

Addressing High-Level Interruptions

It is important to deal with incivilities promptly and consistently. If the problem is ongoing or particularly egregious, or if you are concerned about the student's response, schedule a follow-up conference with the student during office hours to address the behavior. Using the following structure for a conference can help make it more effective.

1. Provide time for the student to share his point of view on his behavior. It could be that your interpretation of his behavior may be very different from his intentions.
 - "I would like to hear your point of view on the incident that happened in class recently. Can you tell me more about it?"
2. Acknowledge any negative emotions that the student may have and show the student you have empathy for his situation.
 - "It seems to me that you are frustrated with the weekly writing assignment on the readings."
 - "I'm sure it must be difficult to cover content you feel you are not very familiar with."
3. Provide clear instructions or options about what the student should do to avoid this type of behavior in the future.
 - "If you are unfamiliar with the content, try to stay focused and actively take notes. Please remember you can ask me questions during class, during my office hours, or by sending me an email. I want to be helpful to you."
4. Throughout the conference, keep the focus on the behavior, the impact of the behavior, and the behavior change you are expecting to see. An effective way to do this is through the use of a behavior impact feedback tool, like FICA. This tool uses the facts, impact, context, and action acronym to organize your conversation with the student.
 - **Facts:** Exactly what behavior did you witness the student exhibiting? Be nonjudgmental in your choice of language by simply describing the most recent incident.
 - "During the group work portion of yesterday's class, you stayed in the back of the room and did not participate with the group you were assigned to."
 - **Impact:** Explain the impact of the behavior.
 - "As a result, the other members in your group had to do extra work. Also, you did not have the opportunity to apply the concepts from the last lecture."
 - **Context:** How often has this or a similar incident happened in the past?
 - "This is the first time something like this has happened, and I'm wondering if there was something about the task that you were not comfortable with."
 - "This is the third time over the last five classes that you have chosen not to participate in group work. How can I help you to participate?"

- **Action:** Explain the actions you are going to take and the actions you expect the student to take to resolve the issue. Refer to the expectations in your syllabus and the classroom code of conduct, or classroom norms, to which students agreed at the start of the semester.
 - “As it states in the syllabus, 20% of your grade is based on group work, so I am going to have to deduct points from your participation grade. How can I help you to avoid this in the future?”
 - “We will continue with group work for the remainder of the semester, and I would like you to do one of two things. Either participate in the remaining group activities or help me to understand, by putting it in writing, how you plan to address the group work requirement for our class.”