



Respect

Several years ago, an acquaintance of mine was working backstage at a local college theater when a United States Senator came to speak to the students.

As the senator was preparing to go onstage for his speech, my acquaintance overheard him

say, "Let's go out and tell these (profanity deleted) what they want to hear, then they'll vote for me." Needless to say, my acquaintance was surprised to hear those words come from the mouth of a senator. No longer did that senator command, or even deserve his respect.

What is respect? According to the dictionary, respect means, "to consider worthy of high regard." Respect is a lot like Christmas gifts. It's great to receive, but better to give. The hunter education instructor cannot demand respect of his or her students if unwilling to give respect to those same students.

In hunter education, there are several areas where respect is required. First, the instructors must respect the students. Secondly, the instructors must respect each other. Thirdly, the students must respect the instructors.

Respect should be given to the curriculum, the facility hosting the course, the parents or guests present, and the overall goals of the hunter education program. Adults are usually better at giving respect in the areas listed above. Young people sometimes have not yet learned the meaning of respect. Young students may leave their litter in the classroom or trash the restrooms. This certainly does not show respect for facilities. Yet they may act totally respectful to the instructors.

How does an instructor command the respect of his or her students? One of the first ways is what I call "Presence of Authority." As soon as the class begins, the instructor should welcome the students and specify the rules of the class. The rules should include what is expected of the student, how to treat the course facilities, and how to treat other students and instructors. If everyone understands that there are expected behaviors in the course, then there should be no room for misunderstandings.

For many years as a high school teacher, I always started the first day of class with my classroom rules and policies. Students sometimes thought I was going to be a mean teacher since I emphasized my rules in detail. Weeks later, students would comment that I was not such a mean teacher after all. What they did not understand was, since my rules had been followed, there were no problems with the behavior I expected from them. They knew how to act! They had my respect, and I had earned theirs.

Students who may be respectful of their instructors may sometimes not be respectful of their fellow students. Instructors should not allow ridicule, physical abuse, verbal abuse, or any type of confrontation between students. Make sure you specify that such behaviors will not be tolerated when you make your opening comments to the class.

Remember that it is always easier to take charge of a class in the beginning than it is to get control of an unruly class later.

Respect is certainly a two-way street. However, the street must undergo reconstruction before the traffic runs smoothly. Construct the groundwork for respect and "to be held in high regard" will follow you throughout your teaching career.

Author Jan Morris is a retired high school teacher who has been teaching hunter education for 31 years. He is a former IHEA Board member. †

Instructors can show respect to their students by:

- ♦ Understanding and appreciating the individuality of each student.
- ♦ Not playing favorites among the students.
- ♦ Treating every student fairly and in a consistent manner.
- ♦ Recognizing that each student may or may not learn at the same rate.
- ♦ Acting in a manner of friendship with each student.
- ♦ Showing parents of young students that you genuinely care about the success of their child.

Instructors can earn the respect of their students by:

- ♦ Letting each student know that you are there to help them pass the course.
- ♦ Not making untrue statements that some students will know to be false or misleading.
- ♦ Not using profane or inappropriate language.
- ♦ Not making fun of, or belittling a student answering a question incorrectly.
- ♦ Being willing to work individually with students who are having difficulty with the course or testing.

Flip Charts vs. Other Media

Given recent requests for flip charts, please consider that while flip charts can be a useful resource, the IHEA encourages instructors to switch to overheads. Overheads are far more effective because they are easier to view, and when used properly, they will generate greater interaction from the students (see Teaching 101, pages 22-23, *Heads Up On Overheads*, Spring 1998 *Journal*). The IHEA has 56 Overhead Masters available for free download from the IHEA website www.ihed.org.