Norms

Building the culture of your classroom WITH students

Credit: Endiya Griffin
Systems of power and oppression are often structured hierarchically, kind of like a pyramid...

The powerful minority occupy the position of the oppressor

Whereas the disempowered majority are forced to take on the role of the oppressed

The minority maintain their positions of power by:

- Controlling the creation of knowledge
- Not recognizing students' intellectual vitality and desire to learn
- Not empowering students to take ownership of the classroom or define success within the classroom
How are hierarchical systems of oppression replicated in the classroom?

Let's use the following 3 interrogatives to contemplate the way hierarchical systems of power and oppression can enter the classroom and be substantiated by educators.
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Who has the power to create knowledge in the classroom?
How are hierarchical systems of oppression replicated in the classroom?

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Does your curriculum engage in conversation with the larger world? Is it *problem-posing*?
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Are students **empowered** to define and re-define success within the classroom?
Dismantle systems of hierarchical oppression inside and outside the classroom

Students are MAIN stakeholders, they decide what makes our community successful
How to cultivate norms alongside your students

**norm**
/nɔr(m)/

*noun*

a standard or pattern, especially of social behavior, that is typical or expected of a group.

- Defining norms as a social agreement of what success looks like in our space
- Norms should be student driven, the educator’s role is to facilitate
- Frame the classroom as a collectively owned space rather than the space of the educator
- Empower students to hold themselves, each other, and the educator accountable
Examples of Norms for the Classroom

- The Platinum rule: treat others the way they want to be treated
- Oops, ouch-- your words and actions have impact
- Practice vulnerability while asserting healthy boundaries

Norms adapted from The Anti-oppression Network