Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice

THIRD EDITION

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Design and Facilitation

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INTRODUCTION

Social justice education (SJE) courses do not simply convey content; they also engage participants in examining social identities, power, privilege, and structural inequalities in our society and in their own lives. Thus, social justice courses are cognitively challenging, emotionally charged, and personally unsettling. They can also be transformative, as participants develop greater personal awareness, expand knowledge that counters dominant narratives, and commit to making changes in themselves and their environments. Given this complexity, social justice educators should be intentional about their curriculum choices and pedagogical approaches if they are to successfully accomplish social justice educational goals. Therefore, thoughtful consideration of the interrelated issues of design and facilitation are essential.

Design includes all the planning, assessment, and evaluation activities that facilitators/instructors engage in prior to, during, and after meeting with participants. Design includes setting an agenda for the course or workshop, selecting reading and other course materials, planning activities, and organizing small- and large-group procedures for engaging participants actively. In traditional academic courses, design also includes constructing syllabi, exams, and other assessments. *Facilitation* refers to the leadership strategies and skills that instructors use to actively engage participants in learning, mediate interactions within the group, and guide interpersonal and group dynamics as part of the learning process. Both aspects are key to social justice teaching and are complementary and interconnected.

Attention to design and facilitation creates a classroom or workshop community or holding environment within which active and engaged learning can take place. As *designers*, we want to clearly think through and organize materials, activities, and sequencing at every stage in the process. As *facilitators*, we want to intentionally model effective communication skills and respect for differences. We also want to encourage ways of interacting that are inclusive, respectful, honest, and courageous, and support people to challenge injustice in our relationships and the institutional systems of which we are a part.

While our approach in this book is to foreground one ism at a time, we always want to keep in mind that isms intersect on both structural and personal levels, and they mutually inform and reinforce each other in various contexts. Participants are personally situated within matrices of oppression that will differentially affect their connections to, and experiences with, the topic under discussion, and this should inform our planning and facilitation. We also want to be mindful that our own social identities and positionality as instructors will impact our responses to students and course material, and plan for this as well. (We discuss this further in Chapter 12.)

In this chapter, we map out the design and facilitation frameworks and strategies we have developed to guide our social justice teaching. While in practice, design and facilitation are

integrally related, for the sake of clarity we focus first on overarching principles of design and then on facilitation strategies. In the facilitation section, we also delve into design considerations at different phases of a class or workshop. We hope readers will see the interconnections between the two sections as they use these design and facilitation guidelines to develop their own social justice practice.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Well-designed curriculum sets the stage for easier and more effective facilitation. Marchesani and Adams (1992) identify four dimensions to consider for addressing diversity and equity in a classroom or workshop: 1) *instructor*, 2) *students*, 3) *curriculum*, and 4) *pedagogy*. Briefly, the four dimensions address these questions: "Who are we as instructors?" "Who are our students?" "What do we teach?" and "How do we teach it?" To these four dimensions, we add one more: 5) *classroom climate and group dynamics*, which affects and is affected by all four other dimensions: "How do the climate and interactions in the classroom affect learning?"

Among other contributions, the model shown in Fig. 3.1 reminds instructors of the multilayered and interacting facets in the design and teaching of social justice courses. Each dimension offers a point of entry for considering how a course may be shaped and improved.

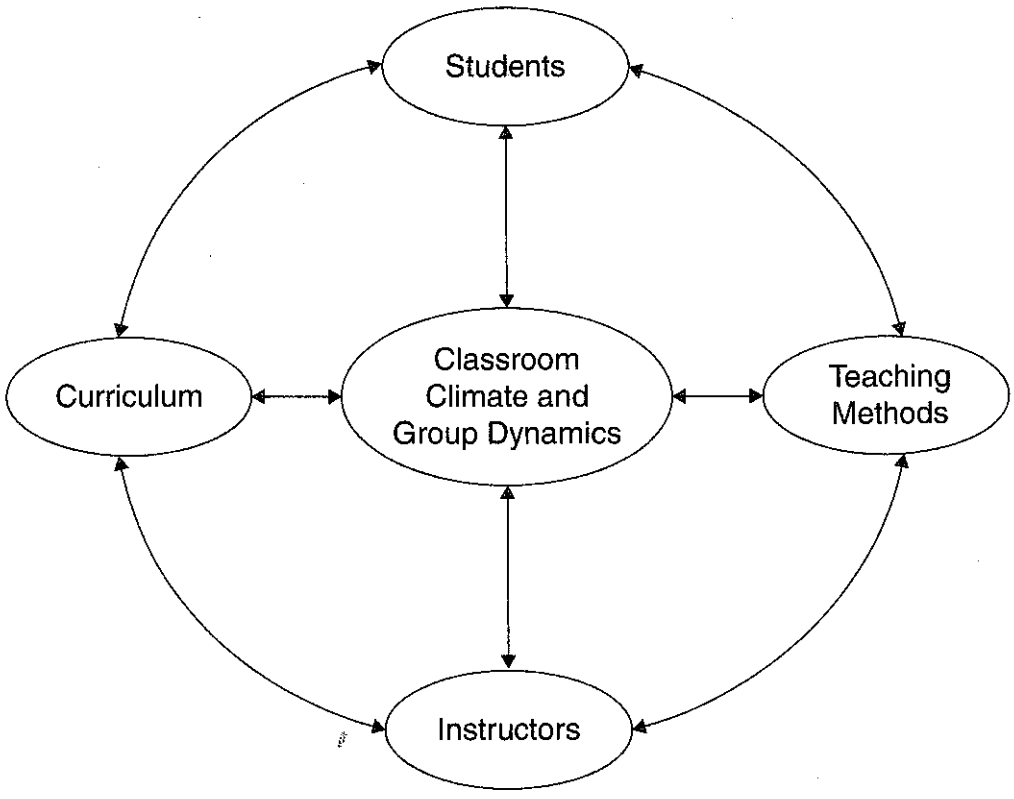

Figure 3.1 Five Dimensions of Diversity and Equity in the Classroom
Adapted from Marchesani & Adams (1992)

DIMENSION 1: SELF/INSTRUCTOR: WHO WE ARE

The first dimension addresses who we are as instructors/facilitators. We bring ourselves into the classroom, including our social identities, cultural styles, preferred teaching approaches, personalities, knowledge bases, triggers, and biases (see Chapter 12). It is especially important in social justice education that educators explore how we are shaped by our intersectional social identities and consequent positionality, and how these affect our teaching (Palmer, 1997). Consciously attending to personal growth and development is essential, ongoing work for social justice educators. We can benefit by considering such questions as these:

- *What social justice related topics am I most and least comfortable teaching?*
- *With which students am I most and least comfortable?*
- *Which students am I most/least effective educating?*
- *How do my social identities and positionality affect my teaching?*
- *What behaviors or issues trigger me in the classroom?*
- *How do I handle conflict? How well do I manage my reactions to conflict?*
- *How do I ensure that I am continuing my own process of development as a social justice educator?*
- *How am I staying current on the topics I teach?*

By examining our competencies and areas for further growth, we can design classes and workshops that match our skills and styles and be conscious of the areas where we will need to grow as instructors. (Chapter 12, *Critical Self-Knowledge for Social Justice Educators*, provides a thorough discussion of these issues.)

DIMENSION 2: STUDENTS—WHO WE TEACH

The second dimension addresses getting to know the participants in our classes and workshops. Important factors to consider are the multiple social identities, interests, expectations, needs, prior experiences, lived realities, and learning preferences that participants bring to the course. Knowing about our students helps us develop appropriate learning goals and activities, and anticipate and plan for participant reactions and interactions in the course.

Multiple Social Identities and Positionality

Participants' various social identities and positionality within matrices of domination and subordination are important for numerous reasons. Social identities shape participants' lived experiences and relationship to the issue being explored. Those who have multiple subordinated identities often bring a different world view and different needs to the course than participants with a single or no subordinated identity. In a sexism course that is multiracial with a mix of sexual identities, for example, we can anticipate and provide ways to explore how participants encounter sexism differently through their diverse experiences with heterosexism and racism (among other forms of oppression). Instructors also can be attuned to possible feelings of isolation or hyper-visibility, depending on the makeup of the group or the organization in which the class is being offered—for example, being one of the few Latino/a students or staff in a predominantly white course or institution.

While we should not assume *how* participants' social identities shape their knowledge, experiences, and perspective, we can recognize that identities do inform the way they relate to the issues. Facilitators can anticipate dynamics between and among people from privileged

and marginalized groups and design accordingly. Some design strategies that facilitators can tailor to the specific needs of individuals and groups include explicit class agreements that address power dynamics and different styles of communication, caucus groups, where participants from the same identity group can share experiences with each other, experiential activities that actively engage participants, process questions that include various degrees of complexity, and choices of readings and assignments tailored to the particular group.

Social Identity Development

We can expect that participants will be at different places in their social identity development related to different forms of oppression. (Chapter 2 provides a more thorough discussion of social identity development theory.) Social identity development helps us understand how students enter our classes with different levels of awareness of their own social identities in relation to larger social structures of privilege and oppression. Participants in earlier phases of identity development may have done little critical thinking about their social identities and are likely to be operating from the ideology and values of the dominant culture. Participants in other phases of growth may be more conscious of their social identities and may be more focused on resisting the dominant paradigm and changing systems they see as oppressive.

Reflecting on where participants are in their individual social identity development allows us to understand how participants from the same social identity group may have very different reactions to the same content. For example, an incident where a young black man is seriously injured by a white police officer may be viewed differently by two students who are both African American, depending on their positionality and prior knowledge. A black male student who grew up in a predominantly white, affluent neighborhood, and who has had no personal interactions with police, may view this situation as an isolated incident and the behavior of one bad cop; while another black male student who is an African American Studies major, and/or who has had similar dealings with police, may see this as a continuation of a history in which police victimize and subordinate black people. While social identity development theory is not a diagnostic tool, it can help us anticipate dynamics among participants at similar and different points in their process, consider how to meet their diverse learning needs, and facilitate class dynamics more skillfully.

Interests and Motivations

Each participant brings to the course or workshop a unique combination of work and life experiences. Insight into participants' personal and professional interests and motivations can help us shape learning activities, supplemental materials, and group experiences to be as relevant as possible to participants' lives and future goals. For example, are participants graduate or undergraduate students? Traditional or nontraditional age, or a mix? Experienced with or new to social justice content? Is the course/workshop required or voluntary? Such information can help guide pedagogical choices, too. If the course includes a variety of participants, the use of caucuses or work groups based on majors, career orientations, or job roles may be helpful to promote a sense of applicability and connection to participants' interests.

Previous Experiences and Comfort

Participants generally will have had varying opportunities to develop personal awareness and to think critically about social justice issues. For some participants, this is their first

time exploring these topics and learning in a diverse group. Others may have grown up in families that talked comfortably about this subject matter and may have lots of experience discussing controversial topics. Some people may have had very positive (even transformative) experiences in social justice courses or workshops, while others may have had very negative ones. Some participants are used to being in an academic setting and debating views, while others are less familiar with formal educational environments.

In some settings, participants may not expect to be engaged actively or experientially. Consequently, an activity may feel risky and emotionally challenging to some participants but not to others. Particular pedagogical strategies can allow for different levels of comfort, such as ensuring that there is time for personal reflection or sharing in pairs before asking people to contribute to a whole-group discussion. Recognizing differences in readiness and experience can help us design learning experiences that foster participation by everyone and provide levels of challenge that promote learning for all.

Relationships Among Participants

Another aspect to consider in designing classes/workshops are the organizational levels and type of relationships among participants. Past, present, and future relationships of participants can directly affect current group dynamics. Differences in power, placement in the organizational hierarchy, or educational attainment can lead participants to have varying degrees of confidence that it is safe enough to be open about their experiences, engage in large-group discussions, or participate in personally revealing learning activities. For example, participants from the same department or work setting who hold different statuses may have concerns about whether what they say and do will be used against them by supervisors or higher-ranking colleagues. Feelings of vulnerability may make it seem too risky to be direct and honest about feelings, experiences, and perceptions in front of other participants. Individuals in high-level positions as well may not want to appear ignorant or vulnerable in front of those they supervise.

It is important to understand the relationships that participants bring into the room with them. Are the participants strangers or an ongoing work group? Do some participants directly supervise others? Have the participants had prior experiences with each other that may have already built trust or called it into question? Knowing something about the participants' prior experiences with each other helps us to plan accordingly. There may be a greater need to include writing exercises, such as brief response exercises or journaling, or more paired discussions in which participants select their own partner. Caucus groups—homogeneous groups organized around particular identities, such as white and people of color/multiracial caucus groups to discuss racism—offer an excellent opportunity to aggregate insights and perspectives that individuals may feel too vulnerable to offer personally in a mixed group. Caucus groups typically report back in an anonymous way key points to the larger group so the group as a whole can learn from these insights.

Accommodations / Modifications

By knowing about participants, we can better anticipate and design learning experiences that will accommodate individual learning needs. The presence of international participants for whom English is not a first language, or participants with learning disabilities, may require that we make modifications to ensure an equitable learning experience for all. For example, this may mean modifying the formats of readings, videos, and class activities. Universal Design (discussed in detail in Chapter 9) is a useful model to ensure that all students can fully benefit and participate.

Pre-assessment Options

One way to obtain relevant information is to use classroom assessment techniques as described by Angelo and Cross (1993), such as a prior learning survey or brief "minute paper" exercises. For example, it may be helpful in a variety of instructional settings to ask participants to fill out an inventory or profile in which they identify their social group memberships and prior experiences in social justice education courses or trainings. Informal pre-assessment activities can be completed beforehand; for example, facilitators can interview participants individually before the session or convene a focus group with representative class members. If that proves impractical, facilitators can send out a brief individual survey in which participants describe their prior experiences, hopes, and fears, and learning goals for the upcoming class or workshop. In a similar way, having participants complete a brief quiz on prior knowledge can provide a sense of the range of understanding that participants are likely to bring to the topic of the class or workshop. Facilitators can also talk with individuals who are knowledgeable about social justice issues and familiar with participants or the community from which they come (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

There are many structured activities that can be used in the initial session to help students learn each other's names, get to know a bit about each other, and give the facilitator a chance to get a better sense of participants' prior experiences, expectations, and views. For example, Chapter 5, *Racism and White Privilege*, uses an activity called the "Prevalence of Race Continuum." This activity asks participants to respond to a series of statements ("You speak a language other than English at home"; "You have studied people who look like you in history class"; "You have ever felt racial tension in a situation and were afraid to say anything about it") by moving to signs in the room that say "True for Me," "Not True For Me," and "Neutral/Don't Know." This activity is a relatively low-risk way to get into the topic of race and lets the facilitator get a sense of who is in the group and their experiences with the topic of race. Curriculum adjustments can then be made based on the information about student identities, experiences, and interests gleaned from these activities.

DIMENSION 3: CURRICULUM—WHAT WE TEACH

The third dimension addresses choices instructors/facilitators make about what content, perspectives, and voices to include in the course. Three broad goals for social justice education courses are to increase personal awareness, expand knowledge, and encourage action. The relative emphasis we place on each of these goals will vary with the specific learning goals for a particular workshop or course. For example, with novice groups, it may be useful to focus on developing personal awareness and knowledge of social justice content, and select curriculum materials that provide information and help participants reflect on their own experiences in relation to that content; whereas with an experienced group, it may be more useful to focus on how to apply and take action on what the participants have learned, and select curriculum materials and content that serve that goal.

Establish Learning Outcomes

It is important that social justice educators have clear and realistic learning outcomes for the whole course or workshop, for each module/session, and for the individual activities we use. While it can be tempting to build curriculum around particular activities that we find exciting, instruction should be driven by our goals for learning, not activities. Establishing learning outcomes offers benefits for both participants and instructors. Facilitators

will be better organized and prepared to communicate to participants what is most important to learn and why. We are also better able to communicate our expectations for how participants will demonstrate successful progress toward these learning goals.

Fink (2013) suggests three questions for developing learning outcome goals. The first question, *What do you want learners to know?* addresses cognitive learning goals and communicates what is most important for participants to know by the end of the course or workshop. The second question, *What do you want learners to be able to do?* addresses kinesthetic learning goals and communicates the skills in which participants are expected to demonstrate proficiency by the end of the course. The third question, *What critical perspectives do we want learners to understand and practice using?* addresses the particular dispositions (sometimes referred to as habits of mind) of social justice education. For example, instructors may want participants to develop and demonstrate dispositions of critical self-reflection and the ability to use a social justice/equity lens to analyze situations thoughtfully.

Clear, realistic, and flexible learning outcome goals help facilitators make decisions more effectively in the moment and as the course unfolds to assess whether or not the group is on track. Sometimes facilitators need to adapt learning goals based on what they learn in the process of working with participants. Having clarified beforehand the priorities related to content, skills, and values, instructors can more easily distinguish what comments, questions, and activities are most central to student learning and which are not. This helps to assess if a question or activity, albeit interesting or fun, may be at best optional, or at worst a digression or distraction, from what is most important and central to the course or workshop focus.

Choosing Activities and Materials

Based on the learning outcomes, facilitators can identify instructional materials and activities that best match the needs of the group. As instructors decide on materials, it is useful to consider such questions as: *Who is included? What is included? How is it included? From whose perspective?* and *Using what sources?* For example, in a course that addresses LGBTQ issues, are a range of people's experiences included? From whose perspective are these issues being examined? Are readings or films written or produced by LGBTQ people? Are LGBTQ people seen only as victims, or are examples of strength, resilience, resistance, and change included? Instructors should always avoid content that presents people from disadvantaged groups in tokenized, stereotypical ways, and seek materials that reflect the diversity of experiences within a social identity group. In making these choices, we benefit as instructors from being mindful of how our own social identities, knowledge base, and values influence our decisions about what to include or not.

Context

Program, department, institutional, community, and/or discipline-specific expectations may also shape learning outcome goals. Curricular goals in many pre-professional programs (nursing, social work, engineering, and teacher education) may reflect both institutional and national professional accreditation guidelines. For example, courses in social work or education may be expected to address specific learning outcomes established by their national accrediting bodies. Grassroots and community organizations may have a different set of expectations and goals than university settings. It is important to understand the context for which the course or workshop is being designed in order to design curriculum appropriately.

DIMENSION 4: PEDAGOGY—HOW WE TEACH

The fourth dimension addresses how facilitators engage with participants, with the content and with each other to promote learning. The degree to which this is done successfully determines whether an inclusive teaching and learning environment will be created and sustained. Social justice and diversity courses/workshops can be transformative experiences. However, such growth comes only after confronting and critically analyzing previously held concepts, theories, and beliefs. The process of addressing what may well have been limited or missing information, unconscious or unintentional bias, and the feelings attached to such positions is both an affective and cognitive process. How instructors model self-reflection, critical analysis, and openness to feelings and ideas is as much a part of the growth experience for students as the theoretical content.

Utilize a Range of Appropriate Pedagogical Strategies and Approaches

Facilitators, as do all people, have learning style preferences, and unless we make conscious choices, we may fall into teaching in ways that reflect our learning style preferences rather than meeting the needs of the group. Effective educators learn to utilize a range of pedagogical strategies to meet the needs of a range of learners as well as to help them stretch and expand their repertoire. The work of Bloom and Krathwohl (1956) on learning taxonomies and Kolb (1984) on learning style preferences offer useful frameworks for designing and facilitating social justice educational experiences.

Bloom and Krathwohl (1956) developed a model to show how learning progresses systematically and identified three domains of learning: cognitive (intellectual), affective (social–emotional), and kinesthetic (skills and behaviors). Further research on this model has shown that sustained learning happens most when learners are appropriately engaged across all three domains simultaneously (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2000; Bloom & Krathwohl, 1956). An example of socio-emotional learning might be to ask participants to purposefully connect with someone whose experiences and perspectives differ from their own. Cognitive learning may be exemplified by listening to a lecture, reading assignments, or learning new theories and definitions. Kinesthetic learning can be seen in experiential activities that enact and explore the dynamics of oppression, such as using role-playing to explore different perspectives, and using music and art to express learning. Kinesthetic activities can be invaluable in helping learners synthesize and integrate skills, practice new behaviors, and process emotions:

- Simulations and speak-outs, for example, engage participants in a direct and concrete manner (*concrete experience*).
- The processing questions that follow an activity, film, or lecture utilize *reflective observation*.
- Conceptual models such as the Five Faces of Oppression or Cycle of Socialization employ *abstract conceptualization*.
- Action projects that ask participants to apply learning to their particular contexts exemplify *active experimentation*.

Physical Environment and Logistics

How we teach particular content and the specific activities we choose also depend on the physical environment and the timing of the class or workshop. It is helpful for facilitators to consider the following questions:

- *What is the space like? Is it stadium seating with unmovable chairs or open space with flexible seating?*

- *How well does the space lend itself to different kinds of groupings, experiential activities, and use of educational technology?*
- *What kind of technology is available for us and for students?*
- *Will the design of the physical structure present any challenges to access, sightlines, and mobility for students?*
- *What time of day is the session? Early morning, late afternoon, or evening when energy may be low?*
- *What activities or events immediately precede or follow that may affect participants' engagement? For example, is the class right before lunch or following another long class?*

STRUCTURING ACTIVITIES

As mentioned above, we believe that it is important for social justice educators to have clear learning objectives for the activities we use and explicit criteria for determining how students will measure progress toward these goals. In general, the internal structure of activities follows a basic progression such as the one shown in Fig. 3.2.

1. Identify Key Concepts and Establish Learning Objectives and Evaluation Criteria
2. Establish How Learners Will Demonstrate Progress
3. Select or Design Learning Activities and Allot Time for Each Activity
4. Organize Directions and Procedures for Each Activity and Gather Equipment and Materials Needed
5. Develop Processing Format and Questions for Each Activity
6. Sequence Learning Activities

Figure 3.2 Steps in Structuring Activities

1. Identify key concepts and establish learning objectives and evaluation criteria.

Given the vast amount of material on any social justice issue, instructors need to identify the main ideas they want to address. Key concepts introduce new information or conceptual frames for participants to use in examining course content, issues raised in discussion, and their own experiences. In an Ableism class, for example, participants may be introduced to the concept of stereotyping by exploring stereotypes of people with disabilities and examining the roots of these stereotypes historically and in their own socialization.

It is important that social justice educators have clear learning objectives for each of the activities used in order to establish criteria for determining whether or not we have been successful in meeting our goals. Instructors should also be intentional about the purpose of a particular activity so they can facilitate it effectively.

2. Establish how learners will demonstrate progress.

It is essential to identify how students will demonstrate successful progress toward the key learning goals by the end of the course or workshop. Participants will value a clear explanation of what is expected of them and how their progress will be assessed. If you are

teaching a course for credit, the students can benefit from knowing the required assignments, seeing models of exemplary work, and having a rubric that describes levels of success. In other settings, participants can develop action plans to demonstrate what they have learned and report on their progress.

3. Select or design learning activities and allot time for each activity.

Each learning activity is a structured interaction with one or more key concepts. As discussed earlier, knowing our students is an essential first step in choosing relevant and developmentally appropriate learning activities. Examples of activities include: role-plays, case studies, simulations, brainstorming, interactive lecture, video, small- or large-group discussions, worksheets, or writing prompts. Activities are generally designed to engage participants with the issues experientially, cognitively, and/or emotionally, and provide ways for them to interact with the content, each other, and with us as instructors at different points in the course. Some questions that can help guide the selection of activities include:

- *What is the composition of this particular group of participants?*
- *What range of prior knowledge and experiences might they bring to this activity?*
- *How does this activity align with and advance progress toward one or more key learning goals?*
- *How does this activity fit with what participants have just been doing and with what they will be asked to do next?* (Later in the chapter, we will discuss sequencing learning activities.)

It is important to anticipate and allocate sufficient time for the full activity, including processing the activity and addressing questions or concerns that may emerge from the group. It can be easy to underestimate how long it will take to complete and then debrief an activity sufficiently, especially for facilitators who are new to experiential learning or to the specific activity. If too little time is allocated for processing and synthesizing the learning outcomes that the activity is designed to promote, participants will be left to make sense of activities on their own without the benefit of facilitator guidance and the perspectives of other participants.

While there are no explicit rules about timing, we suggest that facilitators initially plan to debrief or process an activity for about three times the amount of time the actual exercise or activity takes to do. The more experience with a specific activity, the better able a facilitator will be to judge what students will likely need. It is helpful to provide participants with estimated time frames for each activity, while noting that these can be modified if needed. Leading thoughtful and probing discussions after an activity is at the heart of facilitation in social justice education courses and can often make the difference between high-quality and superficial learning.

4. Organize directions and procedures for each activity and gather equipment and materials as needed.

To facilitate a successful activity, facilitators need to become familiar with the procedures of the activity and to develop directions that will guide participants through a clearly defined and logical sequence of learning. When introducing an activity, it is important to communicate what the learning objectives are, how these fit into the overall curriculum, why this activity is relevant to their learning, and what is expected of them as participants.

It is also important to assemble ahead of time and in the right quantities what participants may need (e.g., directions, handouts, newsprint, videos, scissors, masking tape, index cards, post-its, supplemental resources) in order to complete activities. Additionally, make sure to set up and test technology beforehand.

5. Develop processing format and questions for each activity.

Processing refers to the systematic and guided reflection that follows an activity. The steps involved in processing often include time for individual reflection and analysis (often done in small- and large-group discussions). The goal of processing is to help participants build on prior knowledge, reflect on their learning, construct personal meaning, identify questions and contradictions, and consolidate new learning. Processing also helps facilitators assess how well participants are making sense of an activity and key learnings.

Before asking students to participate in discussions, a brief writing prompt can be used to give participants the opportunity to first reflect individually on how they felt about the activity and what they learned. This strategy can be particularly valuable for students who are shy or prefer time for reflection before engaging with others. Discussions are important opportunities for participants to deepen analysis of the activity and the meanings they draw from it. Discussions can take place in pairs, small groups, or caucuses, depending on the activity. Through discussion, participants can clear up points of confusion, share observations, and receive feedback from us and other participants. In discussions, it is important to normalize respect for the expression of divergent perspectives while also encouraging students to challenge their own and others' thinking.

After a period of personal reflection and group discussion—which match the learning style modes of *concrete experience* and *reflective observation*—it is time to shift the dialogue toward *abstract analysis* of the oppression issues raised in the activity by inviting participants to discuss how the activity illustrates particular dynamics of oppression. We invite them to identify questions, contradictions, or insights raised by the activity, and to discuss connections to other concepts. For example, following a role-play about sexual harassment, we might ask participants, "How did the actions of men and women in this role-play reflect gender socialization?" "In what ways are the power dynamics in this situation similar to other forms of oppression?" "How might the experiences of women from different racial groups compare in this situation?" Participants can also be asked how they might apply the learnings from this and other activities to their lives.

6. Sequence learning activities.

We consider several factors in selecting and sequencing activities so that the overall flow of the course makes sense to participants. Careful sequencing also enables us to introduce concepts and activities in an incremental way that builds upon student prior awareness and learning at different phases of the course (Brooks-Harris & Stock-Ward, 1999; Weinstein, 1988).

Lower to higher risk. Learners need to feel safe enough to express and examine deeply held feelings, confusions, and assumptions about oppression issues. Lower-risk activities in the beginning of a social justice education course are designed to help participants get acquainted, develop a sense of group cohesion, practice interaction guidelines that support honest engagement and learning, and acquire some basic concepts and information before moving to activities that require more risky disclosure of feelings and perspectives. Moving from individual reflection to discussions in pairs or small groups before engaging in whole-group discussions is also a way to progressively increase the level of risk and to build in support as discussions proceed.

Concrete to abstract (or abstract to concrete). This sequencing principle reflects our belief that participants learn best when their understanding of oppression is firmly rooted in concrete experiences and examples that provide a foundation for analysis of abstract concepts, theory, and the multiple levels on which oppression operates. Participants can then examine material in the context of concrete examples that illustrate the theoretical ideas being discussed. For instance, in exploring the portrayal of a marginalized group in the media, participants could be asked to watch TV shows and note the ways members of that group are portrayed (concrete). Then they could read an analysis of how that group has historically been and is currently reflected in the media, and consider the sociological significance (abstract) of the way the group has been reflected in the media. It may make sense to start with the abstract and then connect it to concrete examples when there is limited time or participants are particularly interested in theory or expert opinion.

Personal to institutional/cultural (or institutional/cultural to personal). In most of our courses, we begin with personal content, then introduce an institutional and cultural focus. We start with a personal focus because this level is more accessible to participants for initial exploration of the topic. After examining their own experiences and socialization, they can consider new information (e.g., readings, lectures, and discussions) that asks them to reflect critically on assumptions and experiences using new information and conceptual frameworks that explore how oppression operates on institutional and cultural levels. In some cases, it might be more appropriate for a group to start with the institutional/cultural and then move to the personal if a broader perspective would be useful first.

Difference to dominance (or diversity to social justice). This sequencing principle first focuses on helping participants describe and understand their own experiences as members of different social groups and listen to others in the course share their experiences and perspectives. The focus is on respecting, understanding, and acknowledging difference. After this exchange, the concepts of dominance, social power, and privilege are introduced to help participants understand that difference is not neutral, and that social groups are valued differently and have greater or lesser access to social and personal resources and power.

What? So what? Now what? These questions are a handy shorthand for how to sequence and organize processes as well as content. The first question, *"What?"* asks what knowledge and awareness we want participants to gain. The second question, *"So what?"* helps students understand *why* this information or awareness is important or relevant. And the third question, *"Now what?"* addresses the implications of what participants have learned and the next steps to be taken given this new knowledge and awareness.

Other considerations related to sequencing ensure that activities are varied. Instructors need to balance activities that allow participants to move about (active), such as experiential exercises and role-plays, with ones that require more sitting and listening (passive), such as lectures and movies. How students are grouped, such as individual reflection, paired sharing, and small-group and large-group activities also need to be rotated.

DIMENSION 5: CLIMATE AND CLASSROOM DYNAMICS

The previous four dimensions (i.e., "Who we are as instructors," "Who are our students," "What we teach," and "How we teach") each affect how participants experience the learning environment of the course or workshop. We suggest climate and classroom dynamics be considered a fifth dimension since both are so central in social justice education and

are shaped by the other four dimensions. Some questions that can help identify important factors of climate and classroom dynamics include the following:

- *Do all participants feel heard and respected?*
- *Do participants see us as trustworthy and knowledgeable?*
- *Are participants able to engage with each other in ways that support learning?*
- *Do the content and the pedagogy feel relevant and culturally inclusive?*

The better the facilitator is at creating and sustaining an inclusive climate—by designing and implementing structures and activities that enable participants to engage honestly and thoughtfully with course material and each other—the more likely participants will be open to express and explore unexamined beliefs and values, and learn.

Making adjustments as the class unfolds. More times than not, the design that instructors have prepared prior to the start of the course requires adjustment once the course begins. The flexibility to make needed design adjustments based on what is happening in the moment is an essential skill. Many factors can necessitate redesigning a course. Pre-assessment information about participants may be incomplete or inaccurate. Incidents in a class may require a change in design to capitalize on a spontaneous learning opportunity or "teachable moment" that presents itself during the class. Student expectations for the course may not match the design. Activities may take longer than the time allotted for them in the original design and instructors need to change plans as a result. Informal student evaluations in the midst of the course may signal the need to alter the design. In all of these cases, it is necessary to reevaluate the design and decide how to make adjustments that will maintain the flow of the course while addressing the essential key concepts and learning goals.

Designing for accessibility. Universal instructional design (UID) is a useful planning model for making social justice education courses accessible to a broad spectrum of participants with and without disabilities (Burgstahler & Cory, 2008). Universal instructional design is an adaptation of the universal design model used to enhance architectural accessibility in the physical environment. Just as ramps and automatic doors for building entrances, books on tape, and auditory signals at traffic lights are useful to everyone, UID is intended as a guide for curriculum planning to serve the needs of all participants. Rather than focus on accommodating "special needs," UID principles are integrated into the planning process for all courses. For example, instructors using UID principles routinely ensure the following in their course planning: Wheelchair-accessible spaces, accessible and gender-neutral toilet facilities, instructional materials in a variety of formats (e.g., large print, audio, closed-captioned), adaptable activities (e.g., stand up or raise hand), and flexibility in time for students to complete tests and assignments. Making sure that all aspects of the learning environment are accessible to all participants is essential (Burgstahler & Cory, 2008).

The range of potential disabilities may make it impossible to pre-plan for all of them, but UID principles call on instructors to plan for as many disabilities as are reasonable. As a routine aspect of pre-assessment, instructors should ask participants in each class about their specific learning needs, either before the course begins or at the first class meeting. By incorporating these principles in course planning, instructors are far better prepared to provide appropriate accommodations when needed. Additionally, such efforts send a proactive message about the instructor's commitment to providing an inclusive classroom where every student is welcome and supported to excel.

ASSESSMENT

An important part of design is developing ways to assess participant learning and course/facilitator effectiveness. Assessment and feedback strategies allow instructors to better understand and meet individual participants' needs as well as the needs of the group. Planning evaluation procedures as part of course or workshop design enables instructors to be intentional about selecting methods of assessment that match learning activities and align with the specific learning goals. Assessments can include formative and summative evaluations, and formal and informal mechanisms for feedback and evaluation, of the participants, the course or workshop, and the instructors/facilitators.

Student/Participant Assessment

Student/participant assessment can be accomplished through formative and/or summative evaluations.

Formative participant assessment. Formative assessment methods are designed to provide students the opportunity to receive regular, informal feedback on work in progress. Formative assessment strategies can be used to identify which learning activities successfully prepare students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to meet the course/workshop goals. For example, at the end of a session, facilitators can ask students to write down one or two things they learned from the session and any questions or confusions they still have. Collecting such information at the end of a class or session will help the instructor prepare to address these issues in the next class or session.

Summative participant assessment. Summative assessment measures are designed to grade and/or evaluate performance for uses such as assigning final grades or evaluating participation in community or workplace learning experiences. Traditional examples of summative assessment measures include quizzes, mid- or final-term exams, and term papers. In other settings, they might also include case studies, videos, interview exercises, community service learning projects or other small-group assignments, journals, and reflective essays or action plans. Grades and evaluation should always be based upon assigned work and clear performance criteria. In college environments, this may include questions about assigned texts and other readings, preparation of homework assignments, and completion of in-class activities; written papers that follow a sequence of reflective questions or structured guidelines; and a final essay exam, based on broad conceptual questions prepared in advance that test participants' ability to effectively utilize new concepts and knowledge (Suskie, 2004).

We may disagree, even dislike and disavow, some of the views expressed by participants in these assignments, and we will always ask questions and/or give constructive feedback (Walvoord & Anderson, 2009). Course grades derive from evaluation and assessment activities that are clearly aligned with key outcome goals and learning activities. Students may be concerned about giving "politically correct" answers. A neutral grading scheme, based on work completed and knowledge demonstrated, rather than views or opinions, can be reassuring to students and a fairer basis for assessment.

Grade points and grade percentages can be set in advance for each assignment. Students may find it helpful to see models and examples of successful assignments. Our goal is that participants will demonstrate their ability to think critically, examine prior beliefs and assumptions, increase knowledge, grapple with theoretical and conceptual interconnections, recognize course concepts in real-world examples, and identify potential plans of action (Walvoord & Anderson, 2009).

In the same way participants benefit from feedback, it is important for instructors to gather feedback about the course or workshop as well. Such information can help us determine what works and what can be changed or improved for the future. It can also be a source of information about our strengths and challenges as facilitators. Like student assessments, course assessment can be undertaken using both formative and summative strategies.

Formative course/workshop assessment. Classroom/workshop assessment techniques provide participants the opportunity to give instructors feedback on what they do or do not understand and for instructors to get a clearer, real-time sense of the progress participants are making. Formative evaluation can be informal: asking open-ended questions such as, *"What learning activities have been most effective in helping you to learn more about ableism?" "What made these activities effective?"* and *"How comfortable do you feel participating in class at this point?"* We can draw upon anonymous feedback periodically throughout the course and do informal check-ins with students, especially when we notice issues such as reduced participation, hostility, confusion, or boredom.

Formative evaluation can also be formal: Instructors develop specific questions about learning activities, sequencing, reading assignments, and grading criteria, and ask participants to rate them on a Likert scale. Formative evaluation of student work has the advantage of enabling instructors to make mid-course changes in the content or learning activities based on how well students are making progress toward their goals.

Summative course/workshop assessment. Summative evaluation can make use of institutionally designed forms or those created by the instructor to evaluate the course/workshop as a whole. End-of-semester course-based assessment strategies provide a useful longitudinal perspective on what curricula, learning activities, and assessment practices work well for different students. Looking at student feedback on a course over several semesters can help instructors anticipate which particular topics or exercises will challenge students, refine assignments, and pilot innovative learning activities. Such reflection can also stimulate deeper insights into how a particular module, workshop, seminar, or course links to other courses, programs, and department and institutional learning goals (e.g., general education, disciplinary majors or minors, certificate programs, etc.).

Instructor/Facilitator Assessment and Professional Development

Instructor engagement in an ongoing self-assessment process can be extremely valuable. Instructors grow and develop the same way students do. We benefit from formative and summative feedback and a long-term perspective on our development. A number of resources can foster teacher critical reflection and growth. Two of the most popular and least-intrusive techniques are to keep a daily journal and to foster opportunities for informal debriefings and discussion with trusted colleagues. Whether teaching alone, co-facilitating, or team-teaching, you can develop an ongoing relationship with a trusted peer to provide valuable opportunities for reflection, review, and improvement (see Ouellett & Fraser, 2005, for a team interview guide).

An all-too-human tendency can be to skim over participant evaluations and zero in on any negative comments to the exclusion of everything else. However, it is important to reflect on and integrate the full scope of feedback. One strategy for doing this is to find time after the end of the course to sit down with the other instructor and the course evaluations and take note of the general themes of what the evaluators say went well and suggestions they made for changes or improvements in the course content and teaching.

Identifying what is going well so that you can continue those practices is as important as focusing on what needs improvement.

For instructors of social justice and diversity related courses/workshops, however, Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) and other forms of evaluation can be limiting in at least two ways. Research shows that women and people of color often receive lower course ratings in general (Amos, 2014; Hamermesh & Parker, 2005; Huston, 2006), and in social justice courses, this can be especially true. Participants bring their biases and projections that influence how they perceive and evaluate facilitators. The complexity of facilitating social justice courses, as well as the time it may take for students to grow and develop, may not be easily captured in the time frame in which students are asked to complete course evaluations. Courses that are required versus those that are elective may also receive lower evaluations. Give these realities, it is particularly important to be able to discuss and reflect on this feedback with trusted colleagues to help assess what is useful.

Together, summative and formative assessment measures of students, the course, and the instructor create a communication flow between the facilitator and participants, both during and after the course. Ongoing assessment allows for mid-course corrections on the part of instructors (e.g., the need to give more explicit directions or clarify expectations, provide more examples, clear up questions related to reading) and on the part of students (e.g., reflect on their pattern of contributions to discussions or small group projects, sharpen their theoretical understanding, or revise and resubmit written work). Such embedded assessment practices benefit participants and the overall course/workshop design process as well as instructor development.

SUMMARY OF DESIGN PRINCIPLES

We have offered the design tools in this section of the chapter as a guide to help instructors have confidence that what they have planned will enable participants to explore difficult social justice issues in the most constructive and supportive learning environment possible. We provided activity-sequencing guidelines to help participants understand the dynamics of oppression in their own lives and in the larger society. We hope the design principles described above will also be useful and adaptable for developing new designs for social justice education classes that meet the particular needs of the groups you teach. With practice, these principles can become a routine part of planning and a basis from which to create and explore new activities and approaches to social justice education.

FACILITATION PRINCIPLES

In this section, we hope to highlight facilitation as well as show how design and facilitation are interconnected. Planning and designing ahead of time provide the essential scaffolding and tools for learning. Once the course begins, facilitation issues come to the fore. Facilitation involves managing the group dynamics and guiding participants through activities and the learning process. There are many aspects to good facilitation that include both task and process roles. At different times, instructors may need to guide the discussion by asking questions, be a role model by demonstrating respectful communication or sharing personal stories, present information, manage interpersonal conflict, begin and end an activity, observe and name classroom dynamics, or offer conceptual analysis. One of the skills of good facilitation is being able to utilize the appropriate role and task when needed (see Griffin & Ouellett, 2007, pp. 97–106).

GENERAL FACILITATION STRATEGIES

Before we discuss specific facilitation strategies that may be useful to address particular situations, we share some approaches that can be helpful throughout a class or workshop. While responses are best when they are situational and contextual, these are some general strategies that are useful to keep in mind.

Seek Understanding Before Responding

In general, we want to make sure that individuals feel heard as well as ensure that we understand them correctly before responding. This approach allows us to develop more thoughtful and effective responses. Immediately challenging what someone says can heighten defensiveness and close people off to further discussion. Instead, facilitators can follow three steps: *Reflect, Question, and then Add.* To first paraphrase or repeat back in your own words what you heard someone say can be powerful. It allows individuals to know that they are heard, ensures that the facilitator accurately understands what participants are saying, and provides an opportunity for participants to clarify statements that may not convey their intention.

For example, the instructor might say, *"It sounds like you think that . . ."* or *"Let me be clear, you believe that . . ."* Next, ask questions to further clarify their perspective, such as: *"What led you to believe that . . .?" "Can you tell me more why you think that?" "Can you explain what you mean by that?"* Then, once individuals feel heard and the instructor has greater understanding of their perspective, the facilitator can decide on the most appropriate response. Some options might be to add information or correct misinformation, open it up to the class for other thoughts, build on the comment to move onto new topics, or simply thank them for sharing their view. The point is not to do this process in every situation in a rote manner, but to be mindful of being respectful and gaining clarity before replying.

Get Distance and Gain Perspective

Often when we are in the middle of a situation, we can get caught up in the immediate dynamics and do not see the bigger picture. Especially in complex or challenging moments, it can be useful to try to get some distance, intellectually and emotionally, and gain perspective. Warren refers to this as "getting off the dance floor and getting up on the balcony" (2005, p. 620). "From the balcony" we can better see patterns and dynamics. She encourages instructors to "listen to the song beneath the words." Distance can often help facilitators discern the underlying issues, what is really being communicated. Instructors can also gain perspective by taking a break to reflect on the classroom dynamics, closely attend to the communication and participation patterns and non-verbal behaviors to look for the deeper issues, take a few moments to breathe and refocus their attention, and talk with a co-facilitator or other colleague to process feelings and observations in the moment before reengaging.

Share Observations Non-Judgmentally

Simply stating what you notice in a neutral and non-judgmental way can bring issues to the fore and allow for their discussion in a more thoughtful way. Observations about group dynamics can help surface underlying feelings and assumptions that can promote greater learning. Participants can also be taught and encouraged to share their own observations in constructive ways. Some examples of observations might be, *"When Susan shared her*

powerful story, no one responded. I'm wondering how people are feeling?" Or *"I've noticed that when I ask people to share an example of how they've experienced privilege, several people shared stories of how they've been marginalized. I'm wondering if it seems harder to think about one's privilege?"*

Consider Timing, Tone, and Word Choice

Whether reflecting back what a student says, offering a different perspective, or sharing an observation, the timing, tone, and word choice we use matter. These qualities can make the difference between sounding respectful and insightful or judgmental and disparaging. The timing of a comment can have very different impacts depending on where the group is in its group development. The following examples illustrate how facilitators can consider timing and tone in their interventions. In reference to sharing observations, initially instructors may share observations that are less threatening but help them assess the group, such as *"I notice people are very quiet. I'm wondering if people are reluctant to share their views or if people simply need a break."* At a later point, facilitators might make an observation that could have a deeper impact, for example, *"I notice that the spokespeople for the small group report–outs have all been men, even though men make up only a quarter of the class. I'm wondering what people make of that."*

Similarly, timing may affect how an instructor responds to a comment such as, *"I don't see color. I think we should just be color-blind and treat everyone the same."* At the beginning of the class, the instructor might say *"Thank you for sharing your perspective. That is a sentiment many people have. Throughout the class we'll be discussing why people believe that and the impact that approach may have on creating equity."* At this point, the instructor may not want to directly challenge the statement, but rather focus on encouraging people to share their views while indicating that this view will not go unexplored. Also, asking for other students to comment rather than the instructor can often expand the discussion. Later in the course, the instructor might respond to that statement by drawing on the class material and discussions and greater class cohesiveness to examine the problems with claiming a color-blind stance.

DESIGN AND FACILITATION AT DIFFERENT PHASES OF A CLASS/WORKSHOP: CONFIRMATION, CONTRADICTION, AND CONTINUITY

With these general facilitation strategies and design principles in mind, we next explore Kegan's (2009) framework of *confirmation*, *contradiction*, and *continuity* to highlight common design features and related facilitation issues and strategies that occur in different phases of a course. Kegan, a developmental psychologist, describes the changing ways people make meaning of themselves, others, and the world, and the environments needed to support this developmental process. We use Kegan's framework as a helpful heuristic for attending to the changes that occur over time in a social justice education course so as to anticipate the needs of participants at each stage in the process. The first stage, *confirmation*, highlights the need for creating a holding environment where participants can take risks and be vulnerable so as to be able to look at their own socialization and be open to learning about oppressive issues in which we are all implicated. Once a safe-enough holding environment is created, we move to the *contradiction* stage, where prior beliefs and understandings will be challenged and held up for examination. During this stage, we want to unsettle assumptions and encourage exploration, questioning, and risk-taking. The *continuity* stage addresses the need for closure and continuity beyond the course or workshop.

In this stage, we want to help participants pull together and summarize what they have learned, and plan for how they will act on what they have learned and continue learning once they leave the course. While we consistently see this progression from confirmation to contradiction to continuity in the course/workshop overall, we also see these stages occur and reoccur throughout the course/workshop as well, and we respond accordingly. For example, throughout the course or workshop, we can help participants make connections to how they might apply this information (continuity), or at particularly challenging moments in the course, we may include more ways to sustain a confirming environment (e.g., group building activities).

Table 3.1 shows design issues and facilitation strategies for each facilitating environment.

Phase One: Confirmation

From a social-psychological perspective, consciously or unconsciously, people develop and internalize a set of beliefs about social justice issues simply through living in this society. Each of us could be said to be *embedded* in a particular way of making sense of the world. Left unchallenged, this embeddedness leads us to take for granted our world view as given, natural, and true, as simply "the way things are." In the social justice education classroom, these beliefs will be exposed to critical examination and questioning, unsettling the "taken for granted" worldview. This challenge inevitably disturbs a person's equilibrium, can be experienced as threatening, and will often raise a person's defenses.

Corresponding facilitating environment

The way participants experience the environment of the classroom has a powerful effect on whether or not they are willing to grapple with conflicting information, cognitive dissonance, and internal disequilibrium. If the environment is perceived as too threatening, a person's defenses may become fairly rigid. They will tend to ignore challenges to their world view and rationalize conflicting information to fit their present belief system. In

Table 3.1 Facilitation and Design Issues at Different Stages

Facilitating Environment	Design Issues	Facilitation Strategies
Confirmation	• Introductions • Learning outcomes, agenda/syllabus, and expectations • Group norms for respectful interactions • Activities to develop a supportive and inclusive learning environment	• Set and model tone • Model self-disclosure • Acknowledge the significance of feelings • Ally fears and concerns
Contradiction	• Content that deepens or challenges current learning about oppression • Sharing of personal stories • Opportunities for full discussion and reflection	• Ensure equitable participation and constructive class behavior/dynamics • Surface different perspectives • Challenge inaccurate information and views • Manage conflict and different perspectives • Acknowledge and manage feelings • Utilize and address silence • Address avoidance • Reduce and manage resistance • Manage facilitator reactions
Continuity	• Identify actions for social justice • Identify support • Provide closure • Evaluate class/workshop	• Discuss appropriate action • Address need for support and potential changes in relationships • Deal with immobilizing feelings

other words, they may cling to their "comfort zone" and be unwilling to consider any new material or openly engage in activities.

However, if the environment is perceived as supportive, a person's defenses can be more permeable. In this case, despite the experience of internal conflict, the person may be attracted to new information and become willing to grapple with the contradictions and discrepancies they perceive. Facilitators are always balancing the need for both challenge and support in order to maximize participant learning.

It is common in social justice education for participants to want to feel "safe" or to create a "safe" environment. However, we know that people will rarely feel completely "safe," especially those from marginalized groups. The meaning of "safety" is often different for students depending on their social location(s), and instructors need to consider the differences in needs and experiences of students from dominant and subordinated groups (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014; Garran & Rassmussen, 2014). Some facilitators refer to creating a "safe enough" environment (Bell, 2010). Holley and Steiner describe a safe space as a "climate or environment where students are able to take risks, honestly and openly express their views, and engage in growth promoting learning without fear of psychological or emotional harm" (2005, p. 50).

We believe facilitators must maintain an environment that is respectful and inclusive, whether or not facilitators choose to use some version of the word "safe." Participants need to be able to express their thoughts, feelings, questions, and perspectives without being personally attacked or silenced. Facilitators also should create an environment where they can challenge language and behavior that is offensive or hurtful. We must help students understand the impact of their words or behavior, even if their intent is not to be harmful. Such a climate enables participants to be more open to critically examine their world views and take learning risks. Creating a supportive space for learning and growth is an ongoing process, not a discrete goal.

While we want all participants to feel that the class is a respectful and supportive environment in which they can actively engage, this does not mean they will never be challenged or uncomfortable. We believe that feeling uncomfortable at times is a valuable and expected part of an effective social justice education class. Such feelings of discomfort can be experienced intellectually (e.g., encountering a challenging new perspective, new information, or experience), emotionally (getting feedback from other participants about how one's behavior or attitudes affect others in the class), or physically (experiencing shortness of breath, accelerated heartbeat, or perspiring) and are important learning opportunities for all participants in the class regardless of their social identities. This discomfort can be the basis for intellectual breakthroughs, increased personal insight, and changes in behaviors, awareness, and actions. We can remind participants that discomfort is part of an ultimately growthful and liberating process.

We refer to these moments of discomfort as "learning edges" and invite participants to notice and explore when they are on a learning edge rather than retreat to their comfort zone of familiar beliefs and experiences. Differentiating "safety" and "comfort," and reframing discomfort as an essential aspect of learning in social justice education, helps participants to better understand their feelings and to reframe discomfort as an opportunity to learn. Learning to notice the signs of being on a learning edge is a useful mechanism for realizing when we care deeply about something or experience challenges to taken-for-granted assumptions. In social justice education courses, such self-awareness is an explicit learning outcome goal. At the beginning of the course, facilitators can explicitly ask students to consider how they typically deal with this type of discomfort and name strategies for how they can stay engaged when this occurs.

In a social justice education course, it is desirable that the facilitator get to know participants, help them get to know each other, and enable them to develop a secure enough sense of themselves as a group that they can relax into the learning opportunity. If we can establish a positive group atmosphere and develop trust at the beginning and reinforce it throughout, we can avoid some pitfalls and more easily manage issues that arise. Creating a constructive space entails developing trust among participants as well as with the facilitator. Establishing a confirming environment can greatly reduce resistance and other difficult dynamics, both at the onset and later on in the class.

For these reasons, the initial phase of a social justice education course is very important. Our goals in this phase are to create an environment in which participants feel *confirmed* and validated *as persons* even as they experience challenges to their belief system. We want to construct a community of learners that is supportive and trustworthy and that fosters positive interdependence, the sense that individuals are responsible for their own and other's learning. Our hope is that in such an environment, uncomfortable and challenging issues can be raised and explored, and participants can express discomfort, sadness, confusion, anger, and fear, and know they will be treated with dignity and respect.

Design Features of the Confirmation Phase

To create a *confirming* environment, we want to help people break the ice and become more familiar with each other. We also want to establish and model guidelines of listening respectfully and speaking truthfully from our own experience. We often identify stereotypes and assumptions that the culture fosters about different groups, and acknowledge the misinformation we all receive in order to make it possible to openly examine taboo topics. Once participants experience support and realize they are not expected to have all the answers, they can be confused or uninformed, and they are allowed to make mistakes despite their best intentions, they may be able to relax their defenses enough to engage with classroom activities and information that question their assumptions about social reality. Some specific design components of the confirmation phase include: 1) introductions, 2) learning outcomes, agenda/syllabus, and expectations, 3) group norms for respectful interactions, and 4) activities to develop a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

1. *Introductions*: Introductions of the instructors and participants recognizes the unique identity of each person and lets people know they will not be treated as anonymous, but are indeed central to the course. By learning each other's names and getting to know one another, the participants start to develop a sense of community and group cohesiveness. Participants begin to understand that they will be asked to learn about and listen to each other.

2. *Learning outcomes, agenda/syllabus, and expectations*: This component provides an explicit structure that participants can rely upon and can allay some fears as to what the course will entail. Participants can be informed of expected attendance, class participation, and assignments. The agenda, outcomes, and expectations can also be developed with or adjusted to meet the needs of a particular group. These components help participants anticipate what the focus of the course will be, have some sense of what will occur, and share responsibility for following and achieving these objectives. Participants can also begin to identify and develop their own goals for learning.

3. *Group norms for respectful interactions*: Participants come to social justice workshops and courses with widely varying prior experiences and degrees of knowledge. We assume that all participants have internalized oppressive messages from the dominant culture and lack accurate information about many social issues. Most have had few opportunities to

think critically about their social identities and systemic inequalities, or to engage with people whose lived realities and perspectives may be very different from their own.

It is useful for both instructors and participants to anticipate and plan for the affective and cognitive dynamics that can arise when people express divergent perspectives on topics about which they have strong feelings and deeply held beliefs. We can suggest that participants engage with "critical humility" and openness and recognition that we all are in the process of learning. Students can be encouraged to be curious and ask questions to deepen their understanding of different perspectives and experiences instead of just countering with their own viewpoint. Creating a list of mutual expectations and guidelines for interaction, and asking the class to agree to observe them, is one convention that sets the stage for constructive interactions (see DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014, and Garran & Rassmussen, 2014, for further discussion of guidelines).

In the process of developing these agreements, we can clarify with the group what is meant by different terms (e.g., respect), discuss differences in conflict and communication styles, and coach participants in strategies for successful intergroup dialogue. We can explicitly name the ways that power and privilege often play out in interactions among people from dominant and subordinated social groups, and ask participants to develop agreements that can mitigate or interrupt such interactions in the class. For example, one guideline might be "consider how your own social positionality (such as your race, class, gender, sexuality, ability status) informs your perspectives and reactions." As instructors, we can use group agreements to ensure that dynamics of power and dominance are not unintentionally recreated in our classroom discussions. We can hold students accountable for contributing to a climate in which everyone's participation is valued.

4. Activities to develop a supportive and inclusive learning environment: In addition to introductions, activities early in the course are designed to establish a norm of interaction and self-disclosure. These activities help create group cohesiveness and a sense that everyone has something to learn and contribute. Initial interactions should be lower risk so that participants can comfortably practice what for many might be a novel experience of sharing feelings and personal experiences in the context of a classroom or workshop. Pairs and small-group activities are good vehicles for this type of relationship-building. For examples, in several ism chapters, the activity "Common Ground" is used. This activity uses a list of prompts to identify commonalities and differences among group members.

Facilitation Issues and Strategies for the Confirmation Phase

Participants observe both what facilitators do as well as what we say. Some of the central facilitation issues in the confirmation phase include: 1) setting and modeling the tone of the class, 2) modeling self-disclosure, 3) acknowledging the significance of feelings, and 4) allaying fears.

1. Set and model tone: As previously discussed, it is critical in this initial phase to establish a constructive tone and practice using group agreements or guidelines. As facilitators, we attempt to model and support the norms we hope to establish. Co-facilitators are also role models in their interactions with each other, and should demonstrate respectful dialogue and an effective collaborative relationship. Some components of setting the tone include supporting risk-taking, modeling respect, and integrating humor and fun with serious issues.

Support risk-taking: As participants share their views, personal experiences, feelings, and questions in the initial class activities, facilitators can affirm and validate their willingness to take risks. We can reinforce the notion that there are no "stupid" questions. Simply stating, *"Thank you for sharing that"* or *"I appreciate your willingness to raise that issue"* conveys that we do, in fact, value their openness.

Model respect: Not only can we respond in positive ways when people take initial risks, but we can consistently model respectful interactions. This may include paying thoughtful attention to students as they speak, not talking over them, using their correct or preferred name and gender pronouns, and interrupting comments or behaviors from others that are dismissive or insulting. Additional strategies include building on students' comments, paying attention to equitable access to airtime, inviting quiet students or those who have not spoken yet to participate, and keeping activities generally on time.

Integrate humor and fun. Creating an atmosphere that is both serious and light helps to set a friendly and supportive tone. We want to treat social justice content as the serious issue it is, while incorporating activities that include humor and playfulness that can keep students engaged, release feelings, build community, and challenge the assumption that learning about oppression is simply depressing; working for justice can be joyful, too.

2. *Model self-disclosure*: When instructors model appropriate levels of self-disclosure and the kind of responses sought in a particular activity, it demonstrates for participants how to share about oneself and make personal connections with the content. It also builds rapport with participants and illustrates that it is safe for them to share about themselves. Appropriate self-disclosure on the part of the facilitator serves the learning needs of the students, not the personal development of the instructor.

3. *Acknowledge significance of feelings in the learning process*: As previously discussed, social justice education is both a cognitive and affective process. During a social justice education course, many different feelings arise as participants grapple with perspectives and information that challenge their previous understanding. It is important to acknowledge that these feelings are a natural and appropriate part of the learning process. Providing participants with some guidance for how to recognize, listen to, and learn from feelings encourages their expression in ways that help rather than hinder learning. The introduction of concepts such as "learning edge," "comfort zone," and "triggers," for example, provides participants with a language and a process to use in examining and making sense of feelings that arise. This can be an opportunity to clarify the difference between "safety" and "comfort." Being uncomfortable is a typical and productive reaction when confronting contradictions and challenges to what we have learned in the past and is an essential part of confronting social injustice. Discomfort is not necessarily a sign that we are unsafe or in danger.

4. *Allay fears and concerns*: Some fears or worries may be addressed when the learning outcomes, agenda, and expectations are presented and discussed. Instructors also can speak specifically to some of the concerns people may have, such as worrying about being blamed or shamed for their ignorance or for being part of the privileged group, or being unsupported when offensive stereotypes about one's group are made by other participants. We can communicate our assumptions that highlight our approach of not blaming people for how they were socialized or for not having accurate information, encouraging responsibility once we become conscious, recognizing that we all have work to do to overcome the ways we internalize and perpetuate oppression, and that we all have a role to play in its eradication. We can also reiterate (and model) to participants that we will enforce the agreed-to guidelines that interrupt disrespectful, inequitable, and oppressive group dynamics. Participants can also be reminded that they can have the option to pass or participate at a level that feels appropriate for them.

Phase Two: Contradiction

If we have succeeded in creating a supportive environment, participants may now feel secure enough to open up to contradictions to their old belief system and begin a process of exploration, to find their "learning edge" and live with the inevitable discomfort. They become willing to examine and differentiate ideas and feelings and try on different ways

of making sense of the world. This process can be confusing, disorienting, and, at times, frightening. Participants might feel out of control, without known boundaries or familiar ground, and may experience a sense of loss or *surrender* as they literally "excavate the ground they stand on" (Barker, 1993, p. 48).

As they learn new information, they may also experience strong emotions such as anger, resentment, and a sense of betrayal by those who were supposed to tell them the truth about the social world. At the same time, they may feel a sense of freedom as they consider, discard, and eventually construct new ways of making sense of the world or of conceptualizing and naming their experiences.

Corresponding facilitating environment

The supportive environment for the contradiction phase is one that allows participants to immerse themselves fully in whatever contradictions and conflicts arise as a consequence of engaging previously unknown ideas and exploring their own and others' feelings and experiences. The course content and process deliberately pose and explore contradictions, and encourage participants to make sense of the new material they encounter. This process is akin to Freire's notion of education for critical consciousness (1970, 1973).

At this point, the environment shifts. It does not overprotect or enable participants to avoid feelings of discomfort, confusion, fear, and anger. Such feelings are an inevitable and ultimately helpful part of the learning process. Through engaging with challenging information and participating in experiential activities, participants are encouraged to let go of the comfortable and familiar and explore new territory.

This phase is not only challenging for students—intellectually and emotionally—but often the most challenging for instructors as well, since we are creating dissonance and raising emotions through the information and experiences we provide. This phase requires skillful facilitation to process effectively. As students engage with material that is more personally challenging, and possibly encounter more conflict in the classroom or workshop, facilitators can revisit some of the activities and facilitation strategies utilized in the confirmation phase to help participants stay connected to each other, the instructor, and the material as they feel increasingly uncomfortable.

Design Features of the Contradiction Phase

Activities in the contradiction phase encourage participants to face the challenges posed by new information and different perspectives. Learning activities in the contradiction phase can focus on any of the several key concepts identified in Chapter 4 and exemplified in the course designs in this volume, such as socialization, historical legacies, and manifestations at the individual, institutional, and societal/cultural levels; power and privilege; and allies and advocacy. Some key design components of the contradiction phase include: 1) content that deepens or challenges current understanding, 2) sharing of personal stories, and 3) opportunities for full discussion and reflection.

1. *Content that deepens or challenges current understanding*: There are numerous ways instructors can offer students opportunities to deepen or challenge their current understandings. Readings, different types of media, experiential activities, presentations, panel discussions, guest speakers, field trips, and various discussion formats are some of the resources and approaches facilitators use.

2. *Share personal stories/experiences*: Asking participants to share their personal experiences with the content allows them to reflect on their own experiences and to listen to and reflect on the experiences of others. Hearing personal stories can be very powerful in supporting learning and changing attitudes and beliefs. Personal stories make abstract

concepts concrete and can promote empathy (Bell, 2010; Eisner, 2002; Greene, 2007; Soohoo, 2006). For instance, hearing first-hand a gay student's experiences of harassment is often more evocative than solely hearing facts and statistics about bias incidents. Hearing a white person talk about coming to terms with white privilege and struggling to find responsible ways to be an ally will likely be more powerful than a list of directives.

3. *Provide opportunities for full discussion and reflection*: Facilitators can create a variety of structures that allow participants to deeply grapple with the content. We use a range of discussion formats, including whole-class, small groups, triads, and pairs to ensure that all participants have the opportunity to speak. Caucus groups create the space for people with a similar social identity to discuss their ideas, questions, and experiences with each other without relying on or worrying about the reactions from people with a different social identity. Instructors can ask students, both during and after class, to keep a journal or respond to prompts to further their personal reflection.

Because the activities in a social justice education course are designed to raise contradictions and challenge participants to rethink their understanding of social power relationships, discussions can be intense as participants engage with conflicting perspectives and challenging new content. We can scaffold activities and content by providing ample opportunity to process or collectively reflect on and discuss reactions to the activities. Processing is an intentional and systematic way to guide discussion of a class activity so as to encourage the expression of divergent perspectives, explore contradictions, and encourage participants to derive cognitive as well as affective understanding from the activity. After each class activity, we lead participants through a processing progression that typically begins with their own individual reactions to the activity, then guides them through more abstract analysis of the oppression issues raised in the activity, and finally focuses on how they can apply this new information.

Facilitation Issues and Strategies for the Contradiction Phase

As previously noted, the contradiction phase can pose some of the greatest challenges to facilitators. Instructors need a range of skills to handle the numerous dynamics that can occur and help ensure that the class remains a respectful and supportive environment where participants can take intellectual and emotional risks and engage deeply. Some key facilitation issues typical of the contradiction phase include: 1) ensure equitable participation and constructive class behavior, 2) surface different perspectives, 3) challenge inaccurate information and views, 4) manage conflict and different perspectives, 5) acknowledge and manage feelings, 6) utilize and address silence, 7) address avoidance, 8) reduce and manage resistance, and 9) manage facilitator reactions. Strategies for responding to participant reactions are also discussed in Chapters 5–12 in the context of specific single-issue courses/workshops.

1. *Ensure equitable participation and constructive group behavior*: As the course content and experiences get more challenging and the emotional reactions become stronger, facilitators need to ensure that the class remains a constructive learning environment. Facilitators need to carefully monitor and manage the group and power dynamics so that all participants continue to be heard. We can limit and ensure equitable amounts of airtime for participants. For example, when one person or a small group dominates discussions, or when some participants are always silent, the facilitator can make space for others to participate in a number of ways. Consider these examples:

- One participant has taken an active role in class discussions, contributing to every conversation. The facilitator says, *"Before we hear from you again, Steve, I'd like to see if some of the people who have not spoken up would like to say something."*

- The facilitator notices that a quiet participant has been trying to say something, but she keeps getting cut off by other, more active participants. The facilitator says, *"Maria, it looks like you've been trying to get into this discussion. What would you like to say?"*
- The facilitator notices that five participants have not said anything during large-group discussions. He says, *"Let's do a quick pass around the circle. Each person share a short sentence that describes your reaction to this activity. Choose to pass if you wish."*

The instructor may also use dyads for a brief amount of time to simultaneously get everyone in the group talking, or ask participants to respond to a brief writing prompt as a way to help them organize their thoughts and prepare to offer comments aloud.

In this phase, it is particularly important for instructors to pay attention to the power dynamics in the class. These patterns can be expressed in a variety of ways, such as students from dominant groups dismissing the personal experiences or views of people from marginalized groups or expecting them to speak for their whole group, or individuals from dominant groups feeling intimidated and afraid to say something wrong lest they be verbally attacked by individuals from the subordinated group or other members of their dominant group. While we want to encourage participation, we do not want to allow any student(s) to control, dominate, or subvert the class to their own particular agenda (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014). Participants can be reminded to use critical humility and encouraged to ask questions to better understand someone's perspective as opposed to just asserting their viewpoint. It can be useful for participants to practice just listening, especially to those from marginalized groups, before allowing dialogue. Facilitators need to enforce the agreed-upon guidelines if students act in ways that violate the norms and erode the learning community, or group members are likely to view the guidelines as fraudulent (see Bell, 2010, pp. 100–104). Instructors need to be especially sensitive to comments or behaviors that silence other students. Facilitators will often write up the agreed-upon norms and guidelines to post in the room. Then, when a challenge emerges, it is useful to go back to the posted agreements, talk about the specific guideline that may be relevant, and perhaps elaborate or add to it. The guidelines thus become a "living document" during the life of the learning community. Consider these examples:

- A participant rolls her eyes and looks away when a man tries to challenge her belief in the fairness of affirmative action programs. The facilitator says to her, *"We may not all agree, but we need to be able to disagree respectfully. We need to express our disagreement in ways that are consistent with our discussion guidelines."*
- A white student interrupts a black student who is describing an incident of racial bias by saying, "You're just playing the race card!" The instructor stops the white student and asks him to allow the other student to finish his story. During the subsequent discussion, the instructor asks the white student, *"Instead of challenging his story and analysis, is there a question you could ask that might help you understand why he experienced the situation as racially biased?"*
- A student reacts to another student by saying, "You're so homophobic if you believe that!" The facilitator responds, *"We agreed there will be no name calling. How else could you express your ideas without making it a personal attack?"*
- An upper-middle-class student, in response to a panel presentation by working-class activists, immediately starts to discount their experiences by saying, "My parents worked hard for what they have." The instructor intervenes and asks, *"Instead of negating what they said, let's first look at what was new information for you."*

Instructors can highlight and affirm behaviors that positively contribute to the class as a way to reinforce constructive group dynamics. In the contradiction phase, it is important to continue to validate personal risk-taking as the class goes more deeply into the subject. Instructors can support and encourage participants to take risks in exploring perspectives, feelings, and awareness that contradict or stretch their prior understanding. They can validate participants who express confusion or ask questions that reflect their personal struggle with issues discussed in the course. And they can acknowledge and appreciate comments and behaviors when students disagree in a constructive manner, support the learning of another student, or ask thoughtful and challenging questions that advance the conversation. Consider these examples:

- *"I know it was difficult to share that, but I appreciate your honesty."*
- *"When you asked that question, it really opened up the discussion in interesting ways. Thank you for raising that."*
- *"I know it's uncomfortable to look at our biases. I respect people's willingness to do this hard work."*

2. *Surface different perspectives*: Instructors need to not only ensure equitable and constructive participation, but to actively elicit a variety of perspectives so that different viewpoints can be openly aired and explored. When there is limited participation, the group misses out on learning from other's experiences and perspectives. Instructors should allow contradictions and tensions to emerge, and resist the tendency to smooth over tensions, resolve contradictions, or relieve uncomfortable moments in class.

These experiences are an essential part of the learning process in a social justice education course. As long as participants adhere to the agreements, the experience of discomfort with new perspectives and tension among different perspectives can help them work through their own learning. In addition, facilitators need to balance allowing the conversation to evolve and flow depending on the group while staying mindful of the objectives of the particular discussion or activity. Flexibility is important, as is ensuring that we are consciously leading the class in a direction that meets the learning goals and not simply getting distracted by tangents.

Invite and provide various viewpoints. Facilitators can actively solicit divergent perspectives by summarizing what has already been said and asking for other viewpoints or providing other perspectives and asking for students' reactions (whether as part of a discussion or in writing). Exposure to divergent perspectives enables participants to work with contradictions and have their own thinking challenged, clarified, and extended. Instructors can ask, *"What do other people think?"* or *"Some people believe that . . . what do you think about that?"*

Share facilitators' experiences. In addition to the students, facilitators can also share their experiences and perspectives in ways that can advance learning. Through talking about their own stories or views, facilitators can provide additional information, offer a missing perspective, and make it safer for others to share their thoughts and experiences. However, facilitators need to choose carefully when to disclose their personal reactions or stories, and be clear about the purpose of this disclosure. It is never appropriate for facilitators to work out their own issues during a class or workshop. This important work is better attended to at some other time. If facilitators tell too many personal stories or talk about their experiences too much, participants might begin to discount the course as the facilitator's "personal agenda," and it can subvert the focus from a participant-centered to a facilitator-centered environment. All personal disclosure by facilitators should be for the purpose of helping participants achieve a better understanding of the topic.

It would be disingenuous to pretend that a social justice education course is neutral or objective any more than are any other courses. Participants are correct in perceiving that there is a particular perspective represented in a social justice education course. It is essential, however, that there is room for all perspectives to be heard and challenged respectfully. When facilitators or participants squelch the expression of views or experiences that are counter to the underlying beliefs guiding the course, social justice education courses are vulnerable to charges of political correctness. We assure participants that we all have prejudices, assumptions, and limited perspectives, and we encourage them to see the course as an opportunity to consciously examine them. They can then choose views based on new information and understanding, rather than allowing our unexamined attitudes and beliefs to guide our thinking.

3. *Address inaccurate information and views*: As students share their views, inevitably they will express some erroneous or distorted information. It is important that these inaccuracies get addressed. We want to keep people engaged yet not allow incorrect or insensitive statements to go unchallenged. How a facilitator responds to inaccurate, or in some cases offensive, statements depends on numerous factors, including the effect of the statement on individuals in the group, the timing in the overall course and specific class, the facilitator's relationship with the individual, and the group dynamics. Sometimes instructors need to directly correct misinformation or curtail offensive remarks. Often, the approach described earlier of reflecting, questioning, and adding can be helpful to respond to inaccurate beliefs.

Reflecting: As we discussed earlier, reflecting can be a useful general strategy. In the contradiction phase, one of the most effective ways to encourage participants to think more deeply and critically is to reflect back what they say. Hearing their own words reflected back to them can enable participants to understand the impact of their statements and to identify underlying assumptions. Consider this example:

- The facilitator repeats a participant's statement, *"So, what you are saying is that poor and homeless people have the same opportunity for advancement as people who have more financial resources, they just need to try harder?"*

In some situations, when participants listen to their statement reflected back to them, they can hear their faulty logic and clarify their perspective. In many cases, reflection alone is not sufficient. Participants may say things that are factually incorrect and that reflect commonly held misconceptions. Inaccurate statements need to be addressed and corrected, not simply reflected. There are a variety of ways a facilitator can respond to erroneous beliefs, including asking questions, depersonalizing the comment and then addressing it, and directly correcting the statement.

Asking questions: Posing questions is often an effective way to challenge assumptions, solicit factual information, and redirect discussion. Rather than directly challenging participant perspectives through statements, questions can encourage participants to examine their own assumptions and values in a respectful way, and to differentiate between anecdotal and individual experience, and the sociologically and historically grounded experiences that are generally true of a group. Questions can also help participants understand when they are repeating an unexamined belief or perspective. One question we use is, *"Can you say how you came to this perspective?"* Examples of other questions include:

- *"What kinds of portrayals of Latino/a people do you see in the movies and on television? How do these portrayals affect your perception of what Latino/a people are like?"*

- *"What might be some other reasons that parents of low-income students don't come to school events besides that they are uninterested in their children's education?"*

Depersonalizing the statement: A facilitator can respond to an inaccurate or stereotypical comment directly and sensitively by first depersonalizing the statement and then focusing on the correct answer. The instructor can address the issue as a commonly held belief or connect it to class concepts. Consider these examples:

- *"John says he believes, as do many people, that people of color commit more crimes than do whites. However, as statistics from the Department of Justice show us . . ."*
- *"When we talked about structural racism, we talked about the disproportionate involvement of people of color in the criminal justice system. How does institutional racism contribute to the perception that people of color are more likely to be criminals?"*

Correcting: Sometimes it is useful, even essential, to directly intervene and provide accurate information. This is particularly important if the statement may be harmful or inflammatory to other participants. Consider these examples:

- A participant states his belief that gay men want to be women. The facilitator says, *"People who identify as another gender are called transgender. Transgender people can be gay, lesbian, heterosexual, bisexual, or may identify their sexuality in an entirely different way. Most gay men are as comfortable as heterosexual men with identifying themselves as men."*
- A student claims that women who are drinking at parties and get raped are just as responsible as the man for what happened. The instructor responds, *"It's never a person's fault for being sexually assaulted. Our laws and policies are clear that the alleged perpetrator is responsible for ensuring there is consent."*

Facilitators need to decide which strategies and combinations of strategies are most appropriate considering the particulars of a given situation. There is no simple formula. In some cases, we may feel stuck in the moment and unsure of how to respond to a comment that clearly needs a response. Even if we are uncertain about what to do, we cannot ignore statements that are toxic to the group and learning process. Some options can be to acknowledge the statement and its impact, and then create space to develop a response, either in the present or later on (below we discuss how to deal with facilitator reactions). Facilitators could state, *"Many people had a strong reaction to that statement"* followed by giving participants an opportunity to do a "one-minute paper"—writing their thoughts on what just happened and the effect it had, or doing a brief sharing in pairs. If the comment occurs at the end of a class, the instructor can follow-up on email or an online discussion format, or note that this will be discussed at the next meeting. The instructor can also bring in additional information at a following session and revisit the issue.

4. *Manage conflict and different views*: Conflict and disagreement can be healthy and play an important role in social justice education. Instructors often cite lack of preparation or skills for knowing how to effectively address conflict, and a concomitant fear of losing control of discussions, as primary obstacles to initiating a social justice education (see Chapter 12). Inviting conflict and emotional dissonance, other than in the most traditional forms of argumentation and debate, seems counterintuitive to maintaining "proper" classroom or workshop decorum. The initial response of many instructors to potential conflict in the classroom is to shut down any disagreement, ignore the emotional and affective tone in a class, and keep a tight focus on intellectual and informational content. In the social

justice education classroom, conflict and dissonance are a valued, even necessary, part of the process that enable values, beliefs, and ideas to emerge so that different perspectives can be explored. Our goal is to work through immediate conflicts and emotions so as to understand the individual, institutional, and cultural implications of the topic at hand. We do so by encouraging participants to consider and analyze multiple perspectives on any given topic. Important learning opportunities are missed if participants do not have the opportunity to honestly express feelings, concerns, questions, and disagreements.

There are a number of things the facilitator can do to help ensure that conflict is constructive. First is to enforce the agreed-upon guidelines for interaction, particularly no personal attacks. In addition, the facilitator can slow down the interaction, making sure each person is heard before another person speaks. Often conflict will escalate and become unproductive if people do not feel adequately understood. Facilitators can paraphrase what someone says before another person speaks, or ask the next speaker to do so before adding to the conversation. They can ensure that people are not interrupted and have the opportunity to complete their thoughts. Using a "talking stick" or an object to hold if someone is the recognized speaker can also be helpful. If the conflict gets centered between just a couple of people, facilitators can invite other views or perspectives.

Facilitators can also take a break to give everyone a chance to reflect on the interactions, share their thoughts and feelings with a partner, or free write for a few minutes. We can then ask people to share their reflections. Facilitators can also note common ground and areas of agreement. We can also put the issues being discussed into broader context and relate it to the class concepts, moving it away from personal disagreements, such as, *"While you are raising different ways of addressing the gaps in educational achievement, you both agree that this is an issue that needs attention. You both recognize the role parents play in this process. Let's look at what we know about educational opportunity from the reading we have done."*

It is important that facilitators help participants achieve some degree of closure, not to enforce agreement or to answer all questions, but to help participants pull thoughts together so that they are ready to make a transition to the next activity or to end the class session. In summarizing a discussion, facilitators and participants identify themes that emerged, unresolved questions, insights gained, divergent perspectives, and other important points raised. Time to reflect enables participants to step back, summarize their learning, and develop cognitive as well as experiential understanding of the issues raised in the activity. For example, during a classism course, the facilitators might say, *"From this discussion it appears that we have several different understandings of how to define social class in this group. Can we name those differences?"* or *"I notice a conflict in this discussion between what many of us have believed about equal opportunity in the past and what we are beginning to see about the effects of class differences on economic opportunity."* We do not expect participants to end a discussion feeling that they have completely resolved their discomfort with different ideas and perspectives. Some disorientation is a sign that participants are grappling with new awareness and knowledge. We encourage them to notice discomfort, stay on their learning edge, and consider new ideas and questions rather than retreat to the comfort of more familiar perspectives.

5. Acknowledge and manage feelings: For some facilitators and participants, the expression of feelings in a classroom is an unusual experience. This is because traditionally, education environments have discouraged the public expression of emotions as inappropriate. Some participants (e.g., women and some ethnic and racial groups) have been penalized for showing emotions in the classroom and criticized as less rigorous thinkers, less analytical, or unable to frame an impartial argument (Rendon, 2009). In social justice education classes, many feelings arise as people deeply explore systemic inequality, such as anger,

guilt, sadness, and frustration. While no one should feel that intense emotion is required for effective learning, all should be prepared for the expression of honest feelings that may arise at different times in the course, and remember that important learning can come from openness and listening closely to the experiences and feelings of others. Facilitators can help participants recognize feelings and manage them or work them through. They can remind students that feelings are a common and normal part of this process. Hearing from other people with similar feelings can be validating and make it easier for participants to accept their own reactions. Consider these examples:

- A participant begins to cry as she recalls how a younger brother with a developmental disability was teased by classmates at school. The facilitator says, *"It seems like that is still a painful memory for you. Thanks for telling us about this experience. It is a powerful reminder of how deeply name-calling can affect us. Do other people have similar memories?"*
- A facilitator asks participants to go around the circle and give a one-word description of what they are feeling in reaction to an intense video about the Holocaust.
- After a panel presentation by a group of people with disabilities in an ableism course, the instructor asks participants to think about or write down their feelings as they heard different panelists talk about how they deal with obstacles they face because of ableism, such as *"What feelings did you have as you listened to the panelists' stories?" "What did the panelists say about their experiences as people with disabilities attending this school that you had never thought about before?"*

Some students may become immobilized by feelings of guilt, or the fear of saying the wrong thing or revealing their prejudices. Facilitators can remind students that we are not at fault for having misinformation, and shift the focus to understanding our cultural conditioning. Personal sharing from the facilitators about their own learning process and errors they have made can help students work through these feelings. The introduction of a conceptual model can also provide participants with a way to understand emotions in a broader theoretical context, or it can focus the discussion to proceed more productively. For example, facilitators can refer to the oppression model, the cycle of socialization, identity development theory, or learning edge/comfort zone models discussed in the introductory module to help participants understand and normalize their experience (see Chapters 2 and 4). For example:

- A white participant is ashamed because she could not identify any African American historical figures on a short quiz. The facilitator responds, *"How does the cycle of socialization we talked about earlier help us to understand how we have been kept from knowing about cultures different from our own?"*
- An Asian American student who has struggled with perfectionism and thought it was her personal problem is relieved to learn about the model minority stereotype as a way to understand her experience in a broader context.

Participants may need support managing their feelings of anger or frustration. We can discuss how to appropriately express their anger at realizing the extent of the oppression they or others face by providing opportunities to share their feelings through class activities and finding other constructive outlets, such as speak outs, social change organizations, or support groups. We can assist students from privileged groups to deal with their guilt and help them transform guilt into taking accountable action. Instructors can encourage students to simply sit with their feelings for awhile, providing support and assurance that

this is a normal part of the process. Models of social identity development (see Chapter 2) or other descriptions of personal growth regarding social oppression can offer students a vision of how feelings and views can be transformed in a liberatory way (Goodman, 2011; Warren, 2005).

6. *Use silence*: Facilitators and participants alike are often uncomfortable with silence in a classroom or workshop. It can be more helpful to students when facilitators wait after asking a question, rather than either answering their own question or posing questions in quick succession to fill a silence. In the social justice education classroom, silence can have many different meanings. Participants often need silence to think about new information or to articulate perspectives on an issue. A brief period of silence is useful to provide participants time to think through their perspectives, experiences, feelings, and ideas before launching into group discussions. This is especially important for participants whose first language is not English or who need time to reflect before responding.

Differentiating productive silence from bored or fearful silence is an important facilitator skill. Signs of a fearful or uncomfortable silence include lack of eye contact among participants, yawning, physical shifting and movement in seats, or tense expressions on faces. However, facilitators should not assume that a period of silence necessarily reflects fear, discomfort, or unwillingness to continue pursuing a topic under discussion. Silence can often be a learning opportunity and deepen the discussion. One strategy that is helpful for bridging these moments is a brief writing assignment—asking participants to write down their feelings at that moment or turning to a neighbor to share their thoughts—to provide a way to acknowledge and clarify reactions before moving on. Another strategy is to do a quick "whip" around the circle, in which each participant in turn says one word that describes their feelings at that moment. Sometimes simply commenting on silence opens the discussion, enabling it to restart and potentially deepen individual understanding. Consider these examples:

- In response to a processing question, the group is silent and no one is making eye contact. The facilitator says, *"I'm not sure what this silence means. Can anyone say what you are thinking or feeling right now?"* or *"Let's just sit with this silence and give all of us time to sort out our feelings. When someone feels ready to answer one of the processing questions, please do."*
- An emotional exchange between a Jew and a Gentile about the prevalence of antisemitism on campus leads to a long period of silence. The facilitator says, *"Why don't we each take a few minutes to jot down what we are feeling right now. Then we can talk with a partner before we come back to the whole group."* Or the facilitator could say, *"This topic clearly generates strong feelings,"* thus normalizing an emotional, as well as intellectual, response to the topic.

7. *Address avoidance*: It is not uncommon for participants to shift away from a topic that makes them uncomfortable or if they feel another issue is more pressing. Sometimes facilitators can acknowledge the importance of the new topic but remind participants of the focus of the discussion, class, or workshop. Other times, instructors can find ways to connect the issue raised to the class or workshop focus. Facilitators can also name when they notice a pattern of certain topics being avoided and discuss it openly with the participants.

In social justice education, it is common for participants to prefer to talk about their subordinated identity(ies) rather than consider their privileged identity(ies). In some cases, participants may want to consider only a particular subordinated identity but not another of their subordinated identities. From an intersectional perspective, it is important to

recognize the interconnections among different forms of oppression and how they mutually constitute each other. However, we do not want students to avoid the in-depth exploration of a particular aspect of social inequality.

Instead of simply dismissing a shift in focus, there are numerous ways facilitators can ask students to consider how their other identities affect and are affected by the form of oppression that is being centered. For example, in a racism workshop, white women who try to shift the focus to their identity as women, but not on their whiteness, could be asked to think about how their whiteness affects their experience of being a woman and how this differs for women of color; or they could be asked how being a woman shapes their experience of being white and having white privilege relative to white men. We can also ask about how their experience and understanding of sexism might help them understand and/or block understanding of racism. What are some of the similarities and differences? Often, once people have had the opportunity to acknowledge the issue that is most central to them, they are more able to explore other issues. Facilitators should support an intersectional focus while foregrounding a particular form of oppression or social identity for the sake of learning about a specific form of oppression.

8. Reduce and address resistance: The contradiction phase is when instructors are most likely to face resistance from participants based on an inability or unwillingness to consider new perspectives or engage in critical self-reflection. This resistance is different than participants expressing prejudiced or inaccurate views. The inability to constructively engage in the learning process is often a sign that defenses are high, and that the dissonance is too threatening.

Resistance can be expressed in many ways by members of both advantaged and disadvantaged groups. Instructors from marginalized groups are likely to encounter more resistance, especially from participants from privileged groups (see Chapter 12). Some behaviors that can indicate resistance might be: refuting every fact that is shared, attacking the facilitator as biased, dismissing other student's experiences, or simply disengaging. Having one's world view challenged—especially one's belief in meritocracy, being asked to acknowledge unasked-for privilege, or to understand how one is discriminated against, are painful and uncomfortable experiences. If the confirmation phase was done well, there is usually less resistance and it is more easily managed, since some basic trust and degree of safety has been established.

There are numerous strategies that can help shift resistance (Beeman, 2015; Goodman, 2011, 2015; Ouyang, 2014). First, the facilitator should try to *assess* what is creating the resistance, i.e., what may be provoking this level of fear or anxiety. This assessment may allow us to make more effective responses. People often feel that they are being told they are bad or wrong and do not feel heard. Their core beliefs or understanding of themselves and the world are being questioned. They may fear what social change would look like and mean for them. If so, consider *revisiting some of the activities in the confirmation phase.* We can affirm who people are and recognize their strengths and qualities that align with social justice (e.g., their strong work ethic, their caring for other people, or their concern for fairness); and we can continue to foster trust and rapport among students and with the facilitator, and ask participants to refer back to the discussion of comfort zone and learning edge to recall how they planned to deal with defensive feelings if they arose. The facilitator can remind students that this exploration is not about personal blame but about understanding how we are part of larger systems that impact our lived realities and those of others.

We can *build on students' current knowledge*, recognizing the nuggets of truth in their perspectives, rather than suggesting that everything they believe is false. If participants tend to refute what they hear from the facilitator or other students, *encourage them to*

research or explore information for themselves. It is almost never effective to continually try to convince a student who is being resistant to accept a particular piece of information or viewpoint. For example, participants who no longer believe that sexism is a problem can be asked to research the representation of women as heads of Fortune 500 companies, on corporate boards, or in other major positions of power. Students can be asked to make observations that reveal power inequities or discrimination, such as how people are represented in the media or treated in stores. Materials and activities that allow participants to *examine issues from a distance* can be less threatening and raise less resistance. Case studies, vignettes, and analogies can be used to help students develop a social justice perspective, and identify and analyze power dynamics without feeling personally implicated or attacked. Instead of focusing at an intellectual level, the facilitator can shift to a more personal level. Sometimes hearing personal stories, whether in person or through media, can help students make a more *personal or empathic connection*. Some students can make the link between their own experiences of feeling marginalized, discriminated against, or treated unfairly to relate to the oppression experienced by another group.

Certain participants may experience feelings of "too much, too soon." It may be necessary *to "back up" and allow students to go at a slower pace*. For example, if a heterosexual participant is completely unwilling to explore issues of homophobia and heterosexism, it may first be necessary for that participant to spend time learning more about the impact of gender role stereotypes on personal development and interpersonal relationships.

Students may feel less threatened by changes in the status quo by discussing the ways they and all people are harmed by oppression, and what alternatives might look like that could be beneficial to all. Instructors can look for ways to *heighten students' investment* in particular social justice topics or equity more generally. How might understanding oppression help them in their work or interpersonal relationships or in helping the U.S. live up to its stated values of equal opportunity for all?

Our goal as facilitators is to help participants build resilience and internal resources that enable them to think critically, and to tolerate ambiguity and complexity, so that they can choose behaviors and attitudes that are congruent with their commitments to social justice.

9. *Manage facilitator reactions*: Emotional reactions in the course of social justice education are a natural and human response for facilitators as well as participants. Facilitators can be triggered by statements participants make, just as participants can trigger emotional reactions in each other (see Chapter 12 for further discussion about facilitator reactions). A facilitator who feels emotionally triggered needs to stay in the facilitator role and attend to group needs, but the facilitator can also respond honestly. Instructors may need to make conscious efforts not to react inappropriately to a student's remark or behavior. It is important for facilitators to recognize their own feelings and reactions, and to have strategies to deal with such situations. Some options include self-talk (telling oneself to calm down, not to take it personally, to just stay in the moment), reframing the situation, taking some deep breaths, letting students know that you had a strong reaction to that comment, and taking a break to collect oneself and think about what to do. A co-facilitator, especially one who holds different social identities, can be helpful in these situations, because rarely are both facilitators triggered at the same time. The one who is not triggered can think more clearly about what leadership role to take in the moment.

Phase Three: Continuity

Once participants have left familiar ground and explored new territory, both affectively and intellectually, they are in a position to integrate what they have learned and establish a

new foundation. This balance is gradually achieved as a new set of beliefs becomes "home base" for interpreting experience and creating meaning. The past is not wholly rejected, but reinterpreted and reconstructed into a new frame of reference.

Corresponding Facilitating Environment

The environment once again shifts to encourage the development of stability and *continuity* based on new insights and knowledge. Activities are designed to help participants articulate and confirm what they have learned, and to think about what this might mean for their actions beyond the course or workshop. Opportunities are provided to imagine taking new actions, the likely consequences of such actions, and the types of support that could be called upon to sustain these changes.

Design Issues for Continuity

During the continuity phase of the course, participants turn their attention to thinking about how to integrate new awareness and knowledge into their lives and to bring their experience in the course to a close. We focus on helping participants identify actions they want to take as they further their learning and concretize their new perspectives in actions. Our intention is to help participants feel optimistic about social change rather than feel overwhelmed by the enormity of social oppression. We want all students to feel a sense of agency—that they can play a role challenging inequities and fostering justice. It is important to allow students to choose and develop their own action plan suited to their particular learning and comfort level. Participants need to think about how to nurture and sustain their developing understanding of, and commitment to, acting against social injustice. The following guidelines help in planning this phase of the course.

1. *Identify actions for social justice:* Instructors can encourage participants to identify actions that match their personal level of comfort and skill. This means acknowledging and valuing actions at all levels of risk. Actions could include reading more about issues, committing to attending lectures or arts events on social justice themes, participating in social justice discussions and actions online, objecting to biased jokes or comments in their classes or at the family dinner table, or joining a social change or ally group on campus or in the community. For example, instructors can provide students with opportunities to map out action plans with concrete steps to successfully accomplish their goals. Several of the ism chapters provide action planning activities.
2. *Identify support*: Developing support for new awareness of and commitment to address social justice issues that extends beyond the course/workshop boundaries is an essential part of helping participants bridge the gap between the class and their school, work, and personal lives. Helping participants develop support groups from the class or learn about existing community or campus groups to join provides a way for participants to nurture relationships with others who share their developing commitments.
3. *Provide closure to the class/workshop:* Instructors can help participants achieve a sense of closure by providing a way for them to summarize what they learned, appreciate classmates, and identify next steps in continuing their learning. Closing activities can take a range of formats. Several of the ism workshops ask students to share an action they plan to take or one thing they want to remember from the workshop.
4. *Solicit feedback*: Whether or not it is formally required, it is usually helpful to get feedback about the class or workshop. Since doing social justice education is always a work in progress, it is useful to hear what participants found helpful and solicit suggestions for improvements, both in terms of our facilitation and the class content.

Facilitation Issues in Continuity Phase

Instructors need to help participants transition out of the class. Many participants report missing the stimulation and support provided in social justice classes or workshops. Sometimes participants are concerned about how they will continue their social justice process without the structure of the class, while others are eager to go out and change the world. Participants need assistance thinking through how they can move forward in constructive ways.

1. *Deal with immobilizing feelings*: It is not uncommon for students to be overwhelmed by the enormity of social inequality and feel powerless to make any significant change. We hope that in our classes and workshops, students will have learned about ways people have resisted oppression and supported movements for justice. Reminding students of these efforts can help reinforce that social change is sometimes a slow process, but societal changes can and do occur through the myriad actions, big and small, that people make together. We can point to actions in their communities that have led to greater equity. Participants can think about their spheres of influence and how they specifically can make an impact. Being part of groups and collective actions can help mitigate feelings of disempowerment and foster a sense of being part of a larger struggle for justice.

Students from marginalized groups may feel overwhelmed, helpless, confused, despairing, hopeless, and/or angry at the enormity of oppression that members of their group face. We can acknowledge such feelings while also encouraging participants from marginalized groups to identify sources of power within their group to make change and resources that can support their efforts. Providing examples of role models from their group who have worked for justice can provide inspiration and encouragement as well as practical tools and strategies. Helping students recognize the value of group support and affirmation from peers who share their social identities is important for developing strength and courage for facing the broader world.

Students from privileged groups may feel guilty or ashamed of their social identity or unearned advantages, feelings that may impede their work for justice. We can remind them that immobilizing guilt only serves to maintain the unjust status quo. In fact, it is a privilege to claim that one feels too guilty to act. Instead, individuals can be encouraged to consider how to use their privileges to foster social change. How can they use their resources, personal connections, education, time, and credibility to support social justice efforts and work in solidarity with people from other groups? They can study and learn from role models in the past and present who are examples of how people from advantaged groups can accept their social identity and become powerful change agents. Students can connect with others from their privileged group to deal with their feelings and explore how to effectively work in solidarity with people from other social groups.

2. *Discuss appropriate action*: Participants may leave a course with much enthusiasm and desire for creating social change. Assessing their competencies and areas for growth can help individuals determine what kind of activities are most appropriate for them at this time. It is our responsibility to help students think through their actions so their impact matches their intentions.

Some individuals take on a missionary role, trying to convert everyone they know to adopt their social justice perspective. Instructors should remind students that other people have not shared their class experience and talk with them about how to communicate their new knowledge and excitement in respectful and effective ways. Students can share their learnings with others without imposing or insisting that others adopt these same views. Students may develop a judgmental attitude, looking down on others from their social group who have not developed the same degree of social consciousness. Instructors need to

work with students to develop the respect and compassion for those from their own social identity group who have not critically examined issues of oppression. They can remind students of their own ongoing journey and of the things that were helpful to them in their learning and development that might inform how they can interact with others.

Participants from privileged groups may try to "help" or "save" people from marginalized communities. However well intentioned, this can be experienced as patronizing and disrespectful of others' cultures and competencies. Instructors should discuss how students can work in collaboration and solidarity with subordinated groups, listening to their needs, valuing their experiences, and supporting their goals. As people from dominant groups work for social change, there needs to be a sense of accountability to people from the marginalized group to ensure that they are acting in ways that in fact are serving the larger social justice vision.

When people leave the class/workshop with a heightened awareness of social justice issues, they may find it hard to relate in the same ways to their friends and family. Students may notice and be more offended by biased comments, jokes, and beliefs. They may find they have less in common with people currently in their social network. We can discuss with them how to find support for their new views while renegotiating current relationships, and help them explore ways to stay engaged with family members while they continue on their social justice journey. We can share ideas for how to deal with changing friendships. We can help prepare students to manage and make decisions about the relationships in their life and find what they need to continue their growth.

BUILDING SKILLS FOR WORKING TOGETHER

People from all social groups can work together as allies and build coalitions to plan and engage in action for change. In our courses and workshops, participants begin this process by learning to listen across differences to understand and value the perspectives of others who are different from themselves. By engaging in small- and large-group activities in the classroom, they are learning skills to work together and manage group dynamics. Planning action within a supportive group of others can challenge and help clarify misguided attempts to be lone heroes or to decide what other groups may need or want. We hope that all of these actions will help prepare participants to take what they have learned in the class or workshop out into the world and their daily lives.

CONCLUSION

As the chapter reflects, both design and facilitation are critical and interconnected elements of successful social justice education. A well-designed class or workshop takes into account the various dimensions of social justice education (instructor, students, curriculum, pedagogy, and classroom climate and dynamics) and provides a thoughtful and solid foundation for the course. Effective facilitation creates a supportive and respectful environment in which participants are invited to discuss and raise questions about new information and perspectives, and to choose new beliefs and actions based on a critical examination of their own values, skills, and knowledge base. The design and facilitation issues and strategies discussed in this chapter can assist facilitators in planning and conducting classes in which all participants, from both advantaged and disadvantaged groups, are engaged in a positive and productive learning experience for all.

Note

* We ask that those who cite this work always acknowledge by name all of the authors listed rather than either only citing the first author or using "et al." to indicate coauthors. All collaborated on the conceptualization, development, and writing of this chapter.

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