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10-7-2016

Squeaky Wheels: Turning Complainers into Collaborators

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Recommended Citation

Ratvasky, Pamela, "Squeaky Wheels: Turning Complainers into Collaborators" (2016). *Learning Showcase 2016: A Celebration of Discovery, Transformation and Success*. 54.

<https://fuse.franklin.edu/ss2016/54>

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Squeaky Wheels: Turning Complainers into Collaborators

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FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY
LEARNING
SHOWCASE
A DAY OF DISCOVERY

Introduction

An overview of strategies for engaging students in the classroom, especially those that tend to complain more frequently than others – the squeaky wheels!

Student Success

We know some students have more successful coping strategies than others when dealing with academic challenges, and there are many theoretical approaches related to achievement and student success.

Effective Coping

Coping is influenced by thinking and acting:

inclination to expect success or avoiding tasks or engaging in task- behavior	failure irrelevant seeking social support
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Social & Psychological Terms

Normative and Structural Life Transitions occur more smoothly for college students when they have well-developed skill sets which include:

Self-regulation – self’s capacity to alter its behaviors, and in everyday pursuits of many goals, standards, and ideals

Self-efficacy – belief in one’s capabilities to achieve a goal or an outcome

Social intelligence – capacity to effectively navigate and negotiate social relationships and environments

Emotional intelligence – capacity of individuals to recognize their own, and other people’s emotions, understand different feelings, and use to guide thinking and behavior

(Gerrig, Zimbardo, 2002)

How Full is the Glass?



Optimists see: A glass half full.

Pessimists see: A glass half empty.

Chronic complainers see: “A glass that is slightly chipped holding water that isn’t cold enough, probably because it’s tap water when I asked for bottled water and wait, there’s a smudge on the rim, too, which means the glass wasn’t cleaned properly and now I’ll probably end up with some kind of virus. Why do these things always happen to me?!” (Winch, 2011)

It’s all about Perception

Chronic complainers:

do not usually see themselves as negative people but see themselves as ‘drawing the short end of stick’ everyday
seek sympathy and validation for the struggle
are not looking for advice or solutions usually (this threatens identity ‘sense of self’) (Winch, 2011)

Improving Collaboration

As *crazy* as it may sound, avoid offering solutions or advice at first

Do not say ‘you are overreacting’ or ‘things are not that bad’

Do offer a quick yet authentic expression of empathy ‘Oh, no your computer stopped working? That is annoying, but I know you are a good student, and will find another way to turn in your paper.’

Start with authentic sympathy and emotional validation and then lead into pointed solutions that are timely and relevant
(Winch, 2011)

And make sure the course expectations are well-developed and students understand what is required for a successful learning experience

References

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Winch, G. (2011). How to deal with chronic complainers: what they want and what they need are very different things. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-squeaky-wheel/201107/how-deal-chronic-complainers>

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