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lessons

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

CONTENTS

LISTEN ... YOUR STUDENT IS SAYING SOMETHING DIFFERENT 2
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT 6
STUDENTS AND PROFESSORS SHARE HORROR STORIES 12
ADDRESSING THE HORROR STORIES 14
THE BENNION CENTER IMPROVES THE SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM 19
THE ACADEMIC PHYSICIANS’ BALANCING ACT 22
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Keys, keys, keys ...

Where is that elusive key to creating a perfect classroom of intellectual bliss and learning? At the Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence, we often hear questions like this. For years, I've searched for this ideal; and just when I think I've found it, the semester ends, a new group of students enters the classroom, and my little key no longer works – as if someone changed the locks when we changed semesters.

I'm beginning to learn that there is no single key created to help us solve all of the issues that may arise in the classroom. It makes sense to me now, realizing that each student that we have is a complex entity in and of themselves, let alone a whole group of students trying to intertwine their complexities and become a working, learning unit. Even more, as I've read through the articles in this issue of lessons, I realize that the mere interpretation of what “Classroom Management” means has various translations, levels, and possibilities.

I hope you enjoy the work that our undergraduate and (for the first time in lessons) graduate students have to offer as they write about the diverse intricacies of classroom management. Each of the features could open a fascinating dialogue into the social and dynamic constructs of classroom behavior.

Kim Welch
Assistant Director, CTLE
LISTEN ... YOUR STUDENT IS SAYING SOMETHING DIFFERENT

BY C. JANE MARLO
PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN HOLT

In 1984, I went through four years of college thinking I was just like every other student, but I didn’t graduate. This spring, I’ll graduate after three more years at the University of Utah, but this time, I realize I’m not like everyone else. I didn’t return to finish school because I love studying; I came out of necessity to provide for myself after a destructive marriage and divorce. I returned to college this time with hidden disabilities – depression and anxiety. In addition, through an earlier testing, I learned that I’ve had Attention Deficit Disorder my entire life.

At age 39, I’ll be leaving the University of Utah with more than an academic education. I’ve learned what my disabilities are and how to work with them despite the demands of school – how to break down assignments into do-able tasks, how to recognize and control thoughts that cause anxiety, how to listen to textbooks on tape to help me concentrate on the content of what I need to read, and how to keep a pair of earplugs in my backpack, so I can study and take tests without the distraction of noises. I found that some medications are effective, but most are not. I’ve also learned that some instructors are understanding and helpful, and although others try, they just are not.

Last year, 882 students were registered with the Center for Disability Services (CDS) on the University of Utah campus. Of these, 644 students have hidden disabilities, which include: ADHD/ADD, learning disabilities, and psychological disabilities. Only 1 percent of the U’s student body is registered with this center, a small amount compared to other universities.

Jone Pete Wilson is currently the director for the CDS. He has been with the university for one year. Prior to his director position, he worked at the University of Vermont for 10 years in a very similar program. According to Wilson, Vermont is a college with only 10,000 students in which 3 percent were registered with its disability center.

The difference in these numbers points to the probability that there are many more students on this campus who are not registered and are possibly struggling through their classes without even realizing that they are fighting their curriculum at a disadvantage compared to their peers and the expectations of their instructors.

“Having an open attitude for discussing disability issues and a willingness to listen to how a student describes his/her weakness is the best start for meeting a student’s needs,” Wilson said. Professors and other faculty need to anticipate problem areas, gain a knowledge base, and know what to do when a student approaches them with a different need than what they are used to providing for in the classroom.

Students with hidden disabilities have often faced a slew of negative labels in school. They see that they are unable to perform at the same levels as their peers and begin to develop feelings and thoughts of inadequacy thus causing inner conflict with the talents and intellect they possess. I remember in kindergarten when I was supposed to add sets of apples printed on a sheet of paper, and another time when I was required to draw the hands on a clock face to correlate with the written time. All the other students were busily working the simple problems, but I couldn’t do it ... I just kept looking at the paper, unable to do anything. My teacher scolded me for not working. Feeling humiliated, I started to cry but still couldn’t do the work. That was just kindergarten. I continued to struggle all the way through my four years in college. It wasn’t until age 33 that I learned of my own hidden disability. My son was diagnosed with ADD, so I started researching it and decided to have myself evaluated. Now, I am back in school, finishing a needed degree, struggling with the same comprehension problems and others, but this time I have the help and moral support I lacked all those years before.

These inner struggles are numerous and varied by
A common problem for students with learning disabilities is not being able to focus on the task at hand with everything else going on. It can be a constant struggle.

each student. People with some hidden disabilities have perception difficulties; they perceive things differently than the majority of people do. Visual and auditory stimuli can bombard the perception of students with hidden disabilities. The student is unable to focus on one thing at a time and is subsequently overwhelmed. Often, these students will then hasten to complete required tasks. The hastening results in overlooked and omitted parts of the requirements. They also may have difficulty organizing information and dealing with impulsiveness, in-attention, forgetfulness, restlessness, disorganization, difficulty completing tasks, focusing, poor self-esteem, risky behavior, and have a hard time keeping their friends.

In an article in the “Daily Texan,” an engineering senior with ADHD said, “Ever since I can remember, I have been easily distracted, disorganized, lost things, spaced out during conversations, and had difficulty paying attention in general. I’d forget my homework, assignments, sometimes even my backpack. I seem to study a lot more than the average engineering student, yet still only have an average GPA.” This student also struggled through years in school without knowing she had a disability that inhibited her capabilities. It wasn’t until her senior year that some of her tutors recommended she be tested and then was clinically diagnosed with ADHD. If it were not for them, she would’ve never realized what she was fighting.

The late teens and early 20s is when the more extreme hidden disabilities, like bi-polar disease and schizophrenia, appear in an individual’s development. Something as simple as dyslexia can make spelling impossible. Anxiety, which easily increases as a student feels more pressure, can reduce concentration affecting spelling, handwriting, and the congruency of context.

A 2004 survey by the American College Health Association reported in “The New York Times” that nearly half of all students at some point find themselves feeling “so depressed that they have trouble functioning,” and 15 percent meet the criteria for clinical depression. Among students seen at campus counseling centers, the number taking psychiatric medications rose to 24.5 percent in 2003-2004, from 17 percent in 2000 and just 9 percent in 1994. This article also points out that the college environment is expected to be a safe environment for students, yet students face increasing stress from work, school, and personal life without the support of the family environment they graduated. Universities are seeing increased amounts of anxiety
disorders and panic attacks this year from the past two decades.

Students with some disabilities are unprepared to deal with college stress alone and need the help of support programs such as the Center for Disability Services. As some students with visible disabilities face challenges of accommodation, students with hidden disabilities face different challenges, because they must fight against skepticism and uncooperativeness. The faculty might not want to be taken advantage of or misled to make the curriculum easier for one student over another. Whether a student has a head injury from an automobile accident or a disability to organize information, students who suffer from these disabilities receive frustrating responses from teachers who blame them for not being able to understand or not accepting that they need extra time or help to meet class requirements. When students get responses like this one after another through the years, it leads to low self-esteem and confidence to finish school.

In my case, I only went to college because my family expected me to. I never expected to finish college when I was younger, because I didn’t believe I could do it after such difficulty in school year after year. Then again, I was never aware of the disabilities I was facing. Now, I’m back in school knowing what I’m dealing with and have support of the Center for Disability Services and most of my instructors. The CDS introduced me to helpful options that I didn’t know existed before.

Some students place extra pressure on themselves to excel in order to prove to themselves that they belong in college. Other students just do what they can to get by and live with low expectations of themselves. In my college years right out of high school, I lived with the low expectations; now I struggle with putting too much pressure on myself out of the necessity to succeed.

What these students need are faculty who legitimize their situation. Help the students correct the problems rather than over-looking their mistakes or just pointing them out. Don’t treat the student in a condescending way or patronize them, and don’t avoid them, either. The students may already fight their own criticizing thoughts and think that any time they do well in school it is because of luck, hard work, or the teacher’s pity – not crediting themselves for having the needed knowledge and skill.

According to Miller, McKinley, and Ryan, “Repeated failure, frustration, ridicule, and embarrassment result in anticipated failure and humiliation. Students said that they need help with their self-concepts; feeling good about themselves. And, the best therapy for counteracting these conditions involves successful completion of academic work, and to develop a sense of competency that will follow repeated successes. Most faculty seemed relieved when they began to understand the disability and how it may affect specific aspects of the student’s performance.”

Wilson said, “The main thing I would like to get across to faculty is that they should talk to students and try to find out how the student is doing in the class. The faculty might find out that a few simple things can make a big difference for the student with a disability and at the same time, improve the quality of instruction for EVERY student in the class. My point is that many of the teaching strategies that work for students with a disability can make the class as a whole learn better. The Center for Disability Services works for both faculty and students. Our primary duty is to arrange appropriate accommodations for students, but on the most basic level, our job is to protect the university and its faculty.”

The university is obligated by law to provide accommodations for students with a disability, and faculty are responsible for accommodating individual students in their classes. The staff of CDS determines if a student is eligible for accommodations and then informs the faculty member of the appropriate accommodations in their class. Wilson believes that the system exists to relieve individual faculty members from having to evaluate every request, and it is meant to maintain student confidentiality, as it provides a resource for both faculty and students to turn to for assistance.

Currently, Wilson is writing a new policy document for the CDS. This policy would require students to provide records to substantiate their disability as well as clearly outlining the student process for requesting accommodations. Students are protected by a grievance process if they feel accommodations are not being properly implemented. The policy also stipulates the responsibilities for the student, faculty, CDS, and the university.

“The new policy is intended to bring our practices up to date in areas such as the documentation we require to certify students, determining appropriate accommodations for students, and who is responsible for specific aspects of providing accommodations to students. We hope to have the policy in place sometime this spring,” Wilson said.
"The main thing I would like to get across to faculty is that they should talk to students and try to find out how the student is doing in the class. The faculty might find out that a few simple things can make a big difference for the student with a disability and at the same time, improve the quality of instruction for EVERY student in the class."

Joe Pete Wilson
Director, Center for Disability Services

"Harmony exists only when standards are clear and when expectations and consequences are laid out and upheld with the least amount of exceptions."

Shannon Haley and Lyubima Simeonova
Ph.D. Teaching Fellows

"Remember, it might seem dire at the time -- just take a step back."

Robert Serpico
Student Advocate

"If we can steer clear of some of the negative experiences that the students have at the beginning of the course, many of our classroom management fires will be squelched well before they fan into disasters."

Kim Welch
Assistant Director, CTLE

"I have found that international students often are used to working harder and longer, as they have had to do this to learn a second language and get accepted to an American university."

Steve Eliason
School of Business

"It's really difficult for some faculty to strike a balance between being very controlling and too relaxed. It always seems to help faculty when I remind them it's in the rules and requirements for them to create an environment conducive to learning. It's their job."

Stephanie Richardson
Director, CTLE

"Service-learning incorporates a method of teaching and learning through the use of experience in community settings. Designed to enhance the understanding of course material, students provide a service that meets the need of a community organization. However, service-learning uniquely features aspects of learning that stand apart from other experiential learning."

Marshall Welch
Director, Lowell Bennion Community Service Center

"In terms of intrinsic rewards, the 'thank you' and appreciation physician faculty get from patients may not be matched by students."

Neal Whitman
Professor, Family and Preventive Medicine

"Go to the teacher, then to the department head, then the dean's office, and finally to the president's office. If you still cannot get a problem worked out, students can then go to the student advocate office. Most students are unaware of this procedure and come to us first."

H. B. Harpending
Student Advocate
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

BY SHAWN SWENSEN
PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN HOLT

As the world moves closer towards becoming an integrated community, educators have found themselves in the midst of an intercultural mix. The University of Utah is no exception. Presently, there are 1,846 international students from 105 countries attending the University of Utah, according to the International Student Council Web site.

Classes and programs that were previously filled with primarily American students are beginning to see a more culturally diverse student base. Aside from different languages and social customs, these students bring new insights, alternative world views, and different ways of thinking. While the differences can often enhance the learning experience for American students, they also can present challenges to educators and the methods they use to teach and manage their classrooms.

Maureen Clark, of the writing program, has had some experience teaching international students in her Writing 2010 course, a course that most students attending the U are required to take. When asked about the influence of international students in her class, she replied that she finds their contributions valuable. "They have a very different perspective on the world, and it adds to the discussion. It lets [American] students see both sides."

The engineering department also has seen an increase in the number of international students. According to Wayne Cottrell, Ph.D. and assistant professor in civil and environmental engineering, there has been a noticeable increase in students from foreign countries, a large number of which are coming from Asian countries. When asked about his feelings on the subject, he said, "on an undergraduate level it's beneficial; I welcome the opportunity. I like to see [the] integration of students."

The attitudes of Clark and Cottrell are not unique to their respective departments or to the U. In a study conducted in 2001 by Xiaofan Liao of the University of Northern Iowa Department of Communication Studies, findings proved to be similar to the attitudes expressed by the teachers interviewed at the U. Liao's study found that all the instructors felt that "international students have uniqueness to share in the classrooms" and consider them as "special contributors bringing different insights and ideas to classroom discussions."

One teacher in Liao's study echoed Cottrell's statement. "They are the opportunity for students to learn the concept (diversity) and prepare for the same kind of encounters in the near future" she said.

While students from other countries bring their own ideas and feelings about the United States and the world in general, they also bring an educational background that is often different than the domestic system of teaching and learning. With so many students from different countries, teachers at the U have had to make some adjustments in their teaching methods, though most characterized them as minor changes. Steve Eliason of the School of Business explained that the only change he has had to make is "trying to be more sensitive to their background and perspective."

In the engineering department, Cottrell found that a "common thread" in challenges faced by international students was that of English as a second language. After finding out that some international students weren't getting all the information that was covered during lectures, he began to do more writing on the board, which seemed to solve the problem. Another change he made was in his exams. Noticing that some international students weren't performing as well on exams, he reformatted his exams in such a way so that the questions were "more direct."

While Cottrell's solutions proved effective for many students, there are students who, despite help from
A student has henna art drawn on their hand.
the instructor, continue to struggle. Clark explained that in her courses the most common struggle for international students is with grammar. She will often spend time with students helping them, but if more help is needed than she has time to offer, she encourages them to get additional help from a tutor. She also explained that the university writing program provides classes specifically for international students. When asked whether or not this extra effort seemed to bother these students, Clark said, “No ... most are driven to get it right.”

Though many international students want to succeed, perhaps their biggest obstacle comes from their instructors. While some students are part of a study abroad program, others have lived in the United States for a number of years. While this has been an advantage for some, not all international students have benefited from their extensive time here.

Clark recounted two stories about students she had. The first was about a young woman from China who, when she took Clark’s class, had only been in the United States for a few months, yet had an excellent command of spoken and written English. In contrast, another young woman from India who had been in the United States during her middle and high school years still wrote and spoke poorly.

Clark felt that there were two possibilities for the young Indian woman’s performance. First, the young woman had simply failed to grasp the language and its rules. Or second, which is more likely according to Clark, was that her previous teachers must have not taken the time to correct her work properly and point out her mistakes as a means of teaching her the proper rules of writing and grammar. Clark felt that perhaps this particular student, along with others, had been held to a different standard simply because they were from another country and didn’t speak English well.

Unfortunately as this situation was, it is not unique. “Those students who have been here for a while aren’t always more advanced than those coming directly to the U.S.,” Cottrell said.

Eliason also stated that he felt international students aren’t always held to the same standard. He said, “I think this may happen occasionally. I have often felt merciful toward international students who are struggling, but I have not made any exceptions from a grading perspective.”

“I have often felt merciful toward international students who are struggling, but I have not made any exceptions from a grading perspective.”

While the presence of international students in the classroom can be challenging, teachers recognize that these students are, in many cases, some of the best. Cottrell has observed a distinct difference between international students and those born in the United States, particularly with regard to graduate school. He has noticed that foreign students tend to view a graduate degree differently.

The explanation, Cottrell said, is that there is a “loss of pride and prestige in an advanced degree [on the part of U.S.-born students].” This “loss of pride” has had a significant effect on the engineering department, according to Cottrell. While the undergraduate program has traditionally had a balanced mix of U.S. and international students, the graduate program has become increasingly one-sided.

Cottrell explained that the graduate program, once saturated by U.S. students, now has a majority of international students. “On a graduate level ... we are almost dependent on foreign students to get upper-level graduation and to help with research.” This is a situation Cottrell would like to see changed – to be more evenly balanced like the undergraduate program.

Eliason also has noticed that international students often give more effort to their studies. He said, “I have found that international students often are used to working harder and longer, as they have had to do this to learn a second language and get accepted to an American university.”

As this flow of international students into the United States continues to grow, teachers will increasingly find themselves in more culturally diverse classroom settings. This change will require them, in at least some respects, to change the way they teach and manage their classrooms.

Teachers looking for assistance in teaching international students have resources available to them. The Associated Students of the University of Utah can provide instructors with a list of organizations for specific ethnicities. Such a resource is helpful if the instructor is trying to address an academic problem associated with the student’s culture. Another resource is the International Center. Finally, teachers can suggest students take courses specifically designed for international students and can draw on the various tutors for international students that are available.

The experiences shared by teachers here, as well as with those in Liao’s study, found the transition to a more culturally diverse classroom to be a smooth one. The general feeling towards international students is a positive one. Most instructors perceive them as good students and are willing to accommodate any special needs that these students may have. As for the international students, they exude a willingness to learn and a determination for success that is not always present in U.S.-born students.

Instructors should keep in mind that most students, no matter how long they have been in the United States, still have some difficulties with the English language. Remembering to use verbiage that is more universal in nature and avoiding the use of idiomatic phrases and slang, which do not have the same meaning to people from other countries, is a small adjustment teachers can make. By viewing international students as an opportunity to cross social barriers, teachers can enhance the learning process for all students.
When I received my first teaching assignment, I was excited, yet intimidated. I was eager to share my knowledge and enthusiasm about my academic field, but I also was concerned about the time commitment and reluctant about public speaking on a regular basis. Soon, these worries were replaced with the difficulties of classroom management encountered during my first semester teaching.

I expected to know exactly how to manage my students; after all, I had been a student for the greater part of my life. However, as a student, I was accustomed to a classroom atmosphere where civility reigned and very few disruptions occurred. I did not realize or reflect on the techniques that my professors employed in creating such a harmonious classroom atmosphere. Veteran teachers have generally observed or participated in a wide range of conflict situations with students and can thus negotiate them efficiently. They can create an illusion that contentions in their classrooms simply do not occur. However, having student management problems is as common as the Yankees beating the Red Sox (it usually happens, and when it does not, everybody is surprised).

Novice instructors do not expect difficulties with students and don't have established methods for counteracting or managing them. Lacking experience, first-time teachers are likely to misinterpret the type of leadership teaching requires, and they tend to gravitate towards one of the two extremes: the stern, inflexible disciplinarian or the loose, easy-going friend figure. Both of these can set difficult precedents for the classroom atmosphere and result in inappropriate responses to problems.

During my first semester teaching, I wanted to be liked by my students. I subscribed to the belief that if I could establish a friendship with all of them, then they certainly would not misbehave. I can vouch for the failure of this method. I do not want to imply that one should not be friendly and treat students with care and respect. However, students become confused when teachers try to be friends and disciplinarians, and such confusion is detrimental to the order in the classroom and to the management of the students. I soon discovered the problems that occur when the instructor tries to be a friend.

Midterms week was a time of increased absences and late or mediocre work. This behavior was accompanied by an excruciating parade of excuses. I heard it all: computer failures, road accidents, family emergencies, strange diseases, childbirths, all of them suspiciously coinciding with the midterm date. By no means do I want to belittle the real crises that some students experience. I would rather let myself be deceived than fail to help a student that is experiencing difficulties. But more often than not these stories and explanations are exaggerated or misleading. If the students see the teacher as a friend, they are more likely to approach him or her with excuses and personal disclosures. The students assume that sharing something so personal to a friend entitles them to special treatment. They tend to think, how could one not grant an extension to someone in such an excep-
ational situation? After teaching a few classes, one realizes that very few problems are exceptional, and that the heartfelt excuse of “I am having a really difficult time ...” is just as banal as the freshmen 15 or “Let’s just be friends.” During my first semester, I was unprepared to handle the surge of pleas.

Another problem I mismanaged that first semester was counteracting hostile student behavior. After my first quiz, one of my students made a complaint about the problems that I chose to include and the time constraint imposed. The comments were aggressive and rude and caught me off guard. I was bewildered by the student’s words, because I spent a lot of time and care in choosing the questions on the quiz. The hostility of the student and his obvious challenge to my authority startled me, so I just ignored him and the situation. I thought that after he calmed down he would realize that the problems and the time allowed to finish them were not unreasonable, and he would recognize my efforts to make the class fun, interesting, and challenging. But his contentious behavior persisted during the semester and made me doubt my abilities and potential as a teacher. I often go back in my mind to find the origin of these problems, so that I might figure out what I could have done to avoid them. Here, I would like to share some of the strategies I have applied in my classroom to promote a positive learning environment, student integrity, and fairness.

I recommend that first-time teachers think about what sort of problems students present and accept the inevitability of encountering them. A wide range of student misconduct occurs in the classroom, all of which negatively affects learning. It is essential to have a plan of action to handle them as they arise. Even the best teachers have problem situations with students; they are just prepared to use their authority effectively to manage them.

MAKING A BEHAVIORAL CONTRACT

Both teachers and students enter the classroom with fears and expectations of one another. I recommend addressing these on the first day of class. An effective means to communicate expectations of each other is with a written contract, included in your syllabus and reviewed on the first day of class. A behavioral contract is a general term for a written agreement between instructor and student. The contract defines expected conduct for both the teacher and student while also describing the specific consequences for not upholding responsibilities. In this contract:

1) Involve students by including expectations that they may have of you. (Example: I will be prepared for lecture; I will be available for questions and help). Be honest and be committed to uphold the agreement. Express to the students that if they feel you have not lived up to your responsibilities they have a right to express this to you.

2) Explain the expectations you have of the students and the consequences of not meeting them with regards to attendance, preparation for class, late assignments, and missed exams (Example: You have the responsibility to turn assignments in on time. Lateness will result in a deduction of five percentage points for each day late). Avoid vagueness in your wording. Include specifics about what you expect and give exact repercussions.

3) Cover specific topics that commonly cause problems. Topics for your contract might include expectations and consequences regarding: plagiarism, cheating, attendance, missed due dates, missed exams or quizzes, handling student frustration, preparation for class, discussion participation, and classroom behavior.

Putting these expectations on the table the first day is an effective strategy for managing students in several ways. First, it empowers students in that they know what to expect of you and can hold you accountable. It also allows the students to know that you have their best interest in mind and that you will strive to make their experiences positive.

Including a contract with expectations also allows you to lay down the law, so students know exactly what the consequences are for certain behaviors. The key to the effectiveness of this method is that you follow through with your plan of action and remain consistent. This contract helps you remain objective since all cases of missed assignments and lateness, to name a few, are treated the same and with a predetermined consequence. It also places responsibility on the student, because they knew ahead of time the outcome of certain behavior.

Although the contract between students and teachers must be well-defined and unambiguous about mutual expectations, it should allow for leniency in exceptional circumstances. Always remember that the goal of teaching is to impart knowledge and skills.
Make your classroom experience more relaxed by avoiding problems with a behavioral contract.

Sometimes a little mercy or a second chance is the best way to fulfill that goal. A teacher who is inflexible and unsympathetic may fail to educate students with special circumstances. For example, there was a pregnant woman in one of my classes for whom I made some special exceptions. Being too accommodating, however, may jeopardize the impartiality and fairness in the class.

I argue that a contract can be used to help teachers address those more rare cases, such as a confrontation with a particularly emotional or hostile student. In your contract, include a statement that aggressive behavior will not be tolerated in your classroom. Provide a means for students to communicate concerns to you such as an anonymous drop box or specific meeting times after class. Include in the expectations they have of you that you will listen to their comments and respond in a timely manner and make sure you do, in fact, honor this agreement. You do not necessarily have to agree with them, but address the issue, and do so quickly.

First-time teachers should not view students as enemies or antagonists who, left to their own devices, will disrupt the policies or order you have created in your classroom. However, it is wise to be prepared for such cases, because emotional and angry students are more common than most beginning teachers realize and though not every class has one, if you teach long enough, you will encounter similar situations. Most angry students want their concerns recognized, and if you remain calm, nonjudgmental and don't get defensive, most will acquiesce. I believe that if I had discussed with the class that not every student will agree with me and offered an alternative way to communicate their concerns, I may have avoided this type of conflict.

On occasion the method of a behavioral contract may not be enough, and a student may persistently and deliberately refuse to act civilly towards you. In such a case, you should be prepared to quickly and firmly address the student and have a plan of action ready. In your contract, you have already established that aggressive and rude behavior will not be tolerated. Be ready to ask students to leave and have a faculty member provide counsel about particularly distressing situations.

The main roadblock for a graduate student's ability to manage his/her classes is a sense of uncertainty regarding their authority. Graduate students who teach for the first time have little to no training. These circumstances often produce a sense of being an imposter, especially when expected to provide skill training and student assessment to a class of students who are close in age to the instructor. This uncertainty becomes ever more apparent when authority is rigorously challenged. The first step to managing a class well is becoming comfortable yet equitable with one's authority.

I once read an analogy likening teachers to business owners. Effective teachers do not discipline, but, instead, manage the classroom much like a business owner manages a business. A business owner does not wait for problems to occur, but prepares for them with strategic plans to alleviate difficult situations that arise. I have found that making a behavioral contract with students is the best strategy for addressing a wide variety of behaviors that commonly disrupt classroom learning.

I have always wanted to create a fair classroom environment conducive to learning. I now realize that order in the classroom, especially if it is coupled with fairness and consistency is the key to a healthy, safe and positive classroom.

Harmony exists only when standards are clear and when expectations and consequences are laid out and up-held with the least amount of exceptions.
Students

A student came to class with a gun, supposedly as part of his uniform. He could’ve been in the military, but the professor asked him to remove it. The student refused to remove it, saying he had the right to carry it because of something in the school code pertaining to army-related weapons. Having a weapon in your classroom makes it difficult to concentrate.”
– Sophomore, pre-Pharmacy

“I had a language teacher who didn’t teach. She would come to class and leave it up to us. She didn’t bring us any materials, the tests were very few and didn’t reflect anything we’d learned – she’d tell us to read but wouldn’t go over the material. Furthermore, she’d fall asleep in class!”
– Senior, Nursing

“How many classes have you been to where they don’t require attendance? The first day of class has 100 students crammed into the room, all hoping to meet expectations. That first day, the professor lets you know that attendance won’t be taken and is not part of the grade. Over the next several weeks, you start to notice that the class shrinks from 100 claustrophobic students to about 20 dedicated, or perhaps, bored students. MAKE US SHOW UP! As part of the grade, require that students attend your classes! Make us believe that showing up will benefit us! By saying that we don’t have to be there, professors tell students that their class is not very important and won’t demand much attention.”
– Senior, Communication and Gender Studies

“In one of my statistics classes, our professor was foreign, and he spoke with a very heavy accent. He was fairly understandable, and he did a good job. But some of the students didn’t want to do extra work. They continually took advantage of the fact that he knew his English wasn’t perfect. They complained all the time. They’d get extensions on assignments, questions dropped from the test because they said he hadn’t explained it well enough. It was really obnoxious.”
– Senior, Marketing

“The teacher wasn’t a very good teacher. When you asked her questions, she wouldn’t answer them – she’d ask, ‘What do you think? What does he think?’ After awhile, the students got fed up and wouldn’t bother with the assignments. Sometime during the semester, someone came in and audited the class. When the auditor asked...
us about the professor, most of the students didn’t say anything positive. What they said was justified, but there wasn’t anything positive said. The professor found out and took it out on the class, two days in a row. She lectured us and called us little children.”
- Junior, Finance

“One of my professors didn’t know when he was going too far. He often uses sex to explain concepts, which I can understand is an attention grabber, but it is crude and inappropriate at times. He has also made inappropriate remarks to female students. This type of teaching makes the professor unapproachable for help and sets the atmosphere of the classroom as crude and somewhat uncomfortable for the students, especially if they are female.”
- Senior, Sociology

**PROFESSORS**

“We don’t have censorship at the U, and students will come up with all kinds of different ideas for their films, some of which can be offensive to other students. I remember that one student made a film which just about provoked a fight in the classroom; the film would’ve offended anyone that had certain spiritual values. One student actually came in with a gun because he was so mad at the other student.”
- Professor, Film Studies

“Sometimes, it’s the environment. I had to move my class from a room which didn’t have enough seats for my students. I thought it would be better if I moved to a bigger classroom. They’re usually all taken, so I got moved to an auditorium. That was really hard because I couldn’t see my students, and I was so distanced from them. The lighting was difficult. I ended up having to set limits on where they could sit, so I could reach them.”
- Associate Professor, Exercise & Sport Science

“I assigned students to bring examples of magazines to demonstrate how this particular advertising medium is able to target audiences based on their interests. I requested that no pornographic magazines be used as examples. A student completed the assignment by handing in a nudist colony magazine, stating emphatically, ‘That is not pornography, it is nature.’ She went on to explain that it was a key part of her personal beliefs. After class, another student explained how she was uncomfortable with such porn being used as an example and appreciated my initial instruction, yet another student explained that porn was so important to society that he thought I should not restrict it as an example.”
- Professor, Business

“We had to have class outside one night because the room was about a thousand degrees. We stuck it out for as long as we could, but it was excruciatingly hot.”
- Associate Professor (Clinical), Nutrition

“I was shocked with some massive cheating in an exam. It was a class of 40 students, most of them graduate students. About 20 students cheated. It was such a big problem that I ended up spending a lot of one-on-one time. I docked them all points on that exam, but it didn’t seem like it’d do any good to take a no-prisoners approach and expel all of them. I just put them all on the hot seat for a long time.”
- Assistant Professor, Electrical & Computer Engineering

“This semester, one of my classrooms is a long, rectangular hall with training tables as desks. The acoustics are such that one quiet voice talking out of turn, one book opening too late, even one page turning out of time with the rest of the class, will echo around the whole classroom. I repeatedly ask students to stop talking and listen to me. It just doesn’t work. I talk louder. I attempt to remind myself that the students are not really being any more talkative or noisy in this class than any other I teach – it is just the classroom. But even reminding myself doesn’t make competing with echoes any easier.”
- Professional Development Instructor, Civil & Environmental Engineering
ADDRESSING THE HORROR STORIES: BUILDING A BRIDGE ACROSS THE PROFESSOR/STUDENT GAP

BY EMILY HAUSMAN
PHOTOS BY EMILY HAUSMAN

The student advocate office provides avenues of faculty support to help alleviate and prevent horror stories. H.B. Harpending and Robert Serpico are student advocates associated with ASUU. Each student advocate works one three-hour shift per week volunteering to help other students, making this office a valuable tool to students and teachers.

Although most of the complaints the advocates receive are concerning grade changes; they also receive complaints about professors. They receive complaints about religious disputes, issues of power and politeness and teachers being out of line. If a student has a problem with a faculty member the advocate office can be a useful resource for both the student and the professor. They can help dissolve the situation before it gets out of hand and goes any further.

The following questions and answers are based on an interview with these two student advocates.

Question: How many students come into your office each week?
Serpico: “We deal with about 5-10 students a week on average.”

Question: What is the nature of the complaints?
Harpending: “We deal with issues ranging from grade changes to renter’s issues and landlord disputes.”
Serpico: “We deal with academic and psychological problems of students and direct them to other agencies. There are horror stories that can be easily dissolved through this office. A lot of the complaints are illegitimate, and students come into the office just to vent. The student might even have a legitimate complaint that they don’t follow up on. They could have complaints on this office too; we are here to listen to them all.”

Question: Where do you direct students first when they have a complaint?
Harpending: “Go to the teacher, then to the department head, then the dean’s office and finally the president’s office. If you still cannot get a problem worked out, students can then go to the student advocate office. Most students are unaware of this procedure and come to us first.”

Question: What are some suggestions you can give students and teachers?
Serpico: “Proactively exercise and know your rights. Appropriately handle the situation, don’t confront the teacher in front of everyone.”
Harpending: “Go to the head of the department before you go to the teacher if you are having a personality conflict; sometimes talking to the department head first can be effective. Most importantly, introduce yourself to the professor. It is hard for them to change your grade when they have no idea who you are.”

The advocate’s office suggests that students read the online reviews of professors before taking their class. They also suggest asking other students who have completed the course about how effective the professor was. These are two easy ways to prevent conflicts from happening in the first place.

Some advice the advocate office gives to faculty to help things run more smoothly is to remind students to read the syllabus and emphasize the importance of it. Encourage students to introduce themselves to you, so if a conflict arises, you are already acquainted with the student. Reiterate to your students to read the student handbook. Last year a bill was passed giving students a 10-day window to make grade changes; let them be aware of that.

Most cases that go through the advocate office don’t go to legal action and are dealt with internally before lawyers get involved. However, most tenant disputes go to legal action. In the past three years, there have been no sexual harassment complaints that have come through the office.

Question: Have you had any real student horror stories?
Serpico: “There are not that many horror stories. We want to ease the minds of the professors. We are a liaison to help people understand that there are some harsh realities that come to pass. Professors can move the exam, and if you weren’t there to hear that, you are bumming.”
Screaming at professors in front of everyone isn’t going to help. We only have had one case where the student had gone through the entire process and still needed our help.”

The student advocate office stresses that the Dean’s office is also a great resource for both students and teachers.

**Final thoughts from the student advocates:**
Harpending and Serpico: “The administrators at this University are extraordinary wonderful people.”
Serpico: “We want to be a facilitator.”
Harpending: “We can direct students to the best avenue they can take. If they come to the advocate first, we will tell the student to go to the teacher and direct them down the right path.”
Serpico: “We are facilitators that bring concerns to the dean of students and let them make the call. A student who understands the process of the school can completely bypass us.”
Serpico: “Remember, it might seem dire at the time – just take a step back.”

This office is important because it bridges the gap between teachers and students. It prevents bad situations from getting worse. It is an important neutral zone for students and faculty.

In addition to listening to complaints, these advocates point students in the right direction. The Student Advocate Office is valuable because it is a place for students to turn to when they feel like they have nowhere else to go. Also, this office is valuable to faculty, because it puts their students on the right track to deal with certain situations.

Generally, students and faculty don’t need the student advocate office if they follow the procedures. But when these procedures don’t work, the student advocates can then step in and help make the learning environment better at the university by facilitating problems.

Making this office known will help students work toward graduation and keep illegitimate claims out of the faculty’s way. The office is a fantastic service that is a helpful tool to all at the University of Utah.
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT FROM DAY ONE: PUT OUT FIRES BEFORE THEY START

BY KIM WELCH

As a faculty developer, I am asked to observe classes all around campus. It’s fun to watch people, and people watching in a classroom setting is particularly interesting. As I sit in these classrooms around mid-semester, I find that scrutinizing student behavior informs me a great deal about the instructor: student actions/reactions in a classroom setting usually have a direct connection to the teacher. The instructor’s demeanor, enthusiasm, size, voice, objectives and more have a direct impact on how students act in the classroom. Unfortunately for us as instructors, many of these students make some of their most negative judgments on the very first day. If we can steer clear of some of the negative experiences that the students have at the beginning of the course, many of our classroom management fires will be squelched well before they fan into disasters. The following are examples of what might happen on the first day and what we can do to prevent our smoldering students from bursting into flame.

Let’s start with a possible scenario for the first day of class:

The instructor rushes in, a little flustered on the first day after fighting for copy machine time to print out the syllabus and realizing that the class starts at 8:35 a.m. instead of 8:45 a.m. (who came up with this odd schedule, anyway?). The instructor just returned from a conference trip to the Netherlands and hasn’t quite readjusted to the time zone: 8:35 came too early.

The class starts to fill up. Whoa, wait a minute. Fill up and beyond! Students seem to be multiplying from the corners. Many of them are already waiting at the front of the class to talk to the teacher about adding the course. All the instructor can do is reflect on the nice, warm bed he left just to experience this chaos. Luckily, it’s the first day, and none of the students expect to be kept long on the first day, right? The instructor quickly passes out his syllabus, realizing he doesn’t have enough. He tells the class his name, rank and a brief bio, and gives a 10-minute spiel on the Introduction to [Name of subject]. He then lets everyone know he’ll work out the classroom capacity problems with the secretary, and he’ll bring more syllabi next time. And with that, everyone is excused.

Well, the students came to learn, right? Some of you might think that the students didn’t learn much on this first day of class, but learn they did. As James E. Zull suggests in his book The Art of Changing the Brain (2002):

Just because your learner didn’t understand what you hoped he would, does that mean he learned nothing? ... It happens in school all the time. A student may not learn history in our history class, but he may learn that his teacher thinks history is interesting. Or he may learn that his teacher dislikes students, or that he is just overwhelmed. The student has an experience of some sort. His brain processes that experience, and ultimately he acts on it in some way. His action may be to close the book and look out the window, but that is because his experience has taught him that he doesn’t need to listen, or that he doesn’t care to listen.

So, let’s read the minds of these students as they walk out of this particular class:

Dan: Cool, I was hoping we’d get out early. I was afraid he was going to drag on and on.
Travis: Wait a minute. This syllabus doesn’t even
tell me when the test is. What if it's during my trip to Florida?

Sarah: I got out of bed for that?

Eric: Were there any pre-reqs for this class? I wish I knew someone here, so that I could ask a few questions.

Lindsay: Looks like I'll be able to sit back and ride through this one. Maybe I can do my math homework during this class.

If we take this qualitative information, here's what we can deduce that the students learned. 1) The teacher has boring lectures and doesn't care much for student opinion. 2) The instructor doesn't mind if the students leave feeling clueless about the course. 3) The instructor doesn't care if he wastes the students' time. 4) The students will have to forge their own learning communities, since the instructor doesn't care if they get to know each other or not. 5) Active participation is not important neither is listening. All too often these attitudes don't change and the resultant behavior still exists as I watch the students during midterm observations (see sidebar for recommendations on how to resolve these issues).

As much as I love to see neat little checklists on how to do everything right, I've noticed as I've taught and observed other teachers that what works for one individual will not necessarily work for another. Although I understood this on some level, I didn't really get it until I moved away for a year to teach in Morocco. One day, as I was chatting with colleagues about ideas I could use to get my rambunctious students to calm down and stop talking, one of the older, male Moroccans looked at me in amazement and said, "You need to get them to calm down? If I could get them to make a peep in my class, I'd be happy." I looked at him with an equal amount of amazement, and then it hit me. There he was with his graying hair and his beard that showed he had made his pilgrimage to Mecca. Of course the students wouldn't say anything in his class. They respected him too much. I, on the other hand, was a young, short, liberal, Caucasian female coming from a society known for loose morals and questionable practices. Why should they feel like I had any authority over them?

Although the University of Utah classroom probably doesn't have the same cultural norms as the typical Moroccan classroom, the same notion exists that students, based on their own values, will likely judge an instructor first and foremost by things that won't change, such as gender, age, and ethnic background. They also will judge us based on our physical appearance, voice projection, confidence level in front of crowds, body language, and innumerable other factors. All of this before we've even touched the course material.

Sounds overwhelming, doesn't it?

Don't get discouraged. Often, we can compensate for those things that we cannot easily change. For example, if our voice just doesn't project well, we can get a microphone. If we are worried that our age might negatively affect us, our sense of humor might balance it out. Or if we're worried that our gender won't be taken seriously in the discipline, extra studying might help us to prove our knowledge base.

The most important thing to note is that we need to know ourselves as individuals and as instructors in order to rationally and intentionally realize our best method of compensation. Videotaping your teaching or asking an honest colleague to observe you could be a good start to this process.

After getting to know ourselves, it is important that we be transparent about the expectations we have of our students. As I was getting ready to write this piece on classroom management, I asked a few students about classroom management issues they saw in their classes. One said, "My instructor got upset at us because none of us had done the reading. He pretty much stormed out of class." Delving a little further, I inquired, "Why hadn't
Teaching Behavior


Take it as a given that freshmen will, initially, be more interested in you than what you are teaching. They don’t want you to appear nervous. They don’t want you to be so preoccupied with the subject that you forget they are there. They want you to love them. Happily there are some teacher behaviors that can go a long way toward creating a good teaching environment right at the beginning:

1. Look at the students! Few things are more disheartening than a speaker who refuses to look at the listeners but instead stares first at a pile of papers, then the ceiling, then an imaginary spot on the floor. Something nice happens when a speaker locks eyes with a listener. Anyone can learn to catch the eye of every student in the room in a matter of seconds.
2. Don’t talk about yourself. There really isn’t much point in telling students that you will be a demanding but fair teacher because they will learn all about your former experience, and not from what you tell them.
3. Treat the students like friends. A friend can be a critic, but she will never be demeaning or sarcastic. To be critical without hurting feelings is to walk a very fine line. Freshmen easily and often mistake irony for sarcasm and feel hurt when there is no real reason for it.
4. Work the room. Students will quickly become disengaged from an instructor who is simply reciting his discipline. They may at first resent being bothered by questions or requests for examples or summaries, but a teacher who engages students and appears to know them as persons will, in the end, be much more effective than one who simply gives notes.

the students done the reading?” His response: “Well, the instructor put up the full reading list on the first day, but he never told us when we were supposed to read each of the articles.”

When students don’t understand the expectations, they can get frustrated, and this can create bad situations in the classroom. The more we can tell the students on the first day, the less frustrated they will be and the less argument we will get from them being “surprised” about our policies. Having it down in writing, in a syllabus, for example, is an even wiser choice in that the students will be held accountable for the information.

Being transparent is more than just letting the students know due dates and late policies. It also consists of communicating classroom behavior policies.

One of the students I questioned told me that his worst classroom management experience was one in which an instructor didn’t know how to control the class. A single, know-it-all student seemed to dominate the discussion on a daily basis. This can be a tough situation, but it is avoidable. We can often figure out who these students are during our first few class periods. If we have a management plan stated in our syllabus that states, for example, “Full class participation is important for this class. As much as possible, I will create an atmosphere in which everyone can be heard,” we will then be able to nicely tell one person that we need to hear from some of the other members of the class, or, even better, we will be able to implement activities that help everyone to get involved.

Smokey Bear says “Only YOU can prevent wildfires!” We all know that forces of nature also cause wildfires, but it’s still good to remember that we do have some control and some ability to prevent possible disasters. Although not a cure-all, extensive preparation for the first day, including teaching a full, deliberate first day lesson, compensating for short-comings, being transparent and having a management plan can greatly reduce the possibility of major classroom management wildfires.

Activity Ideas

Activities made to promote broader participation in class discussions:

Rotating Chair
1. Explain this “discussion activity” to the class before starting the discussion so that everyone is clear.
2. Pose a “juicy” question that will create a great deal of discussion.
3. Ask the first person who answers to call on the next person of his/her choice. and to call on students they have already heard from, and to call on students they have not yet heard from.
4. Instruct the class to avoid calling on students they have already heard from, and to call on students they have not yet heard from.

Think-Pair-Shares
1. Pose a thought-provoking question
2. Give sufficient time for individuals to think (a time limit would be good)
3. Pair the students, so that individuals feel more comfortable sharing in front of the entire class (again, a time limit would be helpful)
4. Ask a student to share either his/her own ideas or the ideas of his/her neighbor

Discussion Leaders (Phillips 66)
• Choose different leaders each time to vary input in the classroom (with “Phillips 66”, 6 people share their ideas for 6 minutes)

Use of Dice / Other Randomization
• Roll the die and have the corresponding row be responsible for responding
• Give handouts with colored dots (the dotted papers are responsible for responding)
• Put candies or papers under desks (but not gum)
THE BENNION CENTER IMPROVES
THE SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM

BY MARC STERN

With hundreds of internships available through the University of Utah, students may wonder which internship will serve them best, but unknown to many, another option exists. The University of Utah has a newer alternative to the traditional internship that gives the student a more refined learning experience: service-learning.

Additionally, for teachers who are seeking to enhance both the quality of their courses as well as the ease by which they manage their classroom, the Lowell Bennion Community Service Center recently enhanced the service-learning program. In order to accommodate teachers, as well as students and community partners, the Bennion Center has added two new features to the service-learning program: the Service-Learning Coordinator and a service-learning database.

“Service-learning incorporates a method of teaching and learning through the use of experience in community settings. Designed to enhance the understanding of course material, students provide a service that meets the need of a community organization. However, service-learning uniquely features aspects of learning that make it stand apart from other experiential learning,” said Marshall Welch, Director of the Lowell Bennion Community Service Center at the University of Utah.

“It's important to note the unassuming hyphen between the words 'service' and 'learning,'” Welch said. “Students provide a service that meets the need of a community partner. That service connects to course objectives and represents the learning aspect.”

By connecting the service experience with class content, students earn a grade for learning and not for the service. This way, the service shares just as much importance as the learning and is tied to the instructional goals.

Service-learning arranges and designates the service component as important as other outside-the-classroom learning activities, such as reading assignments, written papers, and exams. Instructors should anticipate 2 to 3 hours of service activities per week for a 3-credit course.

Every service-learning course maintains the expectation that students will learn the genuine “give and take,” or reciprocity, which comes from performing community service. Although similar to internships, which usually focus on a student's mastery of a professional skill, each service-learning course goes beyond most internship limits by addressing community needs and promoting students’ sense of citizenship.

Internships, in fact, can qualify as service learning if they meet the nine basic principles of criteria established by the Bennion Center, as the sidebar on the next page indicates.

Service-learning courses also incorporate two fundamental principles: reflection and reciprocity. Reflection occurs in the classroom when students analyze their service experience by considering how the project went beyond the course objectives and encountered larger societal issues.

“Reflection is connecting course material to service in order to create a meaningful learning experience,” said Shannon Gillespie, the Service-Learning Coordinator.
at the Bennion Center. “The program encourages students not just to perform service now, but to always be civically engaged.”

Reciprocity occurs as the service venues create unique atmospheres to learn in. As the service-learning activities unfold, community partners, instructors, and students often switch roles.

“Instructors aren’t always in charge,” Welch said. “Reciprocity isn’t always included in internships.” Faculty members aren’t always present. Giving students the opportunity to take on greater responsibility is part of experiential learning.

“Service-learning is designed to encourage students to take an active role as citizens,” Welch said. Service-learning creates opportunities that often generate a desire for students to pursue certain aspects of the project after the course ends. The facilitators intentionally design service-learning courses with this component in mind.

Service-learning courses originate in one of two ways: either faculty members or community partners submit proposals for projects to the Bennion Center. A new Web database called Service-Learning Pro, at bennion.servicelearningpro.com, eases the creation process, as well as assists teachers, students, and community partners with management and communication.

“Service-Learning Pro is a time-saving tool,” said Joani Shaver, the Service-Learning Manager at the Bennion Center. “The database is a valuable way to learn and teach. It organizes the activities of 1500 students and 130 classes as well as helps teachers avoid overstaffing one community project with students while ignoring others.”

“The database categorizes the programs into different disciplines such as direct or indirect service projects, office assistance, and Web development,” Gillespie said. “The service-learning program is unique, because the projects must correspond to course work and learning. Students won’t copy, file, or perform office work that takes away from the learning process.”

Faculty members submit requests to the Bennion Center to include service-learning in their courses. Unlike an application process, the Service-Learning Coordinator will then compare the course syllabus to the criteria and work with the faculty members to adjust the curriculum of the class to conform to standards.

“It’s not an ‘accept’ or ‘reject’ process,” Gillespie explained. “We help ensure that whichever class that requests service-learning will be able to provide it for students.” The Bennion Center encourages faculty to embrace the opportunities that the service-learning program provides.

The new Service-Learning Coordinators, who work at the Bennion Center, serve as liaisons between teachers, community partners, and students. Service-Learning Coordinators are there to assist with any aspect of the program. This new role that the Bennion Center plays helps refine and ease the program application at all levels.

“With so much activity happening in the program, it’s important to everyone to have the Service-Learning Coordinator available to help and counsel you through the process,” Gillespie said.

“The Bennion Center gets contacted at least once a day by community partners with requests,” Gillespie said. “The Bennion Center isn’t able to immediately fill all the requests but actively recruits volunteers by means such as placing ads in The Chronicle, posting fliers, and sending out e-mails.”

“Students sign up for service-learning courses by simply adding classes from that registrar that have ‘S-L’ in the column of ‘other course attributes,’” Gillespie said. “Almost every department offers a course that incorporates service-learning.”

“For those considering participating in service-learning, soon the Bennion Center will have a comprehensive DVD about service-learning,” Shaver said. “The DVD provides an overview, how to develop a service-learning project and course syllabus, as well as other key features of the program.”

“Family and Consumer Studies, Communications, and Pharmacy are examples of departments that do a good job of embracing service-learning and make the most of it,” Welch said. “The university offers service-learning through approximately 40 classes every semester, with over 130 classes being available throughout the year.”

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### Service-Learning Criteria

**Service-Learning Scholars Program, p. 22**

The Nine Criteria for Designation of Service-Learning Classes:

1. Students in the class provide a needed service to individuals, organizations, schools, or other entities in the community.
2. The service experience relates to the subject matter of the course.
3. Activities in the class provide a method or methods for students to think about what they learned through the service experience and how these learnings relate to the subject of the class.
4. The course offers a method to assess the learning derived from the service. Credit is given for the learning and its relation to the course, not for the service alone.
5. Service interactions in the community recognize the needs of service recipients and offer an opportunity for recipients to be involved in the evaluation of the service.
6. The service opportunities are aimed at the department of the civic education of students even though they may also be focused on career preparation.
7. Knowledge from the discipline informs the service experiences with which the students are involved.
8. The class offers a way to learn from other class members as well as from the instructor.
9. Course options ensure that no student is required to participate in service which creates a religious, political and/or moral conflict for the student.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service-Learning Criteria</th>
<th>Example Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students in the class provide a needed service to individuals, organizations, schools, or other entities in the community.</td>
<td>Provide a service that helps community members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The service experience relates to the subject matter of the course.</td>
<td>The service experience should be relevant to the course content.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Activities in the class provide a method or methods for students to think about what they learned through the service experience and how these learnings relate to the subject of the class.</td>
<td>Encourage reflection on the service experience and its relevance to course topics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The course offers a method to assess the learning derived from the service. Credit is given for the learning and its relation to the course, not for the service alone.</td>
<td>Offer an assessment method that connects service to course learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Service interactions in the community recognize the needs of service recipients and offer an opportunity for recipients to be involved in the evaluation of the service.</td>
<td>Involve service recipients in assessing the service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The service opportunities are aimed at the department of the civic education of students even though they may also be focused on career preparation.</td>
<td>Focus on civic education even if the service is career-oriented.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Knowledge from the discipline informs the service experiences with which the students are involved.</td>
<td>Use the discipline's knowledge to inform service experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. The class offers a way to learn from other class members as well as from the instructor.</td>
<td>Encourage peer learning as well as instructor guidance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Course options ensure that no student is required to participate in service which creates a religious, political and/or moral conflict for the student.</td>
<td>Offer alternative learning opportunities.</td>
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Concrete Waves

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN HOLT
THE ACADEMIC PHYSICIANS’ BALANCING ACT

BY KIRSTEN MONTAGUE
PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN HOLT

Every year, Americans surveyed by The Harris Poll® report what they feel are the most prestigious professions a person can pursue. For the last 27 years, little has changed in the minds of the American public: scientists are believed to be the most prestigious, doctors rank second, and teachers are fourth behind military officials.

This consistent belief among Americans is nothing short of an enormous compliment to many university faculty members in the Health Sciences Center. Out of the top four most respected professional titles among Americans, an academic physician at the University of Utah could hold three of them at once.

The term, “academic physician,” is commonly used to describe doctors at the University Hospital who divide their time between seeing patients, working in labs with specimens, researching, and teaching medical students. In addition, many hold administrative positions within the Health Sciences Center.

Clinicians can sometimes be outstanding teachers, because their curriculum is derived from real life, perhaps cases they are working on just minutes before they get to the classroom.

Students get to see medical proceedings and complex, intense cases as they happen. Their courses aren’t just textbooks; they’re the real-world experiences happening down the hall. The instructors are able to prioritize and determine the things that would be the best to teach at that time. Researchers also are the most up-to-date on basic sciences and recent scientific findings.

For specialists wearing so many hats, there may be arising obstacles that could stand in the way of efficient classroom management. Faculty members in the Health Sciences Center often find that their time is stretched between clinical responsibilities and the classroom.

The two areas of their work is equally demanding, and an academic physician may find that she/he is doing the jobs of two professionals. When so much is being asked of faculty members, it is imperative that they establish priorities — especially if they want to prioritize teaching.

However, research and patient care are more visible, noticeable, and can produce more tangible evidence of benefit. There are more opportunities for individual faculty members to appear productive — something many of them rely on to receive awards of tenure, promotions, or even to find jobs.

Each faculty member’s teaching is more difficult to monitor than research and patient care. Student evaluations may not always be fair or unbiased, and they can be difficult to find, making teaching difficult to assess.

Because of the difficulty in providing direct evidence of productivity, teachers may fear that they will be under-appreciated in promotion and not as highly regarded by their peers. The more thankless responsibilities of their careers may be placed on the back burner.

In addition to the challenges of extreme multi-tasking, another issue faced by administrative and educational officials in the Health Sciences Center is the application of pedagogy as the academic leg of the School of Medicine.

Neal Whitman, professor in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, former Director of Faculty Development for the School of Medicine said, “The word ‘doctor’ is derived from the Latin docere, meaning ‘to teach.’ Physicians have always been and still are teachers of their patients and some of that educational process transfers to teaching medical students and residents.”

Granted, this is not limited to medical school teachers. Many professors of all departments on campus are experts in their fields, with related terminal degrees
being the primary job qualification – not a degree in pedagogy (the skill/art of teaching). Sir William Osler said in 1919, “The problem is that a competent medical man may not be a competent medical teacher.”

New young doctors are thrown into the world of teaching without being trained on how to teach. Assistant Dean of Curriculum and Professor of Clinical Pathology Larry Reimer said, “Through medical school and postgraduate programs, physicians have specific instruction on how to provide patient care and how to do research but not on how to teach.” Many are naturally gifted mentors, but some struggle and out of frustration never improve.

The university offers a yearly retreat for academic physicians to cultivate teaching skills, and there is other help offered on lower campus as well. However, neither is required. Improvement of teaching skills can be taxing and demanding with few rewards and little incentive. And if teachers are fortunate enough to have the praise and approval of their peers and colleagues, they still can’t please everyone. Whitman explains, “In terms of intrinsic rewards, the ‘thank you’ and appreciation physician faculty get from patients may not be matched by students.”

Academic physicians continue to feel pressured to generate revenue for the School of Medicine through applying for grants to supplement their salaries, providing services (seeing patients and doing lab work on patient specimens, etc.), and publishing articles.

Medical student tuition only covers a fraction of the School of Medicine’s overhead. Costs could remain uncovered, even with government funding and private donations. The need for physicians to cover marketable bases is increasing, but the budget for them is not.

In addition, academic physicians are expected to publish articles in professional journals, contribute to textbooks, and continue research on topics legitimate enough to maintain grants from different funds such as the National Institute of Health. If grant funding falls through, major complications in salaries ensue. At the departmental level, administrators are forced to make difficult decisions, while administrative and secretarial support is potentially lost. Laboratory support also may be lost. According to the University’s Reduction in Force & Severance Policy, the University of Utah must find or create job opportunities for these displaced employees, and this process is difficult and time consuming.

Some physicians may feel alone in their dual roles.

As a result of this difficult balance, many physicians break off from the University system and enter private practices. To some, the benefits of working for an institution such as the University of Utah do not equal the perks of entrepreneurial medicine.

The University of Utah allows and encourages volunteers appointed to adjunct or auxiliary faculty positions. When these volunteers teach, financial tension is relieved in the Health Sciences Center. Many teaching are professionals employed or practicing elsewhere, whose involvement is geared toward broadening their careers, enjoyment of teaching, association with other professionals, or an increase of experience reflected in their curriculum vitae. Others are members of different departments in the Health Sciences Center, crossing over into further research and expertise. Adjunct appointments are a big part of the School of Medicine and hospital. As a teaching hospital, the University Hospital employs students or residents to provide clinical services. Students are the doctors, just on smaller salaries.

Despite this support, the medical school continues to face a challenge. Given the many levels at which classroom management can face problems in the School of Medicine, finding the balance between teaching and clinical duties is paramount. Without one, the other may be of less value. Concerns on whether the physicians of the future are receiving the highest quality of training are legitimate, and the public’s expectations on the School of Medicine, as well as increased utilization of campus resources, may possibly induce improvement in national ranking and performance.
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