

Course Syllabus

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| Course: | EDZU 9721 <u>Succeeding With Difficult Students</u> |
| Credit Hours: | 3.0 credits / 45 hours |
| Instructors: | Dawn Nachtigall and Pamila Pahuja |

Course Description

As teachers, we have students in our classrooms that exhibit a wide range of behaviors that we might consider difficult. However, it is important for us as educators to realize that the majority of difficult behavior comes from some underlying reason. In this course, we will identify some of those reasons and try to understand the resulting behaviors. Once we have defined some of the concerns our students bring to the classroom, we will develop strategies to use when working with them. Throughout the course, we will explore current research, examine case studies, as well as discuss our own experiences to create a personalized proactive plan that each teacher can bring back to their current teaching situation. This course is designed for teachers in all grade levels who want to become more effective with students that exhibit difficult behaviors.

Course Goals

Know

1. The typical causes for “difficult behavior.”
2. Immediate reactions, short term solutions, and long term solutions to difficult behavior.
3. What a Behavior Intervention Plan is, the important elements that make up a BIP, and how they are used in schools.
4. The difference between reactive and proactive teachers.

Understand

1. That a student isn’t “difficult”; his or her behavior is.
2. That teachers can only control their own reactions to a behavior.
3. How outside stresses and childhood experiences contribute to “difficult behavior”.
4. The nature of certain disabilities such as ADD, AD/HD, LD and ODD, and how they can cause difficult behavior.
5. A teacher’s role is in designing a BIP.

To Be Able To

1. Use a series of strategies designed to address certain difficult behaviors that they experience in their classrooms.

2. Use immediate, short term and long term solutions to succeed with difficult behavior.
3. Help design a BIP for a student who exhibits difficult behavior.
4. Use techniques to develop trusting relationships with students who exhibit difficult behaviors and their families.
5. To reach out and communicate with difficult students.

Course Outline

Part 1- Introduction

- Participants will be introduced to the basic layout of the course and to one another by participating in some ice-breaking online forum activities.

Part 2- Difficult Students vs. Difficult Behavior

- We will analyze 5 case studies of difficult students. We will discuss how these 5 students would exhibit difficult behavior in a variety of classroom settings. Then we will come up with strategies to handle these specific students in those classroom settings.
- We will explore our favorite classroom management techniques as a group. This will be done in an on-line forum requiring all students to post their own favorite techniques in their classroom and grade setting. All students will be required to reply to at least 2 other students to create a dialogue.
- Participants will discuss and list difficult behavior that they have experienced as an educator. They will then create a specific list for their own class/subject/grade level of the top 5 difficult behaviors that they have to deal with.
- We will explore the idea that there is a difference between “difficult students” and “difficult behavior”. When we label our students as difficult, what is that based on?

Part 3- Reasons for Difficult Behavior

- Instructors will present the reasons for difficult behavior. There are so many reasons why our students exhibit difficult behavior in the classroom. If the educator can understand the underlying causes of the difficult behavior, then they can create strategies on how to deal with it.

Part 4-The six domains of Stress

- Stress is a major contributor to difficult behavior. Class participants will examine the 6 domains of stress. They will discuss as a group what domains are exhibited in their personal districts and classrooms.
- Participants will analyze a variety of student case studies and discover which domain(s) of stress is being exhibited by the student.

Part 4- Exploring Various Disabilities

- In an online forum, participants will discuss the various disabilities that their students have and if the disability contributed to difficult behavior displayed in the classroom.
- Instructors will present current research on some common disabilities. Class Participants will research a specific disability and present strategies on how to handle the difficult behavior that is associated with that disability.

Part 5- What is a BIP and how do we create one?

- Instructors will introduce BIPs and class participants will discuss the value of creating a BIP for certain students, how to create one and how to implement it in various educational settings.
- Based on a case study, all participants will examine a BIP created for one particular student. As a group we will discuss any changes that should be made to the BIP and how to implement it in our districts.

Part 6 – Analyzing Difficult Behavior displayed on the Big Screen

- Participants will be given a choice of several Hollywood movies. All movies are relevant and occur in an educational setting. Some of the movies are based on real-life educators.
- Class participants will choose one movie and watch it through “an educator’s eyes”. They will write a reaction to the movie including a discussion on the difficult behavior observed in the movie and the strategies that were used to handle that behavior.

Part 7 – Establishing Class Rules and an Atmosphere of Trust

- Participants will create a list of 3-5 classroom rules. They will share their rules with the class in an online forum. The class will provide constructive comments on the classroom rules that were presented and use this as an opportunity to gain some new ideas that can be utilized in their own classrooms.
- Class Participants will analyze a PowerPoint presentation on establishing trust. As educators, we set the tone of our classroom. Do we have a setting where the student feels valued? Do our students trust us?
- The PowerPoint will discuss how to establish trust with a “difficult student” and how to establish a positive relationship with all students. We will also discuss the six foundations for effective teacher-student relationships.
- One technique is to show your students that you are genuinely interested in them outside of the classroom. We will discuss the implementation of a Student Interest Survey.
- All class participants will create their own Student Interest Survey that can be used in their own specific educational setting.
- All class participants will analyze a case study of an interaction with a student and teacher. We will discuss what strategies should be implemented in the future.

Part 8-The Ron Clark Story

- Participants will watch the Ron Clark Story which is based on the true story of an educator from North Carolina. He taught at a “difficult” school in Harlem and by utilizing many of the techniques discussed in class earlier, he was able to establish a family within his classroom. His techniques and teaching style resulted in very high passing scores for his students.
- Participants will analyze and review his extensive list of class rules to see which ones are appropriate for their own classroom settings.

Part 9-Reactive vs Proactive Teachers and Handling Difficult Students

- Class Participants will analyze a PowerPoint presentation on reactive vs proactive teachers. Participants will be asked to describe a personal situation in which they were reactive. They will then discuss proactive strategies that could have been used to prevent the situation from spiraling out of control.
- Class participants will be asked to evaluate a site that details direct strategies to use for many specific difficult behaviors. After reviewing the source, participants will pick 3 common behaviors that occur in their own classrooms. They will discuss how they handled the situation and examine the website’s strategies to see if they can come up with a new plan to handle these behaviors in the future.

- In an online forum, class participants will discuss their roles as educators and how they set the mood for their own classrooms.

Methods of Instruction

Teachers enrolled in this course will evaluate primary and secondary sources, presentations, case studies, movies and literature. These sources will discuss causes of student behavior, causes of stress, various disorders, and the difference between proactive and reactive students in order to better understand the factors that contribute to or cause difficult behavior. They will communicate with other teachers around the state and country to share behavior management success stories and gain insights into the best proactive responses to difficult behaviors in various situations. They will utilize case studies and complete assignments that assess their understanding of the causes of stresses displayed by students in their own districts. All students will be challenged to apply their learning by designing a plan of action to deal with difficult behaviors immediately to their own classrooms, schools, districts and communities.

Students will connect with each other throughout the course within forums and various other types of online feedback options built into each class.

Methods of Assessment

A student must complete all of the assigned readings and assignments, and participate in all discussion forums. In addition to the above:

For an “**A**”:

- Students will complete the “Proactive Booklet” for 3 separate difficult behaviors. They will include an immediate fix, a short term fix and a long term fix for each behavior they discussed.
- Students will submit a 2 page reaction to this course. Explain specific material that you learned in this course that will affect your current teaching situation.

For a “**B**”:

- Students will complete the “Proactive Booklet” for 3 separate difficult behaviors. They will include an immediate fix, a short term fix and a long term fix for each behavior they discussed.

Instructors are online each day of the course and correspond with students through the course itself, feedback on assignments, e-mail, and by phone.

Time Validation

| <u>Assignment</u> | <u>Time (in hours)</u> |
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| Students will complete an introductory forum. They are required to read and comment on each other's posts. | 1.00 |
| Students will consider five different scenarios involving difficult behavior. For each scenario they will reflect on how they dealt with the situation in the past by answering 4 different questions. | 1.50 |
| In a forum setting, students will share best practices for classroom management. Participants will read other participants' post and comment on them as well. | 1.00 |
| Students are to brainstorm a list of behaviors they consider "difficult" in the classroom. Then they are to narrow down the list to the "Top 5" and provide a possible strategy for dealing with each. | 1.00 |
| In a forum setting, students will consider the difference between "difficult students" and "difficult behavior". Participants will read other participants' post and comment on them as well. | 1.00 |
| Students will examine the different reasons students exhibit difficult behaviors through a PPT presentation. Afterwards, they will submit a detailed reaction to the information provided in the presentation. | 2.00 |
| Students will consider the 6 domains of stress that affect students. They will reflect upon which domains affect students in their particular school community most. In a forum setting, they will share their thoughts. | 1.00 |
| Students will read three case studies in which students are affected by stress. They will submit a paper describing which domains of stress are affecting each student and then propose how one might see that stress manifested in the classroom. | 1.50 |
| Students will consider how disabilities like ADD, ADHD, ODD, etc. affect students in the classroom. Participants will explore the origin of such disorders on a nature vs. nurture debate. | 1.00 |
| Students will use online resources to explore ODD: basic symptoms, how it affects students in the classroom, etc. Afterwards, students will answer several questions including their own personal history with students having ODD and strategies to work with such students. | 2.50 |
| In a forum setting, students will discuss any prior experience they have with Behavior Intervention Plans. Participants will read other participants' post and comment on them as well. | 1.00 |
| Students will choose from several well known movies that exhibit difficult students. After watching one of the full length feature films, students will write a detailed reaction about how it was to watch the movie with "teacher eyes". | 4.00 |
| In a forum setting, students will discuss classroom rules. Each participant will provide a list of 3-5 rules and then critique 2 other participants' rules. | 1.00 |
| Students will investigate different techniques for establishing trust with students and their families. They will read through a detailed PPT presentation and then create a student interest survey for use with their classes. | 2.00 |

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| Students will read a case study about a girl desperate for self-approval. They will then propose strategies for working with this student. | 1.00 |
| Students will watch the full-length feature film based on real life teacher Ron Clark. They will then submit a reaction to his work. | 4.00 |
| Students will read through the 55 class rules that Ron Clark used with his classes. In a forum setting, they will discuss the implementation of these rules. Participants will read other participants' post and comment on them as well. | 2.00 |
| Students will consider the difference between reactively and proactively dealing with a situation. They will read through a detailed PPT presentation and then consider a time when they personally reacted. They will design a strategy for how to affect proactively in a similar situation. | 2.00 |
| Students will explore a website that provides many different strategies to deal with difficult behaviors. They will choose any 3 behaviors presented on the website and explain how they have dealt with those in the past. Then they will consider the solutions presented on the site and explain if they would work in the future. | 3.50 |
| Students will consider a famous quote by Haim Ginott regarding our role as educators. In a forum setting, they will discuss how this quote defines them. Participants will read other participants' post and comment on them as well. | 1.00 |
| Students will explore 5 different resources provided by the instructor including videos, articles and websites providing strategies to use with difficult students. | 5.00 |
| Students will synthesize the material learned in this course by creating a proactive booklet for three difficult behaviors they have dealt with in class. The booklet will include immediate, short term and long term fixes for each behavior. | 3.00 |
| The students will write a detailed report summarizing the material they learned in this course and how they will use it in their current teaching situation. | 2.00 |
| Total Time | 45.00 |