

# DELIBERATIVE PEDAGOGY IN THE K-12 CLASSROOM

Considerations for Designing a Professional  
Development Workshop

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CENTER FOR  
PUBLIC DELIBERATION  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Key Summary of Findings

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PUBLIC DELIBERATION  
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## **About the Center**

The Colorado State University Center for Public Deliberation (CPD) serves as an impartial resource to the northern Colorado community. Working with students trained in small group facilitation, the CPD assists local government, schools, and community organizations by researching issues and developing useful background material, and then designing, facilitating, and reporting on innovative public events. The interpretations and conclusions contained in this publication have been produced by CPD associates without the input of partner organizations to maintain impartiality.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Democratic, public life is filled with complex social and political issues that deal with competing values and tensions.<sup>1</sup> Learning to communicate productively with those that have different beliefs is key to improving the future of democratic practices.<sup>2</sup> The classroom is an ideal space to teach young people the skills for complex issue discussion and rewire tendencies to avoid the uncomfortable feelings that arise with public disagreement, but teachers often feel unequipped to productively address controversy.<sup>3</sup>

Deliberation provides a model for classroom discourse that encourages teachers and students to talk about complex or contentious issues. Deliberation asks participants to acknowledge the value of diverse perspectives and discuss the tensions among these differences with openness and respect.<sup>4</sup> This process recognizes that no one person has all the answers while acknowledging the intricacy of the varied ways people experience these problems in their personal lives.<sup>5</sup> The research presented here offers a design for an initial professional development workshop intended to help educators understand the value of deliberative pedagogy and provide them with tools to begin using these practices for more productive, effective conversations about public issues in the classroom.

This workshop will:

- Integrate deliberative theory and practice to introduce educators to the value of deliberation.
- Provide tools for fostering an inclusive, productive space for classroom discussion.
- Allow educators to practice basic facilitation skills to ease the process.
- Provide ample time for educators to think about how to implement these techniques into their unique classrooms.

Each of these steps will help educators become more comfortable and confident engaging students in controversial discussions to improve civic capacities and public life.

# BACKGROUND

## K-12 Civic Education

Educators take on a difficult task when trying to teach young people how to engage in their communities and understand the democratic political system. The functional and historical aspects of government can be taught in a traditional classroom setting, but skill-based instruction is imperative for preparing students to realize their civic capacity.<sup>6</sup> Developing the skills and attitudes for citizenship require time and practice.

## Why Schools are Sites for Civic Education

Schools possess several characteristics that demonstrate their potential as an ideal space to learn best practices for civic life.<sup>7</sup>

### The School's Purpose for Producing Good Citizens

- Schools provide a safe environment to build the inclusive mindsets necessary for democracy, such as kindness, tolerance, and dialogue across difference.
- School is a practice in community interaction where discussion can stimulate critical thinking and argument analysis skills.

### Schools are a Multicultural Location

- Schools are a public space that can draw on community diversity to discuss curriculum in engaged, applicable ways.
- School diversity provides opportunities to learn about difference and practice civic skills.

## Civic Challenges in the Classroom

Although schools have the potential to act as ideal spaces for civic education, they also face unique challenges.

### Institutional & Curricular Constraints<sup>8</sup>

- Schools often lack the resources for innovation or improvement of civic education.
- Most states' civic requirements focus on factual knowledge and do not set standards for attaining the skills needed for citizenship.
- Lower-income areas tend to have fewer resources for engaged civic opportunities that allow students to connect with their communities through experiential learning projects.

### Individual Skill Challenges<sup>9</sup>

- Many educators do not feel prepared or comfortable discussing complex topics in the classroom. It can feel overwhelming to engage these conversations because of a fear they will get out of control, be ineffective, or unproductive.
- Discussing identity differences can feel uncomfortable, and teachers tend to have a harder time talking about contentious issues because these can feel highly personal and rife with tensions.
- Schools have a responsibility to embrace and teach all students, even those who may seem morally or civically deviant. This creates tension for teachers who must simultaneously create space for all voices and productively respond to speech that is offensive or problematic.

Though such conversations are often difficult, controversial issues inevitably come up and should be addressed in order to give young people the tools to effectively discuss contentious topics in their public and private lives. Education systems should better acknowledge the complex nature of civic education to reform and improve teaching methods. Deliberative pedagogy provides one solution.

## Deliberation Toward Improved Civic Education

Deliberation asks the public to engage in discussion and work through various choices and conflicts in order to reach better decisions.<sup>10</sup> It is a process that requires reason giving, mutual respect, and equal opportunity to participate.<sup>11</sup>

Deliberative participation offers a host of civic benefits, but young people are often excluded from deliberative opportunities.<sup>12</sup> Schools may provide space to offer these skills through the introduction of deliberative pedagogy.

### Deliberative Pedagogy

Deliberative pedagogy uses engaged, facilitated discussion methods to provide students with the skills for communicating across difference about complex or controversial issues.<sup>13</sup> This pedagogy functions as a means for enhancing the civic education of young people in two ways:

- To teach students skills for their future, such as reasonableness, tolerance, and respect.
- By providing classroom space for civic forums that allow students to participate in difficult but productive conversations.

### Goals & Skills for Students

Deliberation in schools can help prepare students for civic life by imparting improved civic attitudes, skills, and behaviors and fostering learning about complex curricular content. Such beneficial impacts include (See **Figure 1**):

- Increased capacity to understand different perspectives, communicate reasoning to others, and engage in inclusive, productive discussion toward decision making.<sup>14</sup>
- Recognition of individual agency and increased tolerance, fairness, engagement, and political literacy.<sup>15</sup>
- An ability to talk across cultural differences and use critical thinking skills for cooperative problem-solving.<sup>16</sup>
- Improved skills in research and source analysis, bias identification, question creation, and literacy and vocabulary competency.<sup>17</sup>
- Improved noncognitive skills, like interpersonal communication, empathy, openness, and listening.<sup>18</sup>
- Deeper awareness of one's role in democracy, fueled by discussing public problems in relation to curricular content.<sup>19</sup>

#### Individual skills to be gained through deliberative participation:

- Civic knowledge, attitudes, behaviors
- Perspective taking
- Mutual understanding & tolerance
- Increased empathy toward others

**FIGURE 1: DELIBERATIVE SKILLS FOR STUDENTS**



### Teacher Training Initiatives

In order to implement deliberative methods in the K-12 classroom, educators must first become comfortable with and motivated to use these techniques with their students. Every teacher has a unique teaching style and classroom management practice, and deliberative methods often ask teachers to shift these practices by focusing on skill development rather than knowledge retention.<sup>20</sup> Professional development should help educators understand the goals of conducting deliberation, namely, to impart democratic skills to their students.<sup>21</sup> For any educator who is not familiar or comfortable with deliberation, setting up a classroom, preparing students for the discussion, and equipping teachers with the knowledge and tools to effectively enact deliberative processes within a course takes significant training.

The remainder of this white paper focuses on compiling existing resources and tools for deliberative pedagogy to design a professional development workshop for K-12 teachers. Because this work cannot be fully accomplished through a single professional development intervention, the initial workshop design will function as an introduction to implementing deliberative discussion. This workshop will focus on basic facilitator tools and deliberative models to use in the classroom. Future initiatives would allow educators to practice and further develop these skills and link teachers to additional community resources.

“...the key ingredient for high-quality discussions of controversial issues in classrooms is the quality of teacher practice”.

-Diana Hess

# DESIGNING A DELIBERATIVE PEDAGOGY WORKSHOP

## Purpose & Outcomes

This workshop is an initial introduction for educators interested in using deliberative facilitation to conduct difficult conversations in the K-12 classroom. Deliberation encourages students to engage in productive discussions across difference on complex or contentious issues surrounding current or historical topics. It uses engaged, facilitated discussion to help students build skills in listening, mutual respect and understanding, critical thinking, and communication. Through deliberative discussion, students can develop their capacity for conversations across difference, information evaluation, and problem solving in their personal, professional, and civic lives. This workshop aims to equip teachers with the tools necessary for implementing such discussions in their classrooms and anticipates the following outcomes:

- Introduce educators to deliberative pedagogy and its value for humanities classes.
- Provide educators with basic tools for implementing deliberative pedagogy.
- Practice classroom deliberation, including basic facilitator moves.
- Allow time for individual and group brainstorming to adapt the process to unique classroom settings and content.
- Address classroom complexities, including common concerns and barriers to implementation, especially in dealing with diversity and controversy.

## Resources

At the event, participants will be given a workbook that contains materials and resources related to the training. These resources will additionally be made available electronically for easy access. These resources can serve as both informational material for teachers and material suitable for use in the middle or high school setting. Materials include:

- Handouts introducing deliberation and facilitation.
- Lesson plans designed to practice and implement deliberative discussion.
- Example discussion guides appropriate for use in class discussion.



## Full Day Workshop Agenda

<b>Section</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<i>Welcome, preview, &amp; goals</i>	Participants welcomed. Presentations about the purpose of the workshop and the agenda.
	<i>Small group discussion: introductions</i>	Participants will introduce themselves to the other people at the table that they will be working with.
	<i>Introduction to deliberation</i>	Participants will be introduced to deliberation as a unique tool for the classroom, how it is different from other models, and how values play a key role in discussing complex issues.
	<i>Values sorting activity</i>	Participants prioritize value cards individually and then discuss their reasoning and experiences as a group.
<b>Creating space for deliberation</b>	<i>Creating equitable discussions</i>	Participants will consider different ways of communicating, allowing experience as expertise in discussion, and giving space for silence to encourage all students to participate.
	<i>Developing community guidelines</i>	Participants will be introduced to some common expectations for deliberative discussion. They will discuss what makes them feel included or excluded and how they can incorporate this practice in their classroom.
	<i>Focus on listening</i>	Participants will learn about the role of listening first in deliberative conversations, how to make explicit listening goals, and use tools to foster listening and understanding.
	<b>Basics of facilitation</b>	<i>5 facilitator responsibilities</i>
<i>Basic facilitator moves</i>		Participants will be introduced to facilitator moves, the purpose of each, and some examples of using these in practice.
<i>Asking good questions</i>		Participants will work in groups to craft questions that reflect each type of facilitator move related to a topic of their choice.
<i>Reframing</i>		Participants will be introduced to the value of reframing complex or contentious statements. They will use an activity to practice in small groups.
<b>LUNCH</b>		Participants will be asked to identify one issue that they have had difficulty discussing in class. After some reflection or discussion, they will submit one topic and restructure groups after lunch based on these interests. Participants can join with someone else's topic or create/state your own.

**Practice & reflection**

*Preparing for practice facilitation*

Participants will move to tables based on the topics they chose over lunch. They will review provided materials about this topic and create some potential questions.

*Reflection as an educational tool*

Participants will be explained the value of reflection practices around the conversation and the experience.

*Practice facilitation & reflection*

Each participant in the small group will take a turn practicing as the facilitator. Other participants are encouraged to engage in ways that seem realistic to the classroom environment and student behavior. After each round, participants will reflect on their experience as facilitators and participants in the conversation.

*Resources for discussion guides, lesson plans, and additional tips*

Participants will be more formally introduced to the additional online resources they can access to help in the classroom, including National Issues Forum, Living Room Conversation, and All Sides for Schools.

**Wrap up & questions**

*Dealing with conflict*

Participants will be reminded of some key practices for dealing with controversial issues in the classroom to defuse uncomfortable feelings. These include focusing on experience, deferring fact questions, identify and clarify misunderstanding, acknowledge value differences, and table outside issues.

*Addressing barriers and concerns*

Participants will discuss in their small groups what barriers and concerns still exist. The large group will discuss key themes and brainstorm how to overcome these.

*Reflections and questions*

Participants will discuss in the small and large group what was most useful from the workshop, any continuing questions, and needs for support.

*Survey*

Participants will be asked to complete a survey evaluating the workshop.

# KEY DESIGN DETAILS

## Introduction to Deliberative Theory & Practice

After introducing the overarching purpose of the workshop and who is in the room, organizers will explain some key tenants of what makes deliberative pedagogy different from other communication models and some practices to foster this method in the classroom.

### Differences from Socratic Seminar & Debate

While the open-ended nature of Socratic seminar is in line with deliberative dialogue, this process generally asks students to question the content and provide good reasoning for their own thoughts and perspectives.<sup>22</sup> Deliberation asks students to go one step further to consider others' perspectives. Another important difference relates to equity. Without special care, Socratic seminars can fall short in giving equitable speaking and listening privilege to all students. Those who are more likely to speak up with confidence in or command of the topic and who use traditionally rational arguments tend to dominate or lead the conversation.<sup>23</sup>

Like the Socratic Seminar, debate has significant value for teaching about information gathering, valid argument formation, and clarifying positions and policy options.<sup>24</sup> However, the adversarial nature of debate can reinforce tendencies to manipulate information in order to win.<sup>25</sup> This is not to say debate should be foregone, rather it may hold a later place in the classroom learning process for improving discussion and decision making around complex issues—after considering a wide array of perspectives and experiences.

**Table 1** provides educators with the key values of each model and provides a cheat sheet to think about which method to use based on the classroom learning goals.

**TABLE 1: DIFFERENCES AMONG TEACHING MODELS**

Socratic Seminar	Deliberation	Debate
Question	Choose	Contest
Present	Weigh	Compete
Discuss	Decide	Argue
Rationalize perspective	Make decisions	Promote opinion
Understand	Seek overlap	Seek majority
Seek understanding	Seek wisdom/judgment	Persuade
Dig in	Framed to make choices	Dig in
Loosely structured	Variable structure	Tightly structured

Express	Listen	Express
Usually slow	Usually slow	Usually fast
Clarifies	Clarifies	Clarifies
Complex reasoning	Complementary	Majoritarian
Traditional reasoning	Collaborative	Adversarial

### Value Prioritization & Wicked Problems

Wicked problems deal with competing values and priorities that impact communities in complex ways.<sup>26</sup> Conflict around wicked problems often arises, not from the problem or individual value, but competing prioritization of values.<sup>27</sup> A wicked problems mindset acknowledges these challenges to encourage open-mindedness toward collaborative understanding and perspective taking.<sup>28</sup> In a deliberative environment, this means focusing on listening and learning rather than trying to win the argument. This process can teach students to rely on relevant information when engaging in decision making while also acknowledging the reasons that individuals hold differing perspectives.

The set of common values in this chart can be used in an exercise to understand the challenges of dealing with the tension among competing values. At the workshop, educators will rank these values and then discuss a variety of questions about the experience including, “why did you prioritize your highest values?” and “what is a reason someone might rank one of your lowest values at the top?” Participants will gain a deeper understanding of how values come into tension and why people might reach different decisions based on the ways they prioritize these values. This exercise can be implemented in the classroom to help students understand the same concepts and begin to foster a wicked problems mindset. See the full lesson plan in **Appendix A**.

<b>Security</b>	<b>Diversity</b>	<b>Justice</b>
<b>Community</b>	<b>Equality</b>	<b>Freedom</b>
<b>Individual Responsibility</b>	<b>Consistency/ Tradition</b>	<b>Progress/ Innovation</b>

### Setting up the Classroom Environment

Deliberation in the classroom should foster an inclusive environment that creates space for all students to share their values, beliefs, and perspectives.<sup>29</sup> The workshop will provide information about creating more inclusive, productive discussion and provide tools for building these practices among students.

### Investing in Inclusion

Students and teachers must put in effort to encourage an inclusive mentality in the classroom. Discussions of complex issues can move beyond traditional, rational argument to use emotional speech and diverse modes of expression.<sup>30</sup> The more students feel that their voice matters, the more they may become comfortable sharing, enhancing the learning potential for the group.

Educators will be introduced to two practices that can help to foster this inclusive norm: *letting the silence hang* and *experience as expertise*.

### Letting the Silence Hang

*Letting the silence hang* provides time for individual thought and reflection by acknowledging that sometimes people need space to gather their thoughts before contributing to the conversation. Educators can use this concept in two ways:

- Asking all students to remain silent prior to beginning the conversation.
- Waiting to ask additional questions or moving on when no one is talking.

A helpful acronym for students is W.A.I.T, which asks students who tend to speak often to reflect on whether they are leaving space for others and asks students who are more hesitant to share their perspectives.

**W.A.I.T**  
"WHY AM I TALKING?"  
OR  
"WHY AREN'T I TALKING?"

### Experience as Expertise

Students are often focused on providing the "right" answer in school, but using *experience as expertise* opens the space to all types of information and ways of speaking to acknowledge the complexity of many public issues. This focuses the conversation beyond factual knowledge to use lived experience to create shared understanding.<sup>31</sup> This can help students better understand course content by relating content to personal experience and help them think about how and why their classmates might hold different perspectives, values, and priorities.

### Community Guidelines

Individual feelings and perspectives can lead to passion and disagreement; navigating this requires a design that allows the group to keep the conversation productive.<sup>32</sup> Community guidelines act as expectations for participants during a discussion. Implementing community guidelines can help maintain a respectful environment by making behavior standards clear and important for the group.<sup>33</sup> Teachers and students can rely on this pre-established protocol when conflict becomes less productive or inclusive of all participants.<sup>34</sup>

Guidelines can be created beforehand, but it can also be beneficial to do so as a collective. This allows students more agency and deepens their commitment to the standards agreed upon by the class. Developing community guidelines can help students acknowledge individual differences in the ways that they engage in conversation while remaining ready to listen, discuss, and take responsibility for one's role in the process.<sup>35</sup> There is a plethora of possible guidelines; some suggestions are provided below that draw on the work of deliberative organizations that use this practice.

Center for Public Deliberation Ground Rules	
Be honest and respectful	Listen to understand
Be brief so everyone has an opportunity to participate	It's okay to disagree, but do so with curiosity, not hostility

National Issues Forum Ground Rules	
Everyone is encouraged to participate	The discussion will focus on the choices and consider all major choices/positions
No one or two individuals dominate	An atmosphere for discussion and analysis of the alternatives should be maintained
Participants should speak to one another, not just to the moderator	Voices not present should be considered and introduced by both the moderator and participants
Listening is as important as speaking	

Living Room/All Sides Conversation Agreement	
Be curious, open to learning, and listen to understand	Note any common ground as well as any differences
Show respect and suspend judgement	Be purposeful and to the point
Be authentic and welcome that from others	Own and guide the conversation

## Focus on Listening

An emphasis on listening can foster inclusion because it asks participants to withhold judgement and engage with an open mind in ways that builds trust.<sup>36</sup> Listening practices can help create a foundation of respect to allow spaces of co-learning. However, listening is not simple; it is a choice, and often both participants and facilitators can fail to listen in one or more ways.<sup>37</sup>

### What are our goals? Using the Listening Styles Profile

Teachers can discuss specific objectives for the conversation to help mitigate listening challenges. This practice acknowledges that no one listens the same in all situations, allowing for different types of listening that reflect the purpose of the conversation.<sup>38</sup> The Listening Styles Profile uses common conversational goals to think about four distinct types of listening that can accompany varying contexts.<sup>39</sup> **Figure 2** provides an overview of the profile and goals of each listening style that may be useful for fostering listening goals in the classroom.

### Active & Dialogic Listening Skills

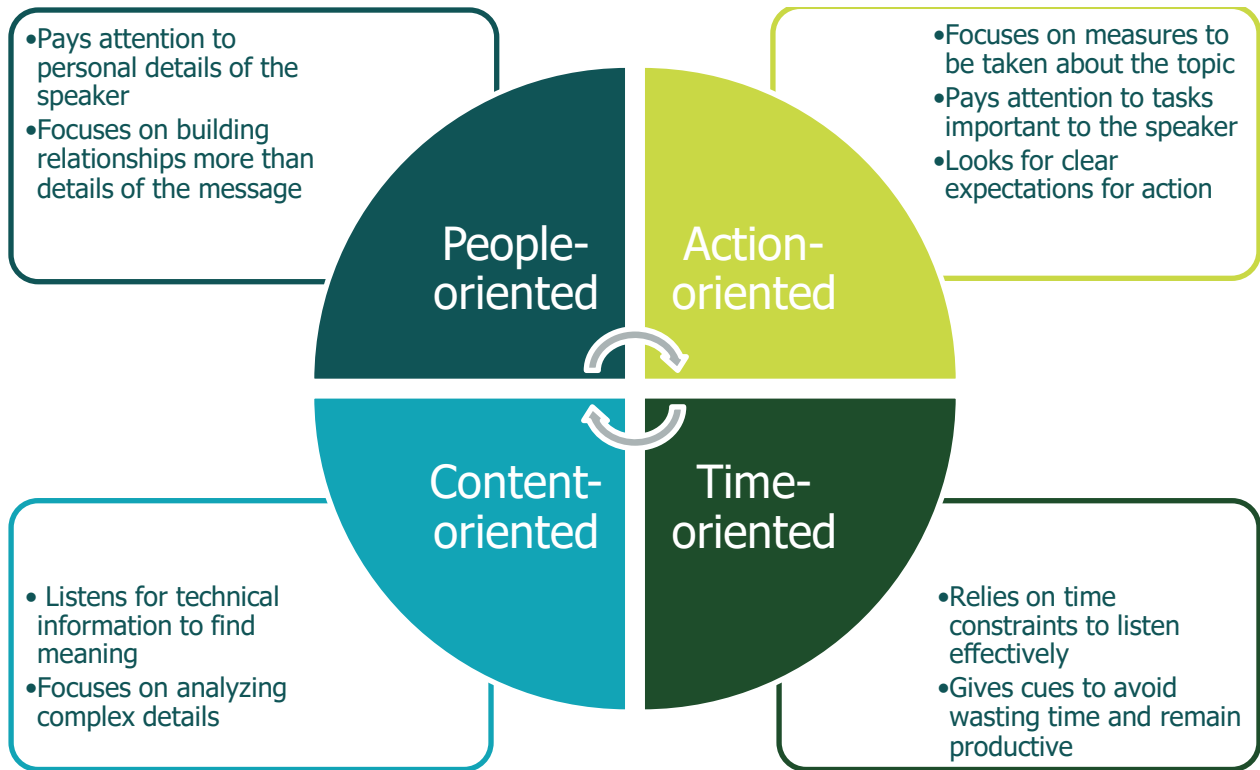
Active and dialogic listening are two additional listening styles that can encourage certain behaviors among participants. The goal of active listening is to acknowledge, understand, and interpret the meaning of another's statement to further the discussion.<sup>40</sup> Dialogic listening emphasizes the co-creation of knowledge to move from understanding the perspectives of others to transforming ways of thinking about the issue.<sup>41</sup>

Since listening is often emphasized less than speaking practices, additional reflection may help build these skills and center listening in knowledge creation.<sup>42</sup> These listening styles can provide a vocabulary to reflect upon listening practices during a conversation and help students build

the listening skills necessary for discussion across difference. **Table 2** provides some common active listening practices.

**Table 3** contains some example reflection questions to build these skills among students.

**FIGURE 2: LISTENING STYLES PROFILE**



**Consider:** *What are the goals of this conversation? What listening styles are important to helping us reach these goals as a group? How will we hold each other to these standards?*

**TABLE 2: ACTIVE LISTENING PRACTICES**

Behavior	Purpose	Tips	Examples
<b>Encouraging</b>	Conveys interest Encourages the person to keep talking	Don't agree or disagree Use neutral words Face the speaker and nod as they speak Ask probing questions	"Can you tell me more?" "And then what happened?"
<b>Clarifying</b>	Ensures understanding Avoids confusion Obtains additional information	Ask questions Restate understanding Ask if interpretation is on track	"When did this happen?" "By impacts you mean...?"

<b>Restating or Paraphrasing</b>	Shows you are listening and understanding what is being said Check meaning and interpretation of message	Restate basic ideas on your understanding of what was said in your own words	"So, you would like to see _____. Is that right?" "You thought that this action was required at this time?"
<b>Reflecting</b>	Diffuses difficult situations Shows understanding of feelings and emotions Helps the speaker evaluate their feelings after hearing them reflected by someone else	Reflect the speaker's basic feelings Listen to the tone of your voice Watch body language Guess their feelings and reflect them back	"This has been frustrating to you." "You sound disappointed..." I hear anger in your voice..."

**TABLE 3: LISTENING REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

### Individual Reflection Questions

1. Spend a few minutes reflecting on your own listening practices during the discussion. How did you listen to others and yourself?
2. How did you perceive your classmates' listening during the discussion? Any examples of particularly useful or inhibiting listening practices?
3. Write 2-3 key take-aways you have from the discussion. Specific to your understanding of the topic or listening practices more broadly.

### Group Reflection Questions

1. Briefly share with the group how you perceived your own and others' listening practices during the discussion. Allow each group member to share.
2. Discuss similarities and differences between each person's reflection on listening. Are there any beneficial additions to our understanding of listening?
3. Spend the remaining time discussing your key take-aways from the discussion. Compare and contrast the ways your group understood the discussion and listening process. How does this reflect different listening practices?

## The Basics of Facilitation

The facilitator plays an important role in fostering the deliberative environment by ensuring the group achieves their conversational goals while remaining inclusive and following the community guidelines.<sup>43</sup> The facilitator guides the conversation by listening and asking questions that set a balanced tone and aim to achieve productive outcomes. In the classroom setting, both educators and students can act as facilitators.

### Role of the Facilitator

The facilitator role can shift based on the need for the process to foster understanding across difference or help prioritize options and make decisions.<sup>44</sup> Facilitation can vary among levels of



passive, moderate, and active engagement and should reflect the extent to which the group can achieve these goals with or without facilitator interventions.

**Table 4** includes the five essential responsibilities for facilitators in a classroom environment.

**TABLE 4: KEY FACILITATOR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM**

Facilitator Responsibility	What it means...
<p><b>Remains impartial about the subject of the forum and allows participants to own the process as much as possible.</b></p>	<p>Avoid expressing your own opinion or evaluating participant comments based on your perspective. However, moderators are not “neutral” or disengaged, and should be passionate about democracy and the process. Allow participants to direct the conversation, as they will then take more ownership of its results. They need to feel heard and in control. Ideally, the group deliberates, and the facilitator is only necessary to keep time.</p>
<p><b>Keeps the group on track and encourages everyone to join in the conversation and ensures no one dominates.</b></p>	<p>Attend to both task and relationship dimensions of the group. Work with participants so people do not get frustrated with procedural issues, seeking a balance between having too much/too little structure to the conversation. Facilitators should be aware of who has spoken and who has not, assure that all voices get heard if possible, and no voices dominate the discussion.</p>
<p><b>Models and encourages democratic attitudes and skills.</b></p>	<p>By exhibiting strong listening skills and asking good questions, facilitators can model behaviors they are hoping participants will develop. This includes maintaining a safe and respectful environment and keeping the floor open to all perspectives and ideas.</p>
<p><b>Does not take on an “expert” role and seeks a productive balance between facts being irrelevant and facts being too much focus.</b></p>	<p>Your role is not to teach the participants about the issue. Facilitators need to think like non-experts. If jargon is used, ask for clarification as a service to less informed participants. One of the main tensions within deliberative work is between experts/data being too much or too little of the focus, and facilitators play a key role in working to help negotiate that tension.</p>
<p><b>Helps participants develop mutual understanding and consider a broad range of views, particularly the drawbacks of their perspective and the benefits of opposing views.</b></p>	<p><i>Helps identify values and underlining interests that motivate perspectives.</i> Participants’ values, motives, and underlying interests—their reasoning—are just as important as positions and opinions. Sometimes people with different opinions share the same motive or value, and that similarity can form the basis for common ground. Since participants would rarely explicitly cite values, the facilitator can play a key role in making the implicit values more explicit. Facilitators ask thoughtful questions to surface costs/consequences and plays devil’s advocate as necessary to serve as a pathway for the underrepresented opinions and perspectives.</p> <p><i>Helps identify and work through tensions within and between perspectives.</i> At the center of deliberative processes is the need to negotiate tensions and paradoxes that lie at the heart of wicked problems.</p>

## Basic Facilitator Moves

A key role of the facilitator is in creating and asking questions that foster transformative space for discussion.<sup>45</sup> Asking good questions can help build a sense of curiosity and encourage perspective taking.<sup>46</sup> While there is no set formula for question development, commonly practiced question types can help develop the conversation further, including initial, probing, reaction, paraphrasing and reframing, and tough choices questions. **Table 5** explains the purpose of each of these types of questions, including some examples of each. **Appendix B** provides a list of additional “back pocket” questions that can be useful in a variety of situations.

**TABLE 5: FACILITATION QUESTIONS, PURPOSES, AND EXAMPLES**

Question Type	Purpose	Examples
<b><i>Initial</i></b>	These questions help to open up the conversation. They will tend to remain broad and allow space for all voices to get comfortable engaging in the conversation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is this topic important to you personally?</li> <li>• What brought you to the discussion today?</li> <li>• What are some initial thoughts about this issue?</li> </ul>
<b><i>Probing</i></b>	These questions foster curiosity and help an individual further explain their statement or perspective to enhance clarity of the value of this perspective for the group and the topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you tell us a bit more?</li> <li>• For example?</li> <li>• How would this be done?</li> <li>• What can we learn from this example?</li> <li>• Why is this important to you?</li> <li>• Yes? And?</li> <li>• Go on...</li> </ul>
<b><i>Reaction</i></b>	This helps open up the conversation to the rest of the group to allow for different perspectives and find underlying agreement and/or tensions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do others think?</li> <li>• Does anyone agree?</li> <li>• What are we missing?</li> <li>• Imagine the perspective of _____.</li> <li>• Why might someone disagree?</li> </ul>
<b><i>Paraphrasing &amp; Reframing</i></b>	These statements and questions help to identify underlying values and provide deeper understanding of complex statements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It sounds like you are valuing _____, is that correct?</li> <li>• What values are most important to this perspective?</li> <li>• What solutions might better address this value?</li> </ul>
<b><i>Tough choices</i></b>	These questions ask participants to recognize the tensions and trade-offs in decision making by weighing pertinent values and identifying priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the impacts of this decision?</li> <li>• Which perspectives/peoples are most impacted by these choices?</li> <li>• What tensions exist with choosing one path over another?</li> <li>• What are we willing to give up?</li> </ul>

## Creating Good Questions

Two resources that may help make facilitation more practical for the classroom and the instructor are a question creation worksheet (**Appendix C**) and a reframing practice exercise (**Appendix D**). The worksheet can help identify values related to a topic, conflict among values, benefits and tradeoffs of varying perspectives, and places for common ground. Teachers can use this worksheet to create questions that dig deeper into the complexity of the problem.

The reframing exercise is a great tool to help facilitators practice skills for validating complex or problematic statements that students might say, while developing questions to move the conversation forward productively. This exercise explains why passionate discussion is valuable and recognizes the challenges of responding to these statements. The group then works to reframe a complex statement, identifying underlying values and working to create a question that opens up the conversation.

## Providing Practice & Sustaining Support

Educators require additional time and support to effectively implement new teaching tools. The final segment will provide space for improving comfort with these practices to enhance the likelihood that teachers use them. In addition, there will be time to discuss educators' continuing needs and concerns, address additional barriers, and brainstorm potential support that might help educators implement these methods in their classroom.

## Practice & Reflection

Educators do not often have time during their regular lesson planning and school day to find ways of incorporating new methods into the classroom.<sup>47</sup> Incorporating reflection is imperative to developing new ways of thinking, understanding, and doing.<sup>48</sup> Practice and reflection function to build deliberative skills and to enhance learning. In order to feel more comfortable and confident leading these discussions effectively, teachers need time using these resources in a simulated deliberative conversation that they might have in their classrooms.

The final activity of the workshop will allow them to practice facilitation skills while adapting materials to the course content that educators teach. Participants will be asked to either suggest a discussion topic or join another group deliberation about a topic. Educators will be asked to focus on the content they teach that might be well suited for deliberation. After participants reorganize based on the topics chosen, each group member will take turns acting as the facilitator and creating good questions to guide the conversation.

## Additional Resources

To support this process, teachers will be introduced to organizations that have deliberation models. These provide issue-specific materials that teachers can access when discussing one of these topics. Below is a brief explanation of each organization and links to their materials. During the practice facilitation, participants will have the opportunity to use these resources.

## ALL SIDES FOR SCHOOLS

<a href="#">Classroom activities</a>	<a href="#">Lesson plans</a>
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All Sides for Schools provides guides with question prompts that focus on experience and understanding. The materials are tailored for the classroom, with lesson plans and other tools made specifically for educators.<sup>49</sup>

<a href="#">Topics/issue guides</a>	<a href="#">Topic selection guidelines</a>
<a href="#">"Mismatch" program</a>	

**NATIONAL ISSUES FORUM (NIF)**

<a href="#">Issue Guides</a>
<a href="#">Topic introduction videos</a>
<a href="#">Additional student worksheets</a>

National Issues Forum Institute creates guides that provide information about public issues or problems and then detail three or four broad approaches for addressing the problem.<sup>50</sup>

**LIVING ROOM CONVERSATION**

Living Room Conversations focuses on bridging divides and speaking from experience; their issue guides provide a timeline for a discussion with topic specific questions for the group.<sup>51</sup>

<a href="#">Conversation topics</a>
<a href="#">Conversation agreement</a>
<a href="#">Conversation tip sheet</a>

**Example Reflection Worksheet**

After each round of discussion, the group will use a reflection exercise to think about the moves made by the facilitator to determine a variety of best practices and places for improvement.

**Table 6** provides example reflection questions that are specific to classroom implementation. The practice and reflection time work two-fold to enhance educator skills for the classroom and provide additional tools to use when implementing these methods with their students.

**TABLE 6: SAMPLE DELIBERATIVE REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

### Group Reflection Questions

1. Now that we have deliberated, are there ideas or viewpoints you hadn't considered before? Can we identify any common ground?
2. Can you identify any tensions that came up during the forum? What questions remain? What work do we still need to do?
3. What questions remain? What work do we still need to do?
4. Are there other people or groups you would like to hear from, now that you've begun to weigh some of options before us?
5. How has what you heard affected your thinking? What could you do? What could the community do? About what we want our elected officials to do?
6. How did the community guidelines/ground rules influence the conversation? What should we add to our guidelines/rules?

### Individual Reflection Questions

1. What are the three most important points you learned today?
2. What important questions remain unanswered for you?
3. What did you learn specifically from what someone else said that you would not have thought of on your own?
4. At what moment were you most engaged as a learner?
5. At what moment were you most distanced as a learner?
6. What action that anyone in the room took did you find most affirming or helpful?
7. What action that anyone in the room took did you find most puzzling or confusing?
8. What surprised you most?

### Addressing Questions & Concerns

Educators face a plethora of challenges in having discussions about political and controversial issues in the classroom, including a lack of time and resources, social and institutional pressures, burnout, and confidence in their abilities.<sup>52</sup> Deliberative pedagogy provides tools for improving classroom discussion, but it is not a simple or straightforward practice. Recognizing barriers and allowing space for teachers to discuss how they might further overcome them can improve the likelihood that they implement and sustain deliberative practices in the classroom.

The final portion of the workshop will focus on responding to participants' questions and concerns to acknowledge potential barriers educators still anticipate and provide suggestions for continuing support. The organizers will reiterate some key practices for dealing with conflict and then move to small group discussions about what additional barriers or concerns remain. This will be followed by a large group discussion about the workshop and what additional resources might be helpful. Following the discussion, a feedback survey (**Appendix E**) on the workshop will be distributed asking educators to reflect on what they learned and to help identify ways to improve future engagements and support educators in their classroom practices.

## Why was this important?

Democratic public life relies on problem solving and decision making across varied perspectives. Young people deserve to be better equipped with the communication skills necessary for improving the current state of polarization and political inefficacy in the United States.<sup>53</sup> The intention of designing this workshop is to provide an introduction to essential practices from deliberative pedagogy for having complex or contentious conversations in the classroom.

Deliberation asks participants to move through conversational stages toward improving decision making practices.<sup>54</sup> Each stage, while connected to one another, requires different skills and forms of communication. First, participants must acknowledge a wide and diverse variety of perspectives to gain a more nuanced understanding of the topic. Next, the conversation should allow space to struggle with the tensions among these varying perspectives. Then, participants can start to consider the best solutions to make a decision about the issue. One mechanism for understanding this process, is the “What? So What? Now What?” model.<sup>55</sup> “What” information and perspectives are important to discuss to ensure that the space remains inclusive of diverse experiences. “So What” makes these various perspectives important and how can the participants better understand the issue by discussing their relevance. Then, “Now What” should be done after careful consideration of diverse perspectives.

This is a complex process, one that cannot be thoroughly covered in an initial workshop. This introductory training for educators focuses first on providing tools for inclusive, productive discussion. Future trainings should include a greater focus on recognizing the shift from conversation about the issue to skills for decision making as well. Both the communication skills for inclusive discussion and the methods for decision making that deliberation can provide are important to improving democratic public life. However, the decision making cannot function without the tough, thorough discussion. Therefore, educators should be equipped with tools for improving the productivity and quality of these types of deliberative conversations.

This type of discussion, ripe with controversy, is happening in the lives of people across the United States and the global community, including among young people.<sup>56</sup> Middle and high school students are particularly well situated to learn the civic skills for communicating about these issues.<sup>57</sup> This initiative should improve students’ preparedness for public life by enhancing skills for communicating productively and effectively across difference. This is the true impact of this work, enhancing civic capacities to foster better democratic practices for a better future.

# APPENDIX A

## Values Exercise Lesson Plan

**Lecture:** Wicked problems are complex social and political issues that inherently involve competing underlying value that are in tension and require tough choices. This exercise will help us understand and talk about values, something many people often struggle. Many assume values are personal, therefore not the proper subject for discussion. But if societal problems contain these values, we *have* to learn to talk about them.

### The 5 Minute Exercise

- From a basic list of values, ask people to react to them individually. "Who here prefers justice to injustice? Security over always being fearful? Etc."
  - This helps establish basic agreement. What makes us different is not necessarily which values we hold, but how we rank them, apply/define them, and when they are in competition with each other, which ones dominate?
- Use either wireless clickers or a phone app like <https://www.polleverywhere.com/> or <https://kahoot.com/schools-u/> to have people pick their top value from the list, and then their bottom value ("what are you most willing to give up?").
  - Point out that there are people in the room that their top value was someone else's bottom value. Does that mean they are enemies? Polarized?
  - No, we already established everyone holds the each value high individually.
- Ask if the rankings matter? Do we ever have to choose between these values? Does pursuing one lead to another being slighted? Ask for examples, common tensions include:
  - Freedom v. Equality (especially in economic terms, rich tend to get richer within a capitalist economy)
  - Our Freedom v. Freedom of Future generations (tension for environmental issues)
  - Freedom v. Security (key tension with national security, privacy, travel, etc.)
  - Justice is a tension within itself (justice as the ideal between too much and too little credit or punishment)
- Democracy is full of these inherent tensions, and ideally communities are involved in a constant process of engaging the tensions and working through them. Unfortunately, most public discourse does not identify or engage such tensions. Most public discourse highlights one particularly value, and using deductive logic, makes the argument for actions that support that value (while inherently implying that those that oppose the action must also oppose that value).
  - This is what causes basic polarization and frustration. By simply applying a deliberative/wicked problem frame and putting focus on the tensions, can go a long way to reframing the issue.

<b>Security</b>	<b>Diversity</b>	<b>Justice</b>
<b>Community</b>	<b>Equality</b>	<b>Freedom</b>
<b>Individual Responsibility</b>	<b>Consistency/ Tradition</b>	<b>Progress/ Innovation</b>

## Longer versions (card exercise)

1. Each participant has their own set of cards. Ask them to prioritize their list top to bottom on the table.
2. Have them get into pairs or groups of 3 to compare their rankings and talk through differences.
3. Do a full group, or table facilitated, report out, allowing people to explain their choices. Potential discussion questions:

- a. What did you have at the top? Why?
- b. What did you put at the bottom? Why?
  - i. Values that are ranked low could be because that value/need is basically taken for granted, like security.
- c. What tensions do you see between these values? Do any of your top 3 clash?
- d. Did you rank them based on overall general abstract importance, or based on which need to be more of a current focus?
- e. Based on your conversation, did you want to move any value up or down your ranking? Why?
- f. Can you imagine a situation where your top value dominates too much? Can you have too much of it?
- g. Can you make the case for the importance of your bottom value?

Security	Diversity	Justice
Community	Equality	Freedom
Individual Responsibility	Consistency/ Tradition	Progress/ Innovation

## Additional Activities

- 1. Adding convenience:** You can either include or add after the initial conversation a card labeled "convenience." Abstractly, convenience will likely be very low on the ranked list of values, but you can then challenge people to realize that when we make everyday decisions, convenience is often much more powerful than many other values we say we support. Rankings may be very different when done as an abstract exercise or when applied to a specific "real-life" situation.
- 2. Adding additional values:** You can do the same exercise and leave one card blank to allow people to add any additional value on their own. Or alternatively ask people toward the end of the process what key values were missing.
- 3. Defining values:** Pick a value and ask people to write down their definition. In most cases, you will get different definitions from different people. For example, justice to progressives is often tied to equality and helping the underprivileged, whereas justice for conservatives is more tied to justifying inequalities or hierarchy because people that work hard deserve more than those that don't.



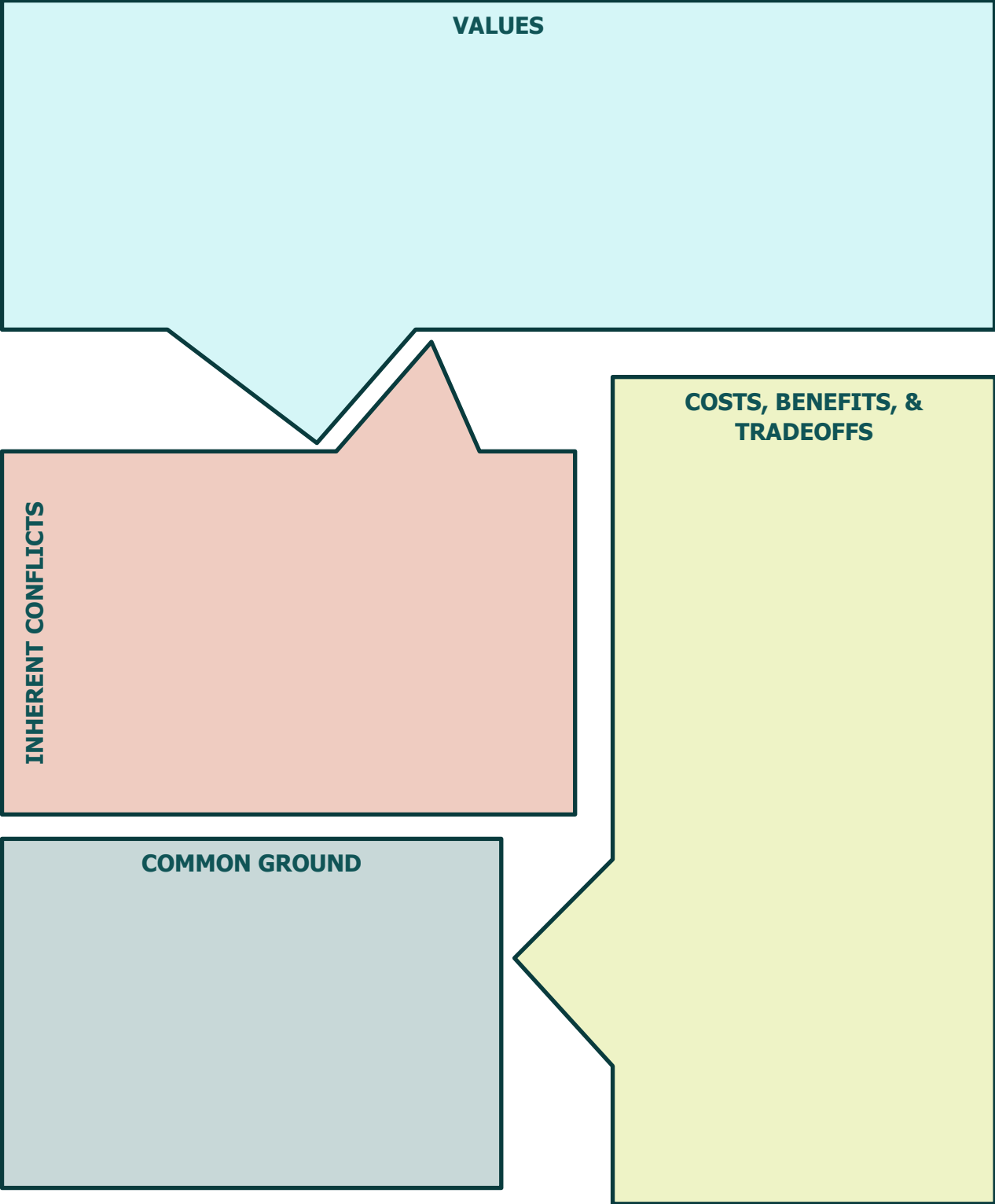
# APPENDIX B

## List of “Back Pocket” Facilitation Questions

- It sounds like you might be frustrated by this approach, what might be some alternatives?
- I’m hearing a lot of agreement; how might someone make a case against this perspective?
- I understand you do not like that position, but what do you think people who favor it care about?
- What is interesting or helpful about this perspective? What is difficult?
- How may your ideas affect other people?
- Can someone suggest areas that we seem to have in common?
- What values are in tension? What is underlying these frustrations?
- What perspectives don’t seem to be represented in the group? What might those people add if they were here?
- If we made these choices, what impacts, positive and negative, would there be in your life? What about in the lives of others?
- Can anyone envision how their life would change if this approach become policy?
- How might your concerns differ if you were poor/wealthy?
- How does this issue impact our local community?

# APPENDIX C

## Creating Good Questions Worksheet



# APPENDIX D

## Reframing Practice Exercise

**Lecture:** Another important facilitator skill is the ability to respond to passionate statements by reframing them.

1. Sometimes people are passionate about the issue. That's a good thing. We want people to be passionate about the issues that affect them. It's okay to be emotional about things that have real consequences. But sometimes when people are passionate, they aren't delicate with their language. They might misrepresent people that disagree with them, or generalize about things that are really nuanced, or take extreme positions. Our job is to uncover the reasons that they are passionate and turn their argument into a point of conversation by reframing their statements.
2. Reframing is a form of paraphrasing that takes a heated statement and turns it into a question for the wider group. When we reframe, we can validate someone's emotions and create space for discussion. Reframing encourages us to think about why someone cares about an issue and to identify their underlying goals or concerns. In reframing, we paraphrase their comment, focusing on why they care about the issue, and then turn that underlying value, concern, or interest into a question for the whole group.

**Discussion:** As a large group, work to reframe these statements.

***A few tips before you get started:***

- a. Remember that people are allowed to feel passionate and emotional. Emotion helps us understand why people care about an issue and reveals the impact issues have on people's lives.
- b. Dig through the negative to find what the person DOES want. Buried in their statements is something even their "opponent" can probably support in some way (what's the interest behind their position). The more you know about the issues, the more easily you can do this, but you don't need to be an expert. Listen for what's important to people.

***Statement 1:*** I don't like this option at all. I think people who drink and drive need to be held accountable. I know some people are addicted to alcohol, but they should be punished when they break the law.

- c. Values/interests from statement: Justice; Accountability; Public Safety; Protecting people and community members
- d. Values/interests to bring into the conversation: Providing help to those with addictions; Balancing rehabilitation and accountability

***Statement 2:*** We try to throw medicine at everything. Most people with mental health issues could resolve their problems if they just changed their diet and exercise. I get so frustrated when I hear about moms putting their five-year olds on adderall. Most of them just need less sugar in their lives.

- e. Values/interests from statement: Fear of overmedication or potential side effects; Allowing people to find the treatment that meets their needs; Desire to find a solution; Physical health
- f. Values/interests to bring into the conversation: Providing medicine for those who need it; Cultural acceptance of mental health treatment

**Note to the group before moving on:** Deliberation welcomes passion, but we shouldn't ignore when people denigrate people different from themselves. It's okay to stop the conversation and reset so that you can create a sense of belonging among all community members. In these instances, it can be helpful to validate the speaker's emotions, refer back to the ground rules, and then return to the underlying concern.

- g. Ex: I appreciate your passion about this issue. These things matter to us and can have real consequences. But I want to remind everyone that we should be tough on the issue and not on the people. Let's try to use language that doesn't disrespect people who are different from us. But I do want to discuss some issues you just raised. It sounds like you're concerned about...

### **Activity Part 1:**

1. Pass out the Reframing Worksheet to each table.
2. In their small groups, educators will work through the worksheet. For each statement, one member will read the statement and the others will work together to reframe it, with input from the speaker.
3. Switch roles and repeat until you have reframed all statements.

### **Debrief:**

1. Walk through each statement and ask how different groups reframed it.
2. Highlight the values and interests of the speaker.

### **Activity Part 2:**

1. Reframing is difficult work, and it's even more difficult when we can't read the statements in front of us. This next activity will ask us to reframe in a more natural environment, by hearing the statement out loud rather than reading it together on a page.
2. Pass out the 1/4 sheets. Each teacher should get one sheet, everyone in the small group should have a different statement.
3. The person with Statement 1 will read the statement to the group. The other participants will work together to reframe the statement and create a question to open the conversation up to the group.
4. Repeat until you have completed all statements (approximately 15-20 minutes).

### **Debrief:**

1. Walk through each statement and ask how different groups reframed it.
2. Highlight the values and interests of the speaker.

### Group Worksheet Statements

1. People just keep moving here. Fort Collins used to be such a great place and now it's just overrun. We should close the gates already! Let them live in Greeley! I don't even recognize most of the people I see around town anymore.
2. Those city folks have no clue what it's like to farm. They just keep telling us we're doing it wrong. That we shouldn't use fertilizers, that we're using too much water. I'm feeding America! I'm working my land every day to feed them and now they want to come tell me how to run my business!?!
3. Students around here are just out of control. Our neighborhood used to be nice and quiet. They don't even care that they keep us up half the night with their music. And the garbage! Don't even get me started!
4. These pro-pot hippies are so full of it! Everyone acts like it's no big deal but my grandson is watching all of this. You can't walk down the street without getting a second-hand high and everyone just thinks it's normal. I don't want my grandson wasting his life like these low-life stoners!

### Individual ¼ Sheet Statements

1. The last thing we need around here is another McDonalds or big-box store. I get all my food from the farmer's market or the co-op. I know where those products come from. I know the farmers! People who can't wait to get their next Wal Mart fix don't even care about our community.
2. How can people be so stupid to ignore climate change?! Did any of them graduate high school? The science is clear, and people need to shut up if they don't know what they're talking about.
3. All I have to say is if you're here, you ought to speak English. Enough of the "hola" and "konichiwa" garbage. If you're really American, speak English. I mean how am I supposed to talk to my neighbors and keep the neighborhood intact if they don't even speak English!
4. All that young people care about is there cell phones. They spend all their time with their noses in their phones while the real world is happening around them. And then they have the nerve to complain about how things work. They're so entitled.

# APPENDIX E

## Survey

### Participant Feedback

**1. How relevant was today's training to your classroom pedagogy?**

Very irrelevant   Irrelevant   Somewhat relevant   Relevant   Very Relevant

**2. After this training, how much more or less equipped do you feel in implementing deliberative methods in the classroom?**

Much less   Less   Neutral   More   Much more

**3. After this training, how much more or less likely are you to implement these methods in the classroom?**

Very unlikely   Unlikely   Somewhat likely   Likely   Very likely

**4. How often do you anticipate using deliberative methods in your discussions with students?**

Not at all   Rarely   Occasionally   Often   Almost Always

**5. How often do you plan to implement curricular components of deliberative forums in the class (e.g., NIF style processes)?**

Not at all   Rarely   Occasionally   Often   Almost Always

**6. After the training, how comfortable do you feel using deliberative methods to discuss:**

**a. Curricular content?**

Much less   Less   Neutral   More   Much more

**b. Polarized political issues?**

Much less   Less   Neutral   More   Much more

**c. Diversity or identity issues?**

Much less   Less   Neutral   More   Much more

- 7. What part of today's workshop was most valuable to you? Why?**
- 8. Where/how do you see yourself utilizing this practice?**
- 9. What concerns do you still have about using deliberative methods in the classroom?**
- 10. After the workshop, what barriers to implementing deliberation in the classroom are still concerning for you?**
- 11. What types of support would benefit your capacity for implementing deliberation in the classroom?**
- 12. What else should be included in this workshop that was not incorporated today?**
- 13. Anything else?**

#### School Demographic Questions

- 1. What school do you teach at?**
- 2. What course(s) do you teach?**
- 3. What population(s) within your school do you work with (e.g., integrated services, honors, AP, general, etc.)?**
- 4. What grade level(s) do you teach?**

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