

HELPFUL QUESTIONS FOR DIALOGUE FACILITATION

Dialogue can be a helpful process to engage students in articulating their experiences and/or reactions to challenging situations. Dialogue, different from discussion, invites us to listen and hear each other's perceptions, experiences without judgement or intent to convince individuals of our viewpoint. Dialogue welcomes individuals into the conversation and it accepts differences.

Before we begin to engage in dialogue, we need to establish guidelines for dialogue to provide a safe space for the conversation to occur. Guidelines may entail the following:

- * Confidentiality: "What's learned here, leaves here, what's shared here, stays here."
- * Commitment to learn from each other.
- * Commitment to not demean, devalue, or "put down" individuals.
- * Commitment to trust that individuals are always doing the best they can.
- * Commitment to monitor one's own and others' airtime – to be mindful of how long one is talking and to speak up when others are taking over the conversation.

Confirm with students that they will abide by these guidelines.

The following questions are designed to help engage in dialogue around difficult topics, such as the reports of humiliation and intimidation that we have heard about, following the nation's presidential election. These questions are framed to invite students into thoughtful conversation grounded in their own experiences. The central purpose of these questions is to listen to individuals' experiences, observations, affirm them (not evaluate them), link them to other issues raised, and add information, as appropriate; for example, we might ask, "How does this observation resonate with you?"

QUESTIONS FOR DIALOGUE FACILITATION

EXPLORATORY QUESTIONS-Probe basic knowledge

What do you think about _____?

How does _____ make you feel?

What bothers/concerns/confuses you the most about _____?

What are some ways we might respond to _____?

CASUAL QUESTIONS-Open ended questions that don't require a detailed or specific kind of response

What is your understanding of _____?

What do you want to know about _____?

What is the first thing you think about in relation to _____?

What are some questions you have about _____?

State one image/scene/event/moment from your experience that relates to-----

RELATIONAL QUESTIONS-Ask for comparisons of themes, ideas, or issues

How do you account for _____?

What was significant about _____?

What connections do you see?

What does _____ suggest to you?

EXTENSION QUESTIONS-Expand the discussion

What do the rest of you think?

How do others feel?

What did you find noteworthy about this comment?

How can we move forward?

Can you give some specific examples of _____?

HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS-Pose a change in the facts or issues

What if _____ were from a different _____ would that change things?

How might this dialogue be different if _____?

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS-Probe motives or causes

What brings you to say that?

What led you to that conclusion?

PRIORITY QUESTIONS-Seek to identify the most important issue

From all that we've talked about, what is the most important concept you see?

Considering the different ideas in the room, what do you see as the most critical issue?

What do you find yourself resonating with the most?

If you had to pick just one topic to continue talking about, what would it be?

PROCESS QUESTION Elicits satisfaction/buy-in/interest levels

What perspectives are missing from this dialogue?

Everyone has been _____ for a while, why?

How would you summarize this dialogue so far?

How might splitting into groups/pairs affect our discussion?

ANALYTICAL QUESTIONS-Seek to apply concepts or principles to new or different situations

What questions arise for you as you think about ?

How does this idea/contribution add to what has already been said?

SUMMARY QUESTIONS=Elicit syntheses: what themes or lessons have emerged?

If you had to pick two themes from this dialogue, what would they be?

What did you learn?

What remains unresolved? How can we better process this?

Based on our dialogue, what will you be thinking about after you leave?

This is what I've heard so far ... Does anyone have anything to correct or add?

ACTION QUESTIONS-Call for a conclusion or action

How can we use that information?

What does this new information say about our own actions/lives?

How will you do things differently as a result of this dialogue?

What are our next steps?

What kind of support do we need as we move forward?

EVALUATIVE-QUESTION Gauge emotions, anxiety levels - what is going well or not

Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

How are you feeling about this now?

What was a high point of the dialogue for you?

A low point?

What excited you? Disappointed you?