

# Norms

Building the culture of your classroom **WITH** students

Credit: Endiya Griffin

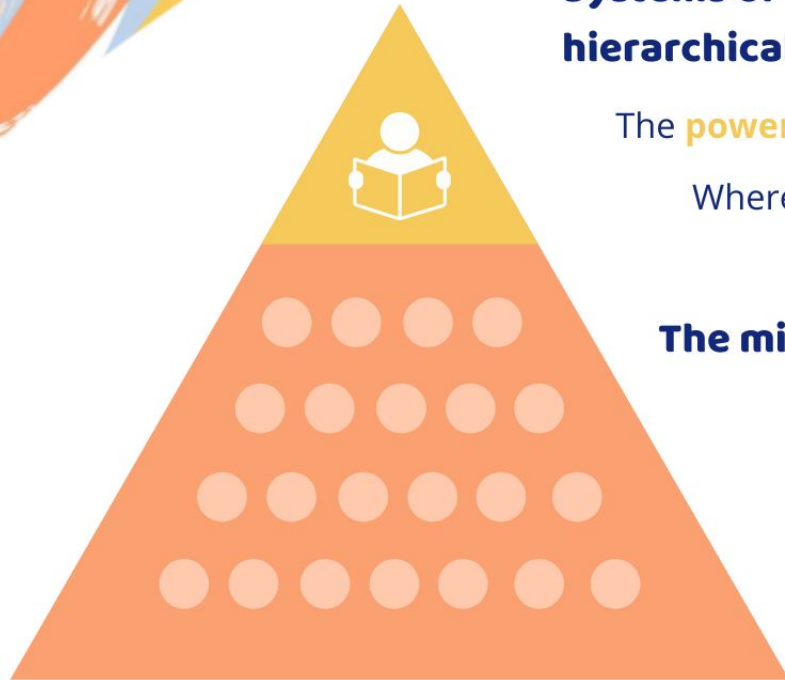
## Systems of power and oppression are often structured hierarchically, kind of like a pyramid...

The **powerful minority** occupy the position of the oppressor

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

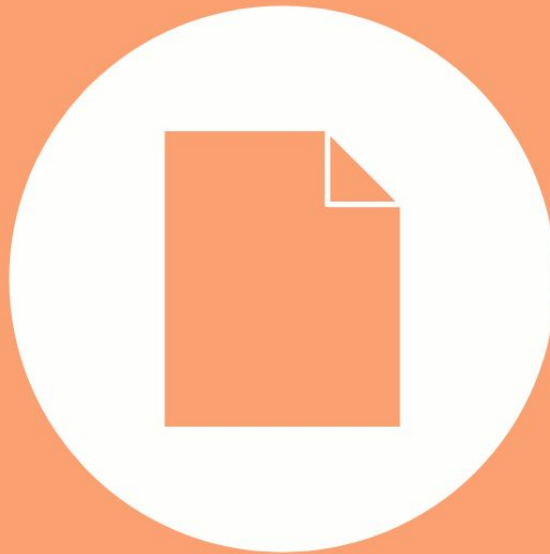
### The minority maintain their positions of power by:

- 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?



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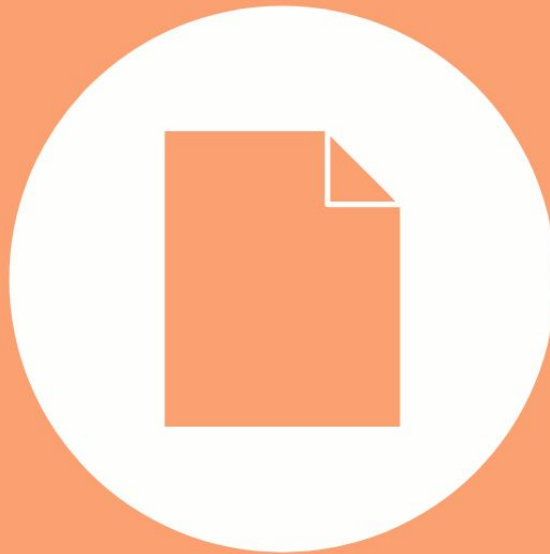
Does your curriculum engage in conversation with the **larger world**?  
Is it *problem-posing*?



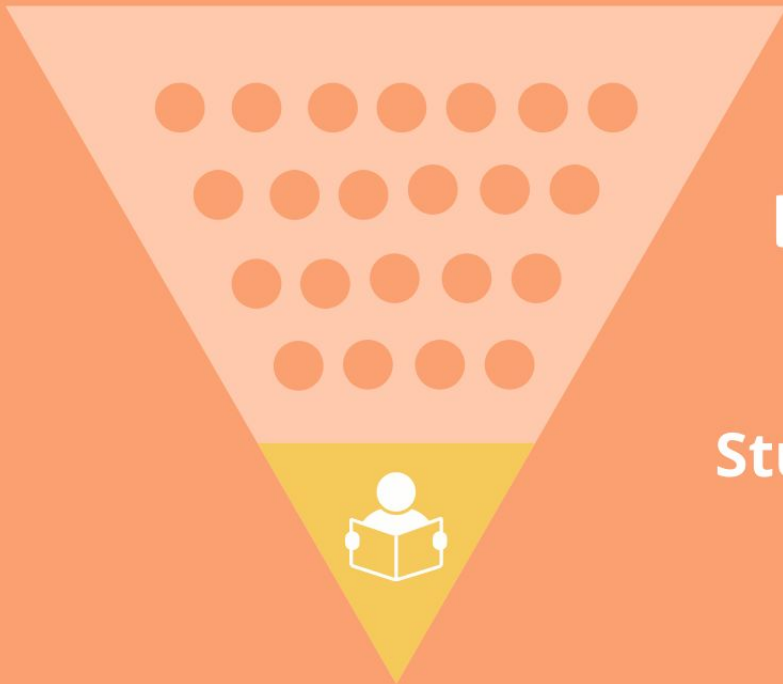


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Are students  
**empowered** to  
define and re-define  
success within the  
classroom?



## **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**

/nôrm/

*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*