Strategies for Fostering Dialogue
Among Students with Diverse Political Beliefs and Social Identities

Facilitated Discussion by:

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A Process for Fostering Dialogue

• Creating a Safe, Brave Space
• Developing Critical Thinking Skills
• Establishing Values and Frameworks
• Facilitating Experiential Learning
Creating a Safe, Brave Space

What activities and strategies do you use to create a space where all students feel comfortable to share as well as explore new ideas?
Poll Everywhere
# Steps for creating a Group Agreement


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Example Prompt</th>
<th>Facilitator Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask participants to brainstorm individually about times they flourished or felt constrained through group membership.</td>
<td>“Think about a time you were in a group and it did not go well. What were some of the issues?”</td>
<td>It’s often easier for people to think about a negative group experience than a positive one.</td>
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<td>Develop statements for the group agreement.</td>
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<td>Have each participant share their statements, clarifying meaning.</td>
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<td>Decide what the leadership wants to contribute to the list.</td>
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<td>Develop a final list of 8 to 10 statements.</td>
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<td>Take a vow.</td>
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<td>Revisit the group agreement regularly.</td>
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Sample Group Agreement for a Safe, Brave Space

- respect each other and ourselves
- actively listen
- honor confidentiality
- talk about my experience, not others’
- value risk-taking
- express thoughts and emotions
- participate fully and stay engaged
- my level of participation is up to me
- pledge my best intent at all times
Developing Critical Thinking Skills

What approaches do you use to develop critical thinking in your students?

How do you help students to challenge their existing ideas, interrogate their values and explore issues from multiple perspectives?
Resources

• CLUES Worksheet
• Reading Reaction Worksheet
Critical Thinking Links

• Media Bias Fact Check
  https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/

• Blue Feed, Red Feed
  http://graphics.wsj.com/blue-feed-red-feed/
Establishing Values and Frameworks

What strategies do you use to help students identify what they believe?

When you design a course, do you have a particular set of values (or frameworks) you use? How do you present those in a way that fosters dialogue?
Explore your values by identifying a time you were the:
1) happiest
2) most proud
3) most fulfilled

What do these stories tell you about your values?

Look at this list of values to see if any of them connect to your experiences and goals

List from: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_85.htm
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frameworks</th>
<th>Sisters of Mercy Critical Concerns</th>
<th>National Association of Social Workers Core Values</th>
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<tr>
<td><img src="https://www.sistersofmercy.org/what-we-do/social-justice-advocacy/" alt="Sisters of Mercy" /></td>
<td><img src="https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/" alt="National Association of Social Workers" /></td>
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https://www.sistersofmercy.org/what-we-do/social-justice-advocacy/

https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/

Code-of-Ethics-English
Critical social justice recognizes inequality as deeply embedded in the fabric of society (i.e., structural), and actively seeks to change this.

While this approach refers to a broad range of fields, there are some important shared principles:

• All people are individuals, but they are also members of social groups.
• These social groups are valued unequally in society.
• Social groups that are valued more highly have greater access to the resources of a society.
• Social injustice is real, exists today, and results in unequal access to resources between groups of people.

• Those who claim to be for social justice must be engaged in self-reflection about their own socialization into these groups (their “positionality”) and must strategically act from that awareness in ways that challenge social injustice.
• This action requires a commitment to an ongoing and lifelong process.
• Recognize that relations of unequal social power are constantly being enacted at both the micro (individual) and macro (structural) levels.
• Understand our own positions within these relations of unequal power.
• Think critically about knowledge.
• Act on all of the above in service of a more socially just society.

Stages of Racial Identity Development

Conformity  
Dissonance  
Resistance & Immersion  
Introspection  
Integrative Awareness

From:
Racial/Cultural Minority Identity Development: pp 92 -105
White Racial Identity Development: pp 120 -128

More variations available at:
Diverse Rationales for Global Citizenship


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Challenging Reflective Questions</th>
<th>Examples of Integration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secular essentialism suggests a secularly derived notion that human life has certain fundamental features.</td>
<td>UN Declaration of Human Rights</td>
<td>Educating others about rights; advocating for rights</td>
<td>How do we reconcile the frequent emphasis on individual rights with the additional emphasis on communal rights?</td>
<td>Drawing on personal faith as a reason to promote a secular expression of human rights</td>
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<td>Faith-based essentialism</td>
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<td>Utilitarianism</td>
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<td>The Kantian categorical imperative</td>
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<td>Particularistic approaches</td>
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<td>Skeptical postmodernism</td>
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<td>Affirmative postmodernism and critical traditions</td>
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Facilitating Experiential Learning

Providing an opportunity for students to live their values, apply course learning and engage in dialogue in the real world
Additional Resources

• Racial Equity Tools Website at: https://www.racialequitytools.org/home