

WHY YOU NEED TO MANAGE STUDENT STRESS AND WAYS TO DO IT

By **Julie DeNeen**

In Psychology, Maslow's hierarchy of needs explains in part why anxious and depressed students are much more likely to fail. Even if the situation is not catastrophic, a student's mind and body "feels" that the situation is very serious. All their brainpower is fixated on dealing with the fight or flight response in the body, plus the repetitive thought patterns that affect daily activities like eating, sleeping, and relationships.

In this cycle, learning takes a backseat to the perceived "disaster" in front of them. For them, it's about survival, not creativity or self-actualization. If you notice students in your class are stressed, it is vital that you work into your teaching ways to help them cope and reduce their anxiety.

The following tips will give you some tools to create a relaxing learning environment :

1. Keep Communication Open

Communication is the single most important thing you can do for your students. Create open channels for them to come to you for support, advice, counsel, etc. In both group and individual settings, you can offer your wisdom and experience in dealing with daily stress in your own life. This mentorship approach will build safety in the classroom and help the students to feel like you are on their side.

2. Flexible Assignments

Instead of assigning homework every night, assign a packet of homework and let them decide when to complete the work. With extracurricular activities like sports and music, some nights it might be impossible to do homework without it impacting their sleep. This way they can catch up on the weekends or on a night with less to do.

3. Teach Time Management

If you follow the above advice, it is important to go over with your students how to manage their time. Some kids will be overwhelmed with trying to divide and conquer a big project so practice setting goals in the classroom so it's more manageable for them at night.

4. Grade Effort As Well As Product

Effort is often the redheaded stepchild of product, but it shouldn't be. Some kids will work diligently for hours and only be able to produce an average grade. Other students will work ¼ of the time and produce an A+ grade. This can be demoralizing for those students who are putting forth so much effort. Even if you work in a school where grades must reflect a certain level of aptitude (thus limiting your ability to assign an "effort" score), you can offer other awards for those who have worked hard.

5. Offer Five-Minute Meditation

At the beginning and end of the day, set aside five minutes for students to do a private meditation or imagery. Teach deep breathing exercises and give them time to relax their bodies and minds.

6. Help Them To See The Bigger Picture

It is so easy to get pulled into the present so intensely that you forget the bigger picture. Kids who get stressed out easily forget that the assignment they are pulling their hair out about is really quite small in the grand scheme of things. Offer a lighthearted tale about your failures as a student and help them to see the bigger picture.

7. Keep Your Students Moving

Sitting in a chair listening to one person's voice is boring. Let's face it; the mind can wander in this setting. Worries and fears easily creep in when the atmosphere isn't requiring all of their attention. Keep the class moving through assignments, stations, and activities.

8. Offer Incentives For Bringing Healthy Food To Class

Healthy food plays a big role in student stress. You cannot control what your students eat for breakfast and lunch, but you can offer incentives for healthy eating. In your classroom, award points for those who bring in vegetables, fruits, or healthy proteins like lean meat and eggs. When a student gets to a certain point level, offer a reward like a free homework pass.

9. Have Music Playing During Class Time

Classical music is an excellent way to calm nerves. There should be time without music too, but during exams, meditation, or silent reading, turn on Bach!

10. Model How To Cope With Disappointment

Disappointment is inevitable. One of the most crucial moments in a student's career is what they do after they've failed an exam. Failure is the world's greatest teacher. It is like an open doorway to future success. Don't just hand out a failing grade and move on. Use the opportunity to teach what went wrong, how to face disappointment head on, and most importantly, how to not let it cripple your future work.

11. Don't Nitpick

You've probably had a teacher who did this. You had to use a blue pen, not black. You couldn't sit a certain way, eat during class, use the bathroom, or wear a hooded sweatshirt. Obviously rules are important, but first try to examine if any of your rules are actually just pet peeves in disguise. Kids who are prone to stress will feel the effects of this type of environment and it will negatively affect their work.

12. Balanced Exams

As much as possible, offer exams that have multiple parts. Can one part be verbal? Open book? Creative? Students learn differently. If every test is a large sheet of essay questions or multiple choice, it doesn't give students who have auditory or kinesthetic learning styles a chance to flourish. It's more work for you yes, but it will make a big difference in your classroom.

13. Be Mindful of Ergonomics

Kids are not as prone to back and neck aches, but it doesn't mean our classrooms should be devoid of comfortable seating and lighting. How much natural sunlight does your room get? Is there opportunity for a quick walk in the sunshine after lunch? Do you have students who suffer from ADD and would benefit from an exercise ball as a seat? In some classrooms, students have the option of using an exercise ball, which not only strengthens muscles, but also gives the "fidgety" students a chance to bounce while they work.

14. Stay In Touch With Parents

Keep communication channels open with parents of stressed out kids. Try to find out if there are other issues besides classwork that are affecting him/her. If the parents are struggling too, a guidance counselor or social worker might be able to help the student cope with difficult life circumstances. Be your student's advocate whenever possible.

15. Help Students To Enjoy The Learning Process

A stressed out student forgets about the process of learning. They are so fixated on the end result and the grade, they don't know how to enjoy HOW to learn. Take moments in the day to point out the beauty in discovery, in problem solving, and yes- even in failure. Remind your students that it isn't all about the grades. It's about the journey.

16. Give Continual Feedback

If you are able to give "mini" grades each day, it lessens the anxiety about the end-of-term grade. At that point, there is nothing a student can do about it! Students should never be surprised at their grade. Offer constant feedback so they have time to get on track while there is still time to make a difference.

17. Keep Yourself Relaxed!

A relaxed teacher makes for a relaxed classroom. You need to do what you can to alleviate your own stress – be it through meditation, organization, or time of silent reading. We all need to recharge and you as the teacher set the whole tone of the classroom. If you aren't stressed about tests or final scores, your students will pick up on that vibe too.

Source : <http://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/features/why-you-need-to-manage-student-stress-and-20-ways-to-do-it/>

NINE NETIQUETTE GUIDELINES ONLINE STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW

By Will Erstad

Proper etiquette is nothing new for most people. You grew up with your parents constantly telling you to mind your manners. But for those who grew up without some sort of computer screen inches from their face at all times, proper “netiquette” may seem a bit mystifying. We’re here to help with nine simple guidelines for how to be on your best behavior in an online classroom.

As you might have guessed, netiquette is essentially rules and norms for interacting with others on the internet. We enlisted Rasmussen College’s Heather Zink, who has taught online courses for seven years, to explain some guidelines to make sure your online manners are up to par.

Nine netiquette guidelines every online student needs to know

1. No Yelling, Please

There’s a time and a place for everything—**BUT IN MOST SITUATIONS TYPING IN ALL CAPS IS INAPPROPRIATE.** Most readers tend to perceive it as shouting and will have a hard time taking what you say seriously, no matter how intelligent your response may be. If you have vision issues—there are ways to adjust how text displays so you can still see without coming across as “yelling.”

2. Sarcasm Can (And Will) Backfire

“You really need to be overly polite and ensure there is no sarcastic tone in your message,” Zink says. You never know who is reading your comment on the other end, so she says you should never assume the reader will pick up on your sarcasm.

Sarcasm has been the source of plenty of misguided arguments online, as it can be incredibly difficult to understand the commenter’s intent. What may seem like an obvious joke to you could come across as off-putting or rude to those who don’t know you personally. As a rule of thumb, it’s best to avoid sarcasm all together in an online classroom.

3. Attempt To Find Your Own Answer

“Make an effort to exhaust your search options before asking a question,” Zink suggests. She says it can be frustrating for instructors when students ask questions that are clearly answered within the assignment instructions or course materials.

For questions related to class structure such as due dates or policies, refer to your syllabus and course FAQ. Attempt to find the answers to any other questions on your own using a search engine like Google or Bing. Relatively simple questions can usually be answered within seconds—which saves everyone time. If your questions remain unanswered after a bit of effort, feel free to bring them up with your instructor.

4. Stop ... Grammar-Time!

Always make an effort to use proper punctuation, spelling and grammar. Trying to decipher a string of misspelled words with erratic punctuation frustrates the reader and distracts from the point of your message. Take the time to spell check any message you send and save everyone the headache.

On the other hand, it's important to be reasonable about others' grammar mistakes. Nobody likes the grammar police and scolding a classmate because he or she used "your" instead of "you're" isn't practicing proper netiquette. If a classmate makes a simple mistake in a message that is otherwise coherent, give them a break.

5. Don't Get Cute With Text Colors

While it may be tempting to write all messages in neon green, whoever is reading it may not appreciate it as much as you. Stick to the basic black text color—if you need to emphasize something in your sentence use **bold** or *italicized* words. This will help ensure everyone can easily read your message without acquiring a headache.

6. Brevity Rules

Keep email messages short and to the point. You don't need to share your life story to ask for help with a problem—just focus on the essential information. This will ensure your question doesn't get lost in the noise and saves time for everyone involved.

"The more direct you can be in your question, the quicker the response you will get," Zink says. She suggests including a numbered or bulleted list if you have multiple comments or questions in order to make it clear and concise for the reader.

7. Read First

Take some time to read through each of the previous discussion post responses before writing your own response. If the original post was asking a specific question, there's a good chance someone has already answered it. Submitting an answer that is eerily similar to a classmate's indicates to the instructor that you haven't paid attention to the conversation thus far.

Remember, discussions can move fairly quickly so it is important to absorb all of the information before crafting your reply. Building upon a classmate's thought or attempting to add something new to the conversation will show your instructor you've been paying attention.

8. Don't Over Share

Personal information is valuable to identity thieves, so try not to share more than is necessary. We're not suggesting your classmates are criminals, but it's good practice in general to be guarded when it comes to personal information. Zink says a good rule of thumb to follow is if you're comfortable standing up in front of a classroom and saying your message, then it's most likely okay to share.

9. Be Kind

Communicating online is unique in that there tends to be a level of anonymity between the people who are interacting. This sometimes results in individuals being more impolite than they might be in person. In an online class, you might not have the complete anonymity that comes with using a screen name, but you likely won't see your classmates face-to-face. Make a point to be respectful in your comments—even if you disagree or dislike someone's stance on a topic.

Zink recommends taking time to think and relax before firing off a reply in the heat of a disagreement. "Wait a day. If you still feel like you need to reply you'll be more composed and won't say something you'll regret later," she says. "Even though other students can't see you, your name is attached to that comment and your classmates and instructors will remember it if you've been rude."

Source : <http://www.rasmussen.edu/student-life/blogs/college-life/netiquette-guidelines-every-online-student-needs-to-know/>

EIGHT INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT RATAN TATA

By **Pragati Kashyap**

If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always had. Think differently” Same can be said about the success of the greatest Indian businessman, Ratan Naval Tata.

Ratan Tata transformed the fate of Tata Group from being a conventional corporate house to a global conglomerate, worth \$100 million with high-profile acquisitions abroad. He stepped down as the Chairman of the Tata Group on December 28, 2012, ending the long 50 year run of one of India's oldest business empires.

A sincere dedication to an exceptional leader, below are eight interesting facts about Ratan Navel Tata.

8. He Was Born Rich. Very Rich

Ratan Naval Tata was born on 28 December, 1937, into a wealthy and famous family of Mumbai. Born to Naval Hormusji Tata and Soono, he is the great grandson of founder of the Tata Group, Jamsetji Tata.

7. He Had a Troubled Childhood

The opposite of what one would expect, Ratan Tata went through a troubled childhood. His parents separated during mid-1940s, when he was just 7 years old. Thereafter, he was brought up and raised by his grandmother.

6. He Studied From Some of the Best Boarding Schools; Nationally and Internationally

Ratan Tata went to Campion School, Bombay, followed by Bishop Cotton School, Shimla. He later came back and went to Cathedral and John Connon School, Mumbai to complete his schooling. Ratan completed his B.S. in Architecture in 1962 from Cornell University, New York and got an Advanced Management Program degree from Harvard Business School, US in 1975. As advised by J.R.D Tata, Ratan turned down the job offer from IBM to join the family business.

5. An Amazing Career Story

In December 1962, Ratan joined the Tata Group. He joined at Jamshedpur to work at the Tata Steel. He worked as a blue-collar employee till 1971 and was promoted as the Director-In-Charge at the National Radio & Electronics Company Limited. The company was going through a rough financial phase at that time. Ratan suggested Nelco should invest in developing high technology products other than consumer electronics. J.R.D was initially reluctant to do so, due to the financial performance of Nelco, but he still followed Ratan's suggestions and the company eventually recovered all its damages.

4. And Soon He Went On To Become The Chairman of Tata Industries

Ratan Tata took over as Chairman of Tata Industries in 1981. Here, he was responsible for promoting new ventures in high-technology businesses. Later in 1991, he took over as the group

Chairman from J.R.D Tata. It was then that he pushed out the old guard and ushered in young managers. Ever since then, Ratan has been instrumental in reshaping the fortune of the Tata Group.

It is only because of his vision and sincere effort that today Tata Group holds the largest market capitalization than any other business house in the Indian Stock Market.

3. One After Another Successful Projects; A Stellar Leader

Under the leadership of Ratan Tata, the Tata Group successfully acquired Jaguar, Corus, Land Rover and Tetly. His guidance and unmatched leadership changed the company status from being a local company to an international business name.

Tata motor's then came up with the brain child of Tata Motors and named it 'Tata Indica'. However, Ratan Tata gained wide popularity in 1998, when he first introduced the world's cheapest car- "Tata Nano". Also known as the "People's Car", Tata Nano could be bought for 1 lakh rupees.

2. Foreign Affiliations of Ratan Tata

The foreign affiliations of Ratan Tata include membership of the international advisory boards of the Mitsubishi Corporation, Booz Allen Hamilton, the American International Group and JP Morgan Chase. He is also the member of the board of trustees of RAND Corporation, University of Southern California and Cornell University.

In addition, Ratan Tata is also serving as the board member of Republic of South Africa's International Investment Council and Asia-Pacific advisory committee member for the New York Stock Exchange.

1. Achievement Awards Earned By Ratan Tata

The legendry business magnate, Ratan Navel Tata, has bagged countless awards during his entrepreneurial journey. Amongst the most important national awards he won were 'Padma Bhushan' in 2000 and 'Padma Vibhushan' in 2008.

Ratan Tata was also honored in Economic Education as the 26th Robert S. Hatfield Fellow. This is the most prestigious and highest award given by Cornell University. Even London School of Economics awarded him with an honorary doctorate.

Source: <http://topyaps.com/n-interesting-facts-about-ratan-tata>

SHORT STORIES**A SIMPLE GESTURE OF KINDNESS**

Mark was walking home from school one day when he noticed that the boy ahead of him had tripped and dropped all the books he was carrying, along with two sweaters, a baseball bat, a glove and a small tape recorder.

Mark knelt down and helped the boy pick up the scattered articles. Since they were going the same way, he helped to carry part of the burden. As they walked, Mark discovered the boy's name was Bill, that he loved video games, baseball and history. He was having a lot of trouble with his other subjects and that he had just broken up with his girlfriend.

Mark went home after dropping Bill at his house. They continued to see each other around school, had lunch together once or twice, and then both graduated from junior high school. They ended up in the same high school, where they had brief contacts over the years. Finally the long-awaited senior year came.

Three weeks before graduation, Bill asked Mark if they could talk.

Bill reminded him of the day years ago when they had first met. "Do you ever wonder why I was carrying so many things home that day?" asked Bill. "You see, I cleaned out my locker because I didn't want to leave a mess for anyone else. I had stored away some of my mother's sleeping pills and I was going home to commit suicide.

But after we spent some time together talking and laughing, I realized that if I had killed myself, I would have missed that time and so many others that might follow. So you see, Mark, when you picked up my books that day, that simple gesture, you did a lot more. You saved my life."

ARE YOU WILLING TO LEARN?

Once, a long time ago, there was a wise Zen master. People from far and near would seek his counsel and ask for his wisdom. Many would come and ask him to teach them, enlighten them in the way of Zen. He seldom turned any away.

One day an important man, a man used to command and obedience came to visit the master. "I have come today to ask you to teach me about Zen. Open my mind to enlightenment." The tone of the important man's voice was one used to getting his own way.

The Zen master smiled and said that they should discuss the matter over a cup of tea. When the tea was served the master poured his visitor a cup. He poured and he poured and the tea rose to the rim and began to spill over the table and finally onto the robes of the wealthy man. Finally the visitor shouted, "Enough. You are spilling the tea all over. Can't you see the cup is full?"

The master stopped pouring and smiled at his guest. "You are like this tea cup, so full that nothing more can be added. Come back to me when the cup is empty. Come back to me with an empty mind."

So are you ready to learn? Is your cup empty or full?