



The Diversity Education team has curated a selection of classroom activities, blog posts, short videos, and discussion guides to encourage productive dialogue and respect for viewpoint diversity.

Classroom Activities

[Creating Connection to Generate Deep Discussion](#) Developed by Debra Mashek

To ready students to take the interpersonal risks of sharing diverse viewpoints, admitting the limits of their own knowledge, or expressing genuine curiosity about the experiences and perspectives of others, professors can dedicate an hour of class time to the goal of facilitating interpersonal connection among their students. This activity, based on experimental social psychological research, offers an effective approach for doing so.

[Dialectical Thinking Classroom Activity](#) Developed by Andrew Hartz, PhD.

Dialectical thinking can help people understand issues more completely and accurately, develop more effective solutions, have more productive dialogue, improve their relationships with people with whom they disagree, and increase their emotional stability and mental health. This worksheet aims to help people learn how to use dialectical thinking to explore a range of controversial, political, or academic topics.

[Encountering Controversial Ideas in Higher Education](#) Created by [Living Room Conversations](#) and the [Heterodox Academy](#)

Students attend college for many reasons, including to learn about the world, to develop critical thinking, and to hone employable skills. In recent years, colleges and universities have struggled to determine how to include or if they can include a variety of ideas that challenge students' understanding of charged issues in their curriculum and in the academic environment. Students, faculty and administrators naturally bring their own experience and perspectives to the classroom. The purpose of this conversation is to share experiences that create greater understanding of what helps or hinders the free exchange of diverse ideas in the higher education learning environment.

[Structuring Classroom Discussions About the 2020 Election](#) from The CRLT Blog, Michigan

A three-part guide outlining the process for planning, structuring, and facilitating of any discussions about the election, before or after November 3rd, as well as instructions to help students channel their reactions into action and community engagement, regardless of political affiliation. Includes discussion of high stakes discussions, 'hot moments' in the classroom, and civic learning.

Blog Posts

[Three Strategies for Navigating Moral Disagreements](#), by Musa al-Gharbi

[Fostering Constructive Dialogue Between Students in an Online Course](#), by Samantha Hedges

Don't Avoid Controversial Topics. Use Them!, by Mark Urista

Bringing Living Room Conversations to the Classroom, by Rebecca March, Jessica Shryack, and Miki Huntington

Want Free Speech and Meaningful Classes on Campus? Encourage Listening. by Jill DeTemple

Teaching and the Election by Jason at the University of Oregon

Short Videos from the **Moral Courage Channel** on YouTube

[3 Reasons why Sticking to Your Political Beliefs Can Be Dangerous](#)

[3 Ways Americans Can Heal the Partisan Divide.](#)

[Why College Students Shouldn't Avoid Difference of Opinion](#)

[Why Offensive Topics Should be Discussed Offline](#) with Genesis Be

[Why Your Political Rants Hurt Your Cause and Help the Other Side](#)

Other Useful Resources

Ask Big Questions November Conversation Guide: How Do We Disagree?

In today's world, interaction in the media, online, and in person can devolve quickly into inflammatory statements and personal attacks that leave all parties feeling angry and frustrated. We don't have to agree, but can we find ways to disagree productively? That's the question explored in the Ask Big Questions November conversation guide.

Moving Forward Together

Moving Forward Together is a two-week series of election-focused conversations for people to come together and share hopes and concerns, to process grief and anxiety, and to relate and build understanding even across political differences. Watch the recorded, livestreamed Living Room Conversation on political peace building with Marianne Williamson, Grover Norquist, and noted guests across the political spectrum. The site also offers a series of conversation guides that cover "gentler" and "more challenging" conversations.

Teaching Tolerance

Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, provides free resources for K-12 teachers. Their articles on [Teaching the 2020 Election: What Will You Do On Wednesday?](#) and [Teaching the Election and Digital Literacy](#) offer great insights for parents and educators at all levels.

Share your thoughts: inclusivvt@vt.edu