

Anticipate & Address Classroom Incivilities

- “Hot moment”: A sudden eruption of tension or conflict in the classroom.
- How do we anticipate, prepare, and address such a moment?
- How can we use it as an opportunity to advance student learning?

Anticipate Classroom Incivilities

- Know yourself
 - Examine your own cultural background and implicit bias, and how it may differ from your students
 - What pushes your buttons and causes an emotional reaction?
- Prepare the class
 - Explicitly state and implicitly model respect
 - Guidelines for student discussions in syllabus, mention on first day to set expectations
- Where are the “hot spots” are in AEC material?

University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT)

Address Classroom Incivilities

- Be attuned to the class mood and dynamic; acknowledge the current feeling
- Try to depersonalize—it is not about the student(s) who spoke up, but about the ideas being exchanged
- Clarify student comments that have sparked tension AND acknowledge hurtful language choices
 - Sometimes inadvertently marginalizing things are said when struggling to understand a new perspective or having familiar views challenged
 - “The word X is a label that’s often objected to by those it’s used to describe because ...”
 - Students who are hurt might not speak up

Address Classroom Incivilities

- Find common ground
 - Identify a shared value
 - “I hear that you both care deeply about achieving X, but you have strongly divergent ideas about how to get there”
- Provide a basis for common understanding
 - Establish facts and questions about the topics raised in the tense moment
 - Explain or ask the class *why* a given topic or language choice feels emotionally charged

Address Classroom Incivilities

- Connect the hot moment to course topics or learning goals
 - What does the big emotion suggest about the importance of the topic you're teaching?
 - Can course materials help inform, anchor, or delimit the discussion that follows a hot moment?
 - Are there learning objectives related to critical thinking or precise framing of an argument that can be reinforced?
- Note that we can come back to it next time, then follow up!
 - Avoidance breaks trust; model honest engagement with difficult subjects

Address Classroom Incivilities

- Where are the "hot spots" are in AEC material?
- How have you handled controversial topics or vocal divergent opinions in the past?
- How have you handled potentially marginalizing comments?
- What are our common values about these moments as a department?