

## **Lesson Plans: A Facilitator's Guide to Transformative Teaching**

Possible Icebreakers to start out with:

1. Ask the participants to share about a great teaching mentor they've had. It might be useful to give them some time to write about this. Then ask the participants what it was about **them** that allowed that mentoring to take place? (Not about the teacher, but what was it in them as the student that allowed it to be great.)
2. Another icebreaker to get us started could be asking each person to write down a question that they feel would really help them get to know the people in the room. Then, they each take a turn answering each person's question, including the person who wrote the question answering their own. (This can take quite a bit of time, it can be shortened by having the person answering their own question and each answering one other person's question of their choice.)

Lead the change/transformation discussion at the beginning of the guide book. I suggest giving participants time to write and then maybe having them share with a partner or a smaller group so more people get a chance to speak. Then maybe asking if there are any themes that groups noticed from their smaller group that they would like to share with the entire class.

### **01 Inner Landscape**

#### **Teaching Philosophy**

The teaching philosophy activity could be assigned for participants to do on their own time and then come ready to discuss as a group. The benefit of this is because it will likely take a while for them to write out all of their answers to the questions and then it could be useful for them to have more time to share together after they have written than spending that writing time in the training time. Alternatively, the facilitator could allow for the time to write and talk more about each question one at a time.

The facilitator could split the group into smaller groups here, maybe 3 or 4 people in each, and then have them share their answers to one or two of the questions that they feel like really define their teaching philosophy. Encourage them to share stories and concrete examples about their ideals about what should take place in the classroom. Then bring the group back together and allow them to share with the whole group. Questions to guide this discussion when all together:

- What was difficult about this activity?
- What did you learn about yourself as a teacher during this activity?
- Did any of the experiences that came to mind about teaching and learning surprise you?
- Were there any themes that surfaced for you as really important?

-Did you notice any similarities or differences between your teaching philosophy and others' in your group?

-If you had to organize your teaching philosophy into 3 or 4 main ideas or themes, what would they be? (Could be useful to give some time to write about this question.)

-What would your elevator pitch version of your teaching philosophy be? You've got two minutes to let someone know who you are as a teacher- what do you say?

## **Value Sort**

Lead them through the value sort according to instructions in the guide. Give them about 10 minutes to do this. Tell the participants if they think of a value that is important to them that is not listed, to write it in. If some finish early, they can begin to write about their thoughts as they were going through the sort.

Then discuss the reflection questions together and allow time for writing and sharing with the group.

This quote can be used to frame why this activity is useful: "When we have not sounded our own depths, we cannot sound the depths of our students' lives." -Parker Palmer

Reflection Questions for Value Sort:

-What, if anything, was difficult about the value sort for you?

-In a small group, share your top 5 with each other and a brief description of what this value means to you and why you chose it above others.

-Which values stood out as not important to you in teaching? Why those ones?

-Which values emerged as the most important to you in teaching? Why those ones?

-How was it for you narrowing it down to your top 5?

-Did you have any values that you felt like you should put in the most important pile but didn't and then felt guilty about it? Did you notice any self-judgement about which ones you thought were important or not important to you?

-How did you come to value those things in the classroom over others?

-How might knowing your teaching values impact you as a teacher?

-Did this bring any teaching or learning experiences to mind?

Transition: It can be easy to profess values sometimes, but it's really difficult to make sure our classrooms and teaching line up with those values.

-If an outside party came in to observe your teaching and had to say what your top values were, do you think they would get some of them right?

-Pick two of your top values. Write about a behavior that would align with that value and a behavior that doesn't align with that value for you as a teacher. (Participants might find an example useful for this question. If they value flexibility in the classroom then they might find that an assignment isn't working as well for the students as they thought mid-semester, they

might brainstorm some ways to adjust it mid-semester rather than just ignoring that they can see it's not going well. A behavior that doesn't align with flexibility as a teacher would be maybe not being willing to change up how much they use powerpoints in the classroom, even though they have a suspicion that their students might enjoy something different for a change.) It could also be useful to get into small groups and have the group help the teacher brainstorm what that value could look like expressed in the classroom.

-Do you have any shadow values? (A value that you don't want to align with but you actually do in your teaching? Some examples could be perfection, control, power.) If an unbiased observer came and observed you teach and had to identify some of your top values- what might they see?

-Can some of your top values be a negative thing if taken too far in the classroom?

-Do you have any paradoxical values in the classroom? How do you manage that tension? (safety and risk, openness and intentionality, preparation and adaptability.)

-What do you do if your students don't value the same things as you in the classroom space?

-Write about a time you taught according to one of your values. How did it feel? Why did it happen? How did the students respond?

-Write about a time you struggled to teach according to one of your values. How did it feel? Why did it happen? How did the students respond?

-How do you typically talk to yourself when you have a teaching moment that doesn't align with your values? What is the impact of that on you?

-End with discussion around these quotes. "We don't have to be perfect, just engaged and committed to aligning values with actions." Brene Brown

"Living into our values means that we do more than profess our values, we practice them. We walk our talk—we are clear about what we believe and hold important, and we take care that our intentions, words, thoughts, and behaviors align with those beliefs." Brene Brown

## **Metaphor**

It would be useful for the facilitator to read about this section in the book "The Courage to Teach" by Parker Palmer before leading the activity. It can be found on page 152-155.

Direct students to take some time to think of their own teaching metaphor. When I am teaching at my best, I am like a...

Direct them not to try and edit or censor their first impulse. Try to go with the first image that comes to mind rather than revising or talking themselves out of it.

Explain that our metaphors can highlight strengths in us as teachers and they can point us to some of our shadows or weaknesses as teachers. An example might be helpful here if they are having a hard time grasping the concept, though I wouldn't offer an example before they think of

their own metaphors because it might hinder them from thinking of their own original one. Parker Palmer who is the author of this activity describes his metaphor in teaching as a sheepdog. He talks about maintaining the space where the sheep can graze and feed themselves, brings back strays, protects the boundaries of the space to keep dangerous predators out, moves sheep to new space when grazing ground is depleted, etc. His shadow revealed here is that sometimes he views the students as sheep in some negative ways like how they can seem docile and mindless.

Direct students to write about some of the shadows (weaknesses) their metaphor reveals about them and some strengths it reveals.

Discussion Questions for after they have completed the writing in the guide.

-What clues does your metaphor give you about your identity as a teacher?

-How does this awareness help you in teaching? (Discuss here how Parker Palmer uses his metaphor when he has a negative teaching experience. What would a sheepdog have done in this circumstance?)

-How does knowing more about yourself as a teacher in this way make a difference how you engage in the classroom?

## **Gifts and Limits**

Begin the activity by directing students with this prompt: Write a brief description about a moment when things were going so well you knew you were born to teach and a moment when things were going so poorly that you wished you had never been born.

After they have had adequate time to write about these experiences, divide the students into groups of three.

Direct the groups to focus on the born to teach moment and have each group member share in turn. After each member shares, have that member ask their group this question: What gifts do I have that helped make this moment possible? Direct the group members to help the person who shared identify the strengths and capacities that made an authentic learning experience possible. Then move on to the “wished you had never been born prompt”. Instruct students to avoid this question like the plague: What could I have done differently that would have made for a better outcome? (We tend to jump so quickly to try to alleviate our discomfort in the experience by finding some technique that would have fixed it.) Instead, consider the second experience in the light of this paradox; with every strength comes a limit or liability. What is the strength showcased in your second experience and what is the limit that comes with it? This question might benefit from the students having more time to write and reflect and then have the opportunity to share with the group if they wish.

## 02 Wayfinders

### Modeling

Explain that wayfinders are like guideposts we can use to reorient ourselves when we get a bit lost. These four wayfinders I have found useful to continuously check myself against to see if I'm staying balanced and on the path I want to be in my teaching.

The facilitator can share the definition of each wayfinder and stories that exemplify the wayfinder to help the students get on the same page about what it looks like in the classroom. (These stories are from my experiences in the classroom, the facilitator should replace them with their own stories that can help the class grasp the concept more clearly.) Lead students through brainstorming what the wayfinder is and isn't in the classroom. This is a way to define the concept and try to get rid of misconceptions about it as well. Then lead the group through some of the questions on the bottom of each wayfinder page.

Definition: Living in such a way that embodies the traits, values, and skills you are trying to instill in your students. Teaching in a way that exemplifies the skills you hope they choose to develop. Teaching by example. Showing the students how to use skills as you are teaching them. Not asking the students to do anything that you are not also striving to do yourself.

Stories:

I was taking an advanced conflict class from a different teacher than I had had conflict from. This was a surprisingly difficult transition for me because I felt very loyal to how my first teacher had taught things and was pretty resistant to the differences in my new teacher. After a few days in the class, my new teacher was vulnerable with us and expressed that it was scary for them to be teaching this class when they could tell we were all wishing we were with our old teacher. It was amazing how fast my resistance to them melted away. Once she was vulnerable, it was like there was space for us all to be exactly where we were in the process of adjusting to a new class and I found myself open and receptive to the strengths of their different way of teaching. I was no longer defensive of the original way I learned things and was open to what I could gain from a different mentor. We talked about how important vulnerability was in conflict throughout the semester, but this was the most powerful teaching moment for it to sink in for me. Watching them do it and feeling the tangible difference it made in our class' experience.

One day I was teaching about nonverbal communication in relation to listening and I asked the class how they knew if someone was really listening to them. One student raised their hand and said "you're doing it right now!" They pointed out how I was nodding my head, making eye contact, saying mm hmm and that I sometimes paraphrased things back to check if I really

understood. This was a fun moment where it drew attention to how the skill was being embodied and it felt more real when it was happening live rather than talking about it as something removed from us.

I was teaching about listening and was noticing that a lot of the questions I was asking weren't getting a lot of response. It seemed to me not like contemplative silence that the students were in but they were not wanting to respond or something. I started feeling pretty self-conscious about my questions and whether I had chosen something interesting/valuable to focus on for that day and I went into a perception check. I didn't plan to do it, I think I had practiced it so much in other contexts that it felt just like the thing I needed to do right then. So I told them I had noticed quite a bit of silence in response to some questions I had been asking and wasn't sure if that was because they didn't quite understand the concept or if they didn't think it was useful or interesting and if they'd be willing to fill me in on what was going on for them. Like 5-6 students chimed in and let me know that the concept felt really hard for them and they weren't sure how to answer the questions because they needed a bit more coaching on the concept. So valuable for me to hear what was going on for them and to not get wrapped up in my own story of not being a good teacher. I hope it was also valuable for them to see me demonstrate how that can work in a real-life circumstance.

Modeling is: healthy striving, authenticity, practice what you preach, lead by example, being brave- not hiding behind the powerful teacher role, trusting the stuff you teach, embodiment, vulnerable

Modeling is not: pretending, perfection, faking it, never making mistakes.

## **Openness**

A willingness to adapt, be flexible, and redirect according to needs or questions that arise in the moment. An acceptance that planning can only get you so far, and some of the best teaching moments arise organically and cannot be predicted or manufactured.

Stories:

I was teaching my first semester of interpersonal communication, and it was the week before spring break. I felt like I had been giving the students a ton of material the last few days and if I was going to stick to my schedule we were supposed to start a new chapter the day before they went on break. I wanted to stick to the schedule because it was nice for each chapter to get three days and feel like they got equal showtime. I kept feeling a pull to take a break from the schedule and new material and have a halfway check-in conversation with the class. I circled the chairs up at the beginning of class and we had a conversation about self-care and actually applying the things we were learning in class and what keeps us from doing that. It was super refreshing to

slow down and take a moment to hear more from the class and talk about how they felt the class was going so far instead of cramming in more material in order to stick to the schedule. This is one of my favorite memories of teaching the group that semester because it felt like I was a little more open to their needs as a class and my needs as a teacher too.

I have a tendency to overplan before I step into the classroom. If I am preparing to teach for 50 minutes, I will usually plan so much that I could fill 3x that much time. It is out of fear a little bit for me, I fear that students won't talk to me or like I will find that things all the sudden aren't interesting once I step into the classroom and I'll need to switch to a different topic. I think it can be a useful teaching tactic to prepare more than you might need so you have more to draw from, but I think I was taking it a bit too far and doing it too much out of fear. I am working on planning less so that I can be more open to what students might bring to the classroom. I feel when I have 5 activities that would all be exciting to get to, I can have a tendency to move onto those too quickly and not allow for more openness in me and allowing the students to come in and fill some of the space I couldn't plan for.

Openness is: adaptation, responsiveness, curiosity, trusting the students, serendipity (things going better than you planned, learning moments you couldn't plan for)

Openness is not: no preparation, no bounds, apathy, ignoring responsibility for how class time goes- handing over all ownership to students.

Quote:

“The teacher is of course an artist, but being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the profile, can shape the students. What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves.” Paulo Freire

What does Freire teach us here about openness?

## **Intentionality**

Coming into the class with a plan or a path in mind. The vision of where the class can go and scouting out the possible paths to get there. Leadership and facilitation skills to help guide the students in a fruitful direction.

Stories:

I was doing a training public speaking teaching assistants a couple years ago, I really wanted it to be useful for them. I put a lot of thought into what I could bring into the class to help them where they might be struggling in their mentoring with their students. I brought in a quote that I thought really helped me understand that the difficult moments in teaching can actually tell us a lot about who we are as a teacher, our strengths, etc. I was intentional about picking this quote and thought

there would be valuable things for the TAs to learn here, I also was very intentional about having a few prepared questions to lead the discussion along and certain things I wanted them to have time to write about before talking as a group. I thought a lot about which order the questions might go in and how much time they might need to write about them. The individual stories they shared, follow-up questions I asked, and insights they found during the training I couldn't have planned for, but I think my intentionality in preparing helped us to get to a useful place that day. I also had been intentional practicing the skill of leading a discussion and asking follow-up questions and had done some work to feel a bit more settled and confident walking in to teach them that day.

I find that my desire to be an effective teacher sometimes leads me to panic when there is too much silence in the classroom. I tend to read the silence as a sign that my question was bad or that the students are not interested in what we are talking about. I often will try to fix this by moving on quickly to another activity or question or changing directions. I think when I do this it is taking charge of the space in a way that might be out of touch with what is actually going on for the students. Maybe the silence means they are really interested in the question, maybe the silence means they need to spend a little more time there. I think I exercise too much intentionality when I make the call to move on to swerve the steering wheel and take us in a new direction because I think I know why the silence is happening.

Intentionality is: trusting yourself, crafting possibilities, being an expert in what you teach, improvement, conscientiousness.

Intentionality is not: coercion, scripting every minute, micromanaging, stick to the plan or die, inflexibility, taking all ownership for how class time goes, forcing a certain outcome.

Quote: The educator has the duty of not being neutral. Paulo Freire. What does Freire teach us here about intentionality?

## **Process**

Definition: An abundant state of mind rather than one of scarcity. Process does not judge success by outcomes- and all things have potential to be educational and valuable- resistance and conflict as well as enlightenment and breakthroughs. The journey matters more than the destination in the process mindset. To be "in process" is to be in tune with what the present moment calls for. The minute you find yourself out of it is a chance to enter back in.

Not a one time achievement or destination. Always trying to get closer to the ideal. Like surfing. Try and catch the wave again but falling out is expected.

The path to becoming a process teacher is a process. And there isn't really a point of arrival. You're just always trying to be in it.

Important awareness to gain is “What does it feel like when I’m falling out of process?” “What does it feel like when I’m moving toward process?”

Stories: One day last semester I was sharing a poem with my class that I thought illustrated a healthy sort of relationship we could have with our emotions. I think the poem is beautiful and profound and I was a bit nervous to share it with them because I wasn’t sure what they would think. After I had read the poem aloud, I asked the students what this poem might have to teach us about how we can relate to our emotions. One of my outspoken students raised their hand and said “I think this is a bunch of crap.”

Instead of feeling threatened or defensive, I actually was excited at the comment and asked a question about why they felt that way, eager to see where this took the conversation. I didn’t notice it in the moment, but it was later reflecting back and telling someone else that they told me that was a great process moment. I realized I had been very process focused in that moment because I was open to whatever type of learning would come from this moment and I wasn’t intent on the students arriving at the same conclusion about the poem as me.

This semester I teach at 7:30 and at 8:30, My first class always seems a bit less polished to me and I feel bad for them sometimes feeling like what they’re getting isn’t as valuable as my second class gets because I can edit some things that didn’t work quite as well before 8:30. Today the same sort of thing happened, but I found that I valued some of the things that happened in class more than being a smooth, polished performance. There was a moment I felt really insecure about the questions I was asking so I checked in with them to see if they understood or needed something else. I also expressed how teaching this concept was pretty hard for me because I care about it so much. I also was able to model some open/honest questions which was what I was teaching about when a student was answering a question. So there were all these things I hadn’t planned for like some vulnerability and some modeling that I value a lot and I think there was just as much potential for learning there even if it was less comfortable for me than a flawless performance with no hiccups or awkward moments.

Process is: abundance, forgiving, development, journey, practice, “a student’s resistance is no less beautiful than their enlightenment”, mindful, as soon as you realize you’re out- it’s the chance to get back in, endless chances, not fragile- can’t break it, doesn’t always look productive, consistently surprising, contagious

Process is not: three strikes you’re out, perfection, judgement, comparison, demonstration, finite, outcome focused.

### **03 In Practice**

#### **Grounding**

-Begin by modeling a possible grounding exercise before class. Lead a small sitting yoga sequence or meditation and/or teach some breathing techniques.

<https://www.mindful.org/three-practices-to-find-calm-and-equanimity/>

<https://www.mindful.org/10-minute-meditation-to-ground-breathe-soothe/>

<https://youtu.be/4Bs0qUB3BHQ> Deepak Chopra, 3 minutes.

<https://youtu.be/wv3zQxNgqnA> 3 minutes grounding.

What does it mean to you to be grounded? What does it feel like in your body? What does it feel like in your mind?

Time to write.

Grounded definition from me: When I am grounded I feel aware of and connected to my values and my deepest why behind what I am about to do. I feel that I can walk into the classroom not trying to prove or coerce or hustle for worthiness. When I am grounded, I am in a state that allows me to offer a gift from an authentic place. I have accepted what I cannot control in the classroom and am ready to interact with the students where they are.

In my body..I usually still have some butterflies, but my shoulders aren't scrunched and I'm breathing slow...or trying to at least. I might be a bit sweaty but am not shutting down mentally.

In my mind it feels like I have confidence in the value of what I'm offering. I'm not still trying to prep or perfect the details but am in the zone ready to go.

Have you ever taught when you weren't feeling grounded? What effects did that have? What about teaching when you were grounded? What were the effects?

Time to write.

Answer from me: I notice it a lot when I have thoughts about what the students are thinking of me in class. Sometimes if someone looks like they are sleeping or they look reluctant to participate, I will doubt my whole lesson plan and the worth of my discipline all in a split second. Then I tend to get self-conscious in front of the students and it must look confusing from their perspective because nothing really happened other than in my head. I think grounding for me before class is recognizing that what I have to teach is valuable and it is a gift and if they want to receive it, I'm so glad and if they don't, then I hope they find what they need in some other way or sometime down the road.

What are some common things that come up for you before you teach that keep you from feeling grounded? (emotions, fears, worries, insecurities, etc.)

Time to write.

I worry a lot about not having enough to fill the time. Which is funny because I almost always over plan and then have a bunch of leftover things we didn't get to. I'd like to work on in class if it seems like they aren't responding well... give it a few seconds or try a perception check before I launch into the next activity because I can't stand the thought that they didn't like the question I

asked. Sometimes it might be that they need more time to think or that I asked it too quickly and need to repeat it or I could give them some time to write. Since I have so much prepared, it gives me an easy out of that discomfort because I can skip to the next thing rather than sit with what I've prepared and know that it is valuable.

Then give the participants to look through the grounding check questions together. Have them be looking for one or two that might be especially helpful for them. Then have them talk with a partner about why it would be helpful, how they might overcome obstacles, strategies to implement. Then bring the group back together to talk about insights they gained from the questions and talking to their partner.

Give some time to go out and brainstorm/search for resources that could be included in the teacher's own grounding routines. Give them time to split off and search for music, meditations, write about what might be good for them, think of their own check-in questions, reflect on what gets in the way for them before they teach.

### **Safe spaces**

Safe space visualization: Direct the students to get creative here about visualizing what a safe space looks like for them. It could be helpful to have them close their eyes and try to visualize it before they are expected to just come up with something staring at the blank page. I would be wary about sharing examples before the students have had a chance to try and think of their own, but it could be helpful to hear that some people's images are walking along a private beach or sitting in their grandma's kitchen, or in a forest with a doe approaching, etc. It can be up to the facilitator how creative they want to get here with providing supplies. They could bring magazines for participants to cut up and glue on a collage, they could bring colored pencils, markers, paint, etc. They could instruct everyone to finger paint (this could maybe take some of the pressure off about it having to be really particular or professional). The facilitator could also allow participants to search on the internet for an image that depicts a safe space for them. They could also just have participants get creative with their pen or pencil and not bring any extra supplies.

Debrief the safe space visualization.

-What emotions did you experience as you were visualizing your safe space?

-What was important to you about your visualization of a safe space?

-The facilitator can ask more questions here or transition into reading the quote on the next page and then asking them if they've ever been in a classroom that felt like their safe space or like this quote describes.

Read the quote together then discuss questions below in the guide.

- When have you been in a classroom like the quote above describes?
- What did the teacher do that made that possible?
- When have you felt unsafe in a classroom space? What caused that to be the case?
- What are the boundaries necessary to create a safe space?

Then brainstorm together things that contribute to a safe space in the classroom and things that might be unsafe. Remember that a brainstorm should not evaluate ideas for good or for bad, just get them all up there. Then we can have a refining process for which ones we all agree on, or some could be different for different people. Perhaps start the brainstorm on a whiteboard and then individuals could add in their guidebook which ones they want to keep from the brainstorm.

### Yes, Safe

Listen well.

Honor others' agency.

Invite, not demand.

Confidentiality

Trust that their inner teacher can let them know what they need. This is likely different from what you think they need.

### No, Unsafe

Advice

Fixing

Saving

Judgment

-Let the group read the Circle of Trust touchstones from Parker Palmer.

Ask the group: Does this bring any more to mind that we didn't catch in the brainstorm?

-Read 'the rabbit listened' to the group.

Ask the group:

How could this apply in the classroom?

What was it about for all those animals? Why did they respond in that way? Can you see a tendency in your teaching to be like any of those animals who were unhelpful for Taylor?

In what ways are we like some of these different animals that weren't helpful to Taylor in the classroom?

More possible discussion questions after filling out the chart:

-What are your responsibilities as the guardian of the safe space in your classroom?

-What do you do as a teacher when you feel another student has violated some of the boundaries for a safe space?

-What do you do if you've violated some of the boundaries for a safe space in the classroom?

- How can you know when some of the boundaries have been violated?
- Are the boundaries for a safe space the same for all classrooms?

### **Open/Honest Questions**

After reading the excerpt together “Learning to Ask” from Parker Palmer’s *A Hidden Wholeness*.

- When have you asked a question that was “advice in disguise”? Why did you do it? -What effect did it have on the person you asked it to?
- How do we know if we’re asking a question that serves our needs or the person’s needs we are asking? What other needs of our own might we try to fill through questions? (satisfy our curiosity, desire to control, alleviate our discomfort, show off our newfound communication skills.)
- What stood out to you from this excerpt by Parker Palmer?
- What role do open/honest questions play in process teaching?
- When have you seen an open/honest question transform a classroom moment?
- What can you do to cultivate open/honest questions in your teaching?
- How do you detect when you’re asking a dishonest or closed question?
- What part of open/honest questions is most difficult for you?
- What do you do if someone else in the classroom/group asks a dishonest or closed question?
- How do you balance wanting to expand your student’s arena of exploration with questions when you also really care about them learning certain things in your class?

Roleplay.

- One time I was teaching about emotions and suggesting the idea through a poem that our emotions can be like guests in our house. We can let them all in, even if they seem negative. Then, when I ask the class what they think of the poem, a student raises her hand and says “I think this is a bunch of crap.” What would be your impulse response to that? What effect might that have? What open/honest questions could I use as a teacher here? What effect might they have?
- Another time I was teaching about emotions and a student chimed in that they have gotten along thus far in life not really engaging fully in their emotions and that it has worked pretty well for them. They were wondering why they would choose to try to feel all of the things, if they can survive pretty well without doing so. (This one was pretty tough for me because I have strong opinions about not selectively numbing our emotional experience, I didn’t ask any open/honest questions, but wish I would have.) What would be your impulse response to this? What effect

might that have? What are some open/honest questions we could ask this student to help them explore this? What effect might they have?

-Can anyone think of a real teaching experience they've had that they would like the group to roleplay open/honest questions with?

### **Third Things**

It would be useful for the facilitator to read through Parker Palmer's strategies for leading a discussion about a third thing on page 95 of *A Hidden Wholeness*.

The Facilitator will lead the group through a discussion with a third thing. The participants will be instructed to watch how they are doing this and be taking notes on the way the facilitator does it.

-Start by having different people read each stanza aloud with the woodcarver story.

-Overview question that lets us take on the poem as a whole. "What is this story about for you?" "How does it intersect your life at this moment?" "Is there a word, phrase, or image here that speaks directly to your condition?" (I often make the mistake of closing this off and asking a more directed question right from the get go, so try to keep it open and more broad at the beginning.)

After some open exploration, the facilitator can begin to direct to certain parts of the story and work the group through it with more directed questions.

For example: What are Prince Lu and the people who see Khing's work trying to communicate to him? What is Khing trying to communicate back?

Or What do you think Khing means when he says he had to guard his spirit? What kind of guarding of your spirit do you need to do before you do important work? Or Why do you think Khing needed to forget the specific things he did? Have you ever worked when you have forgotten those things or when you haven't? What was the difference?

What do you think it means that Khing needed this particular tree in order to create the bell stand? What do you think about him saying that the bell stand was already there in the tree?

The facilitator should be asking follow up questions from students' comments as well to help them explore more of what they are learning about themselves from the third thing. It can be important to remind participants that there really isn't an objective truth to the third thing, what they see in it and say about it says more about them than the third thing. Encourage students to take notes on how you facilitate with a third thing.

Then go through questions on the next page of the guide together after the third thing discussion.

### **Feedback**

Giving Feedback:

-Start off talking about how feedback is one of two ways we can gain more self-awareness. So, even though it can be really difficult, it is super valuable.

-We can't experience what it is like to be taught by us. Sometimes we are so saturated in the material and have been sitting with our ideas for so long, we are unable to see it with fresh eyes or from the outside. Clair Canfield says that feedback is the only way we can align our intent with impact.

-Take some time to write about different experiences you've had with feedback good and bad. (We will use these examples throughout to show what works and doesn't work and use them as stories to workshop how they could have gone better.)

-What do you think made some of these experiences good and some of them bad? Some useful and some not so useful? (This will help students start to brainstorm about strategies for useful feedback and things to avoid.)

Clean Feedback:

Clean feedback isn't: We often sneak extra things into our feedback that make it less clean. It doesn't mean these things have no place or are always bad, but they are not feedback.

These commonly include: requests, criticism, correction, advice, attempts to fix or save or control, evaluation, and judgment.

Have you ever received some of these when someone was calling it feedback? What was the impact it had on you?

Clean feedback is: Clean feedback is when we have stilled the waters in ourselves so people have a better chance to see themselves more clearly. We are like a pond they can see their reflection in, which is a super valuable gift. Some things can muddy the water so that our feedback doesn't give the person a gift of seeing themselves more clearly. Stilling the waters is when we calm some of the things inside us that want to control, fix, save, correct, judge, make the other person change something because it annoyed us... etc.

Formula for clean feedback:

I noticed...

The way I'm making sense of that is...

This is how I interpreted it...

The impact it had on me was...

The story I told myself was...

-Let's go back to some of your stories you wrote about in the beginning. Where can you see some of these concepts showing up in your stories? Is anyone willing to let us workshop one of their stories of some not so useful feedback?

-Here are some stories I will have at the ready that we can workshop if needed.

Useful: When I was giving a training on grounding and asked for some feedback about it, almost all of the participants said that they were really drawn to the check-in questions and that they wished we could have spent more time there. They felt we skipped over them so quickly that they felt like they were missing out on valuable stuff. They also stated that after seeing all the questions I had come up with, they couldn't really come up with their own like I had asked them to. This was so useful to me because I didn't really know that they were that interesting, I had just become so familiar with them that I couldn't see that people would want to talk more about them.

Not so useful:

-One of my students in a past semester said that they felt like all we did when we came into class was do activities and participate in discussions. They wished we would have had more lecture and me standing up in the front just talking more. (This was hard to hear for me because I want students to like the class, it was tough for me to realize that some students won't like my teaching style.)

-Your training should have a roadmap at the beginning of each day that says what the participants learned the day before and outlining the day that is coming. This is probably a great idea for some trainings, and I can see the value in it. I felt that this feedback was more what the individual thought had to be incorporated in trainings and I didn't feel that it fit well with my vision. It didn't match up with where I wanted to take the training and felt like just something they thought was wrong with mine because it was different than how they would have done it.

Receiving Feedback:

-What's most difficult for you about receiving feedback?

-When should I ask for feedback and how do I get more comfortable doing so?

-How do I ask for the type of feedback that is most useful for me?

A lot of the time, when we are asked for feedback we hear "tell me what was wrong and how to fix it." I like to view feedback instead like offering someone information on how I experienced whatever they did. It's more like asking "How did you experience me?"

"I would really appreciate hearing some of the impact that training just had on you."

"Where did you feel like you got what you needed?"

"Where did you feel stuck?"

"What was the experience like for you?"

"What resonated? What didn't resonate?"

"Where did you feel resistance?"

"Is there anything you wished for more of? Less of?"

-How do I make sense of the feedback I receive? How do I decide what I will change or not change based on the feedback I receive?

## **Getting Reps**

The students will get a chance to prepare to lead a discussion or teach something to the group going through the training. There are some questions to help lead them through thinking about this process. This will be a time they can reflect on all the things they've learned in other sections and try to apply that for this brief time they will get to teach. It would be useful, if the facilitator has the time, to encourage the students to meet with them one on one as they are preparing to teach in front of the class. That allows for some more tailored mentoring as they are working through the preparation process. I would limit the time for each teacher to about 7-10 minutes so the group can allow every participant to have the chance to teach. The students can choose anything they would like to teach about. They could teach about a conflict concept they are working on or anything they feel would be useful for them and the group. Then the facilitator of the training will give feedback to them in front of the group and the group can practice their newfound feedback skills.

## **Self-Reflection**

Read the quotes about learning through self-reflection together. Ask the participants if they think this quote is true? Why or why not? Have they had any experiences to back up whether they think it is true or not?

Then move on to the quote by Parker Palmer. Do they identify with what he is saying here? I find this quote really encouraging because if someone that is such a good teacher has moments that feel awful in the classroom, maybe it's just a natural part of the trade, not a sign that I'm not meant to do it or something. Do the participants ever find themselves feeling like maybe they're not cut out for teaching or not meant to do it? What keeps you going during these times?

Do you notice you have any tendencies when you are self-reflecting on your teaching?

I know for me I tend to be overly critical and think that the whole thing went poorly. Then as I look at things a little more realistically, I see that things did actually go well and there's room for improvement. But that I need to stop myself from overthinking the things that went wrong and thinking I totally failed.

Like we learned about back when talking about feedback. The only way to gain more self-awareness is feedback or self-reflection. So what kind of self-reflection is helpful for us as teachers? I find that the process can feel pretty different for me when I feel on top of the world

after a teaching experience and when I feel like one was pretty painful. Sometimes it can happen all within the same class!

Allow participants to look through the ouch/painful reflection questions. Instruct them to select a question or two that really stands out to them and discuss with a group of 3 how they think it might be useful for them when they have a painful teaching experience. Bring the group back together after they've had a sufficient time to discuss and ask if anyone would like to share anything they learned with their smaller group. Ask what questions they have about self-reflecting after a painful teaching experience. Instruct the students that this is just a beginning guide to get them started and possibly give them some time to write about what else might be useful for them in this self-reflection process. They could take more time to write some of their own questions they'd like to add to the list, or find some quotes that might help them, list some strategies for self-care after they've had a painful experience, etc.

Then move on to letting the students look through the questions after a teaching experience that went amazing. Go through the same process of them selecting a question or two that really stands out and discuss in a group of 3 (perhaps a different group of 3 if they'd benefit from getting to talk to different people in the group.) Then allow them to share with the whole group things they've learned or questions they still have. Then also allow for some writing time to brainstorm more questions that might be useful for them or write some of the thoughts they have after the discussion.

Many of the questions bring in themes of self-compassion. The facilitator should be prepared to teach more about this idea when it comes up in discussion. If the students need more resources or time spent on self-compassion, a good resource is Kristin Neff's book about self-compassion. I can tend to beat myself up about a teaching experience when I don't feel it goes well. I have to work in my self-reflection to recognize things that did go well and speak kindly to myself about things that didn't go the way I wanted.

### **Closing Discussion**

After the group has gone through the whole training experience together, I think it would be useful to gather one last time with the purpose to reflect on the whole experience in the training. The facilitator can guide this discussion by having a few questions prepared to invite participants to share with the group what the experience has been like for them. The facilitator could write a few of these on the board and then give some writing time before they ask if anyone would like to share, they could also give these questions to the participants the week before and invite them to reflect on them throughout the week and come prepared to share if they'd like with the group the next week.

Some possible questions for this reflection discussion are:

- What victories have you had throughout this training experience?
- What do you hope remains with you?
- Has your understanding of what it means to be a teacher or student changed? How so?
- What have you learned?
- In what ways have you changed?
- What do you know about yourself that you didn't before?
- What have you learned or appreciated from others in the class?
- What questions do you still have?
- How does it feel to have this training/class come to an end?

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