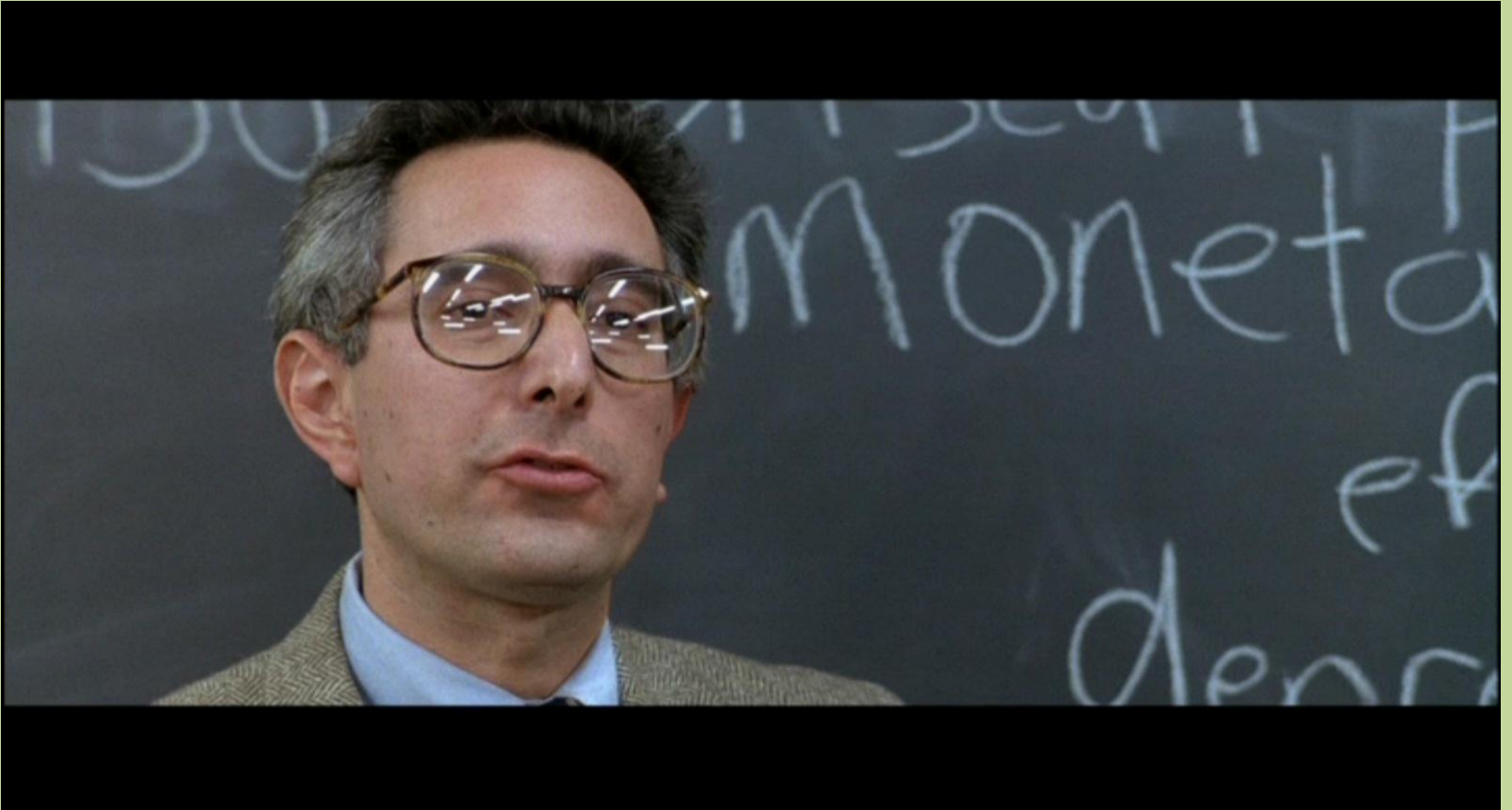


Why have Discussions?

- Knowledge is constructed individually and collectively
- One aspect of teaching
- Continuous Discovery
- Crucibles of the democratic process?

Better than Boring Power Point Slides

Modeling Good Discussion Leading Practices



**Good
Discussions are
Unpredictable
and Surprising**



THE GOAL?

Getting as many people as possible deeply engaged in the conversation



Discussions are Collaborative Enterprises



BALANCE





“Democratically inclined teachers are frequently silent in discussion, curbing the compulsion to say all they would like to say in the interests of promoting engagement and participation.”

Saying too much???

- Responding to *every* student comment...even positively
- Too much of any teacher creates a passive audience
- Often we dominate unintentionally



Why do we fill the silence?



Habit of “didactic transmission”

v.

**The reality that knowledge is
constructed individually and in groups**

Knowledge divorced from Contexts and Relationships

*We need to connect disciplinary discourse with the
everyday experiences of diverse communities and
individuals*

Fear of Failing

Often we socialized to believe that everything that happens in the classroom is our responsibility

**We underestimate the
Students**

We overestimate our own contributions

***Only a small part of what we know can
be usefully and effectively conveyed to
students***



When we don't say enough

Don't stay on the sidelines: "Teachers must be active listeners"

Before students "discuss" they need a model

Discussions need to be productive

Strategic intervention



Questions to Consider



**Do I interrupt
students in mid
sentence?**

**Do I comment more
than the students?**

**Do I give student's
time to reflect and
think?**



**Are my methods
consistent with the
class goals?**

**What are the class
goals?**

**What am I doing to
build a sense of
collaborative
engagement?**

PLANNING

“Good Discussions Don’t Just Happen On Their Own.”



PLANNING

Sketch out Questions ahead of time

Identify relevant passages and formulate possible responses



Setting the Classroom



Adapt the Space for your own purposes



Set Expectations for Discussion

**Discussion as a part of the Contract
with Learners**



**Ask students
to unpack
assumptions
and
implications
of their
contributions**

**Discussions are more likely
to teach process than
straight content**