1

00:00:06,112 --> 00:00:09,712

even as you sit here with me, for which I'm actually quite, quite grateful.

2

00:00:10,312 --> 00:00:15,862

So just a little bit about me, before I say a little more about myself with respect to pedagogy later.

3

00:00:16,162 --> 00:00:20,332

My name is Marquis Bey. I use they/them pronouns, but ultimately I'm pronoun-indifferent.

4

00:00:20,782 --> 00:00:25,282

I'm a, an Assistant Professor in African-American Studies & English

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00:00:25,582 --> 00:00:30,112

an advisory board faculty member in Critical Theory and Gender and Sexuality Studies,

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00:00:30,322 --> 00:00:34,102

as well as the Director of Graduate Studies for Gender and Sexuality Studies.

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00:00:34,732 --> 00:00:40,132

The academic work that I write about, and teach about, concerns feminist theory, black studies,

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00:00:40,132 --> 00:00:44,691

transgender studies, contemporary literature, social life and politics, those kind of things.

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00:00:44,692 --> 00:00:49,252

Just to give you all a sense of, the kinds of courses that I teach, and thus am,

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00:00:49,762 --> 00:00:54,172

I'll say biased toward, for what we will ultimately be talking about today.

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00:00:54,742 --> 00:01:02,652

So, onto that subject. So we are going to be talking, today, about alternatives to deadlines and late penalties.

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00:01:02,662 --> 00:01:10,012

And also, I want to note that my preferred form of sharing this information will be reading from extensive notes that I have up here, for me right now,

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00:01:10,462 --> 00:01:14,008

but with flashes of contemporaneous speaking, expounding, that kind of thing.

14

00:01:19,683 --> 00:01:25,412

I think it's very, helpful and necessary to to let you know, to let you all know—and I let my students know

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00:01:25,413 --> 00:01:32,943

this, as well—is where I'm coming from and how I'm personally and intellectually situated in certain ways,

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00:01:32,943 --> 00:01:36,423

so, you all have context for the things I will share.

17

00:01:37,083 --> 00:01:44,313

So I gave you all the short version of my scholastic context, but now I want to share more in depth my pedagogical context.

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00:01:44,763 --> 00:01:51,603

So I've been teaching at the collegiate level since 2015 or so, so for almost eight years now.

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00:01:51,603 --> 00:02:00,363

And with that I've taught first year students; I've taught upper-level undergraduates, graduate students, students in gender studies, ethnic studies,

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00:02:00,363 --> 00:02:09,933

literature—all of which while very squarely in my own expertise—but also students in physical therapy, computer science, biology, math, etc.

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00:02:10,443 --> 00:02:15,602

So I get a range of students, and also importantly, I myself am a humanities scholar.

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00:02:15,603 --> 00:02:23,162

My s—my, my classes all fall within the humanities, are writing and discussion based, which, which is, we must know

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00:02:23,163 --> 00:02:28,833

a particular kind of class that permits certain things that other kinds of classes do not permit.

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00:02:28,833 --> 00:02:34,113

Though I will say that the number of things that humanities classes permit that others don't permit,

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00:02:34,563 --> 00:02:39,363

at least in the context of deadlines and the like, are fewer than assumed.

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00:02:39,363 --> 00:02:41,343

But we'll get to that, a bit later.

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00:02:42,273 --> 00:02:49,953

Additionally, I have taught in prisons for going on six years now, including the course I taught last fall at Logan Correctional,

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00:02:49,953 --> 00:02:54,063

the women's prison that Northwestern's Prison Education Program is affiliated with.

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00:02:54,693 --> 00:03:00,723

I've taught literature in African-American studies classes in medium and maximum security men's prison in upstate New York,

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00:03:00,903 --> 00:03:04,353

as well as at Stateville Correctional here in Illinois.

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00:03:04,623 --> 00:03:06,633

Also through the Northwestern Prison Education

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00:03:06,733 --> 00:03:15,673

Program (NPEP). And, prison education is, a, quite different pedagogical experience in a number of ways, and also very similar in a number of ways.

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00:03:16,123 --> 00:03:21,942

But it's impacted my teaching, and my approach to teaching, that we can talk about more at the end if you're, if you're interested.

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00:03:21,943 --> 00:03:23,143

But I wanted to make that clear.

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00:03:23,653 --> 00:03:32,013

And then lastly, I've taught for a year in a high school in Chicago, a small high school dedicated specifically to students with learning differences,

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00:03:32,013 --> 00:03:37,273

a small intro to African-American studies class of, I want to say 12 students or so.

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00:03:38,083 --> 00:03:44,533

So all of this is shared with you to, provide you all with a clearer sense of where my pedagogy comes from.

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00:03:44,533 --> 00:03:47,862

All of our pedagogical practices come from different places.

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00:03:47,863 --> 00:03:55,993

We've had, different experiences, that make it more likely that we assume certain things about policies, and about students, and about ourselves, as well.

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00:03:56,533 --> 00:03:59,412

And I want those origins to be clear for me,

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00:03:59,413 --> 00:04:05,273

so you all have a better understanding of, why I will be saying things about teaching and deadlines and students.

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00:04:05,293 --> 00:04:14,413

This is, in other words, a way to make even my own practices of Universal Design for Learning a bit more partial, and maybe even a bit more relatable,

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00:04:14,413 --> 00:04:18,493

or at least understandable. Okay.

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00:04:19,063 --> 00:04:28,993

So on to the topic at hand: deadlines. Most of us have them in our classes; there's a deadline for this assignment, or this reading, or this quiz or exam.

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00:04:29,023 --> 00:04:36,223

Very simply, they are clear, express dates and times for when course requirements are to be submitted or completed.

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00:04:36,733 --> 00:04:41,143

Students need to do these things by this date, or be in class at this time.

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00:04:41,413 --> 00:04:44,973

All of this is entirely understandable, and on the whole make sense

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00:04:44,983 --> 00:04:50,953

at first glance, I would say. And I want to make clear to this workshop, this presentation,

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00:04:53,697 --> 00:05:00,197

I want that to be very, very clear. Nor is it about saying, "You are doing things wrong, if you don't do what I suggest."

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00:05:00,347 --> 00:05:05,337

And nor is, it at all to shame you for your own pedagogical practices.

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00:05:05,357 --> 00:05:14,657

I'm approaching this workshop as I do in my classes, and with my students, with a deep, deep sense of love, and compassion, and understanding, and patience.

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00:05:14,657 --> 00:05:18,377

And I hope you all feel that, if nothing else, throughout this presentation.

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00:05:18,917 --> 00:05:25,267

And I think we need more of that, especially in the sometimes austere intellectualism of the university.

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00:05:25,697 --> 00:05:27,137

And I, I don't want to be misunderstood.

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00:05:27,227 --> 00:05:33,857

I do love me some austere intellectualism, but I do want a little bit more compassion and patience and understanding within all of that.

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00:05:35,447 --> 00:05:45,647

But deadlines have been a major part of, likely all of our learning and educational experiences, since grade school, and even outside of school proper,

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00:05:45,887 --> 00:05:49,587

we've been given deadlines to, help facilitate a number of things

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00:05:49,607 --> 00:05:57,767

it was believed we would face in the real world—a phrase I absolutely despise, but that is a different conversation for a different day.

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00:05:58,637 --> 00:06:04,757

And those things, surely among other things, are: professionalization, sequencing, and time management.

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00:06:05,207 --> 00:06:11,147

So deadlines and requirements are believed to, to help with professionalizing us—which is to say,

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00:06:11,327 --> 00:06:16,907

making us prepared for the protocols and implicit and explicit rules of the working world.

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00:06:17,147 --> 00:06:25,366

So whether that's an ability to know when a project needs to be complete, and being able to meet that requirement, or, understanding that things need to

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00:06:25,367 --> 00:06:34,907

be done at certain times, or else negative outcomes will ensue. Deadlines have long been used as a, as a pedagogical tool to prepare us for what we would,

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00:06:35,117 --> 00:06:44,317

inevitably, it was assumed, I guess—inevitably encounter when we went off to the various job and careers we would go on to have. Deadlines and

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00:06:44,357 --> 00:06:48,887

requirements have also been used as tools to help with sequencing,

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00:06:49,007 --> 00:06:56,087

which simply means here, structuring a kind of a, crescendoing series of things in order to yield an end product,

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00:06:56,357 --> 00:07:01,006

whether mastery, a final project, which will be gotten by a smaller project,

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00:07:01,007 --> 00:07:07,657

etc. And some things have to be done before other things can be, can be done, or can even begin.

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00:07:07,667 --> 00:07:13,037

So one ought to learn what a, what a cell is before going forth and creating a new medication,

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00:07:13,037 --> 00:07:18,737

for example. One cannot become a butterfly without first, acing what it means to be a caterpillar, we might say.

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00:07:19,277 --> 00:07:26,927

And having certain deadlines, for those prerequisites, as it were, can provide quite—can prove quite useful.

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00:07:28,217 --> 00:07:36,237

And lastly, deadlines and requirements have been used to teach time management. So we're probably most familiar with this rationale.

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00:07:36,257 --> 00:07:43,307

So in school, we have multiple deadlines for our different classes that we have to meet, and learning how to meet each of those deadlines,

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00:07:43,607 --> 00:07:49,187

trains one to juggle multiple deadlines in the office or corporation or business.

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00:07:49,487 --> 00:07:53,416

One will likely always have multiple things going on at once,

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00:07:53,417 --> 00:08:00,137

so, being able to, to meet X deadline in order to have sufficient time to meet Y deadline, is a valuable skill.

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00:08:00,887 --> 00:08:07,757

So there are surely other rationales for the utility and importance of deadlines that I'm forgetting.

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00:08:07,877 --> 00:08:12,557

And I invite you all to think about these, too, as you continue to listen to and engage with me here.

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00:08:12,977 --> 00:08:22,067

But I wanted to, to share what I thought were the three primary ones, to both hold myself accountable to them, and in responding to them,

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00:08:22,367 --> 00:08:29,627

while also letting you all know that where I've tentatively landed in my relation to classroom deadlines, is not out of ignorance.

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00:08:29,627 --> 00:08:35,717

I've come to where I am in light of these most common rationales. I want that to be also clear, as well.

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00:08:37,027 --> 00:08:43,907

And before sharing more about where I am, which is of course an alternative relationship to requirements and deadlines,

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00:08:44,237 --> 00:08:47,897

I want to quickly share where I've been, and I think that's quite useful.

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00:08:48,377 --> 00:08:57,167

I have not always been where I am, and I suspect, where I used to be is similar to where some of you are now or used to be.

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00:08:58,037 --> 00:09:04,197

For me, I was deeply, deeply prideful of the clarity of my deadlines in my syllabi.

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00:09:04,207 --> 00:09:12,367

We have, four essays due, and they're each due on these specific dates, by these specific times, via specific means, and also,

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00:09:12,417 --> 00:09:15,597

if you would like some kind of extension or special consideration,

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00:09:15,837 --> 00:09:20,127

here are these specific dates and specific means by which you are to let me know.

89

00:09:20,397 --> 00:09:27,386

My thought was that I was so, clear, and explicit about the deadlines, not only for the assignments,

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00:09:27,387 --> 00:09:32,487

but also, also for extensions to the assignments, that anything that fell outside of that,

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00:09:32,517 --> 00:09:36,117

if you were later on either of those fronts, all of that was on you.

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00:09:36,117 --> 00:09:39,747

I did all I could. It was out of my hands. What more could you want from me?

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00:09:39,747 --> 00:09:42,776

This was my making back then. And it sometimes still creeps

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00:09:42,777 --> 00:09:51,537

in now, I want to say. And inevitably, I received a last minute plea for an extension, or the assignment that was a few days late.

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00:09:51,837 --> 00:09:57,357

And I went back to the syllabus, which is oftentimes our favorite document in the pointing to those pristinely,

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00:09:57,357 --> 00:10:00,457

clearly articulated deadlines, and penalize accordingly.

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00:10:00,627 --> 00:10:10,257

"You brought this on yourself," was essentially my response. And I was there for, five-and-a-half years or so of my, my teaching career.

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00:10:10,737 --> 00:10:15,926

And I also want to say, it felt good, too. I felt righteous and informed and assured

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00:10:15,927 --> 00:10:22,617

that I had a legion of past and present pedagogues who would applaud my policies.

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00:10:22,617 --> 00:10:27,567

I had conversations with cohort members in grad school, and colleagues as a faculty member,

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00:10:27,747 --> 00:10:32,957

and they all concurred, for the most part, save for a few, small tweaks: this person deducted,

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00:10:32,967 --> 00:10:39,087

half a letter grade, each day late, and this person deducted a third of a letter grade, but all more or less in agreement.

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00:10:39,777 --> 00:10:46,177

And then for me, things changed. So it wasn't as sudden as that would imply.

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00:10:46,527 --> 00:10:51,327

There was not a, catastrophic moment or watershed moment.

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00:10:51,567 --> 00:10:56,067

Nothing as spectacular as: first I thought this, and then everything changed, just like that.

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00:10:56,787 --> 00:11:02,907

But things did accumulate, rapidly. I think I was called, implicitly—and once explicitly—

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00:11:03,597 --> 00:11:08,217

I was called to task on aligning my teaching with my politics.

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00:11:08,517 --> 00:11:14,007

I was feeling, I was feeling certain things, and that was impacting my, my teaching.

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00:11:14,217 --> 00:11:18,177

And of course COVID also changed the landscape for us as well.

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00:11:18,597 --> 00:11:22,287

But perhaps most of all, maybe as a combination of all of these things,

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00:11:22,437 --> 00:11:27,567

I actually began listening to my students in a different kind of way, in a more attentive and intentional way.

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00:11:27,957 --> 00:11:35,187

And I really want to say that, students have changed, but I actually don't have evidence that that is truly the case.

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00:11:35,307 --> 00:11:41,787

I don't know if students have changed, actually, or if they feel able to share things they weren't able to before.

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00:11:42,387 --> 00:11:47,607

If they, if they feel emboldened in certain ways, if I've changed, or if the university has changed,

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00:11:47,817 --> 00:11:52,377

or if the the political landscape has changed—it can be any number of these things.

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00:11:52,707 --> 00:11:57,777

But, whether or not students have changed, themselves, a change has occurred, I think,

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00:11:57,927 --> 00:12:02,217

and I deeply wanted to be attentive to that as I started to listen to my students.

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00:12:03,087 --> 00:12:05,817

So, what do we know, about students today?

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00:12:06,597 --> 00:12:13,427

We know that undergrads, as well as some grad students as well, are experiencing more anxiety than ever before.

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00:12:13,437 --> 00:12:22,287

At least that's how some studies express it. Though again, I do genuinely, and non-contentiously, wonder if that is particular to today's students

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00:12:22,287 --> 00:12:28,077

or if the social landscape is one now that allows for those anxieties to be known,

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00:12:28,077 --> 00:12:34,097

for there to be language for that anxiety, and for a student to feel it's more possible now to to share those anxieties.

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00:12:34,107 --> 00:12:42,147

I wonder about those things. But we also know that rates for self-harm, suicide for college students, is uncomfortably high.

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00:12:42,147 --> 00:12:46,077

Though there is no, there's no comfortable number or rate for these things.

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00:12:46,647 --> 00:12:55,557

And this is due in significant part to pressures of perfection, pressures from parents and peers and teachers and universities,

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00:12:55,977 --> 00:12:59,607

pressure that they've internalized, pressures from the job market, all these things.

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00:13:00,057 --> 00:13:06,506

Now we know also that, first-generation college students and students of color are less inclined to ask for extensions

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00:13:06,507 --> 00:13:13,107

and accommodation, because they're less understanding of implicit rules of academia, and less entitlement.

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00:13:13,107 --> 00:13:17,037

And I don't wanna negatively connote that here, but simply in a very neutral way,

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00:13:17,037 --> 00:13:23,167

less entitlement, to even think that asking for accommodations is something that is possible or expected.

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00:13:23,307 --> 00:13:33,887

We know these things, at least implicitly, I think generally. And yet sometimes, maybe even often times, our policies do not reflect this knowledge.

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00:13:33,897 --> 00:13:44,287

And I actually recall in my last year of grad school, in fact the last month of grad school, I had already gotten the offer from Northwestern,

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00:13:44,307 --> 00:13:46,317

so I felt such a, such a relief.

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00:13:46,437 --> 00:13:53,967

And I went to a pedagogy workshop, and I figured, "I'm going to be a faculty member now, so maybe I should start to rethink my teaching."

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00:13:54,597 --> 00:14:02,157

So I go to this workshop, and I'm in a small group, and there's another person there, a grad student who, I knew of but didn't personally know.

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00:14:02,697 --> 00:14:10,166

And she was absolutely going off, in such a beautiful way, about inequalities and inequities among students

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00:14:10,167 --> 00:14:15,327

in the, the ways that faculty members were disconnected from the realities and the experiences of students.

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00:14:15,657 --> 00:14:18,807

And I'm sitting there, very much nodding along, very much in agreement.

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00:14:19,287 --> 00:14:26,846

But then she says something to the effect of, how can faculty members continue to say they care about

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00:14:26,847 --> 00:14:31,916

students and that they acknowledge imbalances and access and all that, when they continue to judge students

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00:14:31,917 --> 00:14:36,477

by standers that don't apply to them? And this is, this is what she said, almost verbatim.

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00:14:36,987 --> 00:14:45,567

And she listed a few things as examples, that I can't recall now, but I recall one of them being grades, and then another being attendance.

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00:14:46,017 --> 00:14:52,467

And that moment, only weeks before I moved halfway across the country to Chicago, stuck with me.

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00:14:52,467 --> 00:14:55,827

That moment really really stuck with me. And, what I felt,

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00:14:55,827 --> 00:15:00,627

the primary thing—not the only thing, but the primary thing I actually felt during that was shame.

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00:15:00,657 --> 00:15:08,997

How could I say the very thing that she said that faculty say regarding students, yet did not put into pedagogical practice that knowledge?

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00:15:09,207 --> 00:15:14,997

How was I also one of the faculty who paid mere lip service to, to classroom inequity?

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00:15:14,997 --> 00:15:20,387

I felt this deep deep sense, of shame. And I'm sharing this anecdote for two reasons.

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00:15:20,457 --> 00:15:26,426

The first reason, is just to show that, there are things we sometimes are not aware of, in our own practices.

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00:15:26,427 --> 00:15:30,627

And so, please do not beat yourself up, over that. It's absolutely okay.

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00:15:30,627 --> 00:15:36,567

You know, we sometimes, get in a pattern, and don't realize the effects of something we've done for a year.

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00:15:36,567 --> 00:15:41,207

Or maybe new knowledge emerges and changes things, and we simply have not yet adapted.

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00:15:41,427 --> 00:15:46,717

These things absolutely happen. And perhaps, we all have these oversights. That you're here, though,

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00:15:46,757 --> 00:15:51,497

being vigilant, being open to, to learning is all really that I can ask for.

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00:15:52,067 --> 00:15:58,967

So that's the first reason. The second reason I share this is precisely that feeling that I felt that shame.

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00:15:59,297 --> 00:16:02,747

And I am not here to make any of you feel a sense of shame.

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00:16:02,927 --> 00:16:07,967

I know that was not the aim of the person in that group during the workshop. And I don't blame her, at all.

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00:16:08,207 --> 00:16:10,307

That feeling, was still there, though,

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00:16:10,487 --> 00:16:18,837

and I, and I don't want any of you to feel shame in light of what I propose as alternatives to deadlines and requirements.

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00:16:18,857 --> 00:16:22,727

This is not what this is about. It's easy to feel that way.

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00:16:23,027 --> 00:16:29,627

And if there's anything I want to get across, it's that none of this is your fault, nor are you a bad teacher.

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00:16:29,867 --> 00:16:34,637

This is about very simply, yet also complexly, but still simply—

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00:16:34,817 --> 00:16:43,606

this is about moving, in our classrooms, in a way that is more equitable, more attentive, and more compassionate, to our students, and also to ourselves.

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00:16:43,607 --> 00:16:55,337

So, I want there to be absolutely, no shame here. So all of this is to scaffold what we will be building off of for the remainder of our time together.

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00:16:56,897 --> 00:17:01,666

Now I've—when I've given this presentation before, I've done (this my third time doing this presentation)—

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00:17:01,667 --> 00:17:08,777

it's always been so wonderful and marvelous to revisit these ideas, in the company of other people who are interested in, these ideas,

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00:17:08,777 --> 00:17:11,027

or think that these ideas, are important.

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00:17:17,866 --> 00:17:24,556

what is it, in fact, that we're assuming about these things, and also about students who, who transgress these policies?

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00:17:24,566 --> 00:17:29,986

I think so often it's just assumed that these policies are here to stay, that they're obvious.

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00:17:30,436 --> 00:17:35,266

But I think they do all come with underlying assumptions, that at least deserve some reflection.

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00:17:35,929 --> 00:17:42,139

So now to the heart of this workshop: the alternatives in the session title Alternatives to Penalties.

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00:17:44,199 --> 00:17:51,909

So overall, I have experienced students in my brief time at Northwestern—and also in hindsight, during my time in graduate school—

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00:17:52,449 --> 00:17:55,539

I have experienced students who are deeply, deeply anxious.

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00:17:55,809 --> 00:17:59,379

I notice an anxiety, and even a fear sometimes.

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00:17:59,619 --> 00:18:05,409

And I notice this, this penchant toward apology and contrition for, even the smallest things.

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00:18:05,409 --> 00:18:10,298

So they might begin to go on these beautifully long, rambling thought processes,

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00:18:10,299 --> 00:18:16,389

thinking rigorously out loud with all of us, and then nearing its end, say, "I'm sorry for rambling," or "Sorry.

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00:18:16,389 --> 00:18:21,489

I know I'm not making sense." And I imagine some of you can empathize with this as well, have witnessed this as well.

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00:18:22,389 --> 00:18:30,609

And I also notice, a kind of exhaustion, this exhaustion with having to do so many things, pulled in so many directions all at once.

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00:18:30,819 --> 00:18:38,949

Midterms come around, then their energy drops or they don't even show up to class, or chemistry exams come up, and they're, essentially walking zombies.

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00:18:39,309 --> 00:18:47,858

And with all of this, it's clear to me that, they want simply to do well, to do a good job, to, to expand their capacity for things.

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00:18:47,859 --> 00:18:53,859

And surely there are some who, who instrumentalize education, using it as a means to an end,

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00:18:54,339 --> 00:18:59,199

whether that end is, is some notion of financial success, or what have you.

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00:18:59,709 --> 00:19:09,969

But nevertheless, it seems to me that, they are here to engage in, in some form of enrichment. They see something of value in learning things and thinking

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00:19:09,969 --> 00:19:16,869

about things that they've never thought about before, and in developing a sense of ethics and politics and intellectual capacity.

186

00:19:17,139 --> 00:19:20,379

And I think I want to honor that. I want to hold and care for that,

187

00:19:20,709 --> 00:19:30,549

because, perhaps, perhaps, it will be the, it'll be the first time that someone has held and cared for, for that part of them,

188

00:19:30,759 --> 00:19:36,579

which then permits them to dare to imagine things differently for themselves, and for the world.

189

00:19:36,849 --> 00:19:41,139

This is what I've come to, to see in students that I never truly saw before.

190

00:19:41,139 --> 00:19:44,619

This sense of, this sense of wonder, the sense of wanting to do a good job.

191

00:19:45,429 --> 00:19:46,479

And with all of this,

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00:19:46,749 --> 00:19:55,989

it seems to me, that there were certain things, certain practices, that were so commonplace, yet did not seem to promote what I wanted students to get.

193

00:19:56,319 --> 00:20:04,088

So I asked myself very sincerely, in light of all that I witness and listen to, do I actually need these things?

194

00:20:04,089 --> 00:20:11,199

These deadlines and rules and tactics of essentially, from my purview, value judgment and surveillance?

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00:20:11,199 --> 00:20:15,309

Do I need to perpetuate these policies, or can I try something different?

196

00:20:15,939 --> 00:20:21,219

So, I did some research and spoke to a dear, dear friend of mine from graduate school. They're

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00:20:21,219 --> 00:20:29,979

someone who, whose politics are incredibly similar to mine, and who, interestingly enough, I have never spoken to at length about teaching before.

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00:20:30,279 --> 00:20:36,429

But in talking with them, I discovered that they've been doing things wildly differently than we were both taught.

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00:20:36,699 --> 00:20:46,869

So, I then dared to try my hand at it. And I sought, in the fall of 2021, to implement some different policies—if they can still be called policies.

200

00:20:47,169 --> 00:20:55,809

And, my guiding questions, were truly truly questions. I wanted to explore: what if I got rid of or reduced the late penalties?

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00:20:56,169 --> 00:20:59,619

What if I did away with, or made much more flexible, deadlines?

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00:20:59,889 --> 00:21:05,139

And what if I gave students and myself more slack when it came to grading and deadlines?

203

00:21:05,229 --> 00:21:09,399

Those are the guiding questions that I had. And I was fearful, for sure.

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00:21:09,399 --> 00:21:19,358

Terrified even, actually. And I assumed, at times, that I'd get no one to feel motivated to turn in anything, and would be met with a mountain of papers

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00:21:19,359 --> 00:21:25,088

and assignments in the last week before grades were due to the university, and feel impossible to finish on time.

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00:21:25,089 --> 00:21:28,209

I had these anxieties. I also had these anxieties.

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00:21:28,449 --> 00:21:34,299

If students also have anxiety, I too as a professor—we also have anxieties about changing things.

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00:21:34,779 --> 00:21:41,739

But I thought again about my students, which, essentially, what they—what do they need, what do they desire, what do they want?

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00:21:42,039 --> 00:21:52,059

And, what they clearly expressed to me in myriad ways, that they desire from faculty, in short: care and compassion and understanding and patience.

210

00:21:52,399 --> 00:21:55,749

My fears were very much about me, not about my students.

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00:21:55,749 --> 00:21:59,649

For mm, all this pedagogy stuff is supposed to be helpful.

212

00:21:59,889 --> 00:22:04,059

Why was I actually being driven by fear stemming from how this felt to me?

213

00:22:04,239 --> 00:22:08,889

"What about them?" is what I ask myself. So I let that go, as difficult as it was,

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00:22:09,159 --> 00:22:19,428

and then I tried, something different. As I said, I experimented with this in the fall of 2021. In that quarter, very purposely,

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00:22:19,429 --> 00:22:25,879

I only taught that one course, because I was also teaching the, the high school course that I mentioned at the beginning of all of this.

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00:22:26,449 --> 00:22:31,399

So it gave me time to reflect, and it also gave me time to, to try different kinds of things.

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00:22:31,819 --> 00:22:35,808

That class ended up being over enrolled, with 34 students in total.

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00:22:35,809 --> 00:22:42,529

And of course it was capped at 30. I had Gender Studies majors, African-American studies majors, Journalism, Computer Science,

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00:22:43,129 --> 00:22:48,739

Bio, English, Spanish, and probably a few other that I'm not thinking of right now.

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00:22:48,739 --> 00:22:57,169

So it was an incredibly eclectic class, which I think was ultimately good for the experiment, I guess, that I was doing. For that class,

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00:22:57,169 --> 00:23:04,429

instead of having as my primary aim, content mastery, and making sure students met my specific expectation,

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00:23:04,729 --> 00:23:10,729

I tried to shift my focus toward three guiding principles. The first was a general sense of compassion.

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00:23:10,909 --> 00:23:18,919

These students are smart, committed, passionate, but also tired and stretched thin and carrying numerous burdens.

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00:23:18,919 --> 00:23:23,238

And none of these things are solely their fault, if the language of fault even applies.

225

00:23:23,239 --> 00:23:26,209

And for me I think it doesn't quite fit.

226

00:23:27,109 --> 00:23:35,389

But as we noted, they are experiencing so many pressures from parents and peers and society, that it's not so easy to to say,

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00:23:35,599 --> 00:23:41,209

as I, I constantly told my students in my early years of teaching, that you brought this on yourself.

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00:23:41,659 --> 00:23:43,819

So much of this was put onto them.

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00:23:44,149 --> 00:23:50,839

So how might I try to demonstrate more compassion toward them, recognizing all those things that were put onto them?

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00:23:50,869 --> 00:24:00,619

How might this sense of compassion, in fact, allow them to feel alleviated of, at least the pressure to perform in, in a certain way in this class,

231

00:24:00,619 --> 00:24:05,389

which might permit a different inhabitation of the class, and a more alertness or more interest,

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00:24:05,389 --> 00:24:10,549

more, more presence in the classroom, even more compassion for themselves and their colleagues.

233

00:24:11,719 --> 00:24:14,419

The second guiding principle was patience.

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00:24:15,169 --> 00:24:23,929

So we all have different paces at which we do things and come to a sense of mastery or comfort or understanding with things.

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00:24:24,169 --> 00:24:28,339

And that is surely the case with gathering knowledge and growing intellectually.

236

00:24:28,729 --> 00:24:37,729

Students learn things at different paces, have different affinities for different topics and methods. How to honor that in my course for, say,

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00:24:37,729 --> 00:24:43,098

the students who love theory but hate poetry, or students who catch on to history like that,

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00:24:43,099 --> 00:24:47,089

versus the students who have a much more, much more of a love for literature.

239

00:24:47,929 --> 00:24:54,019

And then lastly, and more colloquially, I was guided by a simple sentiment of asking them,

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00:24:54,229 --> 00:24:58,038

literally asking them regularly throughout the course, "Are you good?"

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00:24:58,039 --> 00:25:00,109

It's a, at basis a check in,

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00:25:00,529 --> 00:25:09,459

but, it also conveys a feeling of, a feeling of care. I'm making sure that all is well with you in your entire world, not just academically.

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00:25:09,469 --> 00:25:14,749

I'm making sure that in this moment, you have the capacity to show up in a way that feels good to you.

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00:25:15,109 --> 00:25:22,339

Those guiding principle manifested in my syllabus, simply as refusing to give penalties for late assignments.

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00:25:23,209 --> 00:25:31,099

So this is literally the syllabus that, I had for that class, that gender and black masculinity class in the fall of 2021.

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00:25:31,669 --> 00:25:36,678

And, I, did the kind of perfunctory COVID things.

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00:25:36,679 --> 00:25:40,999

And then, towards the end of this part—and I'll get to the next part in a moment,

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00:25:41,509 --> 00:25:49,669

but after, demonstrating a kind of compassion around COVID, and the way that we need to, show up differently with respect to COVID,

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00:25:49,939 --> 00:25:54,589

I said, "We must all be understanding, and kind to ourselves and others.

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00:25:54,769 --> 00:25:59,869

We are still adjusting. We are trying new things and hoping to instill measures that benefit us all.

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00:26:00,199 --> 00:26:05,899

We may then mess up, and owe it to ourselves, to allow for those methods, those moments for growth."

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00:26:07,159 --> 00:26:08,808

So this was setting the stage.

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00:26:08,809 --> 00:26:16,159

This was establishing those principles of patience and compassion for, assignments and attendance, but also for the class as a whole.

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00:26:16,159 --> 00:26:22,249

Because I did not want this to be simply focused on assignments, a kind of compassion and understanding for assignments,

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00:26:22,249 --> 00:26:29,689

and then not bring that to the class itself. It's one thing to say that, there will be no late penalties and then have it isolated to today.

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00:26:29,929 --> 00:26:36,559

It's another, I think, to have such a policy emerge from a general classroom ethos of care and compassion and patience.

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00:26:37,879 --> 00:26:43,698

Then, after going through other boilerplate things on the syllabus with the class about the types of assignment,

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00:26:43,699 --> 00:26:47,599

etc., I then embedded this into the syllabus.

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00:26:50,525 --> 00:26:55,295

There are dates on which all assignments are best turned in. These dates

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00:26:55,295 --> 00:27:02,195

help me get feedback to you all in a timely manner, which allows for you to incorporate that feedback into subsequent assignments.

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00:27:02,675 --> 00:27:05,585

Those dates also help you not have work pile up.

262

00:27:06,245 --> 00:27:13,474

Those dates are chosen to promote what I think would be the best timeline for an efficient, easy, manageable workload.

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00:27:13,475 --> 00:27:18,335

In short, those dates are chosen out of a desire to be understanding and compassionate.

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00:27:19,355 --> 00:27:23,705

But that does not always align with our lives (or mine)—with your lives (or mine),

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00:27:24,095 --> 00:27:27,694

and what each of you need to feel cared for and understood and accommodated

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00:27:27,695 --> 00:27:32,885

is different. So if you cannot hand in assignments on those due dates for whatever reason,

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00:27:33,365 --> 00:27:39,275

all I'd like to know is how I can help you do the work you feel would be beneficial for you in this course.

268

00:27:39,815 --> 00:27:47,134

Share with me however feels best and to whatever extent feels most comfortable. And know that there will be no late penalty,

269

00:27:47,135 --> 00:27:54,405

no penalty for "late" assignment. This, of course, did not permit you to blatantly disregard duties.

270

00:27:54,815 --> 00:28:02,255

You all are here because you want to be think the course will be beneficial in some way or find the course important enough to sit through it.

271

00:28:02,645 --> 00:28:09,515

All of that tells me that you care, so I do not think disregard for assignment due dates will even be an issue.

272

00:28:09,935 --> 00:28:17,825

So I suppose this is simply to say that I trust you all will nevertheless try your best to hand things in in the time that you can.

273

00:28:18,215 --> 00:28:23,405

Simply this is to eliminate as many punitive measures from our lives as possible."

274

00:28:25,205 --> 00:28:27,875

I try to be intentional about the language here.

275

00:28:28,145 --> 00:28:34,775

There was no objectivity in the dates for a "deadline," but chosen very specifically by me,

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00:28:34,925 --> 00:28:41,645

who has certain assumptions, and also, thoughts about what might be the best way to scaffold the class assignments.

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00:28:42,155 --> 00:28:47,195

The deadline did not come down from heavens, but from a very specific person and point of view.

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00:28:47,525 --> 00:28:54,275

And also, the decision to not establish any late penalties is coming from a very clear place of wanting to

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00:28:54,275 --> 00:28:59,555

acknowledge things that students might be going through, or might go through, at various points in the quarter.

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00:29:00,065 --> 00:29:05,165

There was a reason for the refusal of late penalties, essentially, is what I was trying to convey in this.

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00:29:05,465 --> 00:29:12,185

It did not mean that those dates do not matter, nor does it mean that as students, you need not care about them or the assignments.

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00:29:12,455 --> 00:29:16,655

It is one of many ways care can look like this and other classes.

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00:29:16,655 --> 00:29:19,715

This is what I was trying to convey in the language that I chose for that.

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00:29:20,855 --> 00:29:26,195

So I then ask, of course, are there any questions about anything we've noted in the syllabus so far?

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00:29:26,435 --> 00:29:29,765

And one student raised her hand. She was a Computer Science major,

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00:29:30,005 --> 00:29:36,305

incredibly committed to thinking deeply about the topic at hand, which she had in fact, very little familiarity with.

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00:29:36,665 --> 00:29:40,655

But she raised her hand and said simply, "Like, seriously?" And I said, "Yes."

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00:29:40,925 --> 00:29:44,944

And she said, in response, "Like no penalty whatsoever." And I said, "Correct."

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00:29:44,945 --> 00:29:47,945

So there was an incredulity here. Now

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00:29:47,945 --> 00:29:54,495

I do have to admit, that after she asked that question, and I saw other students make quiet comments and snickers,

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00:29:54,495 --> 00:29:59,785

to some of their friends—I'm almost certain two students where iMessaging each other about it on their laptops.

292

00:30:00,055 --> 00:30:06,755

And I got a little worried, if I'm being honest. Would they think that this class was a cakewalk or a joke, or that they could slack off?

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00:30:07,175 --> 00:30:11,675

But all of this again was about me. How would I look or, what would I feel?

294

00:30:11,765 --> 00:30:16,355

And not about the student. So I tried to, in that moment, recommit to the students.

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00:30:17,285 --> 00:30:29,115

So how did it turn out? So 72% of the students in that class, 25 out of the 34 students, handed in assignments on time.

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00:30:29,475 --> 00:30:38,055

And after four days past the due date, 94% submitted on time, or 94% submitted. And by a week after the deadline,

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00:30:38,085 --> 00:30:45,585

all but one student submitted their first assignment. I will say that the jump between the deadline and four days after the deadline came

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00:30:45,585 --> 00:30:50,234

after I mentioned in class that, until I received a critical mass of submission,

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00:30:50,235 --> 00:30:58,905

which I had in my head to be roughly 90% or so, that I could not get feedback and grades back to those, who had already submitted their assignments.

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00:30:59,235 --> 00:31:04,784

So my suspicion, is that, when they realized—when I made explicit that they were part of a collective,

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00:31:04,785 --> 00:31:11,865

when they realized that their actions had an effect on their peers, and their friends, they were more motivated to get the assignment in.

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00:31:12,555 --> 00:31:13,455

So all in all,

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00:31:13,485 --> 00:31:20,685

it actually made no difference to me in terms of grading, because it takes me, for an assignment like that, about a week to, to grade them all, anyway.

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00:31:21,865 --> 00:31:27,475

The one student who had not submitted their assignments, at all, was in fact the same student who ended up not

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00:31:27,475 --> 00:31:33,895

submitting any assignments throughout the course, and who for the group presentation that they had, clearly did very little.

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00:31:36,125 --> 00:31:40,445

What came out of this? Was it a success? So, here is what I know.

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00:31:41,345 --> 00:31:45,935

I was thoroughly pleased with the quality of the work students submitted.

308

00:31:46,325 --> 00:31:53,104

Now it's impossible to know whether or not the time, and—the time and policy made the work better,

309

00:31:53,105 --> 00:31:56,825

or if it would have been the same quality had the policy not been in place.

310

00:31:57,095 --> 00:32:02,645

But I can tell you of that class, I've had about 60% of those students in a previous class.

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00:32:03,065 --> 00:32:06,695

And I know for sure that they're writing was better than it was previously.

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00:32:07,145 --> 00:32:10,955

Maybe they grew as writers in the quarters in between classes. I don't know.

313

00:32:11,255 --> 00:32:20,404

But nonetheless, being alleviated of the time constraint and pressure, led them—led to them being able to write, at the very least, a bit more freely.

314

00:32:20,405 --> 00:32:28,885

And I think that's important. I think that matters. I also know that to be alleviated of time constraints and pressures, for this class at least,

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00:32:29,125 --> 00:32:34,795

allows students to think more deeply and critically and creatively, to not have to rush thinking,

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00:32:35,005 --> 00:32:38,874

which in so many ways I think disallows thinking.

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00:32:38,875 --> 00:32:41,485

Thinking takes time, and writing takes time, as well.

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00:32:41,725 --> 00:32:49,705

And no late penalties give students more time—not to slack off, but to think, at least ideally. That same student,

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00:32:49,915 --> 00:32:58,854

that Computer Science major who was suspicious of the no late penalty, said something so simple yet profound to me at the beginning of class,

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00:32:58,855 --> 00:33:04,045

two class periods after the designated due date. At the beginning of, each and every class,

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00:33:04,055 --> 00:33:09,495

I ask some version of the question, "Are you good?" to my, to my students. And, this particular class,

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00:33:09,505 --> 00:33:13,675

she said, very simply, "Not having to turn in our paper by the deadline

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00:33:13,675 --> 00:33:18,215

was huge for me. It was huge." She handed hers in four days past the deadline.

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00:33:18,475 --> 00:33:26,784

Four days is huge. Just four days. So she and others didn't have to rush something for fear of losing points, just to meet

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00:33:26,785 --> 00:33:31,495

the deadline that I established, which likely made her write a better paper, because she's likely

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00:33:31,495 --> 00:33:38,785

not, staying up until 3 a.m., trying to cram everything in, writing while sleep-deprived and exorbitantly caffeinated,

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00:33:39,025 --> 00:33:43,255

perhaps. But also, this isn't just about my class.

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00:33:43,255 --> 00:33:46,735

The refrain we already know is that it's not about me, it's about the students.

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00:33:47,455 --> 00:33:50,605

This student was able to study as she needed for an exam, that

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00:33:50,935 --> 00:33:56,575

she had, that was the same day as the deadline for my assignment. She was able to focus entirely on that.

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00:33:56,755 --> 00:33:59,455

And then when it was over, focus on my assignment.

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00:33:59,575 --> 00:34:06,264

So the policy, also aided my colleagues in Computer Science. This is to say then that we share students.

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00:34:06,265 --> 00:34:13,645

And if I have a burdensome, overbearing deadline for a paper, the same time that you have an exam or quiz too,

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00:34:14,005 --> 00:34:20,815

our student will do less well on both of them—I think, at least. And briefly, too—

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00:34:21,115 --> 00:34:27,625

I know, I keep saying it's not about me, but one of the benefits for me is that I have a more spaced-out grading schedule.

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00:34:27,625 --> 00:34:33,715

I have a chunk of papers to grade, and then once I whittle that down, I have another chunk come in, and then another smaller one.

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00:34:34,015 --> 00:34:37,825

I don't, in other words, have a stack of papers looming over me, causing me anxiety.

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00:34:37,825 --> 00:34:45,025

And I'm also someone who lives with anxiety, and I don't exhaust myself by trying to get it all graded, at once, or in a short amount of time.

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00:34:45,535 --> 00:34:51,835

And I don't have students waiting too long for submission—from submission to receive their feedback.

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00:34:52,615 --> 00:34:58,825

And I think another thing I noticed in this class is that this was revelatory for students, as well.

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00:34:59,035 --> 00:35:02,485

We are not the only ones with assumptions about deadlines.

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00:35:02,485 --> 00:35:07,645

Students have, internalized some of these things as well, which is not surprising at all.

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00:35:08,185 --> 00:35:15,325

There was one student I had, who noted in a written evaluation, in one of the CTECs, "I didn't know I was allowed to prioritize myself like that.

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00:35:15,535 --> 00:35:20,575

I was able to take care of myself while also knowing that I wouldn't be penalized for that."

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00:35:21,865 --> 00:35:30,325

All I really want from my students is a growing sense of how to be a better, more considerate, and more knowledgeable person in the world.

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00:35:30,565 --> 00:35:37,735

Mastery of content is cool, and efficient classroom time is also nice, but what kind of people, are we hoping to cultivate?

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00:35:37,975 --> 00:35:41,124

Because our students are not only, or even primarily students.

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00:35:41,125 --> 00:35:47,204

They're so much more, than, that outside of these, of the walls of our classroom. And how can we care for them?

349

00:35:47,205 --> 00:35:52,845

That's what I tried to do. Now, this might all sound extra rosy to some.

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00:35:53,385 --> 00:35:55,545

There are, of course, challenges to this picture.

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00:35:55,845 --> 00:36:02,615

It's not wholly applicable to other kinds of classes, and, not applicable for different kinds of teachers, or contexts.

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00:36:02,675 --> 00:36:08,365

So I want to talk about those things, as well. There are university challenges,

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00:36:08,375 --> 00:36:11,425

on the one hand: the quarter must end at some point.

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00:36:11,725 --> 00:36:17,454

The university, if not us as educators, has hard, and fast, deadlines, and we must meet those

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00:36:17,455 --> 00:36:23,875

in the end. We cannot be infinitely patient because, to miss university deadlines, has dire consequences.

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00:36:24,235 --> 00:36:31,435

There are also, disciplinary challenges, on the other hand, meaning, certain disciplines cannot operate in the way that I've outlined.

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00:36:31,585 --> 00:36:40,105

You can't move on to more advanced occupational therapy techniques without having achieved some form of proficiency on other, more basic techniques.

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00:36:40,375 --> 00:36:45,925

So missing deadlines for some benchmarks, stalls the remainder of the course. As well,

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00:36:46,255 --> 00:36:52,975

there are challenges that students have as well, namely, as I've noted, their own internalized assumptions and biases.

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00:36:53,305 --> 00:36:59,335

There are certainly students who will say that, they handed in their assignments on time, while others did not,

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00:36:59,515 --> 00:37:02,545

and it's not fair to them if late submitters get the same grade.

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00:37:03,205 --> 00:37:11,575

And lastly, there are our own challenges. We are only human, and can only do so much, only have so much patience and leniency and understanding.

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00:37:11,875 --> 00:37:15,955

I hear these. I really really do. And I feel them, as well. I feel them intimately.

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00:37:18,615 --> 00:37:26,095

But let's try, to, put us a little more at ease, maybe not to alleviate those challenges, but just to put a little bit more at ease.

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00:37:27,135 --> 00:37:30,325

To the first challenge, that of university deadlines.

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00:37:30,445 --> 00:37:38,185

It is entirely true, that university deadlines and the university, are not subject to, what we might think of deadlines and late penalties.

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00:37:38,845 --> 00:37:42,685

This has, not been a presentation about, other structures' policies,

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00:37:42,865 --> 00:37:50,275

only about what we might do to cultivate the space of our classroom, as a space where students have fewer punitive measures.

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00:37:50,665 --> 00:37:58,765

They know, and we know, as well—very well—that there are other places and people that do not exhibit the kind of patience and compassion.

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00:37:58,915 --> 00:38:07,615

that I've been discussing. And part of what we are doing when we soften our policies, is to demonstrate the, the different weight of deadlines.

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00:38:07,885 --> 00:38:10,645

Some deadlines feel different, and thus have different effects.

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00:38:10,915 --> 00:38:17,454

I have yet to turn in an article I was invited to write, and it's weeks past the deadline, and the editors have

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00:38:17,455 --> 00:38:23,665

given me an extension, and also understanding. I had been preparing for other things with deadlines, of different weights.

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00:38:24,505 --> 00:38:31,255

And, if I would have understood, this article deadline as the same weight, my performance in other areas of my life would have suffered.

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00:38:31,735 --> 00:38:33,204

Students as well, I think,

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00:38:33,205 --> 00:38:41,675

recognize, that some classes, or, some assignments across classes, weigh differently, and know very well that we do not control the university's

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00:38:41,675 --> 00:38:48,685

set deadline. Or maybe, maybe they don't, understand that. I'm not entirely sure about that one, but I choose to believe that they know these things.

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00:38:49,225 --> 00:38:56,514

If they missed that university deadline, I only have the speculative thought that they would not hold that against us,

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00:38:56,515 --> 00:39:02,575

recognizing where we end and the university begins, even though those things are very difficult to parse sometimes.

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00:39:03,815 --> 00:39:10,895

To the second challenge, of differing disciplines. Of course, your class might not do well with this kind of deadline flexibility.

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00:39:11,315 --> 00:39:18,065

The aim is not to implement this specific policy, but to think of alternatives to deadlines and requirements and penalties.

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00:39:18,545 --> 00:39:25,115

Are there ways you might introduce material differently, that permits more, more capacity, within certain constraints?

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00:39:25,385 --> 00:39:31,025

Can you perhaps introduce a set of methods and concepts, or techniques, rather than one at a time?

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00:39:31,055 --> 00:39:38,405

Can you allow students to submit things or demonstrate things, that are still in process, rather than expecting mastery, on your terms?

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00:39:39,555 --> 00:39:43,215

Thirdly, the challenge of students and the question of fairness.

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00:39:43,815 --> 00:39:47,835

I know I've been saying, that this is, all about students, not about us.

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00:39:48,105 --> 00:39:53,535

And yet, if there are students who find this policy unfair, shouldn't we listen to them? On one hand,

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00:39:53,535 --> 00:39:57,435

sure. These students are articulating real concern for them.

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00:39:57,825 --> 00:40:01,215

But I also wonder, where this concern is stemming from,

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00:40:01,305 --> 00:40:09,405

and also, if this concern actually works to the detriment of the majority of other students. Which students are voicing this sense of unfairness?

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00:40:09,555 --> 00:40:16,255

And what is it that these students are assuming about fairness, about peers, about the academic system, and the value of knowledge?

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00:40:16,275 --> 00:40:23,565

Why is it being implicitly assumed that, for one student to do well, that means others need to do proportionately poorly?

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00:40:23,745 --> 00:40:30,074

Why is the ground competitiveness, rather than a collective effort to grow together, in knowledge and relation,

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00:40:30,075 --> 00:40:33,225

albeit at different speeds, and with different interests and capacities?

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00:40:33,975 --> 00:40:40,335

The removal of mitigation—or mitigation of, late penalties, is in part established as a, as

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00:40:40,335 --> 00:40:46,544

a desire to emphasize learning, rather than competition. Calls that this is unfair,

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00:40:46,545 --> 00:40:54,345

emphasize, at least to me, that one is interested in getting a specific grade that is directly related to the poorer performance or grade of a peer,

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00:40:54,555 --> 00:40:58,605

which then leads to a competitive advantage over these peers for scarce resources.

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00:40:58,755 --> 00:41:04,275

And I do not wish to foster that spirit in my classroom. And I suppose that's my, that's my bias.

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00:41:04,455 --> 00:41:12,385

And that can be open to critique, for sure. But in my classroom, I want to try to foster a different sense of, classroom, ethics, and relationality.

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00:41:13,895 --> 00:41:16,685

And lastly, the challenge of our own capacity.

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00:41:17,525 --> 00:41:24,875

My absolute favorite author is the late Toni Morrison, and I did not wear this shirt on purpose, but my—yeah, my absolute

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00:41:24,875 --> 00:41:32,435

favorite author is Toni Morrison. Mere days before she died, I went to, see the documentary on her life called "The Pieces that I Am."

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00:41:32,855 --> 00:41:39,815

And toward the end of the film, she is speaking about, what people can do, in terms of anti-racism and justice.

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00:41:40,115 --> 00:41:45,185

And she says, very pithily, yet simply, "Do what you can, where you're at."

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00:41:45,455 --> 00:41:50,555

And I, daily, live with these words. Each of us is in a different place.

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00:41:50,585 --> 00:41:54,635

We are different kinds of people. We teach different things. Our students have differences.

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00:41:54,815 --> 00:42:01,055

All of that tells me, that there is no one uniform policy, that works for all of them, nor all of us.

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00:42:01,415 --> 00:42:07,355

You ultimately decide what is doable for you. You might demonstrate patience and compassion in a different way.

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00:42:07,505 --> 00:42:11,255

And as long as your students feel that, that is what I hope for.

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00:42:13,945 --> 00:42:21,235

Which is to say, you do not have to implement no late penalties, like me, right now or next year or ever.

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00:42:21,655 --> 00:42:25,525

There are other tactics we can use that vary along the spectrum.

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00:42:26,035 --> 00:42:29,545

These include, altering the grading scale, perhaps.

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00:42:30,085 --> 00:42:33,685

Now I know I may get in trouble with the university from this—for, for this.

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00:42:33,955 --> 00:42:41,215

And I know, or at least I think that the scales are set by the university, what counts as an A, B, etc. But this is one of those assumptions.

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00:42:41,245 --> 00:42:46,555

Why is a 93 the threshold for an A, rather than, a 90 or an 85?

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00:42:47,035 --> 00:42:54,985

I remember actually many years ago having an, albeit half-baked thought about scores, and how those scores are converted into letter grades.

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00:42:55,225 --> 00:43:02,125

You have something like baseball, where to get a hit 40% of the time, or batting 400, is a stellar achievement.

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00:43:02,455 --> 00:43:06,295

And then you have football, where, if you're a defensive lineman, for example,

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00:43:06,295 --> 00:43:12,445

and then you sack the quarterback, just one time in a game, out of approximately 40 or so times being on the field,

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00:43:12,955 --> 00:43:16,455

you had a good game, which also means that the offensive lineman, blocking

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00:43:16,465 --> 00:43:21,025

you, only messed up once, and that person is understood to have let the team down.

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00:43:21,385 --> 00:43:29,845

And then you have traditional letter grades, where if you get a 64%, if you get 64% of the answers correct—over half—you fail.

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00:43:30,265 --> 00:43:36,585

There was something wrong with that to me, back then. So why not explore the possibilities, whatever they may be?

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00:43:36,595 --> 00:43:41,995

I don't want to get anyone in trouble, but, what are the possibilities in exploring other kinds of scales?

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00:43:43,165 --> 00:43:47,305

Another possibility, is allowing students to assess themselves.

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00:43:47,755 --> 00:43:55,555

It might be, incredibly burdensome, to, do all the evaluation ourselves, to feel like we are the judge, of our students' fates.

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00:43:55,825 --> 00:44:03,685

So, why not try, making it a collaborative effort, and have the students give direct input, regarding how they feel that they've performed?

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00:44:04,075 --> 00:44:08,154

Give them a chance to, to share with you how they think they did, and evaluate their

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00:44:08,155 --> 00:44:13,284

own effort. Because, they might have different criteria, that we could learn from.

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00:44:13,285 --> 00:44:19,645

Or, or it might be illuminative in that, in that they learn what our criteria even are,

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00:44:19,645 --> 00:44:25,045

because, you would be surprised, how often it is not clear to students how exactly they're being evaluated.

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00:44:25,645 --> 00:44:30,685

This would alleviate the sole burden from you, or your TAs, and will also, I think,

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00:44:30,865 --> 00:44:35,865

foster a different, and more collaborative, classroom environment with students, who have the,

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00:44:35,885 --> 00:44:40,945

who have the chance to be more honest and reflective, and invested in themselves, and your course.

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00:44:41,905 --> 00:44:46,224

And of course, we can have different kinds of metrics for evaluation.

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00:44:46,225 --> 00:44:49,655

We could have a quiz one week, and a writing assignment another week,

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00:44:49,655 --> 00:44:53,275

then a creative project, then a collaborative project, then a class presentation.

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00:44:53,755 --> 00:45:00,985

Different modes, or methods, of assessment allowing for, students to share, and also discover, their particular strengths.

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00:45:01,225 --> 00:45:05,215

Because we know, that we, each have certain things that we're good at.

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00:45:05,515 --> 00:45:10,915

I love facilitating classroom conversation, but I hate and am not entirely good at lecturing.

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00:45:11,155 --> 00:45:14,125

But if I was evaluated only on the strength of my lecturing,

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00:45:14,365 --> 00:45:18,355

there would be no chance for me to show that I actually do well, teaching in a different kind of way.

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00:45:18,565 --> 00:45:20,935

And I want us to give students that opportunity, as well.

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00:45:22,465 --> 00:45:29,544

All of these things are suggested, to give you agency over, how to best serve the students you, and indeed we—

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00:45:29,545 --> 00:45:37,885

because again, these are our students, we share them. It's not, so much about doing things one particular way, which is my way,

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00:45:38,275 --> 00:45:45,715

because perhaps, that will, not lead to the thing that I, or we, ultimately want. It's not to, to have any specific policy,

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00:45:45,925 --> 00:45:52,884

but instead to rethink our policies and classroom inhabitation, to, better facilitate compassion

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00:45:52,885 --> 00:45:57,655

and care and growth for students who are people in the world, encountering others in the world.

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00:45:57,865 --> 00:46:08,015

But what will allow you to do that? So to wrap this up, this has not been about making you, do things you do not want to, or feel uncomfortable with.

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00:46:08,025 --> 00:46:11,445

Again, you decide what is possible in your classroom.

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00:46:11,925 --> 00:46:15,885

I simply want to assure you that other things are indeed possible.

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00:46:16,215 --> 00:46:21,555

You do not have to content yourself with doing things one way. You can play around with things, and try things out.

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00:46:21,795 --> 00:46:26,055

And perhaps you owe that to yourself and your students. Take the time you need.

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00:46:26,145 --> 00:46:31,065

There is, as you might guess, no deadline for when, you have to implement changes.

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00:46:31,245 --> 00:46:34,445

But I do want to offer the possibility, that you can.