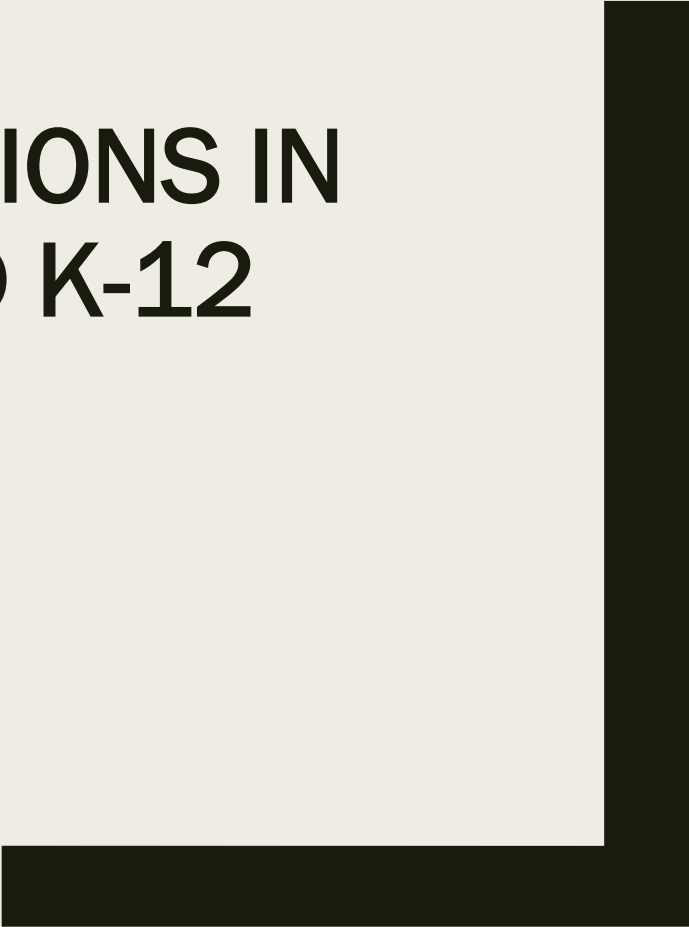




COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND K-12 SETTINGS

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Introductions

- Why are we here today?
- What have we observed/experienced?
- What are our concerns?

Group Agreements

- Stay Engaged
- Experience Discomfort
- Speak Your Truth
- Expect and Accept No closure

A TRUE STORY

“We were ten weeks into Introduction to Afro-American and were discussing Louis Farrakhan. Near the end of section, a very smart Jewish woman said, ‘Only uneducated black men would believe in Farrakhan.’ Six black men in the class turned on her and attacked (verbally). “Class ended, and she ran out of the room, down the hall, in tears.”

How do you think you would address this situation?

Helping the Students Think About it

- Help students think productively
- Make the topic for general discussion
- Require that all students seek to understand each other's perspectives
- Require students to write/research/defend opposing view

Privilege

During a political science course, a student of color tells a white student (in a loud voice) that the white student has no right to speak because he was born privileged.

How do you think you would address this situation?

The Five Minute Rule

The five minute rule is a way of taking an invisible or marginalized perspective and entertaining it respectfully for a short period of time.

Rule: Anyone who feels that a particular point of view is not being taken seriously has a right to point this out and call for this exercise to be used.

Discussion: The group then agrees to take five minutes to consider the merits of this perspective, refrain from criticizing it, and make every effort to believe it. Only those who can speak in support of it are allowed to speak, using the questions below as prompts. All critics must remain silent.

Questions and prompts:

What's interesting or helpful about this view?

What are some intriguing features that others might not have noticed?

What would be different if you believed this view, if you accepted it as true?

In what sense and under what conditions might this idea be true?

Questions for the whole class

What did you learn?

What are you curious to know more about?

Religious Harassment

A female Middle Eastern student wearing the hijab is seated in front of a classroom waiting for class to start. Several Caucasian students come in and are just about to sit down close to her. But then one student notices her and says to his friends, "Let's don't sit here. She looks like ISIS. She probably has a bomb under her scarf"

How do you think you would address this situation?

Religious Harassment

- Because this was done out in the open it needs to be addressed openly.
 - *“This is not acceptable and will not be tolerated”*
 - *“You need to apologize”*
 - *“This will be addressed later”*
 - Talk with the students privately before the next class

Isolation

- A female African American student takes a seat in class and two Caucasian female students sitting nearby roll their eyes and then get up and move away. Many of the Caucasian students won't sit next to her and some refuse to work on group projects with her.

How do you think you would address this situation?

Isolation

- Needs to be addressed because this is obvious to the class
 - *Meet with AA student before you address issue*
- Go back to the class agreements and statements in your syllabus (dispositions)
- Environmentally
 - *Assigning seats*
 - *Assigning groups*

“SOAR-UP”

- Stop
- Think of outcomes
- Assess the situation
- React
- Use active listening
- Prepare

Difficult Conversation Topics



<https://youtu.be/j5CTX0lyFhc>



Resources

- Difficult Conversations: Strategies for Civil Discourse
 - <http://www.csus.edu/ctl/downloads/01%20civil%20discourse%20handout.pdf>
- Tips and Strategies for Difficult Conversations
 - <https://cndls.georgetown.edu/m/documents/CombinedTipsStrategies.pdf>
- Managing Hot Moments in the Classroom
 - https://www2.humboldt.edu/diversity/sites/default/files/Managing_Hot_Moments_in_the_Classroom-Harvard_University.pdf
- Teaching While White
 - <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/teaching-while-white>