

Teaching Circle Ground Rules and Session 1 Discussion Questions

We are offering the following **ground rules for discussion**, so we are able to have a meaningful, productive conversation which are followed by this week's discussion questions.

- Listen actively -- respect others when they are talking.
- Notice who is speaking -- and allow space for others to speak once you have shared.
- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing ("I" instead of "they," "we," and "you").
- Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions but refrain from personal attacks -- focus on ideas.
- Participate to the fullest of your ability -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
- Instead of invalidating somebody else's story with your own spin on her or his experience, share your own story and experience.
- The goal is not to agree -- it is to gain a deeper understanding.
- Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses -- they can be as disrespectful as words.*

**These ground rules are taken from Martin Garner's guidelines for Just Talk events at the Kraemer Family Library and based on the [Guide for Setting Ground Rules](#) for the EdChange project.*

Guiding questions for our Feb. 9 discussion of chapters 1 & 2:

- Chavez's book discusses the craft of creative writing. Consider how you can expand the notion of creative writing craft to your discipline: What creative strategies and techniques do people use to make meaning in your field? How could you expand your understanding of what excellence in this creative practice looks like to include what students already practice?
- Chavez's anti-racist approach upends a traditional writing classroom in which students first read "masters" of literacy craft and then writing in imitation of other writers. Instead, she calls for cycles of experimentation and reflection: encouraging students to write in their own ways, even in the "wrong" ways, then reflect on their processes, practices, and successes. What could experimentation and reflection look like in the classes you teach?
- As Chavez describes, caring for students' well-being is necessary, yet often dismissed as unnecessary "mothering." What ideas from Chapter 2 could you implement to newly care for your students of color? To take the burden of caring off your colleagues of color?
- Chavez calls for us to develop deep listening practices to create space for the voices of students of color to be welcomed and heard. What strategies have you used for self-regulation in your own listening practice, such as strategies you use to make space for others to speak or to ensure you don't dominate conversation? What do the questions at the end of Chapter 1 indicate about how you could grow in your ability to recognize and listen to your students of color?