



Moments of Dissent



AN EXERCISE

PURPOSE:

This exercise is a way to have a meta-conversation with students about co-creating the circumstances in the classroom for intentional, diverse and dialogic sharing--the kind of conversations that the group wants to create in the classroom. What is necessary for the class to have a level of divergent thinking, intellectual and ideological diversity, expressed?

TOPIC:

Building Agreements

ESTIMATED LENGTH:

20-30 min.

NOTE ON RESOURCE:

This exercise needs some time in order to be effective. The worksheet and pair sharing takes about 6-10 minutes. The large group sharing depends on the group size and 5 min. is suggested to wrap up and close the exercise.

Instructions

Ask the students to quietly think about the following:

Imagine you're in this class and the teacher asks a question. The first seven responses to the question have all generally been in agreement with each other about one way of thinking or looking at the problem. As you've listened, you've realized that your thinking/experience/beliefs/world view are different from everyone else who has spoken up until this point. You want to be able to share your opinion--your story--because you want to be understood; because it is important for people in the class to hear different ideas; because you want to get reflections or reactions to what you have to say; because you think people are missing something important. In this moment, you've got to make a decision as to whether to share that thought/story/belief/idea.

Think about three things:

1. What agreements could we have among us as a class that would make you more likely to share, rather than withhold, that idea? (Agreements)
2. What do you need to do internally to make it more possible for you to share? (Intentions)
3. What, as the facilitator of these conversations in this class, should I be thinking about as the conditions that will help you take that step that you, your classmates and this course need to take in order to have a full learning experience? (Conditions)

Take two minutes to write on the worksheet your responses to these questions. Take the full two minutes to write--write as much as you can. Afterwards, you will pair up and share what you have written.

Give the students two minutes to write and, then, pair them with a partner. Each pair talks with each other for 4 minutes about what they have written. After the 4 minutes of pair sharing, bring the group back together and have the students go around in a circle and name any one thing (agreement, intention, condition) that came up for them as being really important. Record these and use them to lead into building agreements with the group.



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1. What agreements could we have among us as a class that would make you more likely to share, rather than withhold that idea?

Agreements

2. What do you need to do internally to make it more possible for you to share?

Intentions

3. What, as the facilitator of these conversations in this class, should I be thinking about as the conditions that will help you take that step that you, your classmates and this course need to take in order to share fully in class?

Conditions