

# Promoting Classroom Civility

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The erosion of classroom decorum affects our success as teachers, as well as our students' success as learners.

--Cynthia Desrochers

# View from the Classroom

*What types of "incivility" do you routinely encounter in the classroom?*

# Types of Incivility

- (Apparent) disinterest
- Inattentiveness
- Disruptive behavior
- Poor work ethic
- Lack of collegiality or tact
- Hostility
- Academic dishonesty

# Proactive Strategies

- Clarify expectations
  - Syllabus policies, clear rubrics, late work policies, documentation criteria, citation checks, etc
  - Civility statements
- Model civility—“teach the language of disagreement” (Heinemann, 1996)
- Develop classroom routines

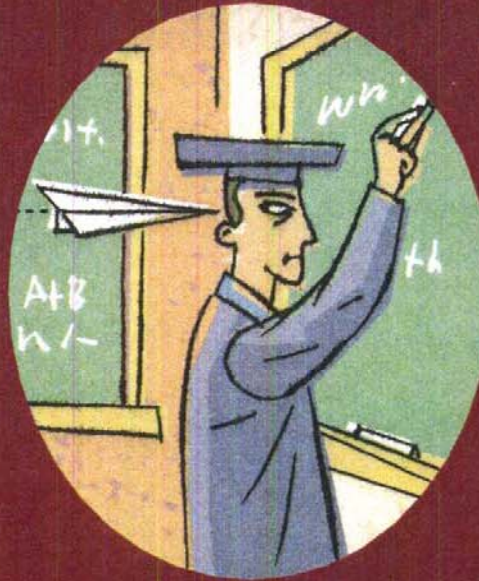
## BEST PRACTICES

# Assumptions We Can Make About One Another

In workshops I had often shared my syllabus “Assumptions” page—that is, until Amir Hussain improved upon mine so dramatically that now I share only his. An edited excerpt follows:

### Assumptions I Make about You

1. You have made an informed choice to be a member of this class. You have read the syllabus and know the workload required. On average, you should spend three hours on your own (reading, studying, making notes, working on assignments, etc.) for every hour that you are in class.
2. You will do the required reading. This means that you will often have to read something more than once in order to fully understand it (remember the 3:1 ratio in the first assumption).



3. You will share your personality, knowledge, skills, and special expertise with the rest of us throughout this semester.

### Assumptions You Can Make about Me

1. I will give you the respect that I ask you to give me and the other members of this class.
2. I will do my best to help you, but I cannot learn the material for you.
3. I will encourage and be receptive to constructive comments about my teaching (as an example, “You’re ugly and your mother dresses you funny” is NOT a constructive comment).

—Amir Hussain

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# Proactive Strategies

- Establish credibility rather than invoke authority
  - “Students and teachers are partners in generating and exacerbating classroom incivility” (Boice, 1996)
- Emphasize the student-as-person
- Assess early and often

# Proactive Strategies

- Emphasize active learning
  - Writing-to-learn (muddiest point, two-minute essay, reflective writing)
  - Student-led discussions
  - Rotating student opener
  - Focused listing
  - Case study method
  - Grading contracts

# Reactive Strategies

- Start with empathy
- Use writing/reflecting-to-learn activities
- Employ conflict management v. argumentation
- Develop discrepancy

# Leave the Dance Floor

- Stop the activity
- Think of outcomes
- Assess the situation
- React with open-mindedness
- Use active listening strategies
- Prepare for the next encounter

# Developing Discrepancy

- Students are motivated to change when they perceive a discrepancy between where they are and where they want to be (Ebbling & Van Brunt, 2010)
- “I understand from our conversations that you want to be a successful manager, yet you fall asleep in this class whenever you lose interest. What’s going to happen when staff meetings you are required to attend get boring?”

# University Resources

- The Park University Student Handbook
- The Park University Student Conduct Code: “The primary intent of this Code is to set forth community standards necessary to maintain and protect an environment conducive to learning.”
- The Park University Behavioral Intervention Team
- Your Department Chair or Program Coordinator

# University Resources

- The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
  - [Quick Tips](#)
  - [Best Practices Institute](#)
  - [Teaching Gallery](#)

# Think, Pair, Share

- Identify one “take away” observation, idea or strategy from today’s discussion.
- Partner with your neighbor to discuss, synthesize, revise.
- Share.

# Continuing the Conversation...

*The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning provides support and resources to full-time and adjunct faculty from all Campus Centers and modalities.*

Please do not hesitate to contact us at [cetl@park.edu](mailto:cetl@park.edu). We welcome your feedback and suggestions!

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