

Managing Problematic Classroom Situations

Nathanael G. Mitchell, Ph.D. & Norah C. Slone, Ph.D.
Spalding University

Jonathan Carrier, M.S.
Laramie County Community College

Planning for Success

- Prevention Psychology
- Be proactive instead of reactive!



Prevention - Expectations

- Student perceptions of an instructor's expectations
 - Grading schemes that are confusing or arbitrary.
 - Lack of clear grading criteria (rubrics).
 - Unclear course policies (attendance, late work, missed tests, plagiarism etc.).
- How can these issues be prevented?

CLARITY

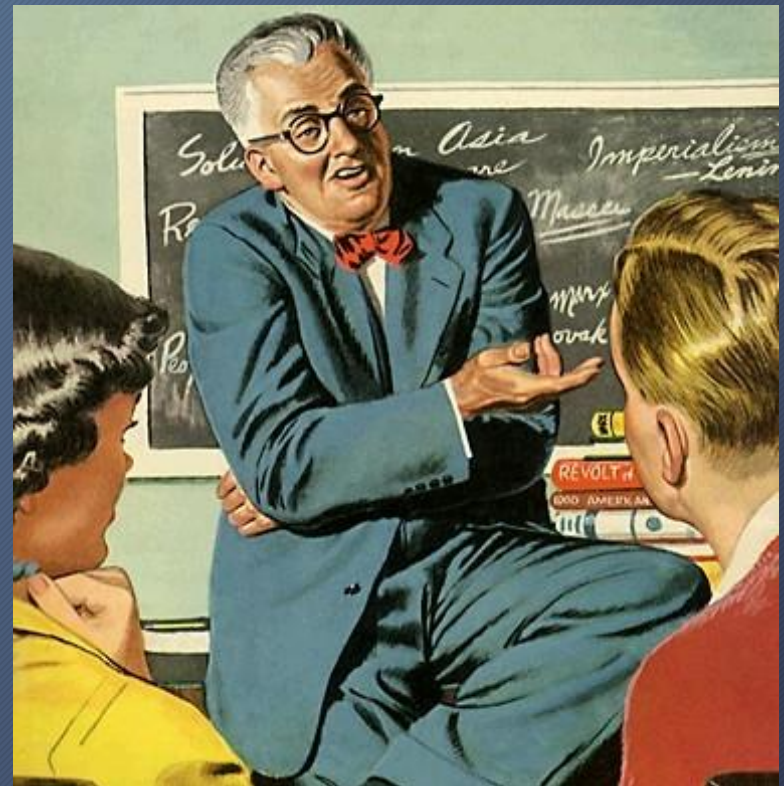
Prevention - Expectations

- Structure will assuage student *(and teacher)* anxiety!
 - Thoroughly cover the syllabus.
 - Expectations, assignments, due dates, test study guides, etc.
 - Be faithful to your policies!
- Clear guidelines and rubrics for every assignment.
- Give assignment reminders.



Prevention - Rapport

- Rapport = a sense of connection with the instructor.
 - Students who feel “left-out” are more likely to misbehave (Kearney & Plax, 1992)
 - Students who believe their instructors care are more positively disposed toward the course and the instructor (Feldman, 1989).
- How can we establish rapport and create a positive social environment in our classes?



Prevention - Rapport



- Share appropriate things about yourself.
- Learn student's names and small details about their lives.
 - A student information card
- Encourage communication throughout the course.
 - Encourage in-class questions.
 - Respond quickly to e-mails and phone calls. Have formal policy for weekends.
- Formal contracts with students (behaviors & grades).

General Strategies



- “SOAR-UP” (CFE,004):
 - Stop the activity or action
 - Think of **O**utcomes
 - **A**ssess the situation
 - **R**eact
 - **U**se active listening techniques
 - **P**repare for next time

SOAR-UP

- Stop the activity or action
 - Break the pattern of verbal or e-mail disagreements.
 - Calm down and consider alternatives.



SOAR-UP

- Think of Otcomes
 - What do you want to achieve?
 - What do you want the student(s) to get out of this situation?
 - What types of accommodations can you make?



SOAR-UP



**KEEP
CALM**

AND

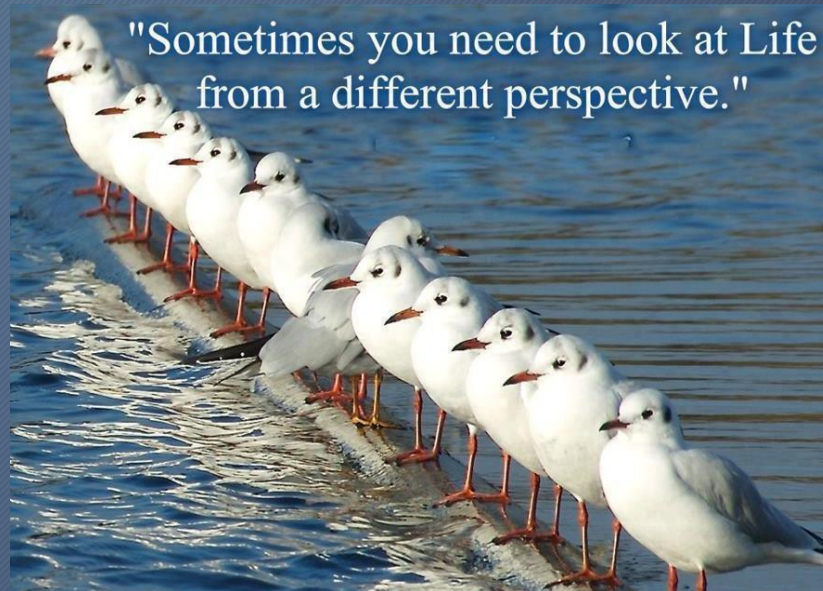
**EVALUATE
THE SITUATION**

- Assess the situation
 - What are possible underlying causes?
 - Is the conflict due to a misunderstanding or a disagreement over personal beliefs?

SOAR-UP

- Read

- Try to consider the issue objectively.
- Be willing to change your position.
- Be willing to agree to disagree and move on.



SOAR-UP

- Use active listening techniques
 - Verbally confirm your understanding of the issue.
 - Ask for further clarification.
 - Attend to body language.



SOAR-UP



- Prepare for the next time you teach the course
 - Reflect on what you learned from the situation.
 - If necessary, make changes for the future.

Undermining Authority and Disrespectful Behavior

- Belittling the instructor
- Engaging in a battle of wills.
- Being openly disrespectful.
- Can be especially daunting for first-time instructors.
- How have you dealt with this in the past?
- Was your solution successful?



Course Disruptions

- Leaving class frequently.
- Arriving late.
- Eating food in class.
- Cell phone distractions.
- How have you dealt with this in the past?
- Was your solution successful?



Disinterested and/or Sleeping Students

- “Spacing out” is relatively common.
- Sleeping in class is almost always considered rude.
- How have you dealt with this in the past?
- Was your solution successful?



Monopolizing Discussions

- Highly interested.
- Knowledgeable.
- Excited.
- Crave the limelight.
- **Be delicate:** you don't want to “turn off” an engaged and excited student!
- How have you dealt with this in the past?
- Was your solution successful?



Questions

- Any challenging classroom issues that we did not cover?
- Any situations that you would like to know more about?



References

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