

Case Studies

Case Study # 1

It's been one of the best terms you can remember! Your students have been engaged, articulate, and fun. This evening's classroom synergy was particularly stimulating, and even though class is over several students are milling around discussing one of the more difficult human rights theories examined in tonight's class. As you and the students are walking out to your cars following class, and as students split up to go to their cars, one of your favorite students follows you to your car to continue to talk about the theories. The conversation is informal, relaxed, with just a hint of innocent titillation. You are attracted to this student—the student's overall energy, intelligence, and the way the student respectfully challenges you in class. As the two of you laugh and discuss the theories, you realize that you have a copy of an unpublished article written about various theories by a philosophy scholar and mention it to your student who asks if he can borrow the article. You live only a few blocks from the college and the article is in your home office.

Discuss these variables:

1. You invite the student over to your house to retrieve the manuscript. **Or**, you invite the student to meet you at Starbucks up the street in 10 minutes after you retrieve the article.
2. If you are at your house, you offer a glass of wine. **Or**, you offer coffee.
3. Discuss how the following variables would impact your decision.
 - a. You and the student are the opposite sex.
 - b. You are both heterosexual
 - c. One of you is heterosexual
 - d. You are both homosexual
 - e. You and the student are the same sex.
 - f. You are both heterosexual
 - g. One of you is heterosexual
 - h. You are both homosexual
4. What would be your concern in meeting at your house? Starbucks? Offering coffee compared to wine?
5. Assuming that you, the professor, did either of the two options – home or Starbucks - How should this issue be addressed by the university, if at all?

Case Study #3

A female Ph.D. student was at a male classmate's home for dinner. They had been close friends throughout the first two years of their program. There had been nothing sexual between them. When the female student was ready to leave and go home, her "friend" sexually assaulted her. She complains to the associate program director of her doctoral program. The director turns the complaint over to the Title IX department. One of the Title IX officers investigates and finds that the male student had sexually assaulted his female classmate. The sanctions given to him, if he chose to not have a hearing, were to not have any contact with the victim.

1. What does "no contact mean"?
2. What do you think of this sanction?
3. How could the university have created a safe environment for the victim based on Title IX?
4. The victim requested several sanctions for her to feel safe, what would you request?

5. The rapist taught night classes to undergraduate students despite him having been found to have assaulted his classmate – what are the ramifications of that decision by the university?
6. If you were the Title IX Coordinator, what sanctions would you have implemented?
7. How should sexual assault be addressed on campus from a systemic perspective?

Case Study #3

It is the final debate for your debate class. Everyone is on edge. Students were to take the approach in the debate that is least like their personal belief. And what do you see – a female student with “inappropriate” clothing.

Discuss these variables:

1. What is “inappropriate” clothing?
2. Is it in “the eye of the beholder” and if so, what variables influence the “eye?”
3. Should you address it?
4. If so, how should you do so?
5. If not, who should address it?
6. If other students are offended by their classmate’s dress, is it sexual harassment? – why or why not?
7. What difference, if any, would it make if you are a male or female instructor? If you believe it would make a difference in addressing the female student’s attire, how come?
8. How should you, as the District superintendent, address this issue – how should you think about it from a systems/holistic perspective?
9. Do you have a dress code in your district? If so, what parameters are established regarding the dress code? Does your policy avoid body shaming girls?

Case Study #4

Students were psyched for the pep fest. They were all seated in the bleachers in the gym, and the music began – it was Prince’s song “I’m a Sex Shooter”. A group of 8 high school girls entered the gym from the two doors leading into the gym, dressed in trench coats black nylons and heels, and lip-synching to the music as they danced and gyrated in tune with the beat. About half way through the song, the girls threw off their trench coats displaying their attire – teddies with their black nylons held up by garter belts. The student audience went nuts – whooping and hollering. Faculty were also in the gym.

1. What action should the faculty have taken?
2. While some students – especially the boys – loved the display, there were other students who did not – what feelings would they be experiencing?
3. Would this be a violation of your harassment or code of conduct policy? Why or why not?
4. Could this behavior be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive to constitute sexual harassment? Why or why not?
5. What follow up action should the school take, if any?
6. What repercussions, if any, should faculty that were present for the pep fest receive? Why or why not?

7. How can you, as the school administrator, address this issue from a systems/holistic approach?

Case Study #5

Three boys between the ages of 8 and 10 pulled off the pants of a first-grade girl, inserted a stick into her vagina, and told her that they would “kill her pussy.” They made her 8-year-old brother watch the assault. The boys told the girl that if she told anyone what they did to her, they would cut off her hands and kill her dog. The girl’s mother reported the assault to the principal.

1. You are the principal – describe what you should do?
2. Is this one event so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive to constitute illegal sexual harassment?
3. What should be the role of the Title IX Coordinator, if any?
4. How can you, as principal, address this misconduct from a systems perspective

A Systems Approach to School Change

A system-wide culture change requires a strategic, painstaking, and diligent effort. Merely creating and disseminating a policy and facilitating training will not change a culture. It requires a group of committed and loyal stakeholders to ask pivotal questions about the change initiative. Stakeholders include parents, students, teachers, administrators, other school staff including psychologists, social workers, bus drivers, nurses, school board members, as well as pertinent community agencies, community members, and various ethnic groups. They need to come together to ask pivotal questions about the change initiative: ⁱ

1. Do we have a shared mindset and if so, is it the “right” one?
2. To what extent does the district have the required knowledge, skills and abilities to create a respectful, discriminatory free learning environment for our students?
3. What needs to be designed, developed, and implemented to ensure that there are the right processes, incentives, rewards, and measurements of our outcomes to demonstrate success?
4. Do we have the ability to do this, and if not, what’s needed?
5. Does the commitment exist within the district (financial, human resources, time, etc.) to reach the desired and measureable outcome/goal?
6. Who else needs to be involved in this change strategy?
7. What is required to accomplish our goal?
8. How will we measure our success?
9. How will our success be maintained?
10. What needs to occur to ensure that the change is approached as an integrated, comprehensive effort rather than fragmented “programs” or “training?”

11. Does the district have the leadership required for this effort?

This last question is key. A major change effort requires strong leadership.

- Does your district have what it takes in the school board, superintendent, and other leadership roles for a successful change management initiative addressing harassment and bullying?
- Will district leaders both “own” the process and champion it as well?
- Are leaders willing to allocate the essential resources, such as human and financial, to promote a successful outcome?
- Are faculty, staff, students, parents and community groups willing to invest what is required to reach the goal of changing the school culture to one of respect, integrity, safety, and non-harassment and discrimination?
- Do the stakeholders believe in the mission of the change initiative and understand its importance?
- Is there passion for its success to the degree that they will partner for a positive outcome?

When the initial discussions of a change initiative begin, the answers to the above questions are often answered in the affirmative. Stakeholders are energized, excited, and express their commitment, and then--there it sits. People get busy with their own personal and professional lives, lack the time, resources, and knowledge of how to begin or complete the process which results in a weak or absent follow through.

While there are several ways to address the change management process, a frequently used strategic planning model includes the following steps:ⁱⁱ

Step 1 – Define the current school culture--based on an assessment of the district’s environment

Step 2 – Define the desired school culture—based on what you want the school learning environment to be

Step 3 – Identify the specific gaps between the current culture and the desired culture

Step 4 – Identify the driving forces (pushing for success, such as Title IX, respectful learning environment) and restraining forces (that create barriers, such as financial resources) that will impact a successful outcome

Step 5 – Design and develop an action plan with measureable goals and objectives, to address the gaps between the district’s current and desired cultures, including how to increase the driving forces and diminish the restraining forces

Step 6 – Implement the plan

Step 7 – Monitor the plan’s effectiveness

Step 8 – Make necessary changes along the way

Step 9 – Evaluate/measure the plan’s effectiveness

Even with strong leadership and commitment from stakeholders, change initiatives may fail for any number of reasons. By examining obstacles to change, the district can minimize or prevent the impact of the predictable and unpredictable reasons for failure. Many reasons exist as to why changes don’t produce change:ⁱⁱⁱ

1. The change is not tied to a strategy
2. It is more of a quick fix or a program rather than a long-term strategy
3. No long-term perspective is considered
4. Political realities are not planned for and might undermine the change
5. Grandiose expectations sabotage simple successes
6. Inflexible change designs create roadblocks

7. Lack of leadership knowledge and skill around change
8. Lack of measurable, tangible results
9. Fear of the unknown
10. Inability to mobilize commitment to sustain change

According to OCR, school officials must think broader than just the discipline of perpetrators of harassment. They need to examine and implement the necessary steps required to eliminate the hostile environment which creates civil rights violations when students are sexually harassed. The OCR's *Dear Colleague* letter stated that "the unique effects of discriminatory harassment may demand a different response than would other types of bullying." Considering OCR's requirement and the roadblocks to successful change listed above, the following, though not exhaustive, are recommendations for the district's anti-harassment and anti-bullying strategy. Some of these actions may involve confidential information protected by laws that prevent your active involvement. Most all the steps will require administrative leadership, and, of course, the school district will have the final say as to what they are willing to implement, and the degree of your involvement:

ⁱ Dave Ulrich, *Human Resource Champions: The Next Agenda for Adding Value and Delivering Results*. 1997. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.