



Speaking Frankly in the Classroom Guidelines for Workshop Planners and Facilitators

These guidelines are based on our experiences facilitating workshops at Penn State using the resources featured on this Web site. The bank of cases provided at <http://www.schreyerinstitute.psu.edu/programs/speakingfrankly/cases.asp> is nothing more than a starting point for inviting faculty and graduate student instructors in your academic unit to consider how they would respond to student questions, conflicts, and concerns that could arise in any college classroom about how individuals or groups define themselves culturally and/or politically; and how to create a more inclusive teaching environment regardless of discipline or course theme. Our hope is to make it easy for you to facilitate or find good facilitators for local workshops based on these materials. If you find that key issues you need to discuss are not raised by the cases provided, please consider writing additional cases and submitting them to site@psu.edu to be added to our case bank. Guidelines for writing cases are at <http://www.schreyerinstitute.psu.edu/pdf/CaseWritingGuidelines.pdf>

Finding Good Workshop Facilitators

We recommend that you tap as workshop facilitators one or more instructors in your academic unit who have experience with inclusive teaching strategies, e.g., discussion teaching that invites and seeks to validate the experiences of all students. It is not essential that facilitators have experience teaching courses that meet the United States Cultures (US) or International Cultures (IL) general education requirements. The Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence can help Penn State academic units adapt these resources, train new facilitators, or locate experienced facilitators. If you would like to speak with one of our consultants, please send a written request to site@psu.edu or call (814) 863-2599.

Recommended Room Set-Up and Time Allotment for Workshops

These case studies have been used most successfully in settings where 3 or more round table groups of 6-8 participants each can discuss cases in detail and, afterwards, share their most significant insights and most pressing unanswered questions with the larger group. Thus, it is important that your space accommodate your needed number of small groups comfortably, so that group members can hear each other without being distracted by other nearby groups. It is also a good idea to have a portable PA system in the room so that facilitators and small group reports can be heard and understood by all present.

You will need 30 minutes for preparing participants to discuss the cases, 20 minutes per case for round table discussions, and (depending on number of groups) 10-20 minutes per case for large group Q/A and facilitator conclusions. We would also recommend that you conduct a 5-minute program assessment using or adapting the feedback form provided on this site. So, for example, in a 90-minute workshop, you could not realistically expect to discuss more than 1 case thoroughly, no more than 2 in a 2-hour workshop, and no more than 4 in a 3-hour workshop.

Typical Workshop Outline

1. Overview of workshop goals
2. Participant introductions (if needed)
3. Review of Penn State policies AD42 and HR64

4. Review of ground rules for case study discussions
5. Brief overview of related identity/intellectual development theories as applied to college students
6. Round table discussions of case(s)
7. Small groups share insights/questions about case(s)
8. Facilitator wrap-up
9. Program feedback

Tips for Facilitators

- Plan all presentational material efficiently, with necessary handouts for participants' subsequent review, so that you can get to the case or cases no later than 30 minutes into the workshop.
- If you are not well-read in identity development theory and/or intellectual development theory, simply provide a layman's overview, include an article or two in the workshop packet, and refer participants to the bibliography provided with these on-line resources. Do not claim to be an expert, and do not try to answer questions about which you are uninformed.
- Given that discussing how to teach controversial subjects or manage student conflicts around identity issues may not be easy for all participants, it is best to let participants self-select their groups. In other words, it's generally best not to assign seating, if the room is set up for tables of 6-8. However, it is a good idea to designate a discussion facilitator for each table prior to or at the beginning of the workshop, even if you have to ask for a volunteer. That person's job might simply to make sure everyone at his/her table gets an opportunity to share at least once (or pass) before anyone can share a second time. This can be added to the ground rules, if desired.
- Remember that the purpose of any good case discussion is not to agree on a best possible course of action, even within a small group. Rather, the purpose is to seek some agreement on what kinds of outcomes would be considered favorable and then sketch out several courses of action that might reasonably be expected to achieve those outcomes. Participants will be diverse and will therefore need to have a range of good solutions from which to choose.
- If a group is confident they've cornered the best solution, their solution should be subjected to a fairly rigorous evaluation, if time permits. Try to get other groups to conduct this evaluation, playing devil's advocate only as needed to advance the dialogue.
- If a group cannot agree on what outcome(s) would be favorable, invite them to share where they are getting stuck. Discourage them from passing up a "teachable moment" simply to avoid conflict at any cost.
- Allow sufficient time for summarizing the areas of consensus or near consensus and the areas of greatest disagreement. If you can pose a key question or two that will likely further the dialogue once the program has ended, by all means do so.
- Do not rely too heavily on informal feedback when deciding what, if any, related programs to offer in future. Remember that you will only ever hear from a certain kind of participant. The larger your group, the more important that you collect some kind of written feedback prior to the advertised conclusion of your program.