

A Case For The Outright: A Special Focus on Universities' First-Timers

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Abstract

In the university environment, new students come in with various attitudes. Some are very open and direct and they want to say anything that enters their mind without thinking there are repercussions to what we say. Because of this, many students has gotten themselves in serious troubles. Sometimes, what one says in secret can be reported in a different way and it is a whole lot of trouble for students. Consequently, this paper on “a case for the outright: a special focus on universities’ first-timers” attempt to look into the various outright attitude that get students into trouble and how such problems can be averted or settled when they come.

Keywords: Outright, First-Timers/Freshers, Students, Educators, Talkative

Introduction

In nearly all academic settings, there are various types of students with multifarious behavioural patterns. The class in many cases is comprised of students from differing ethnic, religious and socio-economic background. Hence, the behaviour so exhibited differs from each other. This paper focuses of a particular type of students which are referred to here as “the outright”.

Outright, as used in this context refers to an open and direct person (student) who may be a talkative, intelligent, “I before others”, “all eyes on me” (showy), “I can do it all by myself”, and so on. The various forms of behaviours that falls under this outright category are numerous. However, for the purpose of being concise, the variations are restricted to the above listed dimensions.

A student can be outright when he/she is intelligent or prepares well before a class. Some students adopt the technique of preparing ahead of the next topic to be discussed in the classroom, hence, when the class is ongoing, they want to express themselves. Of course, if they are not heard, what benefit then accrues to studying ahead of time. It is imperative they are heard to keep up with such pace of reading.

From another angle, a student can also be outright when they are having certain behaviours such as those listed above. If a student is a talkative, of course, he may want the class to hear his comments. Sometimes, it may not really be the comment that matters to him but the need to talk. Talkative varies in their own ways – while some are mild, others may be very extreme and may come with a whole lots of issues within the academic enterprise.

At the Other Extreme

At the other hand of the outright students are the dormant types. These students, no matter how pushed, can decide to remain silent on certain issues. They do not worry to express themselves, they may be intelligent but play on a low key. In a general sense, these types of students do not often get into trouble. Surprisingly, some are even the best students in their various classes. Of course they are right – “the empty headed makes the loudest noise”.

The Case with the First-Timers

Over the years, I have been particularly interested in first timers in the university environment. The new environment seems to overwhelm them like someone who is drunk. They talk the way they like, do things as it pleases them and criticize the system at the tip of any form of displeasure/annoyance. The non-academic staff of universities are the worst hit of students' outright behaviour. A non-academic staff noted that “these students behave as if we have not even been to the university to study before... they behave as if they started university life”. Students who are outright would express their displeasure when asked to stand on a queue for a longer period of time and would be provoked at any instance of queue jumping orchestrated by an attending staff.

Freshers want to be well dressed and seen as someone who must have “arrived”. The major aim of many is to impress others even at the expense of their studies.

This is perhaps why many fail at their beginner level. Another dimension where freshers exhibit their talkative behaviour is when they see or hear something that is to be kept to oneself. Within the university, a lot of issues happen - from sexual harassment to selling of illegal books, extortion, sex for grades, etc. When many students hear of these for the first time, sure they would want to express themselves and they may do this not using the right channel. They may tell someone who will tell another till what they say get to an office where such utterance would bring trouble instead of settlement as they perceived.

The university is a very big place so to say and many things you say are carried to upper level authority. Not every person we come in contact with are good persons. There are even friends who will harm us just to get favours and the freshers are least aware of all these intricacies so they easily get into troubles.

The Breach with Fellow Students and Educators

The outright students are not difficult to identify and before long, they soon play off. Even when maturity sets in and they want to be cool, discussions soon pop up that triggers their behaviours. So, because they want to express themselves, they always get into trouble. They may see something that others would want to remove themselves from, but they will prefer to say it. Before long, their paths has been set against their fellow students or most worrisome, their educators. This is the major focus of this publication.

In many cases, first timers have gotten into trouble with mere utterances. A student may be asymptomatic in the class and someone may jokingly whisper “she is pregnant”. This same statement is also jokingly transferred to another, that someone said “she is pregnant. Before long, the story has been twisted and taken another dimension. Many students has been queried by school authority as a result troubles from mouth-talk-to-mouth discussions. This one said this, this one said that has been a major problem amongst freshmen and even the students’ community at large. So, it is imperative to bridle one’s tongue.

The Disadvantages

Many students has failed woefully as a result of what they said and they just cannot fathom why they fail. “For a course I did well, I failed?” But of course, it ends

there without further action because they do not know where their problems are coming from. Being a talkative in a university environment is very disadvantageous. Sometimes, some things you say comes back to you the way you never intended. Some letters I had written were translated from a different view and sure, it got me into serious trouble. Whatever you say, you must view it from the other end to see how it is viewed out there. Even this publication, upon conclusion, I will have to read it again for editing and again to see it from the perspective of various offices to ensure it does not trample on anyone.

Being outright can also extend to what you do on social media especially on Facebook, Twitter and/or any other social platform you are using. Sometimes a teacher may do something and you posted that the teachers in your school are like this or like that. You are already in trouble man but you will never know. Your post MAY be screenshot and sent to superior authorities in some places. In fact, people can even be paid to watch over your page and posts. This will be inimical to your academic growth. Of course you know that if the person watching over your post is your enemy, be rest assured he/she will add his own part to make your statement look very bad. Do I need to tell you again to be careful online?

Expressing grievances is a major characteristic of the outright. An outright student who is also a freshman does not mind expressing his/her grievance directly to the lecturer without prying into the consequences properly. This is because most of these expressions were done out of fits of anger.

Suggestions for Students

It is very important that students understand any environment they find themselves. As persons who are familiar with their previous homogenous environment, there is always a huge lack of understanding of the characteristics of heterogeneous population, hence, students can use these practical suggestions to help themselves.

1. Keep quiet.
2. Talk only when necessary.
3. Ask yourself, "is this really important/necessary?"
4. Do not be in haste to talk.
5. Be quick to hear, but slow to talk.

6. If talking is a major challenge to you, then read more about who is a recluse and practice it.
7. Hear both sides of the story first before judging.
8. Is this really correct?
9. Will my statement hurt anyone?
10. Will it put someone in trouble?
11. Will it make me a good person?
12. Will the public see it the way I meant it?
13. Does the source of the information have good intentions?
14. Will what I have in mind go against any constituted law/rules/regulation?
15. If I talk and things got spoilt, can I really be able to repair it?
16. Remember you can shoot a bullet but cannot catch the end of it.
17. Remember that the news that has entered the market is difficult to return.
18. Try to avoid certain persons and even people close to them if they are good at reporting. Avoiding here does not mean cold war but restricting talks about them in their presence and absence to avoid "he said this".
19. Be a gossip stopper. Any gossip brought to you must die there. Do not fuel it by adding your own view. When they will tag you that you said something, they will never say all of you said it.
20. You are in a university for studies, express yourself fully in a way no one is offended when it comes to academics and academics alone.
21. Do not make your teacher look stupid like he knows nothing when commenting. If you have a different view, express it respectfully or in some instances, just let it go.

Suggestions for Educators

Just as students have various behaviours, so too educators have various attitudes. Some come as parents and others as not-too-friendly. Nevertheless, I recommend the following for educators:

1. See the student as lacking sense and keep on putting him/her straight.
2. Tell him his/her fault to the face and expect them to change.
3. Set the expectation bar, set the limit. They will always change. They are just dancing in the euphoria of the new environment.

4. **See the students are your customers.** Doing this will make you understand that they can neither be harmed nor kept in grudge.
5. Draw them closer, allow them to express themselves at all times.
6. Necessary punishment should not be kept at bay. Such necessary punishment must be handy. No one has to be allowed to think everyone are age mates. The system is hierarchically structured and such hierarchy must be respected.
7. Be a parent
8. Be a problem solver
9. Make yourself accessible to students.
10. Be friendly enough to attract students to pour their minds.
11. Outright students can be arrogant, handle with all available care.
12. Can you call the parent to know more about their kid? Information from the parents may help you have a better understanding of the student.

How To Settle Problems With Those You Trampled Their Sensibilities

When a student offends a lecturer as a result of talking too much, such may lead to punishment. It may even lead to failing one course over and over again. If you perceive something like this is already playing out, below are some approach you can adopt to resolve the issue.

1. Go alone to meet the lecturer and appease him one-on-one.
2. Depending on the level of misconduct, some students would want to know the type of drink/wine the lecturer takes and go with one. Reaching a heart is a very easy way to resolve issues.
3. Go with someone who can talk or even a fellow lecturer who may be his/her close friend.
4. Make promises that what led to such punishment will never happen again.
5. All your approaches should be centered on making peace.
6. No matter the outcome, deal with it, you caused it first.
7. You may also write to authority if in your case, such is necessary.

What if You Feel Oppressed?

It is a normal thing in a university that someone wants to tell another “who’s the boss”. If you see yourself in such instances, it is very important to play wise. To avoid trouble, “your superiors must always feel comfortably superior”. So, try to use the suggestions above first to explain things and plead for mercy. But where such did not work, then try the suggestions below. But know that these suggestions may cause continued quarrel as the victor may see you as reporting him/her.

1. See the head of department (HOD) and seek advice.
2. If the HOD is not available, see the Dean of Faculty and seek advice.
3. Depending on the nature and gravity of the matter, you can also write to the Vice Chancellor intimating him of your situation and the need to help and follow it up.

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