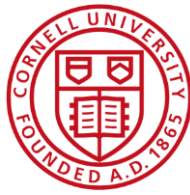


Effectively Dealing with Challenging Classroom Situations

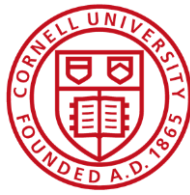


Christina Argyrou
& Daniel Ludwinski



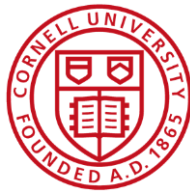
Outline

- Ice breaker
- Workshop Introduction
- Observe Challenging Situations
- Share Personal Experiences
- Scenarios
- Discussion and Conclusion/ Provide Resources on campus
- Evaluation



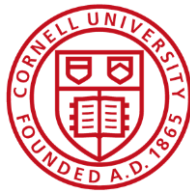
Personal Introductions

- Who are you (name)?
- What department are you in?
- Why are you here / What do you hope to take away?



Workshop Introduction

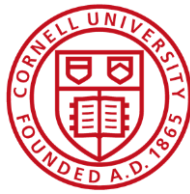
- Learning Objectives:
 - Identify possible challenging classroom situations
 - Discuss strategies and resources to handle these situations



Challenging Situations in... action

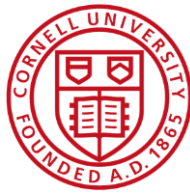
For each of the following videos:

- What potential challenge/problem/dysfunction can you identify?
- How would you approach/try to solve it?



Categories of Difficult Situations

- Student Learning Difficulties
- Emotional Distress
- Personality Conflicts/Interpersonal Relationships
- Classroom Management
- Academic Integrity Issues



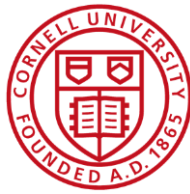
Personal Experiences (Think/Pair/Share)

- Take a minute to think about a difficult classroom situation that you observed
- Discuss with a partner
- We will share insights as a group after



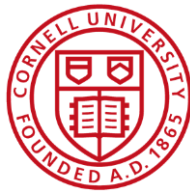
Scenarios

- A. Disrespectful Student
- B. Group Conflict
- C. Language / Communication Difficulties
- D. Extensions
- E. Exam Accommodations
- F. Struggling Students



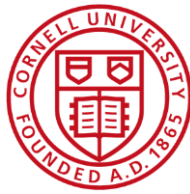
Scenario A: Disrespectful Student

You are a TA for a senior level class and during your recitation session you get interrupted multiple times from a specific student. This person questions your statements in a rude way and uses body language, such as making faces and shaking his head, as signs of disapproval and disbelief. He also turns to his classmates saying phrases like 'This is a total waste of time' and 'This definitely does not hold'. You feel distracted by his presence and uncomfortable being criticized every single moment. You lose your concentration and your coherence.



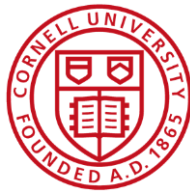
Scenario B: Group Conflict

You are the instructor for a senior level required engineering class. The students are expected to work in groups of 4 people on large design project throughout the semester and report their progress bi-weekly. One school of thought says 'you don't always get to pick who you are working with and thus school should be the same way. Another school encourages students to build their own groups for convenience and better collaboration. You decided to follow the first approach. Towards the end of the semester, prior to final presentations, you receive complaints from two students of the same group that their peers have had virtually no contribution to the project and that they are worried about the quality of the final product.



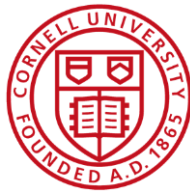
Scenario C: Language Difficulties

You are an instructor for a freshman level class on psychology. The sessions are based on group discussions and debates as follows: students are assigned readings prior to the class and are asked to summarize the key points and/or argue about the ideas presented in the readings. In class there is an international student that avoids participating in the discussion systematically but seems very attentive and aware of what is happening in class. You suspect that the reason he is not engaged more is that he feels insecure and vulnerable expressing himself in a foreign language.



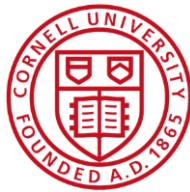
Scenario D: Extensions

You are the instructor for a demanding 4-credit chemistry course. The students are expected to attend the lectures, the required lab sessions and also to turn in homework problem sets and lab reports on a weekly basis. It is very common that after the first couple of weeks, 10% of the students drop the class because of the heavy workload. There is a student that has hard time meeting the deadlines and asks repeatedly for extensions in person and via email. She is very diligent, with high GPA and produces quality work. For fear of losing more people, you are accommodating all her special requests. After the first couple of times, the number of people asking for extensions is increasing dramatically.



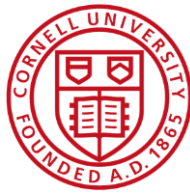
Scenario E: Exam Accommodations

You are a TA proctoring a preliminary exam when one student rushes in 1 hour late, panting and panicked. The professor is not present and you had not discussed how to handle this type of situation ahead of time. He explains that he had to run back to his dorm to get his ID in order to check in for the exam. You rush to give him his paper and get him started, but with 30 min left he does not get far. On the edge of tears the student refuses to get up and begs for the extra hour he lost while retrieving his ID.



Scenario F: Struggling Student

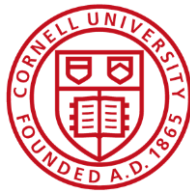
You are a TA for a demanding undergraduate course that is required for the major. After the second exam a student comes to you. They are a second semester senior. They did poorly on the first exam and really tried to pick up their game for the second. They didn't miss a class and came to almost every office hour, however, they did even worse on the second exam. They are afraid that they won't pass the class and then won't graduate.



Group Discussion – Scenarios

In your group, discuss the following questions:

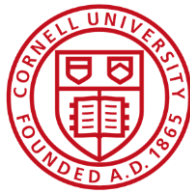
- How would you respond to the given classroom situation? A similar situation?
- What could you have done earlier to prevent this classroom situation (and similar ones)?
- What lessons and principles can be derived from this situation?
- How can you effectively convey these lessons to your students?



Group Discussion – Scenarios

In your new group take turns doing the following:

- Briefly introduce your scenario
- Share your thoughts about
 - How to respond in that type of situation
 - What could have been done earlier to prevent it
 - The lessons and principles that can be derived from this situation



Conclusion – Final Thoughts

I. RECOGNIZE the Incident.

- Identify what is happening.
- Recognize discrepancy between expected and actual outcomes.

II. REFLECT on the Incident.

- Consider the problem from multiple perspectives.
- Explore assumptions/reasoning behind positions/viewpoints
- Actively listen for understanding, respect multiple points of view
- Encourage others to do the same while owning personal feelings.

III. RESPOND to the Incident.

- Generate list of alternative responses to the incident.
- Examine short and long term consequences of each response for all stakeholders
- Decide which response seems most acceptable, given the needs of all.
- Select the most appropriate response, given the range of possibilities.

IV. REASSESS the Action.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the action.
- Collect feedback from stakeholders to determine effectiveness of the strategy used to address the incident.