Handling Classroom Disruptions

Do:
Define behavior and your response according to the Continuum of Disruption
Remain calm
Assess your own safety
Be considerate and express care
Focus on relevant information
Respect confidentiality

Avoid:
Arguing with the student
Getting locked in a single way of dealing with the student
Expecting the student to change his/her view
Lecturing or chastising
Making assumptions
Ignoring cues of escalation
Crowding the student’s personal space
Ignoring your gut feelings

Outlining classroom behaviors at the beginning of the semester in your syllabus including:
- Electronics and cellphone policies
- Reciprocal models of mutual courtesy and respect
- Appropriate times to address individual academic issues or grade disputes
- When to address other personal disputes or disagreements.

Along with your own classroom policies, refer to Board Expectations for Student Conduct found in the Student Handbook.

Responding with Care

Instructors have the right to expect full cooperation from all students. The classroom is a small vital community devoted to teaching and learning. Mutual respect and appropriate behavior are essential elements in this academic setting.

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Campus Security
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GatewayCT.edu
Handling Classroom Disruption

It’s important to remember that our students come to us with a breadth of life experience, and life challenges. While disruptive behavior is never acceptable in the classroom, our approach to the situation might be the difference between helping the student to grow and intensifying underlying issues.

1. If the behavior is inappropriate or mildly disrespectful, instruct the student to stop.
2. If the behavior continues, or is disruptive or threatening (see Continuum of Disruption) ask the student to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class.*
   * Legally, no student may be denied admittance to the next class.
3. It is recommended that you meet with the student: privately, immediately after class, and in your office whenever possible. It is helpful to:
   • Present the student with specific behaviors that were unacceptable, and discuss their impact on the learning process.
   • Avoid statements about the student’s character – this is about the behavior.
   • Issue a verbal warning / explain that the behavior cannot be tolerated in the future.
   • Take the opportunity to listen to the student. Is there something else going on in his/her life?
     o Possible issues might include: Stress, Family Problems, Personal Life Situation, Illness, Alienation, Adjustment Issues
   • Any information recorded while speaking with the student is still covered under FERPA. You may only rely this information to campus officials who have a legitimate educational interest such as your Dean, Department Chair, or the Office of Student Development.

Incident Reports and Referrals

At any time, you may file an incident report with the Office of Student Development detailing the situation. Incident reports may be filed to request follow-up action from the Office of Student Development, or to simply document the incident. Upon receiving the report, the Office of Student Development will request a meeting with the student. The instructor will be notified if/when a meeting takes place. During the meeting, the student will have an opportunity to present his/her version of the incident.

After the meeting, Student Development will follow up with appropriate interventions including (but not limited to): developmental/educational activities, referral to resources, removal of privileges and community restitution. While we are prohibited from disclosing details about conduct cases, our office will provide you with the general outcome of the case.

Incident Reports are now being filed online!

For Conduct Incident Reports: www.gatewayct.edu/ireport
For Concerns to be forwarded to the Behavioral Assessment Team: www.gatewayct.edu/batreport

Guiding Principles

Most inappropriate behaviors can be handled by the instructor at the time of the disruption. However, some may require consultation, referral to Student Development, or immediate emergency response.

Continuum of Disruption

- Inappropriate
- Disrespectful
- Disruptive
- Threatening