

GETTING OFF TRACK: STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN THE FOCUS IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS

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Unique Students

□ The Disgruntled

- Often exhibits displeasure with, the amount of reading, the amount of writing...or just about any facet of their learning expectations for the semester.

Unique Students

□ The Negotiator

- This student begins to haggle for extra credit, alterations to existing assignments, sliding grade scales or curves.

Unique Students

□ The Family Therapy Student

- This student manages to find ways to isolate pockets of the classroom discussion and associate the discussion to familial experiences.

Unique Students

□ The Activists

- This individual is active in social movements, on campus and off campus. May try to use class discussions to make political statements etc...or an opportunity for demonstration(s)

Unique Students

- Ms./Mr. Jump Right In
- This student has no hesitation with being the first to address any questions, or offer comment on the respective subject matter, regardless of what it is.

Unique Students

- The Outside of the Box Thinker
- Often provides examples or contributions to the conversation that are little more unique than you/or the class may have anticipated.

Unique Students

□ The Outsider

- This is a student from a different discipline than your department. May on occasion carry views that differ from a fairly homogenous point of view of the student within the discipline.

Unique Students

- **Students with Disabilities**

Non-Student Distractions

- Subject Matter

Non-Student Distractions

- The Professor

Non-Student Distractions

- Technology In the Classroom
 - Use of Laptops and Mobile Devices

Strategies

- Create a Safe/Equitable Environment From the Start
- *“Attendance and professional classroom demeanor. You must attend class to participate. As a result, students with habitual attendance problems, as measured by class lists and peer evaluations, cannot expect to receive a favorable participation mark. In the case of personal or health emergencies, I will make exceptions on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, students are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism. This means arriving on time and focusing on course activities (i.e., no cell phones, surfing the net on your laptop, reading newspapers, disruptive conversations during lectures, etc.).”*

Strategies

- Classroom norms
- Waiting until the professor has acknowledged you to contribute to the classroom conversation v. chiming in randomly.

Strategies

- Road signs
- Offer the students insight what are the key ideas and concepts to listen for and retain from the discussion.
 - Attempts to keep students focused and paying attention.

Strategies

- Extra Credit

Strategies

- Occasionally Put Them on Task Using Technology
- Search items/information out
 - ▣ Maybe offer extra credit (i.e. first to find...)

Strategies

- Group Work
- Turn improvisational group work into recreation
 - i.e. debates, “game shows”
 - Offer extra credit

Strategies

- Speak/Communicate in Private
- Communicate with the student individually

Strategies



- Go off the rails
- Go off-roading

Strategies

- The Three R's:

Relax

Respect

Remember