

Responding to Disruptions or Disrespect: Some Options

Strategy	<i>What specific language might you use if you pursued this strategy?</i>	<i>What are some pros and cons of this strategy?</i>
Respond immediately by naming behavior as problematic or unwelcome.		
Acknowledge disruption with a smile or laugh and continue with class.		
Ignore in the moment and address the behavior later.		
Deflect potential confrontation with friendly response (e.g., answer it as a request for information, or express sympathy with frustration and move on).		
Where possible, create a learning moment for everyone by connecting disruptive comments to course content.		
Follow up with specific students after class.		
Follow up in next class session with everyone.		
Ask disruptive or disrespectful student to take responsibility for his/her behavior.		
Other strategies?		

Preparing for unsettling moments

“Know yourself. Know your biases, know what will push your buttons and what will cause your mind to stop. Every one of us has areas in which we are vulnerable to strong feelings. Knowing what those areas are in advance can diminish the element of surprise. This self-knowledge can enable you to devise in advance strategies for managing yourself and the class when such a moment arises. You will have thought about what you need to do in order to enable your mind to work again.”

--Lee Warren (Derek Bok Center, Harvard), “Managing Hot Moments in the Classroom”

When unsettling moments occur

Take a deep breath, count to five, imagine a peaceful scene, picture your allies and supporters cheering you on, smile . . . and then proceed.