Teaching in a time of hate

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What we’ll do in this first session together

• Conceptualize hatred—I’ll talk at you for this part to frame hatred

• Consider our responses as teachers when hate arises—specifically in three scenarios that are post-incident, mid-incident, and pre-incident—using your own classrooms and school contexts; you’ll talk in small groups for this

• We’ll share considerations, experience and expertise; we’ll do this as a large group, then close with writing individually and snowballs.

• Questions about the plan?

• I hope that sounds ok (since I don’t have another plan if it doesn’t).


“The FBI is required by law to collect data about hate crimes, but the Bureau relies on local law enforcement to collect the data. The consequences are predictable: While the FBI lists about 6,000 hate crimes per year, a survey by the Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that the number is closer to 250,000. The impediments to good reporting are many:

More than half of hate crime victims don't report to police….Local police officers are often poorly trained at identifying and reporting hate crimes, and as local jurisdictions aren’t required to report hate incidents to the FBI, state crime reports often exclude many hate crimes. While the majority of local law enforcement agencies nominally participate in the FBI’s data collection program, nearly 90 percent … said they had no hate crimes at all in 2016.
hatred as a consistent experience
First, a caveat
Cultural tendency to oversimplify: hatred is bad vs. love is good.

Gendered/religiously infused (in the way of all emotions); “Be nice,” “Don’t hate.”

Why Nancy Pelosi doesn't hate the president and prays for him instead

Dec 10, 2019

by Thomas Reese, Religion News Service | Opinion
What is hatred?

• Many versions of what hatred is—Intense dislike or ill will directed at an object, person or group

• Spans: Aversion, avoidance, pronounced distaste for a generality vs. particular hatreds, phobias (misogyny, antisemitism, homophobia, islamophobia, xenophobia, transphobia…)

• Consider what we have words for in English vs. those we don’t (hatred of the poor or the homeless; hatred without an object; why is that?)
Counseling psychology

- Hate as an emotion: short or long-lived, low-intensity or high-intensity, normalized, part and parcel of being human (D.W. Winnicott, psychoanalyst, “holding environment” for patient)

- Protective function (e.g. my daughter and my boyfriend)

- Robert Sternberg’s (psychologist) theories of hatred: triangular theory of hate—target can be a group or person
  - negation of intimacy, by creating distance when closeness had become threatening; especially when sanctity involved
  - an infusion of passion, such as fear or anger (in response to threat)
  - commitment: a decision to devalue a previously valued object; learned, cognitively apprehended
7 types of hate

• (1) Cool hate: Disgust (disgust of negation of intimacy alone), (2) Hot hate: Anger/Fear (anger/fear of passion alone), (3) Cold hate: Devaluation/Diminution (devaluation/diminution of decision/commitment alone), (4) Boiling hate: Revulsion (disgust of negation of intimacy + anger/fear of passion), (5) Simmering hate: Loathing (disgust of negation of intimacy + devaluation/diminution of decision/commitment), (6) Seething hate: Revilement (anger/fear of passion + devaluation/diminution of decision/commitment), and (7) Burning hate: Need for annihilation (disgust of negation of intimacy + anger/fear of passion + devaluation/diminution of decision/commitment).
Hate as a story

• The theory of hate as a story, like the theory of love as a story, proposes that hate emerges from different kinds of stories. Some of the most common stories, deriving from the work of Sam Keene, Anthony Rhodes, Robert Zajonc, and others, are

  • Stranger (vs. in-group),
  • Impure-other (vs. pure in-group),
  • Controller (vs. controlled),
  • Faceless foe (vs. individuated in-group),
  • Enemy of God (vs. servant of God),
  • Morally bankrupt (vs. morally sound),
  • Death (vs. life),
  • Barbarian (vs. civilized in-group),
  • Greedy enemy (vs. financially responsible)…
Neuroscience of hatred

• Interestingly, not a lot of studies dedicated to this

• In one fMRI study: subjects shown images of those they hate vs. neutral faces; “hate circuit” identified—putamen and insula involved. Same circuit as love—but no deactivation of judgment. Also heightened premotor cortex, motor planning region of brain. (Zeki & Romaya, 2008, University College London) In another study: “Depression uncouples brain hate circuit” (Tao et. al, 2013)
Hate as evolutionary legacy


- Face studies of same/other races: activation of amygdala even without enough time to cognitively process what we’ve seen—1/20th second—aggression, anxiety, fear.

- Us-ness vs. Them-ness is profound in loads of studies.

Dividing the world into Us and Them is deeply hard-wired—not to fulfill psychological needs but to protect our species.
Us-ness

- Assumption of correctness, wisdom, morality, worthiness
- Inflations of the good: Rationalizing why ‘our’ food/music/sex/culture is better (me and late emails)
- Ready forgiveness vs. essentializing failure
- More likely to help someone in need (stadium study)
Them-ness

- Can be threatening, angry, untrustworthy
- Or disgust: insula (triggering gag reflex when you smell something rotten, protects you from poisonous foods)—similar reaction with moral repugnance
- Ridiculous
- Primitive, undifferentiated (more homogenous, less sensitive)
Warmth

Desire to help

Pity
Frontal cortex

People with disabilities
Infirm
Elderly

Desire to exclude

Addicts
Homeless

Recategorization can happen slow or fast

Desire to associate

Middle class Americans
African American professionals
Good Christians

Competence

Colonized views of colonizers
Stereotypes of Jews
Rich by poor

Hostility/urge to attack

Disgust
amygdala, insula

Susan Fiske, Princeton University
• If hate is an emotion, then…

• If hate is a storyline, then…

• If hate is a function of our brains, then…

• If hate is a function of our evolution, then…

Turn and talk
When to intercede, how, and what it means
First Scenario

Imagine this picture was taken before the Senior Prom, on a Saturday night, and one of the young men pictured posted it on-line, proud of how handsome he and his classmates are, all dressed-up. The picture comes to your attention Sunday night. What would you do if this was your school or district?
• Is this an example of hate? If yes, how do you think of it?

• What would you want to know?

• What would you imagine doing? On what grounds?

• Does it matter how you think about hate to respond? (It’s ok if it doesn’t.)

• How is this similar to or different from students chanting “Build that wall” or “Go back to your country”?

• What experiences have you had as a teacher that echo this scenario in some way? What did you do, and on what grounds? What would you do differently if you had the chance?
Second scenario

• It’s just before the beginning of class, and your students are getting into their seats, talking and laughing. In the back corner of the room, just out of earshot, an African American student is teasing a white classmate for being a “fucking Jewy pansexual.”

• Their voices rise in anger, and you hear the white student argue that being called that is the same as being called the ’N-word’—except that the student uses the N-word.

• Consider the same questions you considered for the last scenario. Do you intercede? Why or why not? How? What would you want to know or be able to do? What might follow?
Third scenario

The Kids Are Alt-Right
ADL: Hate on display
Imagine seeing hand-signs

• Is this an example of hate? If yes, how do you think of it? Does it matter how you think about hate to respond? (It’s ok if it doesn’t.)

• What would you imagine doing? On what grounds?

• How is this similar or different from students chanting “Build that wall” or “Go back to your country”? Swastikas in school bathrooms?

• What experiences have you had that are like this scenario in some way? What did you do, on what grounds? What would you do differently if you had the chance? What would you advise other teachers to do or not?
At a school in Idaho...

What if this was proposed at your school?
discuss scenarios together
College football assistant coach suspended after calling Adolf Hitler ‘a great leader’
Fears of a “white genocide”
5-minute free-write

How do you think about hate now? How do you want to address it in your curriculum? Your students? In yourself? What would you like to work on?
Snowball something you’d like to share about hate

What’s a lingering question you have, something you’d like to tell everyone, something that didn’t get said that needs saying or something you’d like to end on? Try to write legibly!
SAC stands for:

- Structured
- Academic
- Controversy
Deliberation
Before we start:

• Think of a discussion skill you’d like to work on in yourself! (I’ll try to remember to ask you about it when we’re done—and if I don’t, please don’t be shy about reminding me!)

• Commit to that skill—e.g. not interrupting, stating points succinctly, inviting participation, making the first point…