The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of various colors and patterns. It includes a teal oval in the top left, a red area with a black dashed circle pattern on the left, a yellow area with a white dot pattern at the bottom left, and a dark blue area with a white dot pattern at the bottom right. A large, light-colored, brush-stroke-like shape frames the central text. The overall style is modern and artistic.

Strategies for Addressing Challenging Student Behavior

7th Annual Conference for High-Impact Instructional Practices

Concurrent Session 2 – Taylor Ballroom B

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Agenda

01

Explore some of the underlying causes of challenging behaviors

02

Explore approaches to prevent disruptions

03

Discuss techniques for addressing disruptive behavior and de-escalating tense situations

Activity 1: Think, Pair, Share



Think:

Take a moment to think about a time when you witnessed or experienced challenging behavior in a classroom.

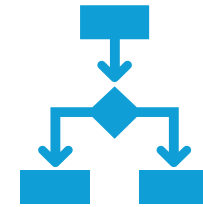
- What was the behavior?
- How was the classroom impacted?
- How did you feel during that moment?



Pair

Pair up with a partner and discuss the behaviors you both identified

- What were some common or significant behaviors?
- How was the level of impact in the classroom the same or different?
- What about the feelings experienced?



Share

Choose one person to share-out your identified behaviors/impacts/feelings with the larger group.

Challenging/Disruptive Behavior

ETSU defines disruptive behavior as “any behavior that obstructs or disrupts the learning environment...” (2017).

Excessive talking – over others or out of turn, during lectures, during films, going off-topic, side-talking, etc.

Inattention – daydreaming, sleeping, etc.

Technology Misuse – text messaging, watching movies/shows, taking phone calls, updating social status, etc.

Excessive noise – eating, drinking, chewing gum, pen tapping, etc.

Aggressive behavior – harassment of students and/or professors, excessive offensive language, challenging authority, arguing, etc.

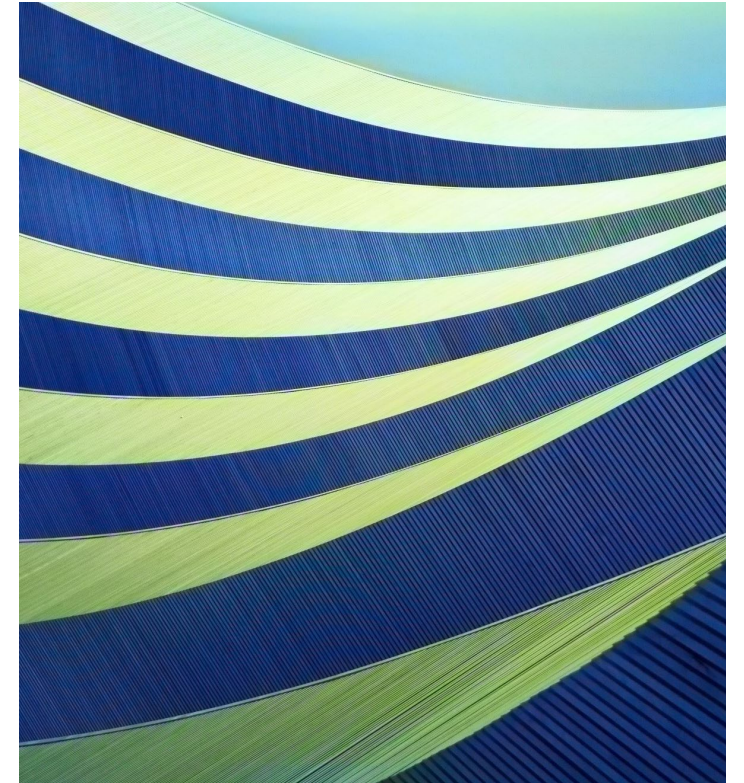
Other - Body odor, clothing choices, sleeping, etc.

Impacts of Disruptive Behavior

INHIBITS STUDENT LEARNING,
COMPREHENSION, RETENTION,
AND GENERAL PERFORMANCE

INFLUENCES STUDENT
SATISFACTION WITH THE
INSTRUCTOR

INFLUENCES FACULTY/STAFF
SATISFACTION



Underlying Causes of Disruptive Behavior



Environmental Factors

“Norm of Conduct” – The behavior that the student considers “normal”

Class size and environment

Vague course requirements or expectations



Emotional Challenges

Feelings of isolation and loss

Immaturity

Misdirected Aggression


Personal or family stress



Physical Causes

Use of medication, drugs, or other substances

Injury or illness



Activity 2: Small Group Discussion

- In small groups, choose 2-3 of the disruptive behaviors listed on the “Common Disruptive Behaviors” handout (or consider some of your own).
 - Identify or suggest 2-3 underlying causes for each behavior
 - Next, brainstorm practical strategies that could be implemented to prevent or subvert some of these behaviors
- Choose one person from your group to share the disruptive behavior that was addressed, the causes suggested, and the preventative measures that were discussed.

Preventative Measures

- Include clear expectations about classroom manners (including what is and isn't acceptable) in the syllabus and establishing consequences
 - Communicate the expectations verbally and early in the course
 - Share responsibility with students by including students in the construction of the expectations
 - Plan for how you will respond to a disruptive moment
- Model the behavior you expect
 - Be mindful of language
 - Be explicit in instructions or requests

Preventative Measures Cont.

-
- Provide engaging lessons
 - Active learning techniques
 - Create a culture of thinking
 - Create a positive environment
 - Get to know the students
 - Build rapport among the group
 - Request their feedback

What if Prevention Doesn't Work?

DO!

Identify	Identify the specific <i>behavior</i> of concern
Address	Address disruption as soon as possible
Uphold	Uphold the guidelines established in the syllabus
Speak	Speak to the student in private
Document	Document your experience
Follow up	Follow up with the student if needed

What if Prevention Doesn't Work?

DON'T

- Don't take it personally! This could be an educational opportunity.
- Don't make it a class-wide issue – address only the individual causing the disruption
- Don't let your reaction cause a bigger/more significant disruption
- Don't use sarcasm
- Don't ridicule or blame the student for the situation

De-escalation Strategies

DO!

- Stay Calm!
 - Model non-verbal cues (control breathing, voice - volume and tone, body language, and vocabulary)
- Minimize the Audience or Separate the Conflict
- Listen with Empathy
 - Do not try to analyze their emotions or tell them how they are feeling
- Ask how you can help
- Listen, nod, and allow them to vent without interrupting them
- Do document your experience of the incident
- Know your limitations and remember there are others who can help!

De-escalation Strategies

DON'T

Don't minimize the situation

Don't be sarcastic or attempt to give advice

Don't get defensive or attempt to argue

Don't blame or ridicule

Don't touch the student

Activity 3: Scenario-Based Brainstorming

- In your small groups, read the scenarios listed on the “Scenarios of Disruptive Behavior” handout and brainstorm possible responses
- Guiding questions:
 - What would be the first thing you’d do or say? Would you do anything at all?
 - What specific techniques could help prevent escalation or calm the situation?
 - How would you address the behavior after you have managed the immediate disruption?
 - What information would change your responses to the questions above?
- Choose one person from your group to share your scenarios and the strategies that were suggested.

Wrap-Up and Final Reflection

- Reflection

- Which strategies did you find most interesting/helpful?
- How might you use some of the strategies we've discussed in your own classroom?

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