

2B: Classroom Demonstration

Student [00:00:00] When I hear people talking, I can't fully focus on the professor or whatever task is at hand.

Student [00:00:08] It really bothers me at the end of class, if the professor is still speaking and people are packing up and we still have five minutes to go in the class because then I can't hear.

Student [00:00:16] I've seen students watch entire Netflix series through an entire course, and I saw a lot more of Game of Thrones than I wanted to ever see in some of my classes. And it absolutely is a distraction and it takes away from the purpose of why you're here. You're here to learn.

Sophie Adamson, PhD, Associate Professor of French, Chair of the Department of World Languages & Cultures, Elon University [00:00:37] Students need to know the professor's expectations. What is the professor looking for? What kind of behavior, what kind of environment is most conducive to learning?

Donald Saucier, PhD, Associate Professor & University Distinguished Teaching Scholar, Department of Psychological Sciences, Kansas State University [00:00:54] On page three of the syllabus, we've got some code of conduct kind of rules for how we're going to have our discussions this semester.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:01:01] College students don't always know how to behave. We as teachers can do our students a favor by letting them know very, very early on, I think on the first day, what are the rules in this class? What are the norms in this class?

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:01:12] When one person is talking, no one else is talking. No one makes a comment that they know will be offensive. We're going to try to give each other the benefit of the doubt as a community of learners.

Sophie Adamson, PhD [00:01:21] What I'm looking for is not just civil niceness and we don't all need to agree. I'm looking for a productive learning environment that's supportive.

Viji Sathy, PhD, Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychology & Neuroscience, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill [00:01:32] I would like you to answer the question, what can you do to exhibit professionalism in the context of this course?

Viji Sathy, PhD [00:01:39] I think it's important for students to not be necessarily told what to do in the classroom. I can tell them what I expect, but they get told by me to do a lot of things.

Student [00:01:51] Do we say coming to class prepared?

Student [00:01:52] Punctuality's definitely a big thing.

Student [00:01:56] Being respectful.

Student [00:01:56] Yeah, being respectful, that was a good one.

Viji Sathy, PhD [00:01:57] So we've got show up on time and come prepared. Be respectful. You'll be engaged and really focused while we're here in class. But we'll make a note of all of these things that you've discussed and that will be put into the syllabus, because these are, these are your data that were generated and will be part of now our working agreement about how we will conduct ourselves not only in class, but out of class.

Shannon, Student, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill [00:02:18] She allows us to define what it means. And then we agree on these terms, what it means to be professional in this class, and then we're expected to uphold those terms that we've set.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:02:31] When we're talking about incivility in the classroom, we're absolutely talking about a spectrum of behaviors. At the low level, you have students being a little bit off task, maybe not paying a little attention, they may be talking to a classmate. Move up to texting or inappropriate computer use. And then you have people being disrespectful to each other, being kind of out and out insubordinate, offending each other, challenging each other.

Viji Sathy, PhD [00:02:57] There is a range of behaviors that are distracting to students in the classroom. One of the biggest ones that we face are students being distracted by their devices, so their cell phones, their computers.

Adam M. Persky, PhD, Clinical Associate Professor, UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill [00:03:08] I want you to be present. If you're on Facebook, if you're shopping for shoes, you're distracted. You're not really paying attention and learning stuff.

Adam M. Persky, PhD [00:03:15] There are some things that occur early on that we try to notice and then correct with feedback. I'm saying here's things that you're doing and you may not know that this is coming across as disrespectful.

Sophie Adamson, PhD [00:03:26] The reason I chose it is because it's particularly compelling and rewarding and accessible.

Sophie Adamson, PhD [00:03:32] They think they can glance down at a phone and perhaps quickly respond to a text and it won't affect the classroom or the teaching. But their neighbors notice, the professor notices more often than they realize, and it's just enough to sort of break someone's concentration.

Sophie Adamson, PhD [00:03:51] And it has those themes of intolerance and ignorance and racism. And Sophia, do you have this right in front of you. Yeah?

Sophia, Student [00:03:58] Oh, sorry.

Sophie Adamson, PhD [00:04:00] What do you think is the most compelling?

Sophia, Student [00:04:03] I think that there are definitely two sides to bringing education to the Third World.

Sophie Adamson, PhD [00:04:07] Thank you, Sophia. Stay with us, Sophia. Okay, let's keep going.

Sophie Adamson, PhD [00:04:11] I try to note it, stay positive, keep them with us, and engage them a little more than the others maybe for the next few minutes, and then, ah, we're back.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:04:21] One of the things that I'll often do in my classes is I'll get close to the student. . .

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:04:25] We can follow in the syllabus. We've got some rules for etiquette.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:04:28] I'll try to do it in a way that is not quite obvious to anyone except me and the student. And usually what happens, they'll put the phone away.

Viji Sathy, PhD [00:04:34] If you feel that you are pulled toward some activity, just close your screen. I'll tell you when you need your computer, you can get it out for that, that portion of it. But I will want you to be focused.

Viji Sathy, PhD [00:04:44] It's commonly thought that the people in the back of the room are the least engaged learners in the classroom. I think it keeps them on task when they know I'm moving around the room and noting who's, who's working and how they're working.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:05:01] If you have students who are packing up early at the end of class, which will often happen, I think the "distract the distractors" technique is really appropriate.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:05:08] There are three components of bias. We have the affective component, the behavioral component, the cognitive component. Really easy to remember. We've got these ABCs and, Ryan, help me out with the behavioral component of bias.

Ryan, Student [00:05:20] Uh, behavioral is, uh, discrimination.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:05:24] Excellent. Discrimination, the . . .

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:05:24] What you do is you get them back on track. You remind them that class is still going on. So you call on them for an easy question. The point isn't to embarrass the student. The point is to kind of remind the student that, hey, I saw what you were doing and let's get back involved. There's still learning to be done today.

Conor, Student, Kansas State University [00:05:44] You know, if someone's falling asleep, everyone else is like, hey, look at that person over there falling asleep and then that distracts everyone.

Sophie Adamson, PhD [00:05:52] So what jumps out at you, for example? Okay, Zoey.

Zoey, Student [00:05:56] Child labor.

Sophie Adamson, PhD [00:05:57] Child labor, right? And what are some, okay . . . Chucky, you're falling asleep. Tell us. So Zoey was just saying child labor would be one of the big topics that jumps out. What are some for you, Chucky?

Chucky, Student [00:06:09] One of the things that really stuck out to me was poverty.

Sophie Adamson, PhD [00:06:12] It's amazing what that will do to their adrenaline. They're awake for the rest of the class at that point.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:06:22] Any time you hand back feedback on an assignment, hand back a grade on a test or a quiz, you run the risk that a student is going to have trouble with that. It is fairly regular that a student is going to say, hey, I want to talk about this right now because I feel like the exam wasn't fair. I feel like I didn't do as well as I should have.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:06:39] So I've just handed back the exams. I was pretty happy actually overall with the class performance, so . . .

Student [00:06:44] I don't understand. Number two, it could definitely be C, and you were not clear that you needed, like, a full paragraph down here.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:06:51] But that's a conversation we'll probably need to have individually. I understand you're frustrated. It's just not the time to do it right now. So please, after class we'll set up an appointment, we'll sit down, we'll talk about that.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:07:01] You need to diffuse the situation by validating the student and then really resolving the issue later. So just kind of getting through that moment and not following up with the student, you haven't done any good there.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:07:16] We're going to go through this, we're going to go through your questions on this. But before we do that, I want to address the behavior that, that I saw you participate in in class. When you repeatedly asked questions and offered your own frustration about your exam, I understood that frustration, but it

prevented me from getting the lesson started for the day, and it kept me from pursuing the student goals for the entire class.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:07:37] The goal is to let the student know that the behavior, whether or not they saw it as disruptive, may have been disruptive to you or the rest of the class and letting them know that there's reasons for why we can't have that behavior persist in a class.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:07:49] So this is your first time doing that. And I understand your being frustrated, but I need to let you know that it's something that does disrupt the learning environment, it can't happen again. If it's something that does continue, I will have to enact the policies in the syllabus that disruptive students are dismissed from class for the day, okay. All right, now we're going to look at your test, we're gonna make sure that we . . .

Viji Sathy, PhD [00:08:10] Instructor behavior can absolutely affect civil learning and that might mean coming in early and having my materials ready to go before class starts so that we can start right on time. It also means that I am organized, I'm clear in my communications. Every aspect that I want them to take on, I exhibit those things as well.

Viji Sathy, PhD [00:08:29] So I want to ask you to answer this prompt. And the question is, have I, Dr. Sathy, exhibited professionalism in the context of this course. And I would like for you to provide some specific examples. Your responses are anonymous. Just want to collect some of your feedback. This is a Wordle plot that shows some of the more frequently occurring words in your response. We see respectful, helpful, some of the types of words that we expect to see in a classroom setting in terms of professionalism.

Donald Saucier, PhD [00:09:01] By and large, students want to do the right things. They want to know how it is they can engage in their learning. Without civility in our classrooms, our students are distracted by other things and can't focus on the things we want them to learn.