

Classroom Management Case Studies

CEDP Phase 1 – Learning Team Project

Learning Outcome

Collaboratively develop strategies to deal with classroom management issues that arise.

Instructions

With your group of three Learning Team members review and discuss the classroom management case study you were just given. Tomorrow morning, 30 minutes will be devoted to the discussion of each case. The presenters will have a maximum of 15 minutes to discuss the context of their case and their suggested reactive and proactive responses. The remainder of the time will be devoted to an open discussion about the case and its implications for our personal teaching practice. Remember to allow time for discussion of your strategy with your entire Learning Team.

There are many resources available to help you – CEDP online modules, Teaching and Learning websites at our colleges and college websites which have links to policies and procedures that will be useful.

Facilitators will be available in R1042 and the Merlin House Residence Lounge from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. If groups prefer to work on the case immediately following this session and/or electronically in the evening, they are welcome to.

Structure your analysis using these guiding questions.

1. Identify the central issues highlighted by this case. Which do you believe are the most difficult to address?
2. In the moment, how would you respond to the student?
3. Who are the other stakeholders with whom you should discuss this problem? (List them.) For each of these individuals, describe how you would approach them about the issue?
4. Describe, in detail, the steps you would take to resolve this issue.
5. Consider and list proactive strategies that could have been put into place to lessen the likelihood that this issue would have arisen?

Mutiny in Biology

Stephanie is teaching Introductory Biology to a group of first year students. This course is a mandatory requirement for students from a variety of Health Sciences diploma programs. The entry requirements vary depending upon the program in which students are registered in, resulting in a wide range of academic preparation and skill. This year the college made a very successful push to attract more international students and 10 of the 40 students in this section are new comers to Canada. The course evaluation scheme includes a major group assignment worth 25% of the final grade. The course lead that developed the assessment was determined to build more authentic assessment practices into the curriculum and this is reflected in the major group assignment. The groups will be working with a community health organization to develop a short video and accompanying information sheet describing.

It is now week 5 and Stephanie has posted the assignment and the student groups, which she formed, to the course LMS. Students have begun emailing her complaining about the group members they will be working with and in two cases, refusing to work in a group and insisting on completing the project individually.

Stephanie has just arrived at the first face-to-face class following her posting of the group composition and as she is introducing the project, a young man says loudly "This is bull. I'm not paying for this course to work with a bunch of people I don't know. Half of 'em can't even speak English. I need a good grade in this course. I'm doing the assignment alone." Other students begin to murmur their agreement

REACTIVE RESPONSES	PROACTIVE RESPONSES

“Talking, texting and tuned out”

Sam’s students are attending class and seem to be interested in the material, but it is difficult to keep the students’ engaged during class. It is only week 3 when Sam returns to the faculty office after a particularly frustrating two hour class. As there are no students in the office, Sam shares the following. “I had so much material to cover, but I only got through half of it because the students just wouldn’t pay attention. There were 35 students but many were ignoring my lesson and texting under their desk or using their laptops. If they weren’t texting they were talking to each other. I had to keep stopping my lecture”.

Sam decides to try to meet students ‘where they are’ by integrating Twitter into an upcoming lecture to gather student thoughts on an issue. Sam is quite proud of himself when he successfully creates a hashtag for the class and invites students to start Tweeting. He even manages to have the Twitter feed posted live behind him on the projector during the next class. A profane (or otherwise inappropriate tweet) appears on the screen and is posted by a username that can’t be automatically linked to a student in class (i.e. @Coolight24). Several other Tweets respond to that Tweet, some calling it inappropriate, others adding to the inappropriate dialogue.

REACTIVE RESPONSES	PROACTIVE RESPONSES

'Two class clowns is one too many'

Peter teaches a second year engineering course and is a well-liked faculty member who is known for being tough, but fair. During the fall semester Peter taught two sections of the first part of this course and both sections went very well. The students were eager, engaged learners and overall completed the course successfully. Peter quite enjoyed both sections as each had a good-natured "class clown" that kept the mood light, despite the highly technical material the students needed to master. Peter did not need to put much effort or thought into classroom management last semester.

Peter was quite pleased to be teaching part 2 of this course in the winter. It is now the winter semester and the sections have been shuffled around and the classroom dynamic has changed. The two "class clowns" have landed in the same section and during the first week they seem to be getting on each other's nerves. Adam and Matt each have a large group of friends who enjoy their humour and encourage the jokes and quips. It is now week three and 10 minutes into the 2:30 pm class. Adam makes a pun based on a scientific term, loud enough for the entire class and the professor to hear. It is not inappropriate in nature. Matt states "that was lame" under his breath. Adam responds with "at least I'm passing the course". Suddenly the two of them are on their feet, challenging each other to fight. They were seated only a few desks apart and are now standing in the aisle, toe to toe.

Also consider your response if Sarah was the professor, and the students were Jessica and Linda. Does it make a difference to your response? Why or why not?

REACTIVE RESPONSES	PROACTIVE RESPONSES

Godwin's Law

Ali posted a case-study of an ethical dilemma in the discussion board of the LMS. Students are expected to write their own analysis of the situation and post it on the discussion board and respond to at least one other student's post.

The morning after assigning the reading, Ali checks email to find several urgent messages from students asking Ali to check what is going on in the discussion. Ali finds one thread of with approximately 30 posts, which are increasingly rude, angry and insulting, has been posted between midnight and 3am. The posts seem to all be from 6 students.

Reading through the thread, it was started by a student, Ray, who posted a simplistic black and white interpretation of the case. A second student Dev, responded, pointing out that there may be grey areas Ray has missed. Ray responds dismissively saying it's about "moral absolutes". At this point a third student Mic, posts an insulting meme image and calls Ray's opinion 'dumb'. Other friends of both Ray and Dev join in what is now an outright flame war, and, inevitably, around post 28, 'Hitler' gets mentioned.

REACTIVE RESPONSES	PROACTIVE RESPONSES

Procedure Please!

Jane is a new carpentry professor assigned to teach a course to second year carpentry students. She is excited to teach this course because the students seem to engage deeply in more interesting and complex projects. During her meeting with the class, Jane outlines the requirements of the first project and is careful to go over her expectations with students regarding their need to be prepared for their scheduled time in the carpentry lab. She makes it clear that the following week students are to arrive with a completed “Plan of Procedure” for their project along with a material list and a cut list.

A half hour into lab the following week, Jane notices that many students are making expensive and time consuming mistakes. She stops the activities in the shop and asks to see the students’ “Plan of Procedure” notes, material lists, and cut lists. To her frustration, over half the class has an incomplete plan or no plan at all for their project. She instructs seven students to leave the lab to work on their plans before returning. The students leave, but mumble angry remarks about a lack of scheduled lab time to finish their projects. Ten minutes later, she notices two of the students are back working on their projects. She approaches the students and finds they still have not completed the prep work. When she asks them to leave again, they argue that they don’t need the prep work and that because of work commitments, they won’t have time to finish their projects. Finally, one of the students responds, “I paid for this shop time, I don’t have to leave”.

REACTIVE RESPONSES	PROACTIVE RESPONSES