

1) Unpacking the Instructor’s Role in Discussions

Tuesday, October 9th from 12 to 1 pm (come 15 minutes early, if possible, for lunch), Eliot Lyman

How does the teaching plan facilitate or inhibit effective discussion? How do instructors leverage their expertise productively? In what ways can instructors allow students space to engage deeply with the content and each other? In this session, faculty members will watch raw classroom footage of two Harvard instructors as a springboard to exploring these questions and the implications for their own practice. [Please RSVP here.](#)

<p>Video footage:</p> <p>Rakoff clip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start at 57:06 ● Fade out between 1:02:25 and 1:02:28 (or thereabouts) <p>McCarthy clip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start at 3:25 ● Fade out at 8:34 	<p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Laptop ● Dongle ● Copy of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Handout -- see Appendix A ○ Feedback survey ○ Blank sheets of paper ○ Pens
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Teaching plan:

12:05 (10')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intro (name and what you teach) ● Goals and agenda ● Starter prompt: What is a discussion practice you employ that you are excited about? (Could be a structure -- like use of reading responses in class -- or a facilitation move -- like a technique for getting students to engage directly with each other.)
12:15 (15')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Watch videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Intro process ○ “Gather descriptive evidence -- low-level of inference -- about the role the instructor is playing in discussion facilitation in these two clips. The transcript is available as an optional resource.” ○ Watch two video clips ● Quick individual reflection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify at least one example that strikes you as a moment of effective discussion facilitation, either in terms of structure or action. Drawing from the

	evidence and your own experience, why do you think this was an effective moment?
12:30 (10')	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Discuss individual reflections in small groups
12:40 (15')	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Share out from small groups● What are you now thinking about discussions and your own facilitation of them?
12:55 (5')	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Next steps● Feedback form

Type 2, Appendix A

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teaching &
learning lab



A) Learning Goals:

1. Leverage the expertise in the room to identify a variety of effective discussion “moves”
2. Explore how one or more of these “moves” might help you grow as a discussion facilitator

B) Lightweight Norms:

- Be curious
- Maintain confidentiality
- Expect non-closure

** This session is not aimed at critiquing the practice of our colleagues, but rather to use these common “texts” as a window into exploring discussion leading, both in general and in our specific context.*

C) Prompts:

1. **While watching the videos:** Gather descriptive evidence -- low-level of inference -- about the role the instructor is playing in discussion facilitation in these two clips. (The transcript is available as an optional resource.)

2. **Individual Reflection:** Identify at least one example that strikes you as a moment of effective discussion facilitation, either in terms of structure or action. Drawing from the evidence and your own experience, why do you think this was an effective moment?

3. **Small Group Conversation:** Share thoughts from your individual reflection.

4. **Whole Group Conversation:**

- Share out from small groups
- Open-ended conversation: What are you now thinking about discussions and your own facilitation of them?

D) Recommended Follow-Up Resources:

1) Instructional Moves:

- a) [Facilitating Discussions](#)
- b) Rakoff's "[Pressing Students for Accuracy and Expanded Reasoning](#)" and "[Encouraging Students to Respond to Each Other](#)"
- c) McCarthy's "[Facilitating Student-Led Discussions](#)" and "[Knowing When to Intervene in the Student-Centered Discussion](#)"

2) Texts

- a) [Education for Judgment: The Artistry of Discussion Leadership](#) -- My favorite book on facilitating discussion in higher education. It can be read "a la carte", and I find that the three chapters by Chris Christensen are alone more than worth the price of the book.
- b) [Tools for Teaching](#) -- My favorite "soup-to-nuts" book on teaching in higher education. It has five chapters on discussion strategies.

3) Handouts

- a) [TLL tip sheet on discussion protocols](#) -- Nice to have a variety of protocols at the ready for various discussion goals.
- b) [HBS tip sheet on asking effective questions](#) -- a power-packed handout with great ideas for asking questions of all types and grain sizes

4) **Instructional coaching support with the TLL:** a variety of options, including session planning, observation & debrief, and course evaluation consultation

5) Future professional development opportunities

- a) Classroom observations and debriefs during Teaching and Learning Week (10/11 through 10/17) -- see Bridget's email to faculty
- b) "Exploring rigor and relevance in the professional school setting" -- Wed, 10/31 from 12 to 1 pm in Longfellow 207, featuring Ebony Bridwell-Mitchell and Marty West as discussants

FILM CLIP CONTEXT AND TRANSCRIPTS

Film Clip #1: Todd Rakoff

Context:

- “Legislation and Regulation”, a required first-year course at HLS to 80 students in Fall, 2016
- The students are charged to think through a particular case of potential unfair business practices in the role of Deputy General Counsel at the National Consumer Protection Agency (NCPA). As such, they need to analyze the case and recommend that the NCPA engage in either rulemaking or adjudication.
- The segment we are watching starts 57 minutes in to an 80 minute class session. The students just discussed the case in small groups, and are now coming back to discuss as a whole class.

Transcript:

RAKOFF: All right, so let's have our discussion and then I'll ask you to vote. All right, so you can have the benefit of the discussion before you decide which way you want to go. All right, let's just clear away some of the basics. All right, this is a choice we have because we can choose rule making or adjudication. We're told up in the first paragraph that we have the authority to do both of those things. If we didn't have the authority to do both of those things we couldn't do both of those things. And if the statute said we had to do one of those things, we'd have to do one of those things. Like the Occupational Safety and Health Act that we read said, basically, there's no occupational safety and health law until the Occupational Safety and Health Administration passes rules. Well, then you've got to do rule making, OK. If we do rule making or we do adjudication what procedures are we going to have to follow? Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Zoe?

STUDENT: If we do adjudication we have to follow the process on the board, correct? If we're going to go through the rule making process we would follow the guidelines outlined in APA. And so we would have--

RAKOFF: Just, we're getting closer. APA, I like that. Now, what would we have to do in the APA as regards rule making?

STUDENT: Well, if it was under 553 we'd have to go to the notice and comment period. And so we would--

RAKOFF: But I don't pay you to give me a sentence that says, if it were.

STUDENT: So I think it would be under 553.

RAKOFF: Why do you think that?

STUDENT: Because almost everything goes through 553. [LAUGHTER] You said if we guessed--

RAKOFF: Sort of a dartboard answer. [LAUGHTER] She's right. [LAUGHTER] She's right, but you've got give me a better reason for it. Sharon?

STUDENT: Because it's an informal process and it's not--

RAKOFF: How do you know it's an informal process? Kaye? Microphone is working its way down here. Law of gravity.

STUDENT: The statute doesn't say that you have to have a hearing. So if the statute doesn't specify, you go through notice and comment.

RAKOFF: Right. OK, the default under the APA is 553. The statute tells you you have to have a hearing on a record, then it's formal rule making. If the statute tells you nothing, then it's informal rule making, OK. And adjudication? If we do the adjudication, what do we have to do? All right. We're got down to the first row here. Brittany?

STUDENT: You have to have an on the record proceeding.

RAKOFF: And you know that?

STUDENT: Because that's what 556 and 557 say.

RAKOFF: How do you know we're in 556 and 557? How do you know it's not informal adjudication?

STUDENT: Well, I thought you said if it was formal adjudication.

RAKOFF: If it was adjudication.

STUDENT: OK Well, you either have to have it on the record or it falls into that top right box where you're following due process considerations. So you at least have to have the opportunity for both sides to be heard. And I guess whether or not it's on the record depends on what box it falls in.

RAKOFF: We can do better than that. What you said was not wrong, just not completely right. Pergeta?

STUDENT: Well, it says that you need to have a hearing on the record.

RAKOFF: Thank you. All right, the problem says you have to have a hearing on the record. It pays to read the problems, aka, exam questions, as to what they say. So if we do it through adjudication we're going to have to have a trial type hearing. And if we do it through rule making we're going to do informal rulemaking. And that's the common pattern. That's the most common choice you'd face in an agency like this. All right, now, what are the differences? That's our choice. What are going to be some of the differences between proceeding through a notice and comment rulemaking or proceeding through on the record adjudication? Kareem, start us off.

Film Clip #2: Tim McCarthy

Context:

- “Stories of Slavery and Freedom”, a undergraduate History and Literature seminar with 16 students in Fall, 2016
- The two-hour class was focused on exploring the notions of what it meant to be free as a Black person in early 19th century America, drawing on autobiographical slave narratives by both Frederick Douglass and William Grimes.
- For each session, two students work with Professor McCarthy (drafting a plan, meeting with McCarthy in advance, etc) to serve as discussion provokers, tasked with directing and energizing the conversation. Jeremy, the first person to speak in this tape, is one of the provokers.
- The segment we are watching starts in the fourth minute of a two-hour class, and the provokers have just introduced the session and built up to their first question, which is where this clip begins.

Transcript:

JEREMY: OK. I guess we'd like to start by just getting your guys' thoughts on what these passages reflect about Douglass's experience and the desire of white people at the time to limit black people from gaining skills or et cetera. I just want to get your thoughts on things that struck you in these passages or anything else that seems related to that from the readings.

STUDENT: Well, in the second paragraph that you guys pointed out there's one line that kind of summarizes the point that came up in one of the essays we read towards the beginning of the semester about how the new US tried to deal with issues of class by sort of pacifying lower class white people by introducing this thing of race. So when it says on page 580-- sorry, I just lost the sentence. But that they would-- oh, yes. "And, taking advantage of Mr. Gardner's necessities, they broke off, swearing they would work no longer, unless he would discharge his black carpenters." So that sort of puts the ultimatum and just makes an ultimatum out of it. It's like either you choose the white workers or you choose the black workers. But there is no way-- the white workers will revolt, unless you suppress the black workers.

MCCARTHY: Yeah.

STUDENT: Well, in your email you said we'd be thinking about this in terms of the election and the results of the election. I think this like anxiety and sense of replacement is really important too. Like the fact that the white workers seem to interpret inclusion of black workers as their exclusion. And this idea that there can't really be both at the same time, and that we have to choose between one and the other. That's quite sad.

STUDENT: Oh, and I think both passages, when taken together, would have implicitly recognized the potential for blacks to be equal, and not, if he's allowed to read, he has the potential to gain all the skills of a white person, which is why it says in the second passage, "Poor white men will be thrown out of employment." So in bringing them up to their potential privilege for white humanity, as we were talking about last week, it described in that context that they have the ability to be equal. And that's why the white men will never let them be equal.

STUDENT: I think also the idea of displacement leverages the idea of race as something-- or the idea of economy, I guess-- as something that there's only a certain amount of the pie. Or there's only a finite amount of pie to go around, which limits the question of where are the other jobs, or how do we revitalize the economy to make room for everyone, and to give everyone a place in the American system or the American dream? Rather, it is like this idea of either/or of fighting each other rather than fighting a system, or fighting a leadership.

MCCARTHY: Does that seem to be pre-existing? A number of you have pointed out to this idea that there's a finite amount of equality, or a finite amount of freedom, or a finite amount of opportunity. And you pointed out that there's an either/or, right? That there's a sense that both can't coexist. Both can't happen at the same time-- black freedom, white freedom, black opportunity, white opportunity. But in both of these passages there seems to be a preexisting assumption that that's the reality that exists-- that these two things are incompatible, or they can't be coexistent. Where does that come when you see that there? Yeah.

STUDENT: I don't know if I see that. I see that from the white perspective. But it doesn't seem that Douglass is writing it as if he believes that black equality would mean the end of white--

MCCARTHY: No, I was talking about the white folks who are trying to foreclose those opportunities, whether it be literacy or whether it be employment. Like there is a preexisting sense that white opportunity, freedom, and inclusion presupposes the exclusion or denial of rights to black people.

STUDENT: Well, I wonder how much of this preexisting supposition is tied to a lot of rhetoric that...