

# How do I manage issues in class?

## Topic focus

- dealing with issues in the classroom which may interfere with teaching and learning
- behaviour, ground rules, civility issues, uncooperative students

## Topic outcomes

- you will be able to access a range of strategies which you may use in managing your classroom

*'You have prepared your class well. You need to cover some important material today. The class gets started after a few students wander in late. As you are beginning to generate some discussion, Emily's mobile phone rings. You ask her if she would mind turning it off, as it is interfering with the class discussion. She responds that it's important, in fact more important than what you are talking about. Chad makes some comment about women who gossip on phones. The class laughs. Things are not going as you had hoped.'*

### Take a moment to reflect on this issue.

What challenges does this pose for *your* teaching? .....

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## Possible solutions

1. Establish your expectations of classroom behaviour and etiquette in your very first class.
2. Explain to students the reasons for these expectations.
3. When issues arise, the class is looking to you for leadership, so lead.
4. Remain calm and speak firmly.
5. Remind students of the reasons for your expectations - a safe and non-threatening learning environment.
6. Ask 'offenders' to speak with you after the class.
7. If you sense a threat to anyone's safety, ask the student(s) to leave your class. Contact Deakin security (extension 222) if you feel the need, although it is preferable to try to diffuse the situation yourself first.

## More help

Here are some resources from which you may seek some advice. They are all annotated so as to assist you in making judgements about what might be useful advice for your particular teaching context. By exploring some or all of these resources, you may well be able to generate strategies to suit your particular circumstances.

1. <http://www.flinders.edu.au/teaching/support/sessional-teachers/solving-tutorial-issues.cfm> - offers suggestions about how to deal with a range of issues that may arise in tutorials e.g. generating discussion, students not cooperating.
2. <http://www.bernicessandler.com/id28.htm> - from the Women's Education and Research Institute, Washington, this site focuses mainly on managing males' inappropriate behaviour towards women in the classroom.
3. <http://tep.uoregon.edu/resources/faqs/issuesofrespect/seriously.html> - succinctly explains the importance of establishing yourself in the first class.

4. [http://www.counsel.ufl.edu/brochure.asp?include=brochures/faculty\\_working\\_with\\_students\\_in\\_crisis.brochure](http://www.counsel.ufl.edu/brochure.asp?include=brochures/faculty_working_with_students_in_crisis.brochure) - from the University of Florida, this site has some useful tips even though they are set in an American context.
5. <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/hotmoments.html> - an interesting discussion about how we can turn 'hot moments' in the classroom into learning opportunities.
6. <http://www.clt.cornell.edu/campus/teach/grad/carlson/terrorist.html> - a lengthy discussion of research into the experiences of two female teaching assistants dealing with "classroom terrorists", from Cornell University.
7. <http://www.4faculty.org/includes/108r2.jsp> - another article from an American perspective, but includes some advice which is generic and universal.
8. <http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/tm/classmgt.html> – a brief description of ideas from the University of Technology, Sydney.
9. <http://www.mccfl.edu/pages/1389.asp> - a collection of sites offering valuable discussion on classroom management, again from an American perspective, but covering many issues which are universal to classrooms.

## **Alert !**

Serious issues don't arise often in adult classrooms, but you need to be prepared just in case. Remember you are a professional and should act accordingly. Anticipate the sorts of issues which may arise, and know what you are going to do if and when they do.