Inspiring trust and risk in online discussion

For Slack: General channel, #trust&risk

How can you build a respectful and supportive classroom community that encourages participation from all students and deepens opportunities for peer learning? Drawing from how community was created in an online course on racial identity development at the School of Social Work, this interactive session will consider how to build community in courses across a variety of departments. Participants will have the chance to reflect on how to apply the lessons from this session to assignment design and implementation.

Matthea Marquart
Twitter @MattheaMarquart

2018 Innovative Teaching Summer Institute #itsi18
Tuesday, June 12, 2018, 10:00am
Quick endorsement of the value of the Center for Teaching and Learning

**CTL lessons apply for years**

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**INNOVATIVE TEACHING WINTER INSTITUTE**

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**Assignment: Customized Staff Development Intervention**

- **Start**
  - Reflect on initial thoughts
  - Draft paper
  - Peer review
  - Feedback
  - Final paper + share with class

**Overall goal:**

Use collaborative skills to identify, propose, and refine a staff development intervention.

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**Steps to the Final Assignment**

1. **Intro to the final assignment**
   - March 27 | 10 pts

2. **Recommendation:**
   - Make an appointment with the Writing Center now, for week 6, to review your draft paper
   - [How to make an online appointment with the Writing Center.pdf](#)

3. **Identify & share who you plan to interview, why, and what you’d like to ask them**
   - April 3 | 20 pts

4. **Quick tech practice:**
   - Record & upload an audio file to make sure you know how to do it
   - April 10 | 5 pts

5. **Upload signed interview consent form**
   - April 17 | 10 pts

6. **Upload your full interview recording**
   - April 17 | 10 pts

7. **Share and discuss an excerpt of your interview**
   - April 24 | 20 pts

8. **Extra credit (optional):**
   - Upload documentation that you met with the Writing Center about your draft paper
   - April 26 | 0 pts

9. **Submit final paper**
   - April 26 | 100 pts

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For your consideration: you may want to archive your interview to share more widely, e.g. with Storycorps, Columbia’s Academic Commons, etc. (optional and not worth any points, and should be done with your interviewee’s permission)
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What risks do we ask students to take in class?
What risks do we ask students to take in class?

We ask students to be vulnerable in front of others:

- Speaking in public
- Volunteering to have people look at them
- Admitting they don’t know the answer
- Being wrong, being right, feeling judged either way
- Experiencing conflict / disagreement
- Sharing personal opinions, thoughts, experiences

The other people include:

- Potential crushes, exes, competitors, friends, peers
- The instructor who has power over them
What how might feeling vulnerable impact student behavior in your class?
Why is it important for students to take risks in the classroom?

“Learning results from what the student does and thinks and only from what the student does and thinks. The teacher can advance learning only by influencing what the student does to learn.”

HERBERT A. SIMON, one of the founders of the field of Cognitive Science, Nobel Laureate, and University Professor (deceased) at Carnegie Mellon University, from: How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching
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How can we create a classroom in which students feel comfortable taking risks?

- Creating, using, and enforcing community agreements
- Building community

These strategies can help establish a respectful, supportive environment that promotes participation & learning.
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Example community agreements:
Workers and the Workplace

• What’s said here stays here
• Acknowledge others’ feelings; give feedback, e.g. by saying “ouch”
• Share what’s learned here
• Use each other & each other's strengths as resources
Example community agreements:
Staff Development, Training, & Mentoring

- Argue the point, not the person
- Communicate respect even if you disagree
- Assume good will / don’t take it personally
- One mic
- “Call them in, not out”
- Share real world experiences
- Share ideas / be brave
- Don’t be afraid to shift your mental model
- “Step up / step back”
- Share job opportunities / network
Example community agreements:

Macro Community Practice

- Take turns / one mic
- Be respectful re: others' views / opinions - disagree respectfully & if possible provide data or explain
- Flow in and flow out; give others an opportunity to speak
- Oops and ouch; watch those microaggressions
- Keep info about specific organizations confidential
- Be patient with one another
- Encourage others to be the best versions of themselves; be supportive of each other
- Use your step away sign if you're away so we don't call on you
- Be careful about the impact of text (e.g. there's no vocal tone or facial expression to help understand)
- Actively participate
- Ask the speaker if they'd like a response or just want to be heard
Example community agreements:
Racial Identity Development

- Be respectful; create a respectful environment
- Listen to listen / listen to learn / listen before speaking
- Apologize if needed; acknowledge that we're here to learn
- Be brave about putting ourselves out there
- Take a moment if needed when reacting before you respond
- Oops / ouch
- Create a space for a dialogue; agree that we'll communicate with each other
- Don't make personal accusations
- What's said here stays here; what's learned here leaves here
- Critique ideas, not the person
Focus on Racial Identity Development:
Online course, First-year MSW students

• Community agreements reviewed:
  – At the start of each class session, with potential to edit / add to the agreements
  – Within each small group breakout discussion

• Community agreements enforced:
  – In grading rubrics for class sessions
  – In grading rubrics for online class discussion forums
  – In the moment during live class discussions
Revisiting our Community Agreements

- Be respectful; create a respectful environment
- Listen to listen / listen to learn / listen before speaking
- Apologize if needed; acknowledge that we're here to learn
- Be brave about putting ourselves out there
- Take a moment if needed when reacting before you respond
- Oops / ouch
- Create a space for a dialogue; agree that we'll communicate with each other
- Don't make personal accusations
- What's said here stays here; what's learned here leaves here
- Critique ideas, not the person

Anything to add or change? If these are still ok with you and you still agree to follow them, please give us a green check.
Example online breakout group setup

**Breakout Questions**

Note: recorders, please don’t write down private details; before starting to ask questions, check to see what the speakers feel comfortable having written down.

1. What was your experience like with the final paper? Were any parts particularly difficult?
2. What did you learn from the discussion forum about interview excerpts? Did your classmates have similar experiences with their interviews to the experience that you had?
3. If time: Feel free to discuss any final questions you’d like around race & racial identity

**Community Agreements**

- Be respectful; create a respectful environment
- Listen to listen / listen to learn / listen before speaking
- Apologize if needed; acknowledge that we’re here to learn
- Be brave about putting ourselves out there
- Take a moment if needed when reacting before you respond
- Ooo’s / ouch
- Create a space for a dialogue; agree that we’ll communicate with each other
- Don’t make personal accusations
- What’s said here stays here; what’s learned here leaves here
- Critique ideas, not the person
# Example class participation rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Ratings</th>
<th>Pts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrived on time and ready to participate</td>
<td>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present in session throughout (excluding any breaks) and stayed until the end</td>
<td>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology functioning as per online student agreement (no wifi, headset mic working, webcam working, etc.)</td>
<td>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in the chat</td>
<td>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in all of the polls</td>
<td>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributed to the group during breakout sessions (e.g., taking on the recorder or reporter roles, contributing to the group discussion, joined the group on webcam when reporting back, etc.)</td>
<td>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responded to instructor requests (e.g., using status icons when asked, volunteering to participate on webcam and mic)</td>
<td>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaved in a professional manner -- supportive of your colleagues and followed the community agreements</td>
<td>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Total Points: 10.0**
Example discussion forum instructions

In your discussion forum post, due on Monday at 11:59pm EST:

- Share who you'd like to interview, and why. Note: fake names are perfectly ok if there's a reason you'd prefer not to say, and you don't have to tell us it's a fake name.
- Share your list of 10 questions for your interviewee.

By Wednesday at 11:59pm EST, reply to at least two of your classmates. In your replies:

- Share something that resonated with you about their post, or that you found interesting
- Share feedback about the questions they plan to ask -- you can provide unlimited positive feedback, but you have a maximum of ONE piece of constructive feedback if you have something helpful to suggest, e.g. about the phrasing of a question, a tip about the overall approach, etc. So, think carefully about what you'd like to say.
- Engage with those who have responded to your post
- Keep in mind that tone can be difficult to interpret online, so be extra careful to write your responses in a respectful tone, and remember to follow our community agreements

This discussion forum is worth 20 points. The points for this assignment will be for:

- Submitting your first post on time (2 points)
- In your first post, sharing who you'd like to interview and why (4 points)
- In your first post, sharing a list of 10 questions you'd like to ask your interviewee (4 points)
- Submitting your responses to two of your classmates on time (2 points)
- In your responses, following the instructions (4 points)
- Demonstrating professionalism and a supportive tone in your language, and following our community agreements (4 points)
### Example discussion forum rubric

**Rubric for discussion forum on who to interview & questions to ask**

You’ve already rated students with this rubric. Any major changes could affect their assessment results.

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<td>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</td>
<td>2.0 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>In first post, shared who you'd like to interview &amp; why</td>
<td>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</td>
<td>4.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In first post, shared a list of 10 questions you’d like to ask your interviewee</td>
<td>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</td>
<td>4.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submitted responses to at least two classmates on time</td>
<td>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</td>
<td>2.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In responses, followed the instructions</td>
<td>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</td>
<td>4.0 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrated professionalism and a supportive tone in your language, and following our community agreements</td>
<td>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</td>
<td>4.0 pts</td>
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**Total Points: 20.0**
How might you create & enforce community agreements in your course?

• What’s worked for you in the past? (as a student or instructor)
• How might you react when someone breaks a community agreement?
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Examples of community-building strategies

Community-building discussion forums

Class celebrations/congratulations

Ask students to tell each other what they appreciate/respect/will miss about each other

Share fun or personal music/videos/images before class or during breaks
Happy Eclipse Week!
Getting acquainted - Building community by getting to know what we have in common

In this course, we are going to have some personal conversations, and we'll be coming from all sorts of different perspectives. Therefore, before we get into conversations about race, I'd like us to take a little time to connect with each other as human beings and colleagues. The goal is to start to build a supportive community.

In your discussion forum post, due on Tuesday at 11:59pm EST:

- Tell us where you're from and where you live now, and something you like about each place.
- Share 1-2 things that you care about or love, and why. This should be general enough that other people can relate.

By Wednesday at 11:59pm EST, reply to at least 3 of your classmates. In your replies:

- Share something that resonated with you about their post, or that you have in common.
- Engage with those who have responded to your post.
- Keep in mind that tone can be difficult to interpret online, so be extra careful to write your responses in a respectful tone.

The points for this assignment will be for:

- Submitting your first post on time (1 point)
- In your first post, answering the questions (1 point)
- Submitting your responses to three of your classmates on time (3 points)
- In your responses, following the instructions (3 points)
- Demonstrating professionalism and a supportive tone in your language (2 points)
Breakout Instructions: Intros & finding things in common

This activity builds on our Getting Acquainted discussion forum. In the discussion forum, you had the chance to find out what you had in common with individuals in our class. Now, let’s see what you have in common with a group of your classmates.

1. Unmute your mics & introduce yourselves
2. Choose a recorder to take notes (only one person can write on the note pad at a time)
3. Choose a facilitator who will make sure all voices are heard in the discussion
4. Choose a reporter to share with the whole group when we come back together
5. Discuss which option below you will do, and then do it:
   - Option 1: List as many things as you can that you all have in common
   - Option 2: Find 1-2 really unique things that you all have in common
Breakout Debrief

- Full group on webcam
- Reporters – share
  1. Which option did your group choose, and why did you choose it?
  2. How did you go about finding out what you had in common?
  3. What’s one thing you’d like to share from your list?
Congrats on nearing the end of your first year at CSSW!
Sooner than you know it, you’ll be here!
Some class celebrations

___ – Happy birthday!
___ – Happy 3-year anniversary & upcoming marriage!
___ – Congratulations on your summer fellowship!
___ – Happy 2\textsuperscript{nd} birthday to your daughter!

Anything else to celebrate? Please type into chat.
Welcome back!
Thank you for your open and respectful conversations last week. You are one week closer to this.
Example class slide

2-Minute Self-Care Break

https://youtu.be/hYjQt_oIQqk
Pre-breakout chat question

What’s something that you respect about your colleagues in this class?
Review: What’s something that you respect about your colleagues in this class?

- being brave
- everyone's attention to detail :)
- ability to listen
- willing to have a conversation about race
- Thoughtful, considerate listeners
- Everyone is open-minded and committed to social equity
- listening!
- consideration for everyone else
- They are intelligent, respectful, and supportive
- Willingness to be present and listen
- being able to handle this subject
- everyone seems open to changing their mindset
- being respectful of peers, openness, diverse experiences
- respect each other's opinion even if they do not always agree
- I respect people's ability to open up and ask questions regarding their gaps in knowledge on race
- Open to other viewpoints
- open-minded
- considerate and respectful
- willingness to be honest and brave
- Willing to learn, open minded, willing to change
- Their dedication to constantly strive towards excellence within themselves, and applying that same passion to helping those in need through evidence based social work practice.
How might you build community in your course throughout the semester?

• What’s worked for you in the past? (as a student or instructor)
• How might you go about building community in your course throughout the semester?
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Thinking about the assignment you’re working on at ITSI:

1. What kinds of risks are you asking your students to take?

2. How might you help students feel brave enough to take those risks?
   a) Is there anything you can add to the assignment itself?
   b) Is there anything you can do with the class prior to assigning the assignment?
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Time to Reflect on Slack
Post to the general channel with #trust&risk

1. What are your key takeaways from this session?

2. In your discipline / courses, what kinds of risks are students asked to take in class?

3. How might community agreements or community-building help students take these risks?
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Mark Phillipson
Lucy Appert
Ian Althouse
Christopher V. H.-H. Chen
Chandani Patel
Peiyi Woo
Rebecca Chung
The Center for Teaching and Learning
Columbia School of Social Work