



HARVARD

Office of the Vice Provost for Advances in Learning



HILT CONFERENCE

Harvard Initiative for Learning and Teaching

2024

2024 HILT Conference: “Open Minds in Dialogue”

Friday, September 20, 2024, at Harvard Graduate School of Education

The thirteenth annual HILT Conference, “Open Minds in Dialogue,” underscored the importance of integrating emotional and analytical skills in teaching, navigating the complexities of speech-related pressures, and fostering inclusive environments for open dialogue. Key discussions revolved around how educators can balance personal narratives with academic rigor, the dynamics of speech-related pressures, and the role of faculty in creating neutral and trustworthy classroom environments. The following insights from the event are meant for educators and institutions aiming to enhance academic and professional development through effective communication and inclusive practices.

Key Takeaways from...

Plenary 3: “Where Does Harvard Go from Here?”

Session Description: *As Harvard looks to the future, how can it lead the way in promoting open dialogue and inquiry, and reshape academic discourse? In this plenary, Professors Eric Beerbohm and Tomiko Brown-Nagin will discuss the work of the University Task Force on Open Inquiry and Constructive Dialogue, and Professor Erica Chenoweth will share the efforts that have been underway at the Harvard Kennedy School. Moderated by Provost John Manning, this session will tackle the pressing question of what Harvard can do to foster open inquiry, equipping students and faculty alike to engage with diverse perspectives in and beyond our classrooms.*

- **Forthcoming Report on Speech-Related Pressures:** The Open Inquiry and Constructive Dialogue Working Group, led by Eric Beerbohm and Tomiko Brown-Nagin, will soon release a report addressing speech-related pressures and constraints within the Harvard community.
- **Speech Restrictions in Classroom and Faculty Concerns:** Political moderates among students feel the most restricted in their speech, and non-tenured faculty fear repercussions in their teaching evaluations if they push for deeper dialogue.
- **Need for Coordination to Encourage Open Dialogue:** Although there is a desire to reduce fear and encourage more open contributions in discussions, coordinated efforts and specific mechanisms are needed to facilitate this cultural shift, especially considering upcoming contentious events.