

ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Inclusive Pedagogy Seminar

Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute

DISCUSSION

Code of Conduct

A basic technique that asks students to establish their own expectations for classroom behavior.

Develop Rules

- Divide the larger group into smaller sub-groups of three to five individuals.
- Ask them to make a short list of desirable and understandable classroom behaviors. Give the groups about five minutes to make their lists.
- Bring everyone back together, and then invite the group to share their lists.

Achieve Consensus

- Combine similar items to create a list in each category that the class can agree on. Save these and display or refer to them regularly throughout the semester.

Determine Sanctions

- Using a similar process, have the class develop sanctions for violations of the rules. Be prepared to negotiate on this; they may recommend harsher penalties than you want to enforce!

From *Start Talking*, p.12

Silence

A technique that encourages reflection and allows discussion participants to plan their responses.

Do

- Allow silence to exist without filling it yourself or panicking.
- Introduce a minute of silence now and then during lectures or discussion to allow everyone—yourself included—to mull things over and plan their next response.

Don't

- Answer your own questions too quickly.
- Mistake silence for “dead air” or disengagement. Discussions are not performances, and the most talkative are not the only ones with ideas.
- Assume that those who speak more are learning more.

From *Start Talking*, p. 26

Critical Incident Questionnaire

A simple evaluation tool to find out what and how students are learning.

At the end of the day (or week, or unit, or other appropriate time period), set aside 10 minutes for the group to respond in writing to a few specific questions:

- At what moment were you most engaged as a learner?
- At what moment were you most distanced as a learner?
- What action that anyone in the room took did you find most affirming or helpful?
- What action that anyone in the room took did you find most puzzling or confusing?
- What surprised you most?

Keep all responses anonymous. Collect them at the end of the period. Read and analyze the responses, and compile them according to similar themes and concerns. Report back to the group at the next meeting. Allow time for comments and discussion.

From *Start Talking*, p. 33

The Five-Minute Rule

A way of taking an invisible or marginalized perspective and entertaining it respectfully for a short period of time.

Rule

Anyone who feels that a particular point of view is not being taken seriously has a right to point this out and call for this exercise to be used.

Discussion

The group then agrees to take five minutes to consider the merits of the perspective, refrain from criticizing it, and make every effort to believe it. Only those who can speak in support of it are allowed to speak, using the questions below as prompts. All critics must remain silent.

Questions and prompts

- What's interesting or helpful about this view?
- What are some intriguing features that others might not have noticed?
- What would be different if you believed this view, if you accepted it as true?
- In what sense and under what conditions might this idea be true?

From *Start Talking*, 109

ASSIGNMENTS

Five Ways to Look at It

A series of assignments that explore a single problem from five different rhetorical stances.

Personal Expression

Write a journal entry about it, knowing it will be read, but giving free vent to personal and emotional response.

Narrative (Informative)

Construct a chronological narrative describing the problem, with relevant background information and circumstances.

Argument (Persuasive)

Construct an argument that is likely to gain some measures of acceptance by the other party.

Literary

Write a poem about the situation.

Reflective

Write a short essay reflecting on the project and where your voice is.

From *Start Talking*, p. 50

Classroom Debate

A highly structured way to engage students in research and oral argument.

Choose a format: objective rules that will keep the debate balanced and allow both sides equal chance to make their case.

Construct a proposition: a declarative sentence that is genuinely controversial, clear, balanced, and challenging in some way to the status quo.

Prepare your students: with understanding of the purpose of the debate (not to win but to illuminate), the type of research you expect (substantive and utilizing multiple sources), and your grading policy (quality of research, not persuasion of audience).

Hold the debate: in class, by the rules, allowing time for class discussion afterwards.

(See Appendix for detailed assignment examples, variations on the assignment, and reflections on using it in the college classroom.)

From *Start Talking*, pp. 53 - 63

Modular Debate

A form of debate that demonstrates multiple perspectives (rather than just two) and engages an entire classroom (rather than only a few students at a time).

- Identify the issue and frame the proposition.
- Identify various constituencies who might hold different positions on the proposition.
- Assign students to a constituency (or let them self-select) and ask them to identify and/or research the positions of that group.

- Conduct the debate, allowing equal time for each constituency group to present its views.

From *Start Talking*, p. 243

Radio Program: Justice Talking Format

The Justice Talking broadcast format can be adopted for use in small group collaborations and full class projects, with and without actual recording technology.

The first segment sets up the issue, usually with an interview that outlines why it is important, how it has been or is being treated in the policy arena, and perhaps some voices of those affected.

The middle segments include a structured debate between two or more competing points of view.

The last segment brings in additional voices and explores the topic from other viewpoints not covered by the debate.

(See Appendix for detailed assignment examples, variations on the assignment, and reflections on using it in the college classroom.)

From *Start Talking*, pp. 64 - 73

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Identity Groups

A simple exercise to get everyone thinking together about their cultural, class, ethnic, religious, gender, and other identities.

Before class: prepare a list of potential identity groups. Include large, broad groups as well as small, distinctive groups.

Call out the groups: Invite members to stand, and invite everyone to notice who is in the group and who is not.

Think about the groups: Have participants pair off and discuss what's great and what's hard about being in their particular groups, and what they want others never to do, say, or think about their group again.

Open discussion: Bring the group back together, and invite people to share.

From *Start Talking*, p. 80

Using a Book to explore Cultural Difference

Suggested techniques to help students consider issues represented in a book.

Modified debate

Have students pick a perspective from the book and debate a question from the point of view of that character or perspective.

Role-playing

Cast students as characters in the book and have them play out a key scenario. Repeat the scene, changing roles and practicing alternate endings.

Small Group Discussion

Introduce the concept of privilege. Break students into groups and ask them to identify instances of privilege depicted in the book. Reconvene the class and list the events on the board as they correspond to social locations of race, class, gender, and nationality.

Online Discussion Board

Post your own discussion questions or assign students to post them on different weeks. Require some kind of response.

From *Start Talking*, p. 86

Hatful of Quotes

A technique for introducing provocative ideas from an outside source.

Before class:

- Select five or six passages from a text.
- Transfer them to small slips of paper, with each quote appearing on at least two slips of paper.

In class:

- Put the quotes in a hat (or other suitable container).
- Ask the students to draw a slip from the hat.
- Give them several minutes to think about the quote they drew.
- Then ask everyone to read his or her quote aloud and comment on it to the group.

From *Start Talking*, p. 104

Cocktail Party

A discussion format that encourages participants to interact with each other as if in a salon or other social setting. Try this in the morning by creating a coffee shop setting if you prefer.

Treat it as a party: Arrange the room as you would for a party. Create lots of open spaces and place chairs in conversational grouping of three to four students. Set up one or two tables with an array of nonalcoholic drinks, finger foods, or hors d'oeuvres, and appropriate napkins, plates, and glasses.

Expect your guests to talk about serious things: Instruct your guests to talk about the topics or issues you want them to explore. Encourage them to mingle often and to engage with more than one group.

Move through the room as host or hostess, modeling the very conversations you are encouraging and introducing new topics or questions wherever appropriate.

From *Start Talking*, p. 133

Panel Discussion and Dialogue

A technique for presenting multiple viewpoints of expert panelists before opening a conversation to a larger audience.

Logistics

Recruit panelists with different experiences and areas of expertise. Plan for alternates. Don't underestimate how much time it can take to organize.

Panel Discussion

Use panelists to frame the discussion. Limit the number of panelists to three or four, and keep the initial presentations short, about five to ten minutes.

Facilitated Dialogue

After the panelists have spoken, open the dialogue to others in the room.

From *Start Talking*, p. 140

Reframing the Discussion

This technique uses the notion of reframing to uncover hidden historical, social, and political dimensions and to articulate the discursive effect of a position.

Step one: Identify the discourses informing the particular text.

- What discourse or discourse community does this view come from?
- In what social or political structures is this view most at home?
- How does this discourse relate to different power structures that believers might find themselves in? What does holding and voicing this opinion do to shape individuals and their different roles or relationships?

Step two: Identify the cultural work it is trying to accomplish.

- What kind of cultural work is this view doing or attempting to do? Is it getting someone to believe in something, act in a specific way, or change his or her mind about something?
- Who loses? Who gains? Which groups benefit and which are penalized?
- What ideas gain traction because of this perspective, and which are minimized?
- What perspectives are mobilized if this view becomes accepted, and which are constrained, limited, or eliminated?

From *Start Talking*, p. 154