Approaches to Facilitating Difficult or Charged Conversations

As we get started:

- Write in the chat: “What brings you to this conversation today?”
- We also encourage you, if time permits, to call to mind a specific difficult / challenging conversation where you were facilitating
A Few Quick Polls
Introductions

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Motivating Questions

● How do we create valuable opportunities to push and challenge our students?
● How can we facilitate learning and mitigate harm in moments of conflict?
● What changes if these conversations are happening in the online space?
Session Agenda

● Getting started (~10 min)
● Frameworks and strategies (~15 min)
● Case study (~30 min)
● Wrapping up (~5 min)
Norms: Courageous Conversations + 1

1. Stay engaged
2. Experience discomfort
3. Expect and accept non-closure
4. Confidentiality

* Norms 1-3 come from *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools* (Singleton and Linton, 2006)
Frameworks and Strategies
“Critical Conversations” Framework

From Teaching Tolerance’s “Let’s Talk” guide to critical conversations:

● Doing Self Work
● Building Community and Discussion Routines
● Planning the conversation
● Facilitating the Conversation [our focus today!]
“Reflective Action Facilitation Framework”

During the Conversation:

1. Name and frame the incident
2. Engage with curiosity and/or redirection
3. Go deeper with reflection and/or response
4. Provide closure and name next steps

NOTE: You may not choose to use all of the steps in each incident that you address. Practice making choices about which steps to use and when!
Setting up the small-group case discussion

- Case-let that puts you in the shoes of the professor and invites you to apply the “Reflective Action Facilitation” Framework
- Groups of 4-5, with facilitators popping in to listen
- Spend approximately half the time discussing the “analysis” questions and about half discussing the “action” questions
Setting up the small-group case discussion

- Take a few minutes to read page 2 (case + discussion instructions) of the handout we are distributing.
- Please type any clarifying questions in the chat.
- As you are discussing, refer to the “Reflective Action Facilitation” Framework on page 1 of the handout to inform your thinking.

- Handout: bit.ly/HILT_DifCon
Case study debrief

● Applying the “Reflective Action Facilitation” framework
  ○ Name and frame the incident
  ○ Engage with curiosity and/or redirection
  ○ Go deeper with reflection and/or response
  ○ Provide closure and name next steps

● Takeaways from breakout sessions

● Online considerations
Wrapping Up
Wrapping Up: Your Takeaways

Please write in the chat:

What is one key learning that you’re walking away with?
Wrapping Up: Summary & Resources

Planning and Facilitating Difficult Conversation

- Doing Self Work
- Building Community and Discussion Routines
- Planning the conversation
- **Facilitating the Conversation**
  - Name and frame the incident
  - Engage with curiosity and/or redirection
  - Go deeper with reflection and/or response
  - Provide closure and name next steps

Resources...
Thank you!

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