Announcements

- Friday, Nov 11 is the deadline for the first drafts of your writing pieces.
- Next week the class will meet in CHL 021 (Chemistry Library) for a microteaching session, starting at 1:30pm.
- If you’re TAing and have changed classrooms since the start of the quarter, please let me know.
- Tomorrow, I plan to send out the survey about what has worked well so far and what could be improved in this seminar.

Session 06: Managing Difficult Classroom Situations (cont.)

Valentin Razmov

Behavior that is rewarded shall be repeated.
First do no harm.
There is no right answer to the wrong question.

Resources

- Teaching Tips
  - Ch.5 (pp.49, 50-52), Ch.8 (pp.101-103), Ch.10 (pp.116-117, 120-121), Ch.14, Ch.15 (pp.208-210)
- The Nuts and Bolts of Classroom Management: How to Teach Like a Pro, Chautauqua workshop, 2003.

Outline

- Challenging scenarios
  - Origins, structure
  - Example scenarios and how to deal with them
- Meta-cognitive discussion

Difficult Classroom Situations – My (Revised) View of Their Origins

- Miscommunication of expectations
  - (Un)Acceptable classroom behavior (discipline, noise, harassment)
  - Assignment requirements, activity goals
- Incorrectly placed incentives
  - Competition with other students
  - Penalizing for mistakes vs. rewarding for good work
  - Potential benefits vs. penalties for cheating
  - Slow or indecisive reaction to unacceptable behavior
  - “Free riders” in group projects
- Students feeling stress
  - Too little time/opportunity to do the work right
  - Internal tension within a team in group projects
- Instructors feeling stress
  - Not knowing “all the answers”
  - Finishing with the prepared material early and not having anything extra
  - Falsely accusing a student of cheating
Your Worst Fears?

- What problem situation(s) do you, in the role of a teacher, fear the most?
- What problem situation(s) do you, in the role of a student, fear (or have feared) the most?

Difficult Classroom Situations – My Advice on Managing Them

- “First do no harm.”
- Seek the lessons behind the problem situation – for yourself and for the student(s). Help them look for those lessons – they’ll appreciate it much.
  - Why did this problem happen? What can we each do to avoid this situation next time?
  - “There is no right answer to the wrong question.”
  - If you’re unsure how to respond, buy yourself time. “Let me discuss this matter with the course instructor.” “I’ll get back to you on this, but now let’s return to our main topic of discussion…”
- “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” “Behavior that is rewarded shall be repeated.”

Real Examples from the Classroom

How do you deal with the student who … :
- ... “monopolizes” the discussion?
- ... always likes to challenge your knowledge?
- ... uses inappropriate language?
- ... behaves disrespectfully toward classmates or you?
- ... challenges your approach to teaching the class?
- ... always has excuses for turning in assignments late?
- ... doesn’t do his/her fair share in group assignments?
- ... claims she’s working hard, but results aren’t good?
- ... frequently talks while you’re talking in class?
- ... regularly comes unprepared for class?
- ... sleeps in class?

Meta-Lessons: Teaching Techniques We Used Today

- Tying material to prior lessons
- In-class discussion
- Tying material to other topics of interest
- Using classroom technology to engage everyone
- Gathering feedback to be used in future discussions
- Looking for structure when exploring a new area
- Shifting gears between presentation and discussion
  - This is what we are doing right now
  - One-minute feedback

One-Minute Feedback

- What one or two ideas discussed today captured your attention and thinking the most? Why?
- What question still remain open for you? Be specific.