

## **Restoring Civility in Our Classrooms**

Peggy Cohen, Ph.D., Director, Center for Teaching and Learning and  
Associate Provost for Professional Development at UMSL  
Peggy\_Cohen@umsl.edu

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“...Students increasingly are bringing to higher education exactly the same consumer expectations they have for every other commercial establishment with which they deal. Their focus is on convenience, quality, service, and cost.” (Levine & Cureton, 1998).

“Learning is a direct result of the student’s efforts rather than a service that the student purchases.” (Groccia, 1997).

#### **Objectives of this session**

- To consider why civility is a pressing problem in higher education
- To describe the parameters of a civil instructional environment
- To identify tools that promote and maintain civil behaviors
- To illustrate strategies that promote and maintain such behaviors

#### **Faculty and staff are responsible for:**

- Creating effective environments for work and learning
- Graduating responsible and prepared citizens
- Practicing and teaching democratic principles

#### **What characterizes civil classrooms and workplaces?**

##### **Tools for Use in Class and Online**

- Your attitudes and behaviors
- Syllabus
- Meeting management strategies
- Professional tools from the disciplines
- Points
- Instructional strategies that engage students

##### **Your attitudes and behaviors**

- “*Learning is serious business*” & takes effort, persistence, responsibility
- Be respectful (no humiliation, sarcasm)
- Be inclusive, welcoming, helpful
- Make boundaries transparent
- Know who is present, learn and use names
- Respect how learning occurs: engage students actively
- Value student input

##### **Syllabus – an *agreement* that includes:**

- Course goals and learning objectives
- Requirements and due dates
- Schedule of topics w/ important campus dates
- Expectations for students’ behaviors
- Syllabus template available at: <http://www.umsl.edu/ctl>

## Management Strategies

In class	Online
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Post Daily Agenda</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Link calendar to assignments</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use all class time</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Designate a discussion forum to post &amp; respond to ???</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define civil behaviors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define or review online netiquette</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set ground rules <i>with</i> students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define civil, respectful behaviors <i>with</i> students</li></ul>

## Professional tools

- Student Conduct Codes
- Professional Standards of the Discipline
- Professional Association Standards
- Focus on career development and progress to goals, degrees

## When these codes are violated:

- Talk privately to the student
- Review ground rules with individual and class
- Document the incident (date, description)
- Consult campus resources
- Report appropriately

## Requiring & Assessing Professionalism

- Objective criteria
- Observable behaviors
- Criteria contributed by students
- Consider self, peer, instructor assessment

## References and Resources

UMSL Center for Teaching and Learning <http://www.umsl.edu/ctl>

- Essential Elements of a Syllabus
- Sample Statements of Civility and Academic Honesty

Groccia, J. (1997). The Student as Customer vs. the Student as Learner. **About Campus**, May-June, pp. 31-32

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Oblinger, D. G. and Oblinger, J.L. (2005). **Educating the net generation**. Educause: Boulder, CO.

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