

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH HOT MOMENTS

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Manage the Moment

I. Manage yourself

- Stop! Breathe. Think. Hold Steady.
- Prepare:
- Know your own hot buttons/biases, and devise strategies in advance
- Think ahead: know what to expect as much as possible
- Don't personalize: self vs. role
- Have partners
- Defer if necessary

II. Manage your students -- so they can learn from the hot moment

- Acknowledge the moment, name the elephant on the table
- Make it safe for all students -- establish norms for behavior
- Model respectful listening and engagement
- Take the issue off the individual, make it general
- Protect the lone outlier, regardless of his/her position
- Acknowledge tears or breakdowns
- See individuals after class, help them learn from the situation

Turn it into a Learning Opportunity

III. Read the situation

- Get up on the balcony, off the dance floor
- Listen for the song beneath the words
- Check that you have heard/understood correctly -- restate
- See how the hot moment reflects the topic under discussion or the initial event -- mirroring
- Get off personalities: it's about issues, not character -- about factions, not individuals

IV. Find and create learning opportunities for your students

- Know your Purpose and keep your eye on it
- Find the part in the hot moment that can be used to further the discussion
- Take the issue off the individual, put it on the table as a recognized, arguable position

- Require students to understand each other's position -- listen, restate
- Ask students to step back and think about what they can learn from the moment
- Use the disruption as an opportunity to discuss the learning environment in the group
- Go around the room and get all perspectives on the table
- Ask students to write about the issue -- in class, at home

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