

3E: Class Demonstration

Jess Butler, PhD, Instructor, Department of Sociology & Criminology, Core Curriculum, Butler University

[00:00:00] I got very little training as an instructor when I was a graduate student and I had this really either/or sort of conception of what a discussion was, that it was either going to be chaos or it was going to be me saying, like, here's a very strict outline and here's what we're going to do.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:00:23] And what I've learned is that the best discussions are when it's not just everybody spouting off their opinions, but we're connecting it to course concepts, we're connecting it to stuff we talked about last week and stuff we're going to talk about next week.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:00:35] Okay, we're going to watch this clip. And what I want you to write down is, I think-- you're gonna finish this sentence for me--I think this clip is useful for understanding sexual violence because . . . Write it down. Do, like, a minute, maybe a minute 30.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:00:54] I find that having students be able to write before they answer is this really cool trick.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:01:00] Okay, get together with your, the people in your group. Talk about this. Why do you guys think this is useful? Go.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:01:13] When they have a chance to gather their thoughts, write them down, then talk to each other, then get in front of everybody else, confidence levels completely shift. They feel secure in what their answers are, instead of, oh my God, I'm being put on the spot, am I going to say the right thing?

Jess Butler, PhD [00:01:32] For a lot of students, full participation doesn't always have to be get up in front of everyone and give this sort of speech. It can be talking to the person next to you. And that can absolutely count as a form of discussion. It doesn't always have to be performing for the larger group.

Student [00:01:47] And that alone is very sort of outdated, that, like . . .

Kathleen M. Jodl, PhD, Lecturer, Department of Psychology, University of Michigan [00:01:50] I want them to spend a few minutes on their own, where they're talking and kind of bouncing ideas off themselves. You know, whether it's a political or whatever the topic might be, it's really important to try to create a safe environment so that everyone feels like they can share.

Kathleen M. Jodl, PhD [00:02:03] Can you guys think in your own lives how media has been used in a positive way academically?

Student [00:02:09] In terms of connecting with your teachers more easily?

Kathleen M. Jodl, PhD [00:02:12] Okay.

Student [00:02:12] Aside from just office hours.

Kathleen M. Jodl, PhD [00:02:13] And have you guys had any discussion about whether or not you agree with Sherry Turkle's perspective in terms of, like, media's effect on social relationships?

Student [00:02:22] Well, we were talking about how, like, you get to know something about someone, but, like, you have to pretend like you don't know it about them. Like you still ask them about it like you don't really know, but, like, they've posted it on Facebook.

Student [00:02:33] There is some research that they have . . .

Kathleen M. Jodi, PhD [00:02:35] I don't want to talk the whole time, so I try to vary my style.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:02:40] I try to talk as little as I can and I've found that they don't let me down.

Student [00:02:45] But it is something that happens and people need to be aware of it.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:02:48] One of the really hard things is to make sure that we're not just having a bunch of opinions, like free-for-all, what do I think about this, that we're grounding what people are talking about in the material that we're reading for the class.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:03:00] The next activity that we're going to do is called Hatful of Quotes. As you might imagine, it's a hat, full of quotes, and I'm going to pass them around. Take one per group, please.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:03:13] Hatful of Quotes to me is this fun way, you know, it's random, you don't know what quote you're gonna get.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:03:16] They're all equally amazing quotes, so don't worry about that.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:03:20] I get to sort of decide, because I get to pick the quotes, what I want students to focus on from the readings.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:03:25] Your instructions are up here, Hatful of Quotes. With your group, read the quote. Discuss how you think it can help us better understand the root causes of sexual violence. Five minutes in your groups and then we'll share.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:03:43] Okay. Will you read your quote for us and tell us what you came up with?

Student [00:03:47] Our quote says, "The widespread cultural message could not be clearer. Men's sexual urges are uncontrollable and therefore not their responsibility."

Jess Butler, PhD [00:03:56] Uncontrol . . . What do you think?

Student [00:03:57] What I said is, like, they're giving it an excuse for their actions.

Tara Lineweaver, PhD, Professor, Department of Psychology, Butler University [00:04:00] One of my goals is to empower those students to really be in charge of the discussion themselves.

Student [00:04:05] It could also be that there's multiple genes contributing.

Tara Lineweaver, PhD [00:04:10] I would define the fishbowl discussion as a student-led discussion that involves students talking to each other about any topic that you want to incorporate into the class.

Student [00:04:21] Because there's the debate we've learned about in work whether faces are special or not.

Tara Lineweaver, PhD [00:04:25] You have a small group in the middle that are sitting and looking at each other.

Student [00:04:29] If they can recognize like animal . . .

Tara Lineweaver, PhD [00:04:32] Because there's only four of them sitting there and there's 20 minutes to talk, everybody has an opportunity to say something.

Student [00:04:38] I would be curious if you looked at just agnosia of . . .

Tara Lineweaver, PhD [00:04:43] One reason I really like the fish bowl is that the quieter students have an equal opportunity to be a part of the discussion.

Kathleen M. Jodi, PhD [00:04:50] I feel it's kind of my job to draw out as many of those shyer ones as possible. I also sense that the quieter ones, they usually have something to say and they want to say it and they're just looking for an opening.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:05:01] Do you agree with this, that even though we might have a little critique of that comparison, it's still . . . Will, what do you think?

Will, Student [00:05:08] I read more it's like, it's like, it's not boys will be boys, you weren't born that way, like, culture made you that way.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:05:12] If you can give it five seconds, I've actually found that the students who are not the dominant talkers sometimes will chime in, right. That it sort of creates a space where it's not that, like, instant feedback, but it's more contemplative. It allows room, space for those other students to step in.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:05:30] What do you guys think about that?

Student [00:05:35] My initial thought was that it was supposed to represent, like . . .

Tara Lineweaver, PhD [00:05:38] We also need to sometimes give students feedback that they are talking too much during discussion. And in fact, just this semester I had a student who felt like after each student in the group said something, it was her turn next. So I gave her feedback saying, I appreciate your enthusiasm. It's also important that everybody in the group have an opportunity to respond.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:05:58] Cameron, do want to add anything about why you think this is useful?

Jess Butler, PhD [00:06:01] Faith, do you agree with what these guys are saying?

Jess Butler, PhD [00:06:02] Jake, you want to add anything to this?

Jacob, Student [00:06:03] Yeah, we mostly just talked about that symbolism . . .

Kathleen M. Jodi, PhD [00:06:06] Just because someone speaks a lot doesn't necessarily mean that what they're saying is of quality. You know, they're, they're putting their hands up really quickly, and my knee-jerk reaction is to immediately say, oh, call on that person. So I have to sometimes really be very aware and step back and, and say, you know, let's hear from someone I haven't heard from.

Jess Butler, PhD [00:06:24] Dominant talkers can learn not to shut up, but that listening is as much of a part of participating as talking is.

Tara Lineweaver, PhD [00:06:33] One of the things I want my students to take away from this class is to be able to listen to each other effectively and communicate effectively, orally. So this is an opportunity for them to really improve in their skills of communicating effectively with others, which is what most of them are going to end up doing in graduate school or in their jobs in the future.