

## Foundations: Setting the Conditions

There are a number of foundational conditions for engaging in productive conversations on challenging topics, from reflecting on one’s own background to norm setting. Begin with self-assessment to note where to prioritize strengthening your course community.

	NOTICING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT
<b>SELF/INNER WORK</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a look at your “backstory” - Where are you likely to be confused? Triggered? Frustrated?</li> <li>• Examine your discomfort.</li> <li>• Learn what you need to learn.</li> </ul>			
<b>PREPARE</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider in advance where communication is likely to break down.</li> </ul>			
<b>NORMS &amp; EXPECTATIONS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have some. ;)</li> <li>• Consider the following categories as you develop norms:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Respect for Self &amp; Others</li> <li>○ Expect and Accept Uncertainty and Non-Closure</li> <li>○ Embrace Challenge</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			
<b>RELEVANCE &amp; IMPORTANCE</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set the stage for the conversation before diving in.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What is your purpose for having the conversation?</li> <li>○ How does it relate to the content of the course? Why is it integral to the content/objective of the course?</li> <li>○ What do you hope to accomplish?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			
<b>FAMILIARITY</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure people have the time to know each other/build connections early on</li> </ul>			

### Questions to Consider when Facilitating During a Hot Moment

What are you hearing?  
What are the considerations & challenges?  
Do you want to lean into this tension or resolve?  
What outcome are you hoping for?  
What move and why?

## The Role of Facilitator

*In challenging conversations, see yourself as an **active** facilitator with the twofold job to (1) help keep the discussion focused, moving forward and productive, and (2) intervene if the train is going off the tracks (e.g. correcting misinformation, asking for clarification, summarizing main points, etc). Below is a list of some, but certainly not all, tried-and-true practices. Note that multiple moves may be used in one moment (e.g. You can affirm and use curiosity together).*

DO	MOVE	SENTENCE STEM(S)
<b>Clarify misconceptions.</b>	Depersonalize and generalize the statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I want to take a moment to talk about that idea. Thank you for raising it because it is a common belief in our country and yet embedded in it is a misperception”</li> <li>“Thank you for raising that perspective. It’s widely held, and you provide us an opportunity to talk about it--and for me to explain why we’re challenging such a perspective in this class.”</li> </ul>
	Directly correct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“What I hear you saying is X, but actually....”</li> <li>“That isn’t accurate actually... [correction]”</li> </ul>
	Interrupt	“Do you mind if I pause you there? I think there is a misconception in your comment... [correct]”
<b>Use self-disclosure.</b>	Truly join or pretend to join	“I am taking off my facilitator hat for a second and just joining the conversation”
<b>Use curiosity.</b>	Adopt a stance of inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Can I ask you to say a bit more about what you mean?”</li> <li>“Hmmm.... Can you clarify that?”</li> </ul>
	Ask for evidence/ explanation	“Can you tell me more about why you think that? What led you that belief/conclusion?”
	Put forward a question in response	“What about X? How would you consider X? What is your response to someone who says X?”
<b>Name differing perspectives.</b>	Name the difference in thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I think we have different perceptions about _____”</li> <li>“I’d like to offer another point of view.”</li> </ul>
<b>Support risk-taking.</b>	Affirm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I know that was probably really hard to share, so thank you for ....”</li> <li>“I appreciate your willingness to put that out there for us to think about...”</li> <li>“Thank you. I appreciate you trusting us with your experience....”</li> </ul>
<b>Give students an opportunity to adjust/self-correct.</b>	Parrot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“It sounds like you think that...”</li> <li>“This is what I heard you say... is this what you meant?”</li> </ul>
	Use confusion	“Hmm. I am not sure I follow... can you say more?”
<b>Narrate what’s</b>	Share observations non-judgmentally	“I am noticing that . . .”

DO	MOVE	SENTENCE STEM(S)
<b>happening.</b>	Acknowledge emotional energy	"I want to thank you for X. But I also want to acknowledge that that viewpoint may have elicited strong emotions from our group."
<b>Refresh.</b>	Know and return to your purpose	"Our goal for our conversation today is to . . ."
	Invite responses and reinforce norms	"I'd like to invite responses to X, but let's keep in mind our norms of X . . ." "As we continue on this topic..."
<b>Pause.</b>	Give a moment	"I think there may have been a lot of strong reactions to that idea... let's take a moment to think to ourselves . . ." [You can use on several mediums for reflection during a pause: writing, drawing, poetic expression, etc.]
<b>Leverage the group.</b>	Throw it out for others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "What do other people think?"</li> <li>• "Would anyone like to respond?"</li> <li>• "Are there similar or differing ideas in the room?"</li> <li>• Wait and see what happens</li> </ul>
<b>Return.</b>	Offer an opportunity to engage in the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I think the idea we are wrestling with is really important and I am not sure we can give it justice now. I want us to return to this next class and I will make sure that we do."</li> <li>• [Same as above], "here are a few things I want us to think about before we return to this. "</li> </ul>