured brick facade. On the right side of the building, the letters 'ASU' are mounted in large, silver, three-dimensional characters. Below them, the words 'TECHNOLOGY CENTER' are also mounted in silver, three-dimensional characters, arranged in two lines. The building is set against a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there are some green trees and a paved area, possibly a parking lot or walkway.

- **Verbal**
- **Written**
- **Visual**
- **Non-Verbal/Tactile**
- **Other**

# Understanding Anger

- **Fight/Flight hormonal response**
- **Emotional intelligence (Daniel Goleman)**
  - Emotional brain + thinking brain
  - Success depends 10 – 30% on raw IQ
  - “Trust your gut”
  - Stress can make you stupid
  - Group emotional IQ exists
- **Behavioral health considerations**
  - 25 – 30 % of the population have “issues”
  - Some may have ADA rights

# Common Classroom Distractions

- **The know-it all**
  - **Sleepers**
  - **Late arrivals/early departures**
  - **Noise makers**
  - **Side bar talkers**
  - **Sarcastic and disrespectful students**
  - **The crude person:**
    - **Vulgar**
    - **Use of slurs**
    - **Other discriminatory remarks**
  - **The angry student**
- 
- A fighter jet, possibly an F-16, is shown on a runway. The jet is dark grey with yellow and black markings on the tail. The cockpit canopy is visible, and the aircraft is positioned on a light-colored tarmac. The background shows a clear sky and some distant structures.

# **Worst Case Classroom Scenarios**

- **Under the influence**
- **Sexual harassment**
- **Stalking**
- **Indecency**
- **Threatening violence**

# Preventing Distractions

- **Establish ground rules**
- **Put a statement in the class manual**
- **Identify your credentials**
- **Create a constructive classroom environment**
- **Connect with the students**
- **Be a role model**
- **Know your audience; anticipate questions**
- **Use proper body language**

# Dealing With Common Distractions

- **Do not tolerate bad behavior**
- **Ask the disruptive person to see you during the break**
- **Wake up sleepers**
- **Change the classroom format**
- **Walk into the audience**
- **Encourage habitual monopolizers to talk about it further with you after class or through email**
- **Make eye contact with talking students**

# Dealing with the Angry Student

- **Insist on discussing their concern privately**
- **Let them vent**
- **Remain calm**
- **Remain at a handshake distance**
- **Keep your face at eye level**
- **Restate their primary issue**
- **Tell them what you can and can't do for them**
- **Ask them to lower their voice**

# Dealing with Worst Case Scenarios

- **Under the influence:**
  - Call a break; talk to the student privately
  - Ask the student to leave
  - Advise the student to call for a ride
  - Report the incident
- **Sexual harassment**
  - Do not tolerate this behavior
  - Report the behavior
- **Threatening violence**
  - Do not attempt to physically remove a student
  - Call your security people or 911
  - Ask other students for help
  - Document the incident and report it

# Questions

- Contact info for Al Brown:  
Director, Environmental Research Initiatives  
Arizona State University  
Environmental Technology Management

[al.brown@asu.edu](mailto:al.brown@asu.edu)

480-727-1320