

Building Student Authority in the Classroom

Issues of Power in Group Work

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Welcome!

Link for slides &
resources:



<https://bit.ly/allisonscats>



Land Acknowledgement

Cal Poly sits on the land of the yak tityu yak tithini, Northern Chumash tribe.
We acknowledge, respect, and thank the yak tityu yak tithini on whose
stolen land we are guests.

Indigenous people are not relics of the past. We who work and live here must
bear witness to the ongoing effects of colonization.

Let's start with a conversation....

What successes have you experienced with group work?

What issues have you experienced with group work?

What do I mean by student "authority"?

Intellectual Authority

- Ideas are evaluated as high quality
- Gains and maintains conversational floor without interruption
- Are spatially attended to

Directive Authority

- Ability to issue directives to peers
- Authority to manage group dynamics

Why is student authority important?

Learning in classrooms goes beyond understanding new concepts.

Students also learn who they are and what they can and cannot do.

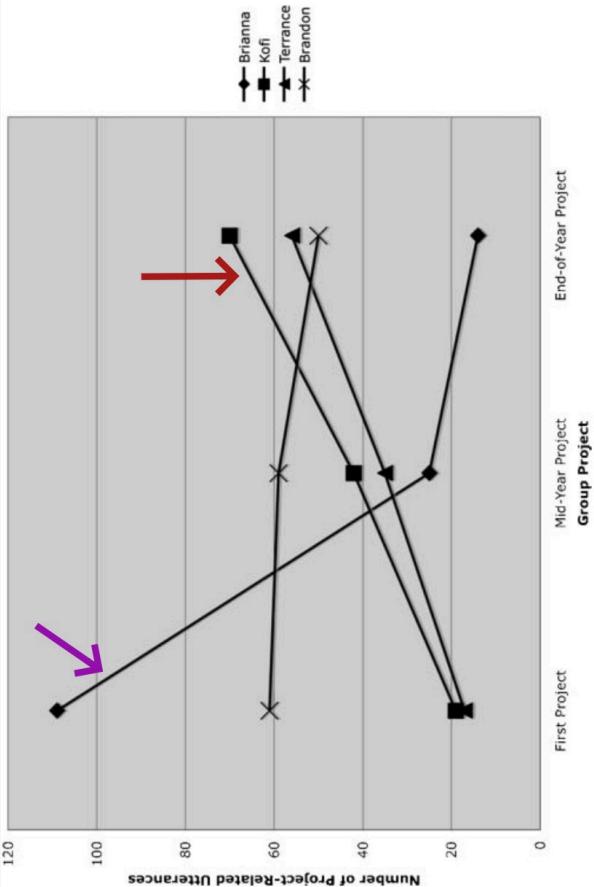
These identities / beliefs largely determine what students' participation in the classroom looks like.

Classroom Discourse

Brianna & Kofi

(Langer-Osuna, 2011)

- Took initial lead in group
 - Initially uninvolved in group
- Positioned by teacher as example of good leadership
 - Positioned by boys as smart
 - Was given intellectual and directive authority by the boys
- Midway through project group members positioned her as bossy



*Boys don't listen to girls.
It's not just in the
classroom, it's outside,
too. (Brianna)*

Uma & Sean

(Theobold & Williams, 2022)

- Solely responsible for establishing and maintaining a collaborative environment
 - Shared his thinking in 86% of interactions
- Never used closed language
 - Had his ideas positioned by Uma as significant in 60% of interactions
- At the expense of having her mathematical thinking positioned as significant
 - Used closed language in 72% of interactions

Meta-level intentions are likely to reside in the mechanisms of interaction rather than in their explicit contents. (Sfard, 2001)

As high-status students interact more in the group, they learn more from the task; as low-status students interact less, they in turn learn less. (Cohen et al., 1999)

Such tedious micro-confirmations in mathematical work for a student might be experienced as pain.

Ana & Jerome

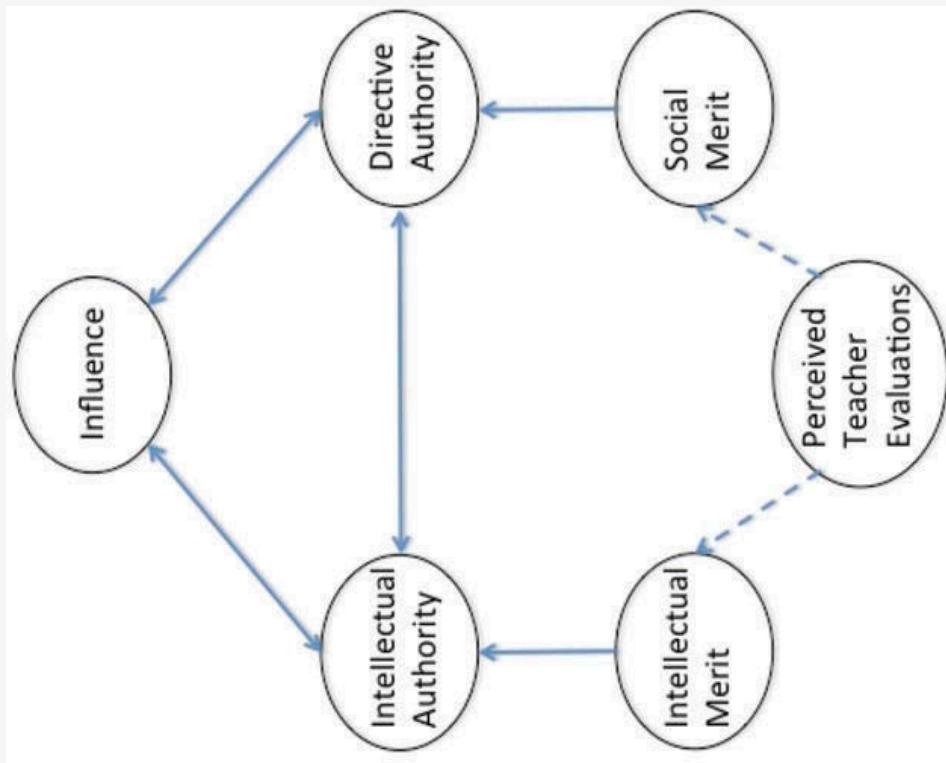
(Langer-Osuna, 2016)

	Intellectual Merit	Intellectual Authority	Social Merit	Directive Authority
Ana	13 (0)	15 (-1)	2 (-1)	20 (-1)
Jerome	3 (-3)	2 (-2)	1 (-10)	3 (-4)

The role of the teacher

- Anna was positioned as behaving like a "good student" twice and off-task once

- Jerome was positioned as off-task 10 times and on-task once



What can we do?

Tools for Building More Equitable Groups

Groupworthy tasks!

- Open-ended, uncertain tasks
- Multiple entry points
- Require multiple abilities to complete
- Intellectually important content

Structured participation --

Group roles

Facilitator Manages team progress through the task <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leads discussion• Makes sure everyone understands the task• Checks in with group members• Keeps the group moving forward	Recorder / Reporter Manages in-class report <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsible for organizing and recording answers to the assignment during discussions• Compiles a summary of the solutions discussed• Sends summary to report editor
Report Editor Manages out-of-class report <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asks professor team questions• Reviews draft summary provided by reporter• Solicits feedback from the team• Shares summary with the team• Submits final assignment	Team Captain Manages team participation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourages participation• Enforces norms• Brings conversation back if it deviates• Substitutes for absent roles

Setting Discourse Expectations

Establishing classroom

norms

- Helping peers means explaining thinking, not giving answers or doing work for others.
- Provide justification when you make a statement.
- Respect one another
 - Intent and impact both matter
 - Non-judgmental
 - Take space, make space -- Share the air
 - Embrace discomfort
 - Make decisions by consensus

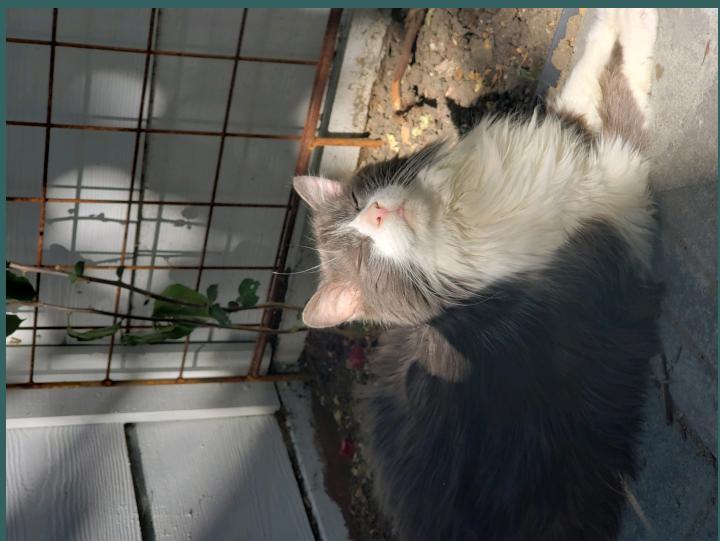
The freer we are to make decisions about ourselves and the worlds around us, the greater our responsibility.

Sfard & Prusak (2005)

Recognizing *your* interactions with students

Language constructs realities in the classroom,
reinforcing and diminishing student identities.

Assigning competence is a public statement that specifically recognizes the intellectual contribution a student has made to the group task. (Cohen et al., 1999)



Let's end with a conversation...

What successes have you had when structuring equitable group collaborations?