

Managing Disruptions in the Language Classroom

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Defining Disruptive Behavior

- * Disruptive behavior is an act that impairs, interferes with, or obstructs the orderly conduct, processes and functions of an instructor's classroom, the College, and/or the rights of other members of the College community. This includes acts that occur both inside and outside the classroom.

-(Deb Peterson, About Education, adulted.about.com)

Common Disruptive Behaviors

- * Persistent late arrival or departure that disrupts class
- * Repeated cell phone use
- * Talking out of place during class
- * Loud and/or frequent interruption of class flow with inappropriate questions or remarks
- * Belligerent behavior once confronted
- * Threatening emails, letters, or voicemails
- * Distressing or disturbing behaviors

Managing Disruptions

Tips for Dealing with Low level disruptions:

- * 1. Adjust the volume
- * 2. Move around
- * 3. Shut out negativity
- * 4. Be prepared
- * 5. Control your space
- 6. Keep calm
- 7. Don't deviate from teaching
- 8. Be positive
- 9. Share your expectations
- 10. Have a routine

Establishing Norms

- * List expected classroom behaviors in the syllabus
- * Post “Student Code of Conduct. Student Rights and Responsibilities” in class (District BP 3100)
- * Refer to these lists when disruptions occur
- * Start and end on time
- * Turn off or silence cell phones. Save texting for breaks
- * Respect the contribution of others
- * Resolve differences calmly.

Reacting to Mild Disruptions

Try one or more, if necessary, of the following tactics:

- * Make eye contact with the disruptive person
- * Remind the group of the agreed-upon norms
- * Move toward the disruptive person
- * Stand in front of the person and wait for it to end or address it in a way that doesn't attract an audience
- * Be the “guide on the side” and have the student explain why the behavior is disruptive

Handling Persistent Disruptions

For more serious, persisting problems:

- * Speak with the person privately
- * Confront the behavior, not the person
- * Speak for yourself only, not the class
- * Seek to understand the reason for the disruption
- * Ask the person to recommend a solution
- * Get an agreement on expected norms
- * Explain any consequences of continued disruptions

Role Play

- * 1. Two students cheating on a test
- * 2. Student on phone, texting, leaving class often
- * 3. Girl putting on makeup in class
- * 4. Two students coming in 10+ minutes late to class
- * 5. Student outburst after receiving an “F” on a test
- * 6. Student makes inappropriate remarks about the language or culture they are studying

Questions?

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