

Pedagogical Repair: Some Guiding Principles for Intentional Classroom Facilitation

*Developed by Antonio Coronado
Clinical Teaching Fellow,
Georgetown University Law Center*

Educator-Facilitators Co-Create Our Profession

- As classroom facilitators, we join our students in co-creating a space for learning and reflection. However, we also take part in shaping the legal profession of tomorrow. The norms, harms, and practices we enact (or allow to go unchecked) will either replicate or challenge our current legal profession.
- In developing intentional classroom space, ask yourself: *How can you best serve your students' particular needs in entering this profession (e.g., their well-being, asserting boundaries, learning unspoken norms, etc.)? And what forms of (re)education did you most crave in your own journey through legal education—what do you wish your educators had done?*

Intention, Impact, & Improvement

- One of our goals in classroom facilitation is to create an affirming and supportive space for all of our students. In cultivating such a space, ask yourself: *Whose voices have been historically erased or ignored from this lesson? What can you say or do to ensure this lesson does not perpetuate the same patterns of harm you may have experienced or seen in law school?*
- Our facilitation will never be perfect; this is a reality of our own growth as educators and perfection is an unattainable, white supremacist standard.¹ Regardless of our intention or preparation, there will be times when our facilitation causes harm or negatively impacts a student. When receiving feedback, ask yourself: *Am I hearing my student in the same way I hope that they'd hear my remarks in class? And how can I improve my lesson or facilitation to better incorporate a perspective that a student has voiced?*

Be Prepared to Close Any Space You Open

- When facilitating a space, it's important to “close out” or help address any forms of harm that you may have introduced (either indirectly or inadvertently). If you've asked students to reflect on a personal experience that may be difficult or on the harmful impact of a certain law, ask: *What are you doing to help students return to the classroom, emotionally and psychologically?* One example might be to “re-ground” students with a free-write or a guided think-pair-share activity to close out a given topic.

Resources Help Reduce Harm

- Despite our best efforts to create a supportive classroom space, our students may feel uncomfortable approaching us should they need help or are negatively affected by a class. Ask yourself: *Have you built your course in ways that will provide students with multiple forms of support (e.g., institutional resources in your syllabi and course website, knowledge of any cultural resource centers on your campus)? And, beyond a trigger/content warning for certain lessons, do you provide tangible, real-time resources for when students leave your class (e.g., any DEI staff at your school/institution; mental health resources; an ombudsperson; additional materials to help process, like articles or videos)?*

¹ “Perfectionism” is a characteristic of white supremacy culture. Kenneth Jones & Tema Okun, *Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups*, ChangeWork (2001), https://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/preserve/museums/files/White_Supremacy_Culture.pdf.

Example Grounding Questions

- Below are several guiding questions that can be used to hold space for critical self-reflection in your class or lesson. These types of questions can help facilitate deep introspection from your students, and it is always best to flag in advance if your expectation is that they share out their thoughts, as the answers to these are inherently personal:
 - *Who do you call home? What lessons and memories have they gifted you? How do they guide you in your journey through legal education?*
 - *What motions or movements bring you to this space?*
 - *Who are you beyond the work you do/classes you take?*
 - *Who are you accountable to as a future legal professional? What communities or people are you responsible to in the work you'll do? How do you know?*
 - *What are you holding onto from this lesson/class? Why?*
 - *What surprised you most about this lesson/class? Why?*
 - *Did this class/seminar change your view on how the law operates? Why or why not?*
 - *What or who was missing from the four-corners of this opinion? What did the opinion get wrong about this issue and why?*
 - *What do you wish you'd known _____ (at the start of the semester, before this class, etc.?)*
 - *What are you doing to practice self-care for yourself? In the short-term? In the long-term? And how can I help?*