



Instructor
Skills

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Knowledge Series
13-001

Difficult behaviors in the classroom

Maintaining control of the classroom/training session is one of the most important tasks of an Instructor. The following list gives examples of behaviors you may encounter and how to respond.

The Rambler – refocus attention by restating relevant point. Direct questions to the group that is back on subject. Ask if they could summarize their main point.

The Talker – Acknowledge comments made, state “that’s an interesting point what does everyone else think?” Make eye contact with another student and move towards that person.

Shyness – Give strong reinforcement from any participation. Make eye contact. Appoint to be a small group leader.

The Heckler – Redirect the question to the group. Acknowledge positive points and move on. Say “I appreciate your comments, but want to hear from someone else.” Or “Looks like we disagree.”

The Grandstander – Say “You are entitled to your own opinion, belief or feeling, but now it’s time we moved on to the next part of the lesson.” Ask them if they would like to stay after to discuss one on one.

Side Conversation – Do not embarrass them ask if they would like to share their opinion on the topic. Comment on the group but do not single out. Stand near the talkers. As a last resort, stop and wait for their conversation to end.

Do not rule your classroom with an “iron fist” but hold students accountable when the distractions are large enough to prevent other students from learning. As soon issues arise, deal with it. This shows the class you will not tolerate such actions. Be respectful and courtesy yet manage YOUR classroom. Remember if teaching was easy, everyone would be doing it.