

Dealing with Challenges in the Classroom

Power in Academic Spaces

- Ways of knowing & modes of expression that are automatically privileged in academic spaces/ those that are marginalized.
- Your power as an instructor: how will you maintain or cede that power?
- Power between instructors and students, students and students, TAs and faculty supervisor, etc.

Instructor Roles/Identity/Power

- How our own identities impact our teaching differently: how things like perceived race/ethnicity, gender, height, accent, nationality, age, etc. can contribute to the ways in which Graduate Instructors are treated by students and others.

Challenges/Conflicts

- What challenges or conflicts do you expect to face in and outside the classroom?
- How do you hope to respond/ what can you do preemptively to lay the groundwork?
- Potential classroom conflicts include: students disagreeing with one another; students disagreeing with TA; diverse academic and cultural backgrounds; uncomfortable or contentious topics; getting students to work as a group or participate

How to Hold Opinions That Might Be Different

- How to work with students who are resistant or hesitant to share their perspectives
- Deconstructing the idea some students may have that their grade is tied to espousing a certain viewpoint

Conflating Comfort with Safety

- Being stretched outside one's comfort zone in the classroom is not the same as being unsafe.
- “We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist.”- @SonofBaldwin

Saf(er) Spaces

-What it means to create a safer space: shared responsibility; taking part in a training; continued self-education; thinking carefully about what control you have over a space; never finished...

Strategies for Mitigating Conflict/ Creating the Space you Want

-Establishing class ground rules: can be agreed upon democratically

-Sharing responsibility with students for creating and holding the space. (Can apply to any section/lab setting, not just discussion-based ones.)

Strategies for When Students Disagree with One Another

-Refer back to classroom guidelines

-Mediate discussion intentionally: ask for concrete examples and/or data to support an argument; ask the class to think of counter examples; emphasize the logic or ideology underlying a viewpoint

-Provide students with concrete examples rather than just saying they are wrong

Strategies for Getting Students to Participate

-Think/Pair/Share; Asking for volunteers to come up to the board to solve a problem or demonstrate a technique; Fish Bowl; “Panel of Experts”

How Will Your Working Conditions Shape Your Experiences in the Classroom?

-Syracuse Graduate Employees United- <https://www.syracusegradsunitied.org>

Resources:

Trainings and Workshops

- SU Safer Spaces training interest information – <http://lgbt.syr.edu/trainings/safer-people-safer-spaces.html>
- SU Undocu Ally training interest form- https://syracuseuniversity.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_djnXAyQCSgaujyd

Reading Material

- Hooks, Bell. 1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- Lisa Delpit. 2006. *Other People’s Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. New York: The New Press.

Social Media Accounts, Podcasts & Blogs

- Son of Baldwin, Twitter: (@SonofBaldwin)
- Teaching while White (Blog and Podcast) <https://teachingwhilewhite.org>
- Cult of Pedagogy (Blog, Podcast and Videos) <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com>