

Clip #1 - Handling participation anxiety (1:35) Frei

PROFESSOR FRANCES FREI: So there are two anxieties: One is about, "Do I get a fair chance to get in?" and two is, "What level of expertise is required to share?" So I'll do them in order.

The first one is getting in. I tell students, if you feel like you're not getting in, send me an e-mail. I want to know if you're not getting in. And it might be that I'll look and I'll see, you think you're not getting in and you've shared every class over the last four classes. Or somebody's not getting in and they haven't. So one thing I have is an open line of communication. My bias checks help, because I'm sure I haven't been paying any attention, I'm sure I haven't seen you, which is surprising because I like to keep my back to the camera, so you'd think I'd be looking right at you.

So that's the first thing: an open engagement with the students on the learning process about how much they get in.

The second one is the level of expertise. It's my job to set the expectations. When somebody talks, I work with them to make them sound better and better and better. If you do that, everyone will want to share. So somebody gives me a little bit and I take that and I'm like, "OK, do you mean this and do you mean this?" And we go, and at the end, they're like, "Wow, I'm pretty smart; look how far I got."

I think that if you do that with students, if you work with them.... It's my obligation, by example, to show that it's OK to share without expertise. And that's, I think, a critical thing to do.

Clip #2 - Combining High Standards with Support (1:03) Frei

PROFESSOR FREI: Well, I think that part of it comes from the fact that you're celebrating any little bits of doing it, and so that helps a great deal. And you want to raise expectations. You set high standards and you are as generous as possible at helping people along the way. And you don't need the Harvard Business School (HBS) culture for that. I did that at Wharton, and Wharton is a lecture environment. And I went there and we had case discussions there. Not just like here, but much different than all of the other lecture environments there. I taught at the University of Rochester; again, the same thing. So the key, the high standard, is that I'm not going to leave Gustavo until we get something good, and I will be very generous about helping him, and it's going to be very apparent how much I helped him, and the environment is going to be such that he's not going to want as much help next time. He's going to have pride when he gets to be more helpful himself, and I will celebrate that.

Clip #3 - Call patterns (1:48) Garvin

PROFESSOR GARVIN: One other tip: call patterns; people's hands up. Suppose we're coming to the end of a discussion, and I'm about to close, and Mike has his hand up. If I don't call on him, and I make the transition, and ask the new question, and the first hand that goes up is Mike's, what's likely to happen if I call on Mike?

___: It goes back.

PROFESSOR GARVIN: Pay attention to whose hands are still up.

PROFESSOR JIM HESKETT: When I've seen a hand up for five minutes, I will typically not call on that person, because my assumption is that that person stopped listening five minutes ago. If I call on that person, they will take us back to where we were five minutes ago, instead of moving us forward.

PROFESSOR GARVIN: Sometimes the hands don't even come down. You've experienced this! Every now and then I get these marvelous MBA students whose hands are up the entire class. And no matter when I call on them, they're right on target with the discussion. I don't know how they do it. It's like they have this list. "OK, they got that one. They got that one. Here's where we are." That's a rarity. More frequently what happens is we go back.

So watch whose hands are still up, because they will bring you back.

Clip #4 - Handling experts (1:00) Frei

PROFESSOR FRANCES FREI: I would ask that expert. If there was an expert, and these experts like to reveal themselves as experts immediately, I would go to the expert and say, "Could you intuitively explain the central limit theorem to us?" And they'll start saying stuff that is just nonsensical. It makes sense to them and to me, and to no one else. I'd say, "Pause, that's great. Here's your performance measure. Look at the eyes here. If they're glazed over, you're not there. Your measure is, can you say it in a language so that they can understand it?"

Now the expert realizes that they have a lot to learn today, because they keep trying to articulate it and keep trying to articulate it, and they can't do it. Now they know that they also have something to learn. It brings them in beautifully.

The big thing here is, knowing something and not being able to articulate it is the same as not knowing it in a discussion-based environment. So I'm delighted when one of them does it early on.

Clip #5 - Don't forget the *B* players (2:56) DeLong

PROFESSOR TOM DELONG: Classes and students and people normally divide themselves up into three groups. And some of you have seen this article. They divide themselves up into the stars of the organization, and the solid citizens of the organization, and then the low performers. OK? What's the percentage in a normal organization? How many would be stars?

__: Ten percent.

PROFESSOR DELONG: Let's say fifteen, just to be generous. How about your low performers?

__: Five to ten percent.

PROFESSOR DELONG: OK, let's say *A*, *B*, and *C* players: 10 percent. Solid citizens: 75 percent. In all of our studies, when we ask deans of colleges, when we ask managers in professional service firms which two groups they focus on, they focus on the stars and they focus on the low performers. These are the faculty who need kind of constant attention, who need to be told how great they are, who need a lot of positive feedback. You know those people? You know who they are. And they fill up your time during the day.

Your low performers are the ones you worry about during the night: What have I done? Have I created a paper trail so that I could let them go? Have I been honest?

When I'm in my class and I have ninety students, my tendency is to focus on the stars, who I think might be bored in the class, or the low performers, who are suffering. But remember, do not forget the heart and soul of your organizations. Do not forget the heart and soul of your faculties. Do not forget the heart and soul... the students that are the *B* players.

Managers don't take *B* players out to dinner to tell them how great they are. They don't have the time. You're focused on the stars. If you ignore them, you ignore them at your peril. If you ignore your *B* players, your *B* students—if you ignore them long enough they become *C* students. Over time, those faculty, if you ignore them long enough, will become low performers, and then you have a management problem. Do not forget these people.