Ground Rules

One of our strongest convictions about discussion is that students learn to speak in critical and democratic ways by watching people in positions of power and authority model these processes in their own lives.

Brookfield and Preskill

Contents

FACULTY INTENSIVE
Day One

It's not easy to get started on any new venture; you have to overcome inertia, build new habits and relationships, disrupt comfortable positions, and ignore the easy escape routes. You also have to know that the first time you try something new, at least some small part of your efforts may fail. You have to risk that, plan for it as best you can, and then just start.

We have presented our faculty intensive three times now, and each time we have organized Day One a little differently. We typically start with an introduction by our facilitator Libby Roderick and a few exercises to get people talking. We develop our own discussion rules and codes of conduct for the week. UAA philosophy professor and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences James Liszka presents a brief history of academic freedom and leads a discussion of several recent cases that put our evolving rights and responsibilities to the test. Psychology professor Claudia Lampman discusses her study of contrapower harassment on UAA's Anchorage campus. UAA Dean of Students Bruce Schultz discusses safety issues and outlines a number of effective responses to disruptive students. Interspersed with these more formal presentations, we've told each other stories of past confrontations, and we've role-played alternate endings. We've tried to identify the difficult dialogues within our own group.

Sample Agenda

- Introduction and Overview
- Exercise: Code of Conduct
- Presentation: Academic Freedom
- Discussion: Case Studies
- Presentation: Contrapower Harassment
- Exercise: Tales from the Trenches
- Presentation: Recognizing and Handling Disruptive Students
- Reflection: Critical Incident Questionnaire

Whatever the precise order of exercises and presentations, we've tried always to keep certain goals in mind. We want to start right away building trust and a sense of shared purpose within the group. We introduce a range of approaches to ensure that participants of all learning styles will be as engaged as possible. We try to defuse any fears and tensions in the room by allowing people to tell their stories, critique the day's activities, and share their individual experiences and goals with each other.

These are the ground rules of our project: participation, engagement, collaboration, balancing safety and risk. And this is our shared purpose: understanding and exercising our academic freedom in the interests of strengthening our teaching and raising the bar on civil discourse in our classrooms, campuses, and communities.

None of this is easy, of course, and none of what we do is complete. But you have to start somewhere.

TALES FROM THE TRENCHES

We like to start our intensive by giving our faculty participants a chance to share some of their most difficult classroom experiences. We ask them to pair off and spend a couple of minutes telling each other about a disruptive student, a tough experience, or a topic that they have found especially difficult to talk about in class. One person agrees to go first, and after a few minutes we ask them to switch. After both have had a chance to speak, the group comes back together, and each pair is invited to share at least one of their stories with the full group.

We chose this exercise because we know these experiences are out there. When we ask applicants why they want to be part of this project, many respond with stories of things that have happened to them, episodes that upset them, moments they wish they would have handled differently. Some have experienced threatening incidents as well and, as a result, are reluctant to approach certain topics in their classrooms. "You can't really hold a difficult dialogue if you're afraid, or if you're avoiding the subject because of past experiences," says Libby Roderick, our facilitator. "So we thought we'd better take care of this first."

We think it is helpful for people to learn that they are not alone: what has happened to them has happened to others as well. We also want to break down the assumption that we always have to look good in front of our peers. Peer review is so ingrained in academic life that it can interfere with our ability to admit failures and learn together from our mistakes. Finally, we want to acknowledge and release some of the tension in the room. People need to be heard before they can take in new information. Basically, this technique allows us to offload some of our bad histories so we can start creating new history—together.

Tales from the Trenches

This exercise gives everyone a chance to participate without forcing anyone to speak to the group at large.

First telling: dyads (10 minutes)

- Break the full group up into dyads (groups of two).
- Take five minutes for each person to tell the other a story or share a concern. At the end of five minutes, ask the speakers to switch.

Second telling: full group (30 minutes)

- Bring the group back together and invite each pair to tell one of their stories to the larger group.
- After all pairs have told a story (or passed), open the floor for comments from everyone.

Tip: This technique works best if all participants agree to confidentiality. When they leave the room, they are free to tell their own tales again, but not to reveal each other's stories without explicit permission.

Adapted from Brookfield and Preskill, Discussion as a Way of Teaching

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

While most university professors are familiar with academic freedom in its broadest sense, many are not well informed about the origin and scope of the concept and may not realize how much gray area it encompasses. This essay introduces academic freedom as a process of evolving rights and responsibilities, with a deep history and an uncertain future, in which what we do each day in our classrooms matters.

Academic Freedom: A Basic Guide

Dr. James Liszka
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Philosophy
University of Alaska Anchorage

A Brief History of Academic Freedom

The idea of academic freedom in America actually had its beginnings in nineteenth century German universities, which were considered to be some of the best in the world at that time. The German concept was based on two notions: *Lehrfreiheit*, the freedom to teach; and *Lernfreiheit*, the freedom to learn. The latter referred to the right of students to choose a course of study and electives, while the former formed the heart of what we consider academic freedom today. *Lehrfreiheit* meant that professors were free to pursue the study of their expertise with no interference from the state. There were self-imposed restrictions on extramural activities, particularly in areas outside of a professor's expertise. But otherwise, the concept was widely recognized and well protected by governmental institutions.

The freedom to teach and learn had powerful positive effects on the German universities. The lack of political constraints led to faster and more innovative research development in a number of fields, and the practice of hiring and retaining faculty for their research competence rather than political conformity or favoritism led to a more competent, expert faculty. Both outcomes were key to the success of the German universities. Indeed, the original justification for academic freedom was the claim that it led to better, more innovative research and scholarship.

Most American universities of the time were sectarian, having been founded on a religious basis. They were typically controlled by trustees with an avowed interest in ensuring that the creed and vision of their religious sect was realized in the mission of its university. Often this became an impediment to research, particularly in the sciences. Many American professors had received their degrees from German universities and seen the results of the German freedoms in action. They began to wish for similar conditions in their own institutions.

Change

An impetus to change was Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. It was introduced to the world with the publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859, and it gained progressively larger numbers of adherents among scientists in the next few decades. At the same time, it became a source of conflict between the mission and vision of sectarian universities and the yearning for academic freedom of scientists. In those early years, many professors and scientists were dismissed from their positions for teaching or advocating the theory of evolution. Even by 1880, many college presidents denounced the theory.

However, as the result of the well-publicized struggles of these professors (and others, similarly dismissed for advocating theories or ideas contrary to their institution's ideology), the professoriate began to organize to advocate for and defend the notion of academic freedom. In 1915, two philosophers, Arthur Lovejoy (of Johns Hopkins University) and John Dewey (of Columbia University), formed the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), with the defense of academic freedom at the forefront of its mission. Especially through the efforts of Lovejoy—who traveled around the country gathering cases—the AAUP became a strong advocate and protector of academic freedom.

> The original justification for academic freedom was the claim that it led to better, more innovative research and scholarship.

The AAUP made its first and strongly definitive statement on academic freedom in 1915, with a later revision in 1940. Both versions expressed three basic principles pertaining to the intellectual life of the professoriate, outlining both freedoms and limitations:

● Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.

● Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter that has no relation to their subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment.

● College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

Freedom to Teach/Freedom to Learn ideas developed in German Universities.		Scientific community embraces evolution; university presidents still decry it.		American Association of University Professors issues Statement on Academic Freedom.	
1800	**1859**	**1880**	**1900-1919**	**1915**	
	Prussian Constitution declares "science and its teaching shall be free."		Incongruity between academic and legal notions		

Legal History

Although the idea of academic freedom was gaining ground in academic settings by the beginning of the twentieth century, it was not yet an accepted legal notion. In fact, at the time of AAUP's 1915 Statement on Academic Freedom, the Supreme Court had a rather weak interpretation of the First Amendment itself, upon which the legal notion of academic freedom would eventually be based. The courts were slow to take up the idea, and many academicians are surprised to discover that the first mention of academic freedom in the legal system was not made until the 1950s.

Legal scholars recognize four phases of the development of academic freedom as a legal concept. The first, roughly up to 1919, was dominated by the incongruity between the academic and legal notions. The Supreme Court at that time regarded professors solely as employees of the institution, and, because of the agency relation involved, considered it permissible for the employer to restrict the speech of the employee. This was so even up until 1929 in the famous Scopes trial, concerning a high school biology teacher who taught evolution in the classroom.

In the second phase, from 1919 to 1950, the higher courts developed a broader interpretation of the First Amendment that paved the way for the recognition of academic freedom. In the third phase, from 1950-1970, we see the first legal establishment of the notion of academic freedom, prompted in part by issues raised during the McCarthy era. In the most famous case of this period (*Sweezy v. New Hampshire,*1968), Justice Felix Frankfurter established a precedent by articulating four essential freedoms a university must be allowed to determine for itself on academic grounds: who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to study.

The fourth phase, from 1970 to today, involves a clarification of the institutional, instructional, and student interests in academic freedom. Most of the recent court cases focus on whether academic freedom resides primarily with the institution or with the faculty member, and attempts to define the limits of speech in the classroom, particularly in terms of hostile, racially charged, and sexually explicit language.

> "A university ceases to be true to its own nature if it becomes the tool of Church or State or any sectional interest. A university is characterized by the spirit of free inquiry, its ideal being the ideal of Socrates — to follow the argument where it leads. It is the business of a university to provide that atmosphere which is most conducive to speculation, experiment, and creation. It is an atmosphere in which there prevail the four essential freedoms of a university to determine for itself on academic grounds: who may teach; what may be taught; how it shall be taught; and who may be admitted to study."
>
> Justice Felix Frankfurter
> *Sweezy v. New Hampshire* (1968)

Scopes Monkey Trial

Courts clarify institutional, instructional, and student interests in academic freedom.

Morse v. Frederick

| 1929 | 1919-1950 | 1950-1970 | 1968 | 2007 |

Courts develop broader interpretation of First Amendment.

Sweezy v. New Hampshire

Academic Freedom Today: General Guidelines

There is still ambiguity concerning several issues in academic freedom, and the courts continue to interpret and clarify the precedents of the past. Because of the ongoing nature of all this, many faculty and administrators are unclear about the rights and limits of academic speech in the university setting.

1. What is protected under academic freedom?

As guidelines, the following are considered to be protected under academic freedom, given current legal interpretations:

● **The freedom to pursue inquiry and publish its results**. This is one of the original and most important reasons for academic freedom. The independence of the scholar and the ability of the university to protect the scholar from the pressures of public opinion or legislative power are key duties of the university.

● **The freedom to discuss or read materials in the classroom**, although the AAUP cautions against the introduction of controversial material that has no relevance to the subject matter.

● **The freedom to refuse to sign loyalty oaths** as a condition of employment.

● **Student speech,** subject to the same constraints as faculty classroom speech given below.

2. What is not protected under academic freedom?

Based on a body of legal cases, the following have not been protected in the courts under the purview of academic freedom claims:

● **Sexual harassment.**

● **Speech, forums, performances, or art on campus** that can be shown to be illegal, obscene, libelous, slanderous, or are a clear and present danger, or can be shown to be disruptive to the operations of the classroom or university. The exhibition of controversial or offensive art may be restricted by administration as to time, place, and manner of exhibition.

● **Racial slurs, excessively obscene, vulgar, or profane language in the classroom**, explicit sexual materials, and other forms of language that create a hostile learning environment for students, unless they are used as examples, or for the purposes of study, or are relevant to the subject of the class.

● **Speech or dissemination of materials with the university imprimatur** by employees of the university community who are not authorized to speak or disseminate information on behalf of the university. Only designated officers of the university may speak on behalf of the university or distribute or disseminate materials that carry the imprimatur of the university.

3. Where is academic freedom protected?

● **The classroom and the university** are the primary places of academic freedom; print and publications are included as well.

● **Extramural settings and matters of public concern**, as long as faculty members indicate that they are not speaking for the institution. The AAUP emphasizes that such speech should be accurate, restrained, and respectful.

4. Who is protected?

This is less clear than answers to the other questions. Although most faculty are under the impression that it is faculty members alone who are the central focus in academic freedom issues, recent court cases have suggested that where there are conflicts between faculty and institutions on this issue, the locus of academic freedom is not always with the faculty member; in many cases it lies with the institution. Some recent cases (in particular *Lovelace v. Southeastern Massachusetts University*) have suggested that matters such as grading policy and even course content can be subject to policy decision by university administrators. Students have also been the focus as well. *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (1969) showed that teachers or administrators cannot discipline students through suspension, grades, or otherwise for non-disruptive classroom expression of political views.

Case Studies for Discussion

A good way to introduce the complexity and nuance of academic freedom is to examine a few controversial cases. Included here are three actual cases, followed by the results of either legal review or expert opinion. Read the first half of the story and then stop. How do you think the story should end?

CASE STUDY
Obscene Language in the Classroom

John Bonnell is an English instructor at a community college where he has taught since 1967. In his lectures, he liberally uses the words "shit," "fuck," "cunt," "ass" and "pussy." Commenting on stories that contain romantic scenes, he talks about his own personal sexual experiences. Commenting on news events, he uses the phrases "butt-fucking" and "blow-job," and makes other coarse references such as "tits on a nun are as useful as balls on a priest." Several women in the classroom are offended and complain to the dean in writing, saying that Bonnell's use of such language is demeaning and creates a hostile learning environment.

Stop. Before reading any further, what do you think?
Should the dean defend John Bonnell's speech as protected under the framework of academic freedom?

What Actually Happened

The dean reprimanded Bonnell, telling him he was prohibited from using vulgar language in the classroom. Bonnell sued. The case, *Bonnell v. Lorenzo* (2001), eventually reached the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, which held that, while Bonnell had the right to use obscene words, he did not have a constitutional right to use them in a classroom setting where they are not germane to the subject matter and are in contravention to the college's sexual harassment policy.

> *"Although we do not wish to chill speech in the classroom setting, especially in the unique milieu of a college or university where debate and the clash of viewpoints are encouraged — if not necessary — to spur intellectual growth, it has long been held that despite the sanctity of the First Amendment, speech that is vulgar or profane is not entitled to absolute constitutional protection."*

In a different case, *Hardy v. Jefferson Community College* (2001), the same court ruled in favor of an instructor who used similarly vulgar speech but with a different intent. The course was entitled "Introduction to Interpersonal Communication" and the instructor, Hardy, employed several racist and sexist epithets. Despite student complaints, the court decided that Hardy's language usage was in the context of a "discussion and analysis of words that have historically served the interests of the dominant culture in which they arise."

Conclusion: Both Bonnell and Hardy used objectionable language in their respective class-rooms; the distinction, however, lies in the degree to which the language was germane to the subject matter.

CASE STUDY
Overt Political Viewpoints

This course was offered at the University of California, Berkeley under English R1A, designed to provide undergraduates with enhanced skills in reading and writing. The original course description, published in the course schedule, was as follows:

> ***The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance****. Since the inception of the Intifada in September of 2000, Palestinians have been fighting for their right to exist. The brutal Israeli military occupation of Palestine, an occupation that has been ongoing since 1948, has systematically displaced, killed, and maimed millions of Palestinian people. And yet, from under the brutal weight of the occupation, Palestinians have produced their own culture and poetry of resistance. This class will examine the history of the Palestinian resistance and the way that it is narrated by Palestinians in order to produce an understanding of the Intifada and to develop a coherent political analysis of the situation. This class takes as its starting point the right of Palestinians to fight for their own self-determination. Conservative thinkers are encouraged to seek other sections.*

Complaints from students and faculty prompted administrators to address the issue. The chair of the English department, acting on the recommendations of a faculty committee, urged the instructor to rewrite the course description so that it used less combative language and did not exclude students with a certain political bent.

Stop. Before reading any further, what do you think?

Should this course be protected under academic freedom? Or should the professor rewrite the course description and rethink how the course will be taught?

What Actually Happened

The instructor did as requested and rewrote the description:

> *This is a course on Palestinian resistance poetry. It takes as its point of departure the Palestinian literature that has developed since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, which has displaced, maimed, and killed many Palestinian people. The Israeli military occupation of historic Palestine has caused unspeakable suffering. Since the occupation, Palestinians have been fighting for their right to exist. And yet, from under the weight of this occupation, Palestinians have produced their own culture and poetry of resistance. This class will examine the history of the Palestinian resistance and the way that it is narrated by Palestinians. The instructor takes as his starting point the right of Palestinians to fight for their own self-determination. Discussions about the literature will focus on several intersecting themes: how are Palestinian artists able to imagine art under the occupation; what consequences does resistance have on the character of the art that is produced (i.e. why are there so few Palestinian epics and plays and comedies); can one represent the Israeli occupation in art; what is the difference between political art and propaganda and how do the debates about those terms inflect the production of literature; how do poems represent the desire to escape and the longing for home simultaneously (alternatively, how do poems represent the nation without a state); what consequence do political debates have on formal innovations and their reproduction; and what are the obligations of artists in representing the occupation. This 1A course offers students frequent practice in a variety of forms of discourse leading toward exposition and argumentation in common standard English. The course aims at continuing to develop the students' practical fluency with sentence, paragraph, and thesis-development skills but with increasingly complex applications. Students will be assigned a number of short essays (2-4 written pages) and several revisions.*

According to Robert Post, a nationally recognized law professor with expertise on academic freedom, these revisions were the right ones to make. Academic freedom does permit instructors to present subject matter with a certain political orientation but does not allow them to exclude certain classes of students from the classroom because of it:

> *The determining criteria should be whether the course description meets professional standards, i.e., it must be educationally justified. The faculty member can indicate the*

particular perspective or political framework from which a particular subject matter is being taught, but it should not be so forcefully stated as to be threatening, nor designed to exclude certain kinds of students.

Conclusion: This case demonstrates that academic freedom extends to students as well as instructors and to course descriptions as well as in-class activities.

CASE STUDY
Offensive Art

Albert Piarowksi was chair of the art department at Prairie State College in Illinois. As part of the annual art department faculty exhibition, he placed three of his own works on display. The works were exhibited in the principal building of the college, in an open area on the main floor known as "the mall" that adjoins a student lounge and is the college's main gathering space. Classrooms are on the upper floors.

Piarowski's work consisted of eight stained-glass windows, five of which were abstract and three of which were representational. One of the latter depicted the naked rump of a brown woman, with a white cylinder resembling a finger sticking out from or into it that was meant to represent a jet of gas. In other words, it was a representation of flatulence. Another showed a brown woman from the back, standing naked except for stockings, and apparently masturbating. The third again depicted a brown woman, also naked except for stockings and also seen from the rear, crouching in a posture of veneration before a robed white male, whose most prominent feature is an oversized erect penis that the woman is embracing.

Based on many complaints from students, faculty, employees, and visitors, the chancellor ordered Piarowski to move the offending stained-glass pieces from the mall to another, less public location.

Stop. Before reading any further, what do you think?
Should Piarowski's art be protected under academic freedom?

What Actually Happened

Piarowski brought the case to court. In *Piarowski v. Illinois Community College*, Judge Richard Posner (U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit) walked the line between the instructor's right to exhibit and the institution's interest in running its affairs, protecting its reputation, and settling a potentially disruptive display of art. Posner wrote:

When we consider that the expression in this case was not political, that it was regulated rather than suppressed, that the plaintiff is not only a faculty member but an

administrator, that good alternative sites may have been available to him, and that in short he is claiming a First Amendment right to exhibit sexually explicit and racially offensive art work in what amounts to the busiest corridor in a college that employs him in a responsible administrative as well as academic position, we are driven to conclude that the defendants did not infringe the plaintiff's First Amendment rights merely by ordering him to move the art to another room in the same building.

Posner infers that had the art been clearly political, then stronger protections may have been warranted. As long as alternative locations for exhibition were made available, then Posner allowed that the university could reasonably direct Piarowski to display the work elsewhere.

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has a similar statement on "Academic Freedom and Artistic Expression," that suggests universities may control "time, place, and manner" of exhibition of controversial art:

Artistic expression in the classroom, studio, and workshop therefore merits the same assurance of academic freedom that is accorded to other scholarly and teaching activities. Since faculty and student artistic presentations to the public are integral to their teaching, learning, and scholarship, these presentations no less merit protection. Educational and artistic criteria should be used by all who participate in the selection and presentation of artistic works. Reasonable content-neutral regulation of the "time, place, and manner" of presentations should be developed and maintained. Academic institutions are obliged to ensure that regulations and procedures do not impair freedom of expression or discourage creativity by subjecting work to tests of propriety or ideology.

Conclusion: When academic institutions offer exhibitions or performances to the public, they should ensure that the rights of the presenters and the audience are not impaired by a "heckler's veto" from those who may be offended by the presentation. Academic institutions should ensure that those who choose to view or attend may do so without interference. Mere presentation in a public place does not create a "captive audience." Institutions may reasonably designate specific places as generally available or unavailable for exhibitions or performances.

ESTABLISHING DISCUSSION RULES

Establishing discussion rules right from the start provides a solid foundation for every other practice and technique described in this handbook. Discussion rules are also known as classroom norms, codes of conduct, and guidelines or agreements for civil discourse; these terms are used more or less interchangeably throughout our conversations. Whatever we choose to call them, many professors develop them on their own, placing them in their syllabus or on a handout they give to students early in the term. But our experience suggests that it is more effective to engage students in creating their own classroom rules.

At the beginning of each intensive, we had our faculty participants develop the code they wished to follow for engaging in civil discourse throughout the week. Similarly, in the classroom, a Code of Conduct exercise reminds students of what they expect from themselves and each other. It can serve as an ice-breaker, a trust builder, and a reminder in case a behavior later becomes a problem.

Of all the techniques we introduced in our faculty intensive, this one was the most frequently applied. Most of our participants tried it out at least once; many of them made it a routine part of beginning their classes.

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 undesirable classroom behaviors. Give the groups about five minutes to make their lists.
- Bring everyone back together, and then invite the groups 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!

The following essay describes how one professor was able to link the Code of Conduct exercise directly to her course content, using it not only to establish discussion rules for the class but also to demonstrate the effects individuals and groups have on each other and to illustrate key sociological concepts such as norms, deviancy, and sanctions.

Creating Classroom Norms

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The Codes of Conduct exercise fits especially well with the subject matter of sociology. The classroom can, to some extent, be transformed into a miniature society with its own culture, norms, deviants, and sanctions. Students can be encouraged to see their personal norms within the context of group norms and to witness the effect of individuals on groups and of groups on individuals.

I introduced this exercise for the first time in an upper-division social psychology class. In preparation, students were instructed to prepare a list of personal norms for the classroom and to bring it with them to the next class period. In class, they were divided into four groups by counting off "one, two, three, four" in order to mix up students who were likely to sit with their friends. The groups were instructed first to discuss their personal norms and why they came up with particular items (demonstrating how past experiences influence present attitudes). Next they were instructed to come up with a list of group norms (demonstrating the relationships between individuals and the group). Finally, the groups came back together as a class to reach consensus on a set of classroom norms (demonstrating the effects of groups on other groups).

Of course, norms are only ideas written on paper, and sanctions (both positive and negative) are usually necessary to achieve conformity to those norms. After introducing this concept, I repeated the exercise by having students develop their own list of personal sanctions and then a set of consensus sanctions in class. The students came up with sanctions that were surprisingly punitive and very hard to enforce. For example, the class suggested that students who talk among themselves during a lecture should be asked to leave the room; students who come to class unprepared should get lower grades; and repeat offenders should be kicked out of the course.

Who would enforce these rules? They basically thought I should. How much time would this enforcement take? Would any student's rights be violated? After some discussion and negotiation, they agreed that enforcement could be less punitive. For several weeks, I brought a large poster to class and displayed the rules so all could see. Near the end of the semester, I brought it back for our discussion of deviancy. The students found it interesting to see where and how they had violated their own rules, and how these activities related to the chapter on deviancy.

The whole experience was so successful that I decided to use it again in a lower-division introductory course the following semester. This class, on the whole, was much younger than the upper-division class; many students were recent graduates from high school. I planned to introduce the exercise on the day we were scheduled to begin the chapter on deviance and social control. This was also the day I gave students back their first exam.

I typically have students sign an attendance sheet in class, and base 2.5% of the course grade on attendance. After we had gone over the exam, about six students, who always sat at the back of the

room, left. At that point I distributed a second attendance sheet. I then introduced the chapter by talking about society's need for social order and norms. I pointed out how once norms or laws are implemented some people will still deviate from those norms or break those laws. In an attempt to maintain social order, society creates sanctions and stigmas (labels), socially constructed by those in power.

I designated the class members who had not left as the "societal leaders" and charged them with creating a set of classroom norms (societal norms). I repeated the process used the previous semester, first having them create personal norms, then small group norms, and then the larger group norms. Interestingly, one of their norms was that students should not sign the attendance sheet and then leave (this was aimed at the group who left after we went over the exam). Class time expired before we could create a set of sanctions.

To demonstrate how those who follow the norms may be rewarded and those who deviate may be stigmatized, I made some big yellow stars and brown circles out of construction paper and brought them with me to the next class period. I began that class by saying we were going to engage in an experiment, and briefly reviewed the ethics of conducting research. I told the class that this was voluntary, so anyone who did not want to take part could leave for the next half hour. If they wanted to participate, they would need to sign a consent form. No one left—they all were curious.

After gathering up the consent forms, I displayed a list of all the students who had attended the previous class and stayed the entire time, and presented each of them with a large gold star. Next, I displayed the list of those who had come to class, signed the first attendance sheet, and left. Each student on this list was presented with a large brown circle—a negative stigma/label. Students who had missed the previous class altogether were given neither label. We then explained what had happened after they left the previous class period. As we did not have time during the prior class period to create sanctions, we repeated the same norm construction process as described above.

Sharon's Sociology 101 class came up with the following classroom norms:

Sociology 101, Spring 2007

Should
- Have cell phones on silent or turned off
- Be prepared/Do assignments/ Participate
- Respect other students and professor

Should Not
- Engage in sidebar talking or visiting with neighbors
- Sign attendance sheet and leave before class ends
- Fall asleep
- Do homework for other classes while in this one
- Eat loud or smelly food

Overall, the students liked this experience and said it helped them understand the deviance chapter much better. Conformists and deviants both took a certain pride in their position. "I liked the position of societal leader and the positive label (star)," wrote one. "It made me feel powerful." Another student wrote: "I took pride in my brown circle. I don't see myself as a conformist—I'm like some of the bikers in the chapter who wear labels that are associated with the idea of being deviants or even law breakers."

I liked it too. The exercise engages students while demonstrating many of my discipline's core concerns as a social science that investigates the interactions between the individual and others in society. I will probably continue to use the exercise in the future.

Establishing a code of conduct also works in an online course. I used the wiki plug-in provided in our Blackboard system to create a collaborative space for students in my first-year journalism class. During the first week of class, students were invited to edit the wiki and come up with rules for classroom behavior. Our Online Code of Conduct included the following rules:

- Do not attack what others have said just because you don't agree with it.
- Don't claim the work of others as your own.
- Be open-minded and consider the feelings of others.

Joy Mapaye
Journalism and Public Communications

I used the Code of Conduct activity with a group of educators and administrators in a professional development course last summer. On the first morning of the four-day intensive, I arranged the chairs in a large circle in front of the whiteboard and spent about fifteen minutes leading the class of twenty in co-creating a code of conduct. Most participants engaged with the exercise, either by offering their own suggested agreements or by nodding or shaking their heads as I recorded the agreements on the board. After generating a list, I asked for a show of hands to see which agreements the group was in favor of, and circled those that were supported by the entire group. Both during and after this activity, participants expressed their appreciation for having the opportunity to collaborate in creating a code of conduct for the ensuing days.

Alice Hisamoto
Education

I ask my students to work first in dyads (groups of two) to create a short list of no more than five of what they feel are key standards of behavior during dialogue. Then, in a whole group session, everyone contributes to establish this class's unique set of guidelines.

My ethics class came up with these:
- We show respect.
- We maintain a sense of humor.
- We're prepared.
- We're open to new ideas.
- We allow time to think — respecting the silence.

The class also felt the need to further define what they meant by respect:
- It's a safe place intellectually.
- We listen to each other.
- We don't interrupt or yell, and we apologize or explain ourselves if we are disrespectful.

Through the process of creating them, students became aware of the standards and began to internalize the expectations. The exercise was so effective we rarely had to refer to the guidelines again. A gentle reminder was all that was necessary when a discussion began to heat up.

Christine Gehrett
Education

The time you spend establishing ground rules can have benefits beyond the rules themselves. The Codes of Conduct exercise can also reveal shared values, illuminate the role that culture plays in determining what we view as "appropriate conduct," and help students limit their own behavior.

Codes of Conduct

Dr. Kerri Morris
Associate Professor of English
University of Alaska Anchorage

Of all of the techniques or strategies discussed during this project, I think that the Codes of Conduct is the most important for me and for my teaching. It is crucial to establish the ground rules for a classroom and also for students to participate in their construction. To spend class time discussing what we as a group value as appropriate behaviors demonstrates that behavior matters and offers every class member the chance to join the group.

> **I was struck by the deep role culture plays in determining how we understand or define "appropriate conduct."**

Talking about conduct also provides us distance from the behaviors themselves and helps us limit or regulate our own behaviors. One student suggested that one person shouldn't dominate the conversation. Then she laughed, saying that she would be the most likely transgressor of that rule. It seemed that she offered both self-awareness and permission for classmates to remind her when she spoke too much.

Several interesting things happened when I used this technique in my classroom. First, many of the students had already been in classrooms or groups where codes of conduct were being written. By the time they got to my class, they were old hands at the process. Much to my surprise they spent ten minutes, no more, "discussing" the rules of most importance to them. In the group discussion, we arrived at our five or six rules in minutes. Practice and experience had helped them to clarify exactly what a classroom needed for appropriate regulation.

Second, I was surprised that one student offered a rule designed to govern my behavior as instructor. She wanted a rule that said, "Students may not negotiate rules of the syllabus with the instructor." She was intent that all deadlines and assignments listed in the syllabus be enforced exactly as they were written with no exceptions and, further, that we not ever discuss the revision of these rules during class time. It was the only rule I vetoed. As an instructor, I draw clear boundaries between decisions that I make and decisions that students make. Negotiation of deadlines and assignments are sometimes necessary. I felt that the student was outside the bounds of her appropriate sphere of influence by attempting to define my own professional practice.

Third, I was struck by the deep role culture plays in determining how we understand or define "appropriate conduct." One rule was that students should listen attentively and respectfully. (This was a seminar in which students sat around a table.) I asked students to give concrete examples of "listening respectfully," to which a young woman replied, "It means leaning forward and nodding while someone else is talking. It is disrespectful to lean back, like this, with one leg crossed over the other." The class laughed, because, at that moment, a young man was "listening respectfully" in just that physical position. From there, we were able to explore the cultural conditions that influence our concepts of respect. Does a respectful person make eye contact? Does a respectful person write when another person talks?

Finally, the Code of Conduct proved to be very helpful during a heated exchange in which one student made a comment about "white male power,"— which, not incidentally, was a phrase used by the author of an essay that we had read — and another (not surprisingly, a white male) exploded in frustration. Later, we were able to discuss this incident, examining it within a frame of both parties having a legitimate perspective. It was clear the student who used the generalization didn't intend harm, and it was also clear that the phrase caused harm anyway. Both parties decided that they had played a role, one for succumbing to a negative generalization and the other for failing to be charitable.

AT STAKE: FACULTY PERFORMANCE

Disrespectful and disruptive students can have a poisonous effect on the classroom environment, for faculty as well as for other students. This essay explores the little-known phenomenon of contra-power harassment, when students disrespect, harass, bully, or threaten their instructors. Dr. Lampman recounts her own experience with student bullying, and some research she conducted at her home campus. Her survey and interviews of UAA faculty reveal the frequency of contrapower harassment at a large, public institution, and the high cost of failing to deal effectively with it, particularly among female faculty.

Contrapower Harassment on Campus: Incidence, Consequences, Implications

Dr. Claudia Lampman
Professor of Psychology
University of Alaska Anchorage

"You can speak to my lawyer."

Those are the only words this particular student ever spoke directly to me all semester long. He was a very large man in his fifties and an intimidating presence in my classroom. He always sat directly in front of me and glared, making his hostility clearly and visibly known. Aside from those six words, he communicated with me solely by angry note.

In this course on the psychology of women, students are required to complete weekly assignments that typically involve a kind of data collection, such as interviewing women about the experience of getting their first periods, or observing parents and children interacting at a playground or fast-food restaurant. Most assignments come right out of our best-selling textbook. Students are given a choice in case they find doing one of them uncomfortable.

This student refused to do the assignments, writing in an early note that he could not be 'forced' to do research. I responded in class, pointing out that psychology is a social science (emphasis on science) and that upper-division psychology classes, as this was, typically involved data collection and analysis. I reminded the class that alternate assignments were always available; students could analyze advertising, television programs, or make observations at toy stores, if they were uncomfortable with face-to-face data collection.

My response to the class just seemed to make him angrier. In subsequent notes, he labeled the assignments dangerous. Watching children would put him in danger of appearing to be a pedophile, he wrote. The assignments were causing him tremendous stress and anxiety; he was going to file a grievance or a lawsuit. I tried on several occasions to talk to him about his concerns, but he wouldn't talk to me directly, only in writing. Although he rarely participated in class activities or exams, he was always there before the class began, and he stayed after it ended.

If his intention was to frighten me, it worked. I was scared to be around him, and I started to fear that he could make significant trouble for me at work. I became afraid to go to my classroom alone, grew significantly anxious and stressed, and had trouble concentrating and sleeping. Once, I inadvertently let my class out an hour early because I was so stressed-out by his behavior. I did not, however, report this to anyone until it became clear that I would have to give him a failing grade. I feared that reporting him might make him more angry, hostile, and potentially violent; I also think that as a female faculty member I was afraid of appearing weak. I just wanted the semester to end, and the student to go away. But even after it did, my fears lingered for quite some time.

Several months passed before I began talking to my colleagues about this student's threatening and harassing behaviors. What I found was that my experience was not unique, especially among female faculty, and that many of my peers believed student incivility and bullying were on the rise. Colleagues felt that students seemed increasingly disrespectful, as evidenced by their answering cell phones or reading the newspaper in class or asking them out on dates. Others mentioned that students openly questioned their authority or credentials, yelled or screamed at them, made hostile comments or threats, stalked or harassed them, and even became violent. I discovered that I wasn't the only one who had been derailed emotionally by such an experience. My colleagues told me about stress-related illnesses and loss of productivity, and some also mentioned that they changed assignments, avoided controversial topics, and gave grades students didn't deserve just to make them "go away."

The social scientist in me headed to the library to see what research had been conducted on disrespectful, hostile, or harassing student behaviors. I soon learned a new term: contrapower harassment, which occurs when a person with lesser power within an institution harasses someone with greater power.[1] Over the past twenty years, several studies have surveyed faculty members about their experiences with contrapower sexual harassment.[2] These studies clearly find that women faculty members are more distressed and negatively impacted by these experiences than men. With most of the research focusing on sexual harassment, I thought it would be important to study the broader definition of contrapower harassment and focus on behaviors ranging from student incivility and bullying to outright violence. So I put together a research team (myself, an adjunct faculty member, and two undergraduate students) and began a series of studies.

In 2005, I conducted the first of these studies, a survey of faculty on the UAA campus.[3] The survey asked faculty about their experience with a broad range of student behaviors, including incivility, bullying, and sexual attention from students. Incivility was defined as rude or discourteous behavior demonstrating a lack of regard for others.[4] Bullying was defined as "physical and verbal aggressive behavior that has the potential to cause physical and/or psychological harm to the victim.[5] On

> **My colleagues told me about stress-related illnesses and loss of productivity due to difficult student interactions. Some also mentioned that they changed assignments, avoided controversial topics, and gave grades students didn't deserve just to make them "go away."**

1 Benson, 1984.
2 Caroll & Ellis, 1989; DeSousa & Fansler, 2003; Grauerholz, 1989; Matchen & DeSousa, 2000; McKinney, 1990.
3 Lampman, Phelps, Beneke & Bancroft, in press
4 See Nydegger, Paludi, DeSousa & Paludi, 2006
5 DeSousa & Ribeiro, 2005:p.1019

college campuses, incivility might take the form of disrespectful or rude behaviors (like reading a newspaper or answering a phone during a class), bullying might involve hostile or aggressive behaviors (like questioning faculty credentials, making threatening comments, and stalking). Sexual attention would include such actions as asking faculty out on dates or commenting on their appearance.

A total of 399 faculty responded to the survey (61% of the Anchorage campus faculty). Uncivil behaviors were reported as extremely common by both males and females. More than 70% stated that a student had engaged in a non-class activity, slept during one of their classes, or asked them to make their exams or assignments easier. More than 60% said a student had answered a cell phone, continually interrupted them, or showed disdain while they were teaching. More than half reported that a student had challenged their authority or verbally disrespected them. Between 25% and 50% stated that a student had asked them to change a grade without cause, referred to them in an inappropriate way, addressed them by their first name, or violated their personal space. Ten to 25% indicated that a student had questioned their credentials or qualifications, called them at home without permission, touched them in an uncomfortable way, given them an inappropriate gift, or commented on their physical appearance in course evaluations. Sexual attention was reported by 15-30% of faculty respondents, including comments of a sexual nature, unwanted sexual attention, and flirting or requests for dates.

So far, my research on contrapower harassment suggests that the vast majority of faculty members on the UAA campus have experienced one or more forms of student incivility or bullying, that very few report it, and that female faculty members are more likely to suffer negative consequences as a result of it.

Although bullying behaviors were less common on average, almost half of the respondents indicated that students had written hostile comments on course evaluations. About 30% said a student had yelled or screamed at them, one in four said a student had threatened to file a grievance, and more than one in five had received hostile or threatening emails, letters, or phone messages from a student. Finally, between 5% and 10% of faculty said a student had threatened to harm or file a law suit against them, or had followed or stalked them. Fewer than 2% said a student had actually harmed them or filed a lawsuit against them.

A substantial number of faculty also reported significant negative consequences as a result of contrapower harassment. More than one in five indicated they were significantly anxious or stressed, or had difficulty sleeping during a time period when they were experiencing student problems. Between 10% and 20% said they felt depressed, had difficulty concentrating, suffered a loss of productivity, felt physically afraid, did not want to go to work, or changed assignments or teaching style as a direct result of student harassment. In addition, 5-10% said they suffered from stress-related illness, felt embarrassed to talk to their colleagues, thought about giving a grade a student didn't deserve, or dropped a controversial or difficult topic because of problems with a student. About 5% of respondents indicated that they had to let a class out early or went to see a mental health professional for help related to an incident of contrapower harassment. Approximately 2% canceled a class or had a substitute because they wanted to avoid contact with a particular student.

Female professors were significantly more upset by incivility, bullying, and sexual student behaviors than male professors, even when they experienced it less frequently. Female faculty, those who teach women's studies courses, and those who reported more incivility, bullying, and sexual attention from students experienced significantly greater negative impact on their health, teaching, and work life. Fewer than one in three said they had reported the incident to their department chair or dean, and fewer than one in ten said they had spoken with the dean of students. Male professors were significantly less likely to take some sort of official action than female faculty. Twice as many women (10.2%) as men (5.0%) said they had spoken to the dean of students about a harassment incident. Similarly, 30.5% of women versus 17.5% of men said they had reported student harassment to university administrators. Finally, women were twice as likely to seek the social support of colleagues than men.

One year later, I conducted a follow-up study to explore whether certain types of students, faculty, courses, or situations are more likely to be involved in incidents of contrapower harassment. Of the 399 faculty members who responded to the original survey, fifty-six (14%) reported having experienced at least one "significant incident of contrapower harassment," and all but one of those agreed to a follow-up interview. During the interview, they were asked to describe 1) the incident; 2) demographic characteristics of the student (sex, race, and age); 3) characteristics of the course (title, level, discipline); 4) whether or not they reported the incident to their department chair, college dean, and/or dean of students; 5) a description of the troubling student behavior; and 6) consequences for their health, teaching, and work life.

Analysis of interviews revealed incidents of stalking, violence, death threats, and other threats of physical harm, unwanted sexual attention, threats of legal action, character assassination, and intimidation and bullying. Although contrapower harassment was not more likely to be reported by women than men, the nature of the incidents and consequences for female faculty appear to be more severe. Contrapower harassment was stressful for all faculty interviewed; however, women were significantly more likely to report depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance, and stress-related illness than men.

The interviews also revealed some clear patterns in terms of the types of courses, faculty, and students most closely associated with harassment. Faculty from the College of Arts and Sciences were disproportionately represented among those interviewed. Faculty were significantly more likely to experience harassment from students of the opposite sex. Although both students and the faculty they harassed tended to be white, the student perpetrators were typically described as nontraditional in age (in their 30s to 50s). Psychopathology (including personality disorders, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia) was often suggested as a contributing factor. Finally, these interviews suggested that successful outcomes were more likely if the incidents were reported to the dean of students rather than academic administrators in one's college.

Summary

So, far my research on contrapower harassment suggests that the vast majority of faculty members on the UAA campus have experienced one or more forms of student incivility or bullying, that very few report it, and that female faculty members are more likely to suffer negative consequences as a result of it. These results suggest a strong need for faculty development regarding the appropriate ways to handle these situations. Faculty need to understand their rights as instructors as well as when to seek help, whom to talk to, and what campus resources are available to help them cope with such experiences.

SAFETY

Some disruptions are worse than others, of course, but how do you tell the difference? Can you tell a naïve disruption from a threatening one? Do you know what the policies are at your university and where you can go for assistance and support? This essay offers a strategy that leads to better threat assessment and a practical approach to handling disruptions at every level to prevent them from going further.

Recognizing and Responding to Disruptive Students

Dr. Bruce Schultz
Dean of Students and Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Development
University of Alaska Anchorage

In the spring of 2007, one of our worst nightmares came true. A disturbed student went on a shooting rampage at Virginia Tech University, killing 32 of his fellow students and teachers, and then, finally, himself. Amid the shock, anger, and fear that rippled across the academic world, many asked themselves the same questions. How dangerous have our campuses become? Shouldn't someone have seen this coming? Is there anything we can do to make sure this never happens again?

The bad news is there are no easy answers. Identifying potentially violent students is extremely difficult, even for teams of professionals; for the faculty member acting alone, it is next to impossible. The problem, says a 2003 National Research Council report, "is that...the offenders are not that unusual; they look like their classmates at school." There is no accurate or useful profile of the "typical" school shooter; they come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and family situations and have a wide range of friendship patterns and academic histories. Few of them show a marked change in behavior prior to their attack.

The most promising approach for identifying potentially violent students is known as threat assessment. It is based on observable behaviors compiled from multiple sources and reviewed by a trained assessment team. Chances are your campus has some version of such a team in place. It's a good idea to find out and familiarize yourself with the processes and individuals on your campus. These are your best resources in an emergency. You hope you'll never need them, but it's best to know how to find them, just in case.

> It amazes me how far faculty and staff will sometimes let students go with inappropriate behavior. Helping students succeed doesn't mean they get everything they demand. Teaching students the skills to recognize and respect appropriate boundaries inside and out of class is one of our new roles.
>
> Bruce Schultz
> Dean of Students

The good news is that most disruptions never get that far, especially if you cultivate habits and practices to deal with milder behaviors as they happen.

As soon as it is evident that a student's behavior is disruptive, address it. Be specific in describing the disruptive behavior and offer alternative methods of dealing with the cause of the behavior. It is usually enough to call the student's attention to it. If the student understands your concerns and demonstrates an appropriate change of behavior, acknowledge it. Document both the behavior and the subsequent meeting for your own records.

If the disruptive behavior continues, you may wish to consult with a colleague, supervisor, department chair, counselor, dean of students, or other individuals on your campus in a position to offer assistance and support. Repeated disruptive behavior must be met with a more formalized approach that includes clear limit-setting and consequences for continuing the behavior. Depending on the circumstances, you may need formal intervention or emergency assistance as well.

Student behavior can be just as different as students are themselves. Over- or under-reacting almost always leads to further problems. To know how best to respond to the behavior, first categorize it. We have identified five levels of disruptive behaviors and outlined appropriate responses to each.

Naïve disruptions include students answering a cell phone, passing notes, muttering to oneself or a neighbor, and similar behaviors during class. The important thing is to address them immediately. Provide a clear, concise, constructive, non-belittling instructional directive: "*It's time to stop that now.*" or "*That is disruptive.*" If possible, refer to classroom rules or codes of conduct you've created together or defined in your syllabus. Make a note of the behavior and your directive immediately after class.

Usually, that's all it will take. If the behavior persists, however—even after you've called it to the student's attention—you can assume it is intentional.

Intentional disruptions include persistent questions or arguments and attention-getting or derisive comments. Repeat your directive if necessary, and this time add clarification and conse-

Basic Self Defense

A few simple steps you can take to prepare yourself in advance.

Know your resources
- Familiarize yourself with your university's student code of conduct and cite it on your syllabus.
- Find out who to turn to on your campus for emergencies, threat assessment, and support.
- Keep emergency phone numbers handy.

Use your resources
- Address disruptive behaviors immediately, and call for help whenever necessary. The sooner the behaviors are addressed, the greater the likelihood for a solution that works for the student, the faculty member, and the university.

Practice situational awareness
- Carry a cell phone or know where the nearest emergency phone is located.
- If you meet with a disruptive student outside of class, stay in public places and ask a colleague to join you.
- Pay attention to details and make notes immediately after all disruptive incidents.

quences: *"Your side comments are disruptive. I expect you to listen respectfully when others are speaking and to follow our classroom discussion rules." "Please see me after class and we'll talk about this further." "I'm sure you want to do the right thing."* Hold your after-class conference in an open space, possibly with a third person in attendance. State what will happen if the behavior persists; depending on your campus policies, the student may be referred to the dean's office or temporarily restricted from attending class. Document the behavior and this follow-up conference, noting dates, times, and others in attendance.

Challenging behaviors are similar to intentional disruptions, but with a slightly more aggressive or personal edge. They include questioning your position, credentials, "unreasonable expectations," or grading policies. When the content of the challenge changes from the topic to you, it's time to call for backup. Set and enforce limits on these behaviors with immediate directives. Get help from a colleague, department chair, counselor, or dean. Meet with the student during a break, after class, or some other time, and document that meeting thoroughly. A counselor or the dean of students may find it effective for the student to enter into a behavioral agreement in order for him or her to continue participating in the class.

Refusals. Occasionally, a student may refuse to stop the behavior, or may be unwilling or unable to follow the directive. If a student refuses to comply with your directive, it's time to initiate a class break. During the break, inform the student that he or she must leave class and may not return until after meeting with you (or you and a colleague or some other person you specify, such as the dean of students).

Situationally Appropriate Response

Address disruptive behaviors immediately. Clear and concise instructional directives are your first line of defense.

Level 1 (naïve disruptions): State your expectation for termination of the behavior. Use constructive comments that do not belittle the student. Refer to previously established classroom rules. Make a note of the exchange.

Level 2 (intentional disruptions): Set limits and state consequences for continued disruptions. Meet with student after class or during office hours (in a public place). Document the exchange.

Level 3 (challenging behaviors): Stay on topic; don't get pulled into the fray. Give immediate and specific directive with consequences. Meet with student after class or during office hours (in a public place). Get help from a colleague, department chair, counselor, dean of students, or other campus resource. Document the exchange.

Level 4 (refusal): Set and enforce limits. Initiate a class break. During the break, inform the student that he or she may not return to class until after meeting with you or other university authorities and getting permission. After the situation is under control, document the incident and inform the appropriate authority on your campus.

Level 5 (intimidations and/or threats): Get away from the student. Have a colleague escort you to safety if possible. Notify your university police. After the situation is under control, document the incident and inform the appropriate authority on your campus.

"Doing _____ during class is continuing to be disruptive. I asked you to stop and you refused. Therefore, you may not attend this class again until you meet with the dean of students and receive permission."

Know where the nearest phone is, and have your emergency phone numbers handy in case you need them. After the situation is under control, document it, and notify the appropriate university authority.

Intimidating or threatening behaviors are the worst-case scenario. *"If you know what's best for you, you'll give me an A." "Watch out. I know what your car looks like."* If you receive threats like these, immediately get away from the student, get another faculty or staff person to escort you to safety, and notify campus security or police. This response will be easier if you have a plan in mind before you need it. Apply a little situational awareness beforehand by noting the staff offices and telephones nearest to your classroom. Know the phone numbers for emergency personnel, or have them handy on your cell phone or in your briefcase.

You'll have to judge these situations on a case-by-case basis, but it is usually a good idea to try conversation first. Careful listening and courteous dialogue—perhaps with participation by a department chair or student conduct administrator—will often resolve the problem. At a minimum, the discussion may prove valuable in any subsequent threat assessment process.

Please do not give assurances of confidentiality. A student who appears to pose a threat to self or others needs to be referred for help and supervision. College teachers should not abrogate their traditional role as guides and mentors, but they must not assume the responsibilities of therapists or police officers.

Research on violence prevention suggest schools and colleges need more cross-generation contact. According to the NRC report, "The insularity of adolescent society serves to magnify slights and reinforce social hierarchies; correspondingly, it is only through exchange with trusted adults that teens can reach the longer-term view that can come with maturity." As one teacher has put it, "the only real way of preventing school violence is to get into their heads and their hearts."

Campus Violence: FAQs

How dangerous is college teaching?

Not very. Violent crime victimization rates for sample occupations (per 1,000 people) include:

College/university employees: 1.6
Physicians: 16.2
Retail sales: 20
Junior high teachers: 54.2
Mental health professionals: 68.2
Police officers: 260.8

Source: Violence in the Workplace, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001

How frequent are homicides on campus?

Still pretty rare.

National average: 5.6 per 100,000 people (2001-2004)
College campuses: 1.5 per 100,000 people (2001-2004)

Source: U.S. News and World Report, April 30, 2007

How common is suicide?

Multiple studies have found that college students commit suicide at half the rate of their nonstudent peers:

College students: 7.5 per 100,000
National average (sample matched for age, race, and gender): 15 per 100,000

Source: Silverman et al, The Big Ten Student Suicide Study: a 10-year study of suicides on Midwestern university campuses," Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior 27[3]:285-303), 1997.

The best way to get inside students heads and hearts is through deeper levels of engagement. Many students value meaningful conversations with their faculty, both inside and outside of class. More than ever before, faculty members are in the best position to understand a student's unique situation and to connect him or her with appropriate campus resources.

PAUSING FOR REFLECTION

Respecting the Silence

You open the discussion with a provocative question. Your class just stares at you or looks at the floor. No one says a word. In panic, you leap in and answer it yourself.

Has this ever happened to you? The answer is probably yes. Silence tends to make us uncomfortable, and as professors we're pretty good at filling conversational voids. But our textbook authors warned us against it. "Do this even once," say Brookfield and Preskill, "and you let students know they can rely on you to answer the question and do their thinking for them."

Reflective silence may be as important to good discussion as the most animated speech. Students need processing time to consider new ideas and material and to formulate their own responses. Silence gives us time to stumble on relationships between ideas and to notice omissions and fallacies we might otherwise miss. It also can keep us from speaking too quickly in frustration or anger. Silence does not indicate a vacuum; there may be a different but equally significant engagement going on.

You might try deliberately introducing periods of silence into a lecture to demonstrate that it's OK to stop and think before responding. Silence can also be a useful backup strategy for surprising moments. "Let's all take a minute just to think about that," you might say, and then use that minute to plan your own response.

It sounds easy enough, but in practice it is much harder to respect the silence and refrain from filling it with more talk. "Far too many teachers think that if they're not speaking, they're not working," say Brookfield and Preskill. "But if good teaching means helping students learn, staying quiet is sometimes the best thing we can do."

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 discussions 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.

Adapted from Brookfield and Preskill, *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*

I introduced the technique of silence in all of my classes. I hoped students would use the silent period to think about what they wanted to communicate. I also hoped that it would give students who normally didn't speak an opportunity to express themselves.

The technique worked well for the first goal, as those who spoke after the silence spoke more slowly and often with well-formed ideas. It didn't work for the second goal, however, as none of my quiet students ever took advantage of the aftermath of silence to speak voluntarily.

I discovered an even more productive way to use silence in my Anthropology of Art course. In this course, I want students to move beyond text (spoken or written) to think and communicate about visual cultural expressions. I broke the students into pairs and told them not to speak aloud to each other. Instead, they were to communicate by drawing iconic symbols to each other. Then I had the pairs form larger groups with at least one other pair and attempt to speak aloud the other pair's communication. Finally, the mid-sized groups formed two larger groups, and this time I asked students one at a time to "read" the conversation of at least one other person.

Surprisingly, the laconic students were equally laconic with drawings as they were with the spoken word. Nevertheless, everyone participated. All of the students' work was understandable by people on the other side of the room and, better yet, everyone had a chance to speak both in drawing and with their voices.

Phyllis Fast
Anthropology

**LINK
Chapter
3**
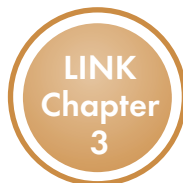
Silence also honors the fact that many students come from cultural backgrounds in which constantly filling the air with speech is frowned upon and speaking slowly, with deliberateness and only when necessary, is rewarded. These students may have a hard time negotiating a class in which others rapidly fill each pause with comments or arguments. For more on culturally responsive teaching, see Chapter 3.

Reflective Writing

Reflective writing helps students organize their thinking before entering into a discussion. The exercises give students time to consider their responses, decide how and whether to take a stance, and plan how they want to express themselves. The act of writing requires stepping back and thinking about the question, taking their personal responses and the likely reactions of others into account.

You can prompt reflective writing through a variety of techniques such as quick writing, shared writing, and mini-journals. These exercises may or may not be collected by the instructor, but if they are, they should not be graded for writing quality or for grammar, punctuation, or correctness. Students should feel free to express themselves without the pressure of judgment, either from instructors or their peers.

Quick Writes are among the simplest and most effective techniques for involving all students in the discussion, even the shy ones or those reluctant to speak for cultural or other reasons. The instructor provides a prompt, and everyone takes five or ten minutes to respond in writing before addressing the question in open discussion. Shared writing (see page 200) is a variation in which students pass their initial Quick Write to one or more other students in the group and do a second or third Quick Write in response. Other variations ask students to read their Quick Write aloud and invite oral comments before having the last word themselves. Journals are useful variations that students can do outside of class in response to assigned readings or activities. You can prompt them to pull out questions for discussion or surprises they encounter in the reading, and then in class to share those items with their discussion groups.

Like silence, reflective writing can also be a terrific backup strategy for those moments when something surprising happens and you find yourself at a temporary loss for how to proceed. In spite of our best intentions and most meticulous preparation, sometimes things will erupt without warning. In these cases, having several backup strategies in mind will help buy time so you can direct a more productive response. "That's an interesting idea," you might say. "Let's take five minutes and reflect on what makes it so."

Quick Writing

A simple technique that provides space between a question and its possible answers, and allows everyone to gather their thoughts and express themselves privately before joining a discussion.

Basic Technique

Provide the group with a prompting question and allow a few minutes for everyone to respond in writing.

Begin the discussion with the same or a similar question and invite people to share what they wrote.

Tip: If you collect the quick writes, do not grade them for grammar, punctuation, strength of argument, or other kind of "quality" criteria. Students should feel free to express themselves without performance concerns.

I used Quick Writes to support a fairly typical term paper assignment on social change. Early in the semester, before their topics were due, I asked students to write a short paragraph that would describe their proposed topic to a reference librarian. After six minutes, they broke into pairs and described their topics to each other. Their topics ranged from the entitlements of baby boomers to the use of hip-hop to promote social change.

The second Quick Write took place two weeks before the final project was due. We had been reading Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point* and discussing the role of human agency in social change, and I wanted them to apply these ideas to the topics they were researching. For the writing exercise, I projected a series of questions on a PowerPoint slide: Has anyone put the principle of "focus, test, and believe" into effect to bring about the change you are writing about? Who has been involved? How has the message been focused? Have the results been tested? Who originally believed the change could happen?

We followed the second exercise with a guided discussion to develop a simple outline and arguments for two of the papers. The Quick Writes were successful at helping students apply concepts about human agency and social change to specific real-life situations. The discussions helped students focus their research more productively. As they considered together the semester-long projects of their fellow students, they redirected each other's research and opened up new avenues of thought. The results were richer, more focused papers.

Ann Jache
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Practitioners of reflective writing techniques often swear by them. Dr. Virginia Juettner credits reflective writing with creating an atmosphere conducive to productive discussion. See page 194. Dr. Leslie Cornick credits journal writing with helping to transform students. See page 234.

BALANCING SAFETY AND RISK

It can be tricky to balance student comfort and safety with the educator's imperative to present challenging ideas and to honor multiple points of view. Conflict is unavoidable, but if managed effectively it can add energy to the classroom, increase student engagement, and promote critical thinking about important problems and issues. This essay offers classroom tips for finding and maintaining the balance between safety and risk while promoting positive personal outcomes.

What Instructors Can Do to Safely Facilitate Controversial Discussion

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One of the central paradoxes in teaching can be summed up like this: The classroom must be safe, but it must also be risky. It is not always easy to create that balance between student comfort and safety and the necessary spirit of challenge that leads to the most productive discussions. Students who are uncomfortable with conflict or with having their point of view challenged may sit silent—or worse, feel offended—without the tools to open their experience for discussion. But it's also true that avoiding controversial ideas (in the often well-meaning spirit of "we don't go there") inhibits student expression and creates an atmosphere unsuited for debate. Where is the magic line between the two, and how can the balance be sustained?

Everything that is important can be narrowed down to a personal outcome for someone. To value education is to value each student's personal outcome. Of course, each individual, students and teachers alike, bears the greatest responsibility for his/her personal experience in any endeavor, but as educators, it is our desire to provide the best learning environment we can. This is quite a task in a single class, consisting of students ranging in age from 18-67, male and female, with a wide range of religious and political views. Add in the variations in students' emotional maturity and styles of handling conflict, and promoting a positive personal outcome for all seems impossible.

Adding these tips to the many different strategies and techniques for engaging controversy may help instructors to find that magic balance.

● Establish the tone right from the beginning. Set up class discussion rules on Day 1 (Codes of Conduct, page 12).

● Explain the process and define roles: *"Respecting the comfort level of each student is important to me. And promoting active debate, especially on controversial subjects, is important for the best learning experience in the class. My job is to manage time so the material is covered, to promote discussion, and to remind everyone of the class rules that all of you have established. Your job is to participate, and to actively communicate with the class and with me. If you feel uncomfortable for any reason, please let the class know, or let me know privately; that is also OK."*

- Notice students' discomfort when it is observable. Check with students who seem to be having an uncomfortable experience after class if you can; and remind students frequently of your accessibility.

- Be conscious of the example you are setting. Examine your own personal style and responses. Ask yourself: How do I handle challenges in class? What values do I display when I am feeling defensive or confronted? Do I handle conflict in a way that demonstrates the best possible response that I want from my students? Do I achieve a nondefensive posture that shows appreciation of others' ideas and efforts to communicate, even when I disagree or do not intend to comply?

- Manage proactively. At the first moment when you realize that a controversial issue is becoming emotional for the class, stop the discussion for a few seconds to remind the class of the class rules that have been established.

- As the instructor, you get to, and sometimes must, interrupt. Always interrupt politely: *"This is a great discussion so far, and I am sorry to interrupt, but we need to switch gears slightly at this point so we can be sure that the other sides of the issue are covered."*

> **Be alert to differences in students' communication styles, and offer direct and open opportunities for all to speak.**

- Be alert to differences in students' communication styles, and offer direct and open opportunities for all to speak: *"This has been a great debate. Now I would like to close the floor to all who have already stated positions, and open the floor to those who have not yet given their thoughts."*

- Skip to solutions. When "who-caused-the-problem" discussions begin to circle (students are taking turns repeating their opinions), switch the discussion to ways to solve it.

- Be overt in your techniques. Explain when class rules are established that you may sometimes interrupt the class to switch gears for purposes of time or to remind them of the rules. Acknowledge that you, too, sometimes feel uncomfortable with debate and confrontation, but that you view the practice as a learning experience and that you want students to tell you when they are uncomfortable.

- State your internal text out loud (explain to students where you are coming from): *"Wow, this is obviously an important topic to folks. I appreciate that we have strong convictions, and it's OK that conversation gets energetic. Everyone is remembering our class rules, which I also appreciate! Now let's move from the potential sources of the problem to solutions. Without debating merit, let's just throw some ideas up on the board."*

● Be overt in your general responses to challenge (when you feel challenged by a student). Another example of overt communication: *"I think I am feeling on the spot at this moment! Please give me a little time to think about this. I do want to respond in a way that will be best for the learning experience of the class. Hmmm."*

● Offer supportive follow-up talks with specific instructions to students after a particularly heated debate: *"Everyone, please remember that I have office hours today and tomorrow from 9-10:30. I invite anyone who would like to talk about the topic, or the experience you had today in the class-room, to come see me to chat privately. And remember, you can also always e-mail me your thoughts and any concerns you have; my e-mail address is on the syllabus. And thanks, everyone, for your participation in discussing these difficult subjects."*

● Debrief with faculty colleagues after challenging classes. Sometimes a chat with a supportive colleague can give us valuable feedback and the perspective we need to rally our energy for the next class.

Conflict may feel uncomfortable, and many people try to avoid it for this rea-son. Despite its sometimes uncomfort-able presence, conflict is both unavoid-able and potentially beneficial. Controversial discussion adds energy and motivation to the classroom; heightens awareness and increases student engagement, and gives us as instructors opportunities to encourage the development of critical thinking skills and potentially new solutions to societal issues.

Be aware of your own personal style and responses. Ask yourself: How do I handle challenges in class? What values do I display when I am feeling defensive or confronted?

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DIFFICULT DIALOGUE
MEETING LEARNER EXPECTATIONS

We had a few firestorms in the first faculty intensive, and they started early, on day one. All day long, Libby could feel the tension in the room rise, but she didn't really know where all of it was coming from. So, at the end of the day, she asked participants to complete a Critical Incident Questionnaire. They wrote some passionate responses which she read that night.

As described by Brookfield and Preskill, a Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ) is an anonymous way to find out from our students what's really going on in the classroom. Used once a week, once a month, after a particularly difficult day, or whenever the need arises, it gives us feedback we need to hear about course content, presentation, minority voices, dominant cultures, and much more. At the same time it gives us a chance to model the kinds of active learning behaviors we hope to teach our students.

No one really likes criticism, especially if it's in public. But by acknowledging criticism and openly discussing the particulars of it, we can model for our students the very qualities we are trying to teach them: a respect for new information and feedback, a willingness to listen and learn, and a habit of discourse that engages rather than avoids difficult truths.

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.

Adapted from Brookfield and Preskill, *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*

We had planned the intensive to focus primarily on positive, proactive approaches to introducing controversial topics in the classroom. However, based on the number of seriously negative incidents UAA faculty members reported in their applications, we decided to address these concerns and fears first, so folks didn't feel like they needed to keep bringing them up throughout the week. As a result, much of the first day involved techniques that addressed negative possibilities, threatening situations, and disruptive students. We hoped the arrangement would free us up to spend the rest of the week exploring proactive ways of working with conflict in the classroom.

"I thought I had adequately explained our rationale," says Libby, "but the CIQ responses told a different story." Some participants were disturbed by the tone of the day and concerned that it would continue throughout the week. In addition, because we had not sufficiently emphasized our desire for highly interactive presentations, many of our first day's presenters delivered their material by formal lectures, accompanied by PowerPoint slides. About half the participants liked those teaching styles, but the rest did not. On top of this, the textbook had been written by two white males, which made some people (who had yet to read it) wonder how culturally relevant the week would turn out to be. A few were operating on misinformation that made them distrust the intentions of some of the presenters. And perhaps worst of all, much of the content seemed to be focused almost exclusively on only one of the partner universities. Participants from the other, already a minority in numbers, felt marginalized.

The next morning, Libby reported back to the group, they discussed these issues, and she began making adjustments. After that, we had fewer static lectures and more interactive practice. We revamped the agenda for future intensives to start working together sooner on difficult dialogues of our own, and to be far more explicit in our introductory description of how the week would unfold.

Libby now likes to take a few minutes early on the first day to warn participants about what will follow.

"This is going to be an intense week," she says. "We're going to try a lot of different things, and not all of them will perfectly match your interests, learning styles, or particular classroom needs. But please remember that what is tough for you may work for someone else and vice versa. That's why all the research suggests that varying what you do in the classroom reaches more students. Experience shows that faculty learners are a lot like student learners in this regard, responding well to certain approaches and resisting or disengaging from others. This week will model some best practices for classroom teaching and introduce us to a range of approaches for proactively engaging difficult topics in the classroom. It will also give you a chance to remember what it is like to be a learner wrestling with new or uncomfortable material. Welcome to your class."

> Lesson learned? Your students may disagree with or be confused about what you say or do, but you can't always tell that—or understand the sources of the problem—just by looking at them. However, they will often write these things down in an anonymous way, and it really helps you tailor what to do next.
>
> Libby Roderick, Facilitator
> Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence

START TALKING

Questions for Discussion:

Do you have any of your own Tales from the Trenches, difficult classroom experiences that you wish you could do over?

What does academic freedom mean to you?

What is your preferred teaching style?

What styles engage you most as a learner?

How often do you take risks in the classroom, and how do you know whether they are successful?

How do you typically handle disruptive students, and how do you think you could improve your response?