REFRESH SYMPOSIUM:
Proactive ^
Classroom Management

BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York

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COMMON CHALLENGES
Identified by Faculty at Buffalo State

Attendance	Assignment Completion	Engagement
Communication	Dispositions	Academic Integrity

THESE CHALLENGES ARE NOT UNIQUE TO BUFFALO STATE

Across higher education:

- Reduced sustained attention after exposure to short-form digital media

- Lower completion of assigned readings

- Shifts in engagement patterns post-pandemic

- Difficulty maintaining focus in both in-person and online courses

(Cole et al., 2015; St. Cair-Thompson et al., 2018; Sartika & Nornota, 2023)

OUR ROLE IN RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES

⚙ I Can Control

- ✓ Course structure, policies, and expectations
- ✓ Instructional design & assessment
- ✓ How expectations are defined
- ✓ Feedback & grading practices
- ✓ My responses & boundaries

🧲 I Can Influence

- ▸▸ Students' motivation & engagement
- ▸▸ Classroom climate & belonging
- ▸▸ Students' understanding of expectations
- ▸▸ Students' willingness to participate
- ▸▸ Awareness of support resources

🚫 I Cannot Control

- ✖ Students' personal circumstances (health, work, family, finances)
- ✖ Students' attendance & work completion
- ✖ Students' mental health & stressors
- ✖ Students' prior educational experiences
- ✖ Institutional constraints

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

1 — ARTICULATE CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

What do students need to do?
How will this be communicated clearly to them?

2 — REINFORCE WITH ACCOUNTABILITY

What happens if students meet – or do not meet – these expectations?

***DISCLAIMER: We know, not rocket science. Channel your inner Draeger: reflect with renewed intentionality...

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES

ARTICULATING EXPECTATIONS

1 (Updated) syllabi statements

2 Intentional course design

3 Collaborative community standards

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REINFORCING WITH ACCOUNTABILITY

⊕ Positive consequences
earning points, dropping grades, extra credit
opportunities, choice/options on assignments

⊖ Negative consequences
loss of points, less choice/options on assignments,
lower grades, missing content naturally leads
to lower performance on assignments/tests

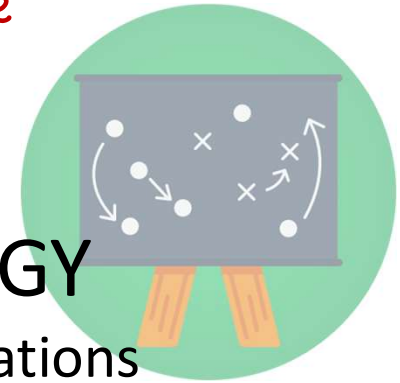# Intentional Class Design Example // Katie McCabe: EXE 100

Classroom
CHALLENGE

Proactive
∧
NEW STRATEGY
for expectations
& accountability

Students not completing work by due dates and/or requesting extensions

- Divide course calendar into three units
- Intentionally plan each unit with ONE text and ONE sub-theme for discussion
- Due dates are flexible *within* the unit
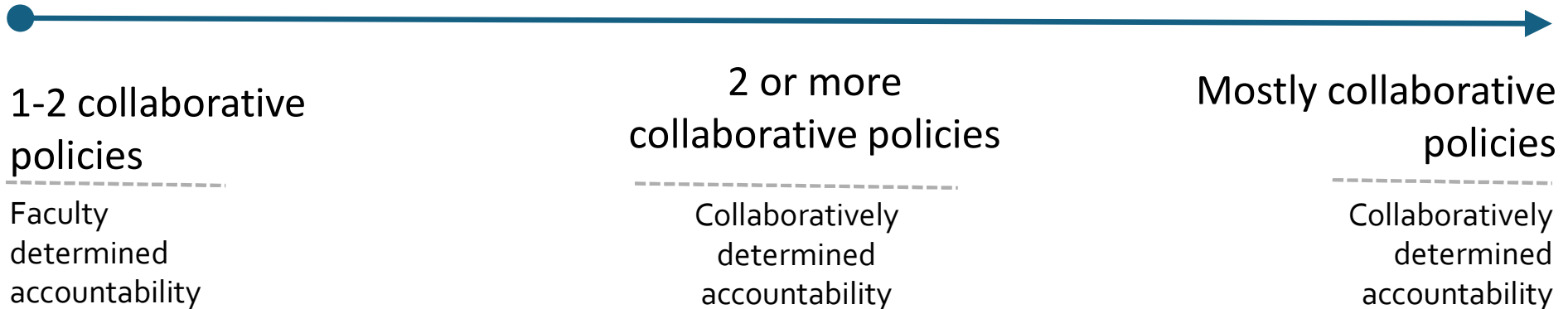- Work is no longer accepted once unit is finished
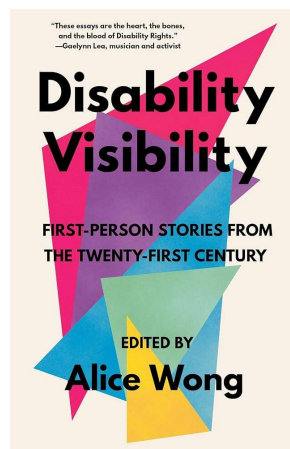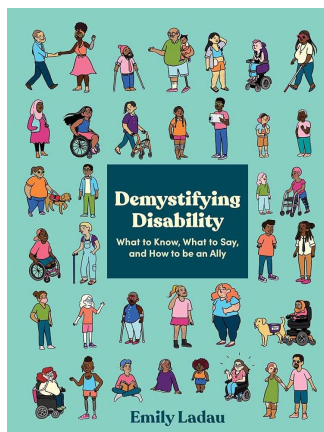
Topic	Date	Read, View, or Listen to BEFORE class	Assignments Due
	Oct 27, 2025	DV Part 4: Connecting (p. 250-275)	★ Book Club Day: Part 4
	Oct 29, 2025 Online Class		★ **Online Module: Disability Futures** ★ **Unessay Project Proposal Due 10/31**
End of Unit #2-All assignments that were assigned between September 29th and November 2nd must be submitted			
Strategies for Inclusive Education Planning for Special Education Services	Nov 3, 2025	NPR Article	★ Learning Check (Before Class)
	Nov 5, 2025	Documentary: *Forget Me Not*	★ Forget Me Not Monster Jam (In Class)
	Nov 10, 2025	Creating Inclusive Schools: What Does the Research Say?	★ Learning Check (Before Class)
	Nov 12, 2025 Online Class	Podcast: Inclusion Stories Chapters One & Two	★ **Online Module: Universal Design for Learning and Access** ★ Learning Check-Podcast Notes 1 (Before Class)
	Nov 17, 2025	Podcast: Inclusion Stories Chapters Three & Four	★ Learning Check-Podcast Notes 2 (Before Class)

Community Standards & Agreement // Natalie Szymanski

1. Student write/discuss prompt questions
2. Small groups review examples and draft class community standards
3. Whole class compiles lists (& votes)
4. Share agreement doc and sign
5. Revisit/revise at midterms

Spectrum of Implementation

1-2 collaborative policies

2 or more collaborative policies

Mostly collaborative policies

Faculty determined accountability

Collaboratively determined accountability

Collaboratively determined accountability

Community Standards Example // Natalie Szymanski: CWP 102

Classroom
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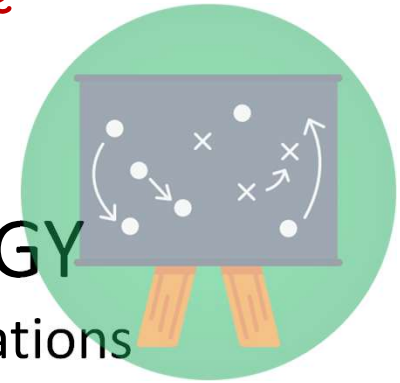
New freshman confused about
"participation & discussion"
- Want more than 3 students talking
- Tackle "hard" topics where students disagree
- Not hate each other after
- Know "when to move on"

1. Student write/discuss prompt questions
2. Small groups review examples and draft class community standards
3. Whole class compiles lists (& votes)
4. Share agreement doc and sign
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COMMUNITY AGREEMENT SAMPLE: CWP 102

1. ==We listen, and we don't judge.== What gets said in our classroom stays in the room; this is a safe sharing space.
2. We will all do our best ==not to interrupt each other.== If we have a point to make, we will wait until the person has finished their thought to respond to their point.
3. We will ==encourage engagement== and help others feel comfortable enough to share. We will make space to include everyone's opinion & comments.
4. We will all try to ==be here and present== as fully as we can because there are meaningful things we can learn from each other.
5. We acknowledge that none of us knows everything, so we will be ==open to learning==.
6. We will promise to ==challenge the idea and not the person==. If we wish to challenge something that has been said, we will challenge the idea, not the individual sharing this idea. We do not want to bash other people for an opinion.
7. We will ==leave space for one another== to speak their discomfort. If something is bothering us, we will share it with the class.
8. We will ==try not to revolt== when Dr. Nat says we have to do "english things."
9. We will ==applaud and celebrate each other==s' positives and listen with empathy to each other's venting.
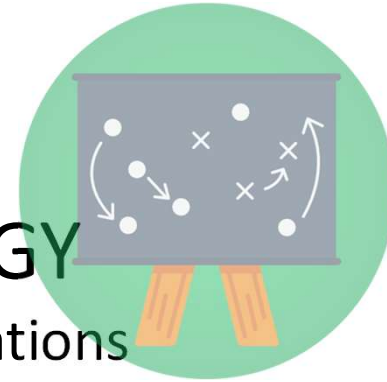
Your Turn...

Classroom CHALLENGE

List a concern in one of your classes...

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Proactive

NEW STRATEGY
for expectations & accountability

Pick a new strategy...

1 (Updated) syllabi statements

2 Intentional course design

3 Collaborative community standards

Decide accountability...

⊕ Positive consequences

⊖ Negative consequences