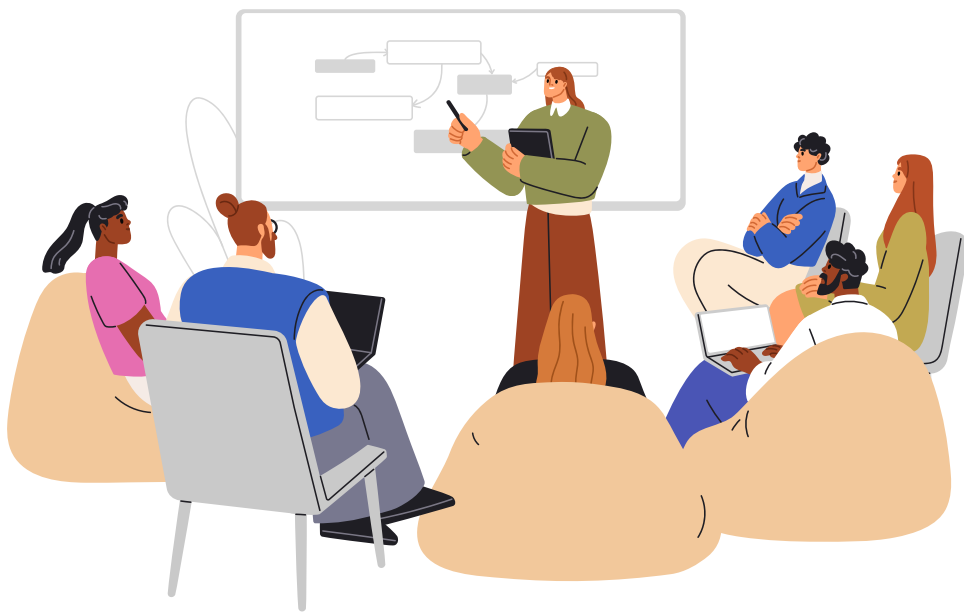


# Discussion Facilitator Toolkit



Made possible by:



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# Chapter 1

# Planning &

# Preparing

**In this section of the training, you will find information around programmatic logistics, considerations, and planning expectations.**

## Topics:

- **Program Purpose**
- **Marketing Toolkit**
- **Safety and Privacy**
- **Planning Spaces**
- **Facilitator and Librarian Roles**



# Program Purpose



**Promote more civic  
engagement**



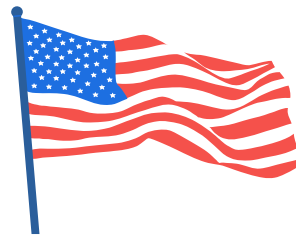
**Create a deeper  
sense of community**



**Promote listening to  
one another**



**Reflect on the past,  
present, and future**



**Commemorating  
America at 250**

# Marketing Toolkit

## Arizona Humanities provides:

- **Social Media Kit**
- **Press Kit**
- **Logos**
- **“Starter” post to introduce the program concept:**

The image shows three panels of a social media starter post for 'Open Minds'. The first panel on the left has a gold background and contains the text 'NEW! Introducing: Open Minds' with a logo of a head with flowers. Below the logo is the text 'Conversations for Collective Growth' and a link 'Swipe to learn more -->'. The middle panel also has a gold background and is titled 'What is Open Minds?'. It contains three paragraphs of text explaining the project's purpose and topics. The third panel on the right has a gold background and says 'Bring a friend, (or two), and join us for conversations that will shape the future!' with a small note at the bottom: 'Full Schedule for All Conversations Will Be Announced S O O N!'.

## Open Minds **PRESS RELEASE: TIPS & TEMPLATE**



### What Type of PR is This? Event PR!

An events press release is sent to generate buzz about an upcoming event your organization is hosting. This should include what the event is, who should attend, when and where it is, and any other important information about the event.



### How Do I Send My Press Release Out?

A Few ways! You can send it to any local journalists or news organizations, a PR distribution service (like PR Newswire), distribute it via email yourself, or use a local influencer who has high reach on social media.



### Have an Engaging Headline.

"Hi my name is Olivia and I will be helping you today. How can I help you find what you're looking for today?"



### Keep it Short & Sweet!

I know we're excited, but people don't want to read anything too lengthy. Only include what people need to know about the event.



### Start Writing!

Not sure how to get started? That's okay! We have a template ready for you to use. It can be found on page 2!

**\*Please note, program branding is subject to change\***

# Public Safety & Privacy



While developing, promoting, and hosting conversations, there may be community members who do not support the conversation happening.

## Developing

During the development of a topic, if comfortable, engage the community member to see why the conversation is “problematic”. Their concerns may help you develop a more rounded, inviting topic.

## Promoting

While promoting a conversation, use your best judgement in how to engage the community member. Their concerns can be politely dismissed or it could be an opening to engage on the topic and ultimately have them be a productive participant.

# Ending a Discussion Early



**At any point during a conversation the library partner and facilitator should feel empowered to end a conversation in the event that they feel the situation is becoming unsafe.**

**This does not need to be contentious or confrontational. Our recommendation is to use the following language:**

**“My apologies, something has come up and I must end our time together right now so I can take care of this.”**

# Planning Spaces



## TECHNOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS

**Think about whether or not you will want access to technology during the conversation. It is recommended to have some guiding materials for your conversation- these can be digital or physical.**



## PHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

**Think about setting up the space in a way that promotes interaction. Participants should be able to see one another, the facilitator, and any projected materials without constant rearranging.**



# Planning Spaces

## PRO TIP



## Book Displays

Book displays are a great way to promote conversations and as a way to keep the conversation going.

### Pre-Talk

Think about putting up a book display in a prominent space prior to the conversation. This display can also advertise the talk and as the books are checked out, library staff can encourage attendance.

### Day of Talk

Move the display into the same space or near the space. The books can be referenced during the conversation or just at the end.

# Supporting a Facilitator



**Librarians with facilitators typically act in a supporting role during the conversation as they can.**

**This includes:**

- **Introducing the facilitator and topic**
- **Taking care of program evaluations**
- **Engaging in the conversation as a participant**

# Facilitator Introductions



**The facilitator, whether a library staff member or an outside person, you will want to have a facilitator introduction. This can be a formal introduction, or just a sentence or two.**

## **Items to think about:**

- Reason they like the topic
- Experience with the topic

# Librarians as Participants



**It is highly encouraged to have library staff participate during the conversation.**

## **This supports:**

- **the library as it is part of the community**
- **the facilitator who can rely on the library staff to start conversations**
- **the participants who need to be encouraged to participate**
- **the overall conversation as everyone's perspective is unique and valuable**

# What if I will be the only librarian on-site?



**In many rural/smaller libraries it is not uncommon for their to only be one staff member on at time. They cannot reasonably participate in the conversation and support the library. Please work with your facilitators to clarify what support facilitators can expect. If your library has volunteers, having them watch the desk during the conversation so that the library staff can participate would be a great way to use a volunteer.**

# Chapter 2

# Creating & Hosting

**This section will support new and experienced Discussion Facilitators with their development and facilitation of community conversations.**

## Topics:

- **Topic preparation**
- **Presentation building**
- **Engagement opportunities**
- **Open-ended questions**



# Discussion Preparation



**The first step in talk preparation is working within your community to craft your topic and determining who will facilitate the conversation. As a discussion facilitator, the goal is not to be “right”, it is create engagement. This goal should always be at the forefront.**

**As you do think about what you want your topics to be, think about topics that are:**

- **Timely**
- **Relevant to the local community**
- **Open to discussion**
- **Multifaceted yet approachable**

# Discussion Preparation



**Questions to ask and discuss as conversations are prepared:**

- **What topics do I feel comfortable discussing from all perspectives?**
- **Can the topic be discussed without a lot of background knowledge or technical expertise?**
- **What current events or community concerns could I use to develop a timely topic?**
- **How can the community's history be included?**
- **What questions do you have about the topic? What questions might people with more or less experience on that topic have?**
- **How will you make this topic engaging and more than a lecture?**



# Discussion Preparation: Marketing

For marketing purposes, it is recommended to craft a short paragraph that can be used to build interest in the topic.  
AZ Humanities can help draft these descriptions.

These can be used with digital and mail marketing.



# Discussion Topic

# Examples

## Era of Artificial Intelligence: What Is Research, and How Is Knowledge Created?

In today's digital world, anyone can publish their writing. Anyone can make a movie. The democratization of knowledge or content creation has given a voice to untold stories. But there is a flipside. Who, or what, gets to create knowledge? Can AI systems create knowledge? When Chat GPT writes a student's paper, is that original research? What are the different systems and standards for creating knowledge? As consumers of knowledge, how can we know what is real and what is manipulated? What is original and what is derivative? Join us for a conversation about knowledge and authenticity in the era of AI.

## The Road to Inequity: Understanding the Wealth Gap

We often hear about the widening wealth gap in the United States. If we look back through history, federal policies and discriminatory practices, from redlining to the current gender wage gap, have contributed to lasting social and economic inequities. Who holds the wealth now? How was that wealth acquired? Can we move toward a more equitable system? Let's take a closer look at the origins of the wealth gap and discuss the inequities that persist today.

# Questions to Consider



**What subject areas do you feel comfortable leading discussions on?**

**What questions or topics might your community find interesting? Would you need a co-facilitator to provide expertise?**

# Presentation Building



**It is recommended that facilitators have a plan for their discussion. This can be a formal slide deck, artifact (song, poem, art piece, etc.), or guiding document.**

**When creating this, you should include:**

- **Discussion Objective**
- **Introductions**
- **Discussion “Ground Rules”**
- **Background Knowledge topic?**
- **Engagement Opportunities**

# Presentation Building

**Introductions are so important! This is recommended to be done as early in the presentation as you feel comfortable. This will help to reinforce for the participants that this is a discussion and not a lecture. Your introduction question should be flexible so that you can adjust for audience size.**



## Small Groups

**“Please share your name and why you are interested in this topic.”**

## Large Groups

**“Please share your name and one word about why you decided to join today’s conversation.”**

# Presentation Building: Background Knowledge

Background knowledge typically refers to two different things:

1. Information necessary to productively participate in a conversation
2. Information, even if incorrect, that participants bring with them to the conversation

Facilitators should plan to cover background knowledge in their topic. This should only take a very small amount of time. Ways that facilitators can do this is:

- Defining important terms
- Asking what participants already know
- Quick videos (TedTalks, YouTube) that give an overview



# **Background Knowledge & Fact Checking**

**In the event that information from a participant seems either a misuse of information or potentially incorrect, the facilitator has a few options:**

**1.**

**Redirect the conversation- this is the easiest way to move the conversation along. You do not have to correct the information if it seems minor, irrelevant, or overly nuanced.**

**2.**

**“Inform” the group of the correct information- this should be done delicately and only if the group seems it will be responsive. Do not call out the participant as incorrect. “Thank you for sharing that. My understanding is....” If you are connected to a projector and can share a computer screen, you can look up primary sources here as well. Again, this should only be done if the audience seems like this will be well received.**

**As facilitators are not necessarily subject matter experts, conversations around misinformation may be a great opportunity for the group to really dig into a topic.**

# **Presentation Building**

## **Pro Tips**

- 1. Prep more material than you think you will need.**
- 2. Think about the flow and timing; how long will be listening before they get a chance to engage?**
- 3. Hyperlink and quote where you can (particularly if you have a more controversial topic)**
- 4. Consider an additional/follow-up resources (i.e. book display or movie titles)**



# Engagement Opportunities

Having a variety of engagement opportunities is key the success of the discussion. As a reminder, this is not a lecture. So think about different ways you may want the group to engage.

Engagement does not always mean sharing with the whole group.

## Examples

The links below will take you more resources around the specific strategy.

- Videos, news clips, movie clips
- Visualization activities
- Discussion questions - <https://www.eduflow.com/blog/how-to-write-discussion-questions-that-actually-spark-discussions>
  - Think-pair-share - <https://www.kent.edu/ctl/think-pair-share>
- Ask your audience for questions and let the room answer them
- Case studies

# Open-Ended Questions



**“An open-ended question is a question that cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no" response, or with a static response. Open-ended questions are phrased as a statement which requires a longer answer therefore producing qualitative data” (wikipedia).**

**For these conversations, the questions serve as an entry point to foster conversation and dialogue. It is not to hear a “correct” answer.**

**An easy way to think about it is to ask questions that start with:**

- **What**
- **How**
- **Why**

# Open-Ended Questions: Examples

## Highlights from How to Write Discussion Questions:

<https://www.eduflow.com/blog/how-to-write-discussion-questions-that-actually-spark-discussions>

**Have participants share what they already know**

- **What do you know/remember/think about....**
- **Use causal reasoning**
- **Based on the materials we've studied this semester, what do you believe is responsible for global warming?**
- **Now that we have been talking about this for a minute, I am curious what is coming to mind?**
- **Ask questions that promote metacognition**
- **How has your thinking about early childhood psychology changed since you began this course?**

Causal reasoning is the process of identifying causality: the relationship between a cause and its effect.

Metacognition: The act of thinking about your thinking (promotes better self-awareness and critical thinking)

# Getting Comfortable Leading Conversations



**Leading conversations can be uncomfortable at times. It can be helpful to remember that this is not a lecture or speech. Facilitators direct the flow, pose questions, and add additional facts and considerations. They are not “teaching” and have no responsibility to change anyone’s thoughts.**

**Try and do what you can with the physical space and conversation flow to make the experience more of a group conversation so that while in the conversation there is less pressure.**

**Setting up the room in a circle and having the facilitator be in the circle instead of at a podium can support this.**

# Discussion Ground Rules



**Facilitators should come prepared to set conversation ground rules.**

**They may create their own or use the ones provided by Arizona Humanities for support here. Some facilitators may even want to ask the group if there are any ground rules they would like to add.**

**Here is an example of Building Bridges' communication guidelines:**

- **Respect-** This means to treat others the way they want to be treated.
- **Speak for Myself-** We can only speak for ourselves, we cannot speak for collectives.
- **Make Space, Take Space-** Be mindful to both speak and listen.
- **Intent and Impact-** Even when we do not intend to offend someone, we may have that impact. Be mindful of your intention and impact.
- **Try On-** If something feels uncomfortable, just try it on during this discussion.
- **Be Present-** Please limit your use of devices inside our discussion space. If you need to use your phone, please step outside.
- **And/Both-** Saying “but” in response to someone can invalidate their experience. Try and add to discussed experiences over disproving someone else’s perspective.

# Visualization Activity



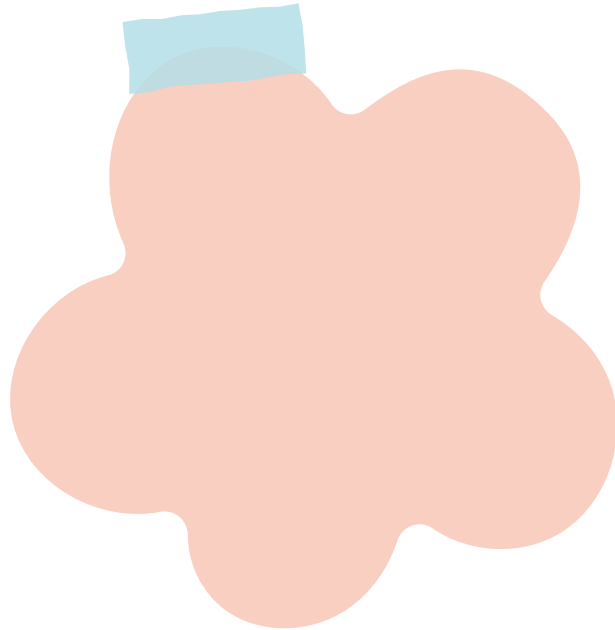
## **Visualization activities:**

**These can be presented in several different ways. They can be done by asking participants to draw on a sheet of paper or to close/lower their eyes and imagine. These activities can help participants remember and recall information. They can also help make connections between their own lived experience and the experience of others.**

## **General instructions:**

**Vocally walk participants through what you are asking them to visualize. If it is a person think about clothes, hair, height, etc. If it is a place, think about smells, day/night, colors, plants, etc.**

# Post-It Board



**This activity can be used to help participants to get ideas out without having to publicly share.**

## **General instructions:**

**Put 1-4 predetermined topics on a poster board. Give participants post-its and pens. Have them write what comes to mind on their participants on their post-its and stick it to the posters. Then the facilitator will review and lead a discussion based on what participants contributed.**

# Think-Pair-Share



**Think-pair-share: This activity is all about getting high levels of engagement. Works best with larger groups.**

## General instructions:

**Ask a question to the group and tell them to think of their answers. Then instead of calling on participants, have them pair up with someone in the room a group of 3 may be necessary. Then share their answers with their partner. From here, there are options. Participants can be asked to share aloud. You can have them rotate partners.**



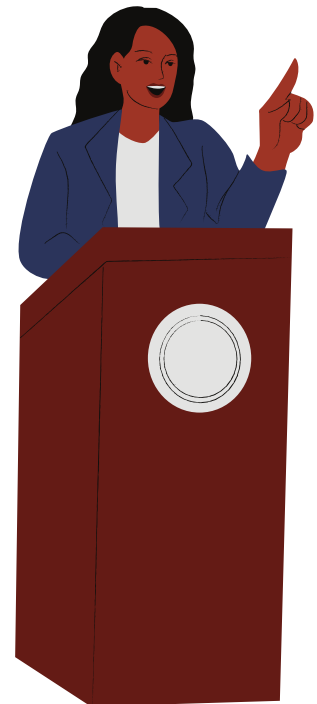
# Chapter 3

# Facilitating & Best Practices

**This section will review expectations, resources, and best practices for facilitators while actively facilitating a discussion.**

## **TOPICS:**

- **AZ Humanities Expectations**
- **Best Practices during a conversation**
- **Post-Conversation Work**



# AZ Humanities

## Expectations

1

**Acknowledge Arizona Humanities and the Arizona State Library during the talk.**

2

**Provide supplemental informational resources for participants to further explore a topic.**

3

**Facilitator is an Independent Contractor and is not entitled to employee benefits.**

4

**Facilitator will not use an AH-funded program to promote his or her own business, publications, or products.**

5

**Facilitators should remain “neutral” on topics. Participants should not know your personal beliefs.**

# AZ Humanities Expectations



## Lobbying v. Advocacy

**Per the National Endowment for the Humanities,  
programs must NOT...**

- **Promote a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view;**
- **Advocate for a particular program of social or political action; or**
- **Support specific public policies or legislation.**

# Speaking Best Practices



- 1. Let the crowd take the lead**
- 2. Redirect as needed**
- 3. “Thank you” versus “Good”**
- 4. Talking Percentage**
- 5. Think Time**

**\*Note that many best practices are situational and therefore the facilitator should do their best to be aware of the comfort level of the participants.**

# Let The Crowd Take The Lead

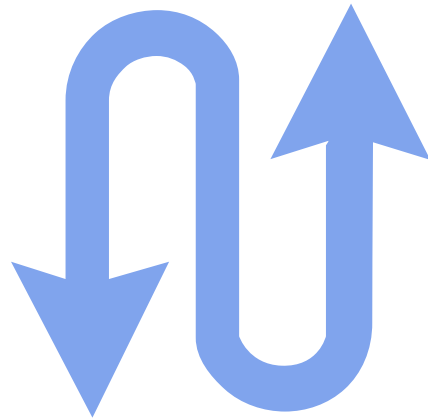


**As there is no knowledge based goal, it is okay to let the conversation meander to additional points or ideas. The facilitator should help the group “stay on topic” but that is a loose idea.**

**In a conversation on Water Rights in AZ all of the following tangents may be ways that your audience can relate and understand the topic:**

- **Water rights in another state**
- **Air rights in AZ**
- **Global water needs**
- **Farming practices**

# Redirect As Needed



**At times, the conversation may need to be redirected. This could be because the conversation has gotten too far off topic or you may be sensing that the emotions in the room need to be reset.**

**At any point in the conversation, facilitators should feel empowered to interject. Often times this can be done without alerting anyone to why the facilitator is redirecting:**

- **That is such an interesting point, how do you think that loops us back to...**
- **Oh thank you for adding that. Now if we look back at the slide...**

# “Thank you”

## VS

# “Good”



**This strategy allows you to acknowledge a participant’s contribution to the conversation without interrupting the flow of thoughts being had by everyone.**

**If you validate an idea with “good idea” or something similar, someone with a different idea may think their idea isn’t good. Someone who had the same idea, but different evidence, may not want to add on to the first speaker.**

**Using “thank you” to move from one participant to the next allows you to still manage the flow of speakers without controlling perceptions of the ideas themselves.**

# Talking Percentage



**As a facilitator, I try and speak less than my “percentage” of the allotted time. If I am leading a 60-minute conversation with 4 participants, my goal is to speak for less than 20 minutes.**

## **Promoting all voices**

**When participants are either dominating the conversation or not engaging, a great strategy is just to remind the group of whatever “communication guideline” addresses this type of participation.**

**Many participants will still raise their hands. More quiet participants may only raise their hand for a little bit and as someone shares, they may decide to lower their hand. Facilitators should try to catch this and still invite them to share.**



# Think Time



**This is another great strategy to use to support encourage engagement- particularly if there is one or two participants dominating the conversation.**

**All the facilitator needs to do is preface a question with “I will give you all 60 seconds to think about this one”. When the 60 seconds are up, the facilitator can either request volunteers and call on someone directly. This is best done with very broad questions such as “what is coming to mind”.**

# Post-Conversation Program Evaluations



**Please request that each participant complete a formal evaluation that will be distributed, collected, and submitted to Arizona Humanities.**

**There will be specific information on program evaluation to come.**

# Questions & Planning: Reach Out!

What came to mind around:

- Topics
- Facilitators
- Spaces
- Activities
- Funding
- Timeline



Reach out to Arizona Humanities staff if you have questions or to schedule a meeting to discuss your ideas.

Brenda Thomson [bthomson@azhumanities.org](mailto:bthomson@azhumanities.org)

Julianne Cheng [jcheng@azhumanities.org](mailto:jcheng@azhumanities.org)

Megan Hammond [mhammond@azlibrary.gov](mailto:mhammond@azlibrary.gov)

Derek Keith: [derekjkeith@gmail.com](mailto:derekjkeith@gmail.com)

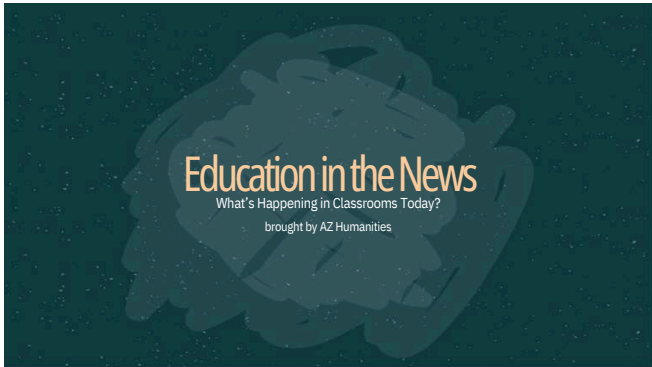
# **Appendix: Conversation Examples**

**These are examples of past talks - when looking through them,  
consider the following:**

**What do you like about the presentation?**

**What do you not like about the presentation?**

**What are 2 things you are thinking right now about how you want  
to build your presentations? What are you excited about?**



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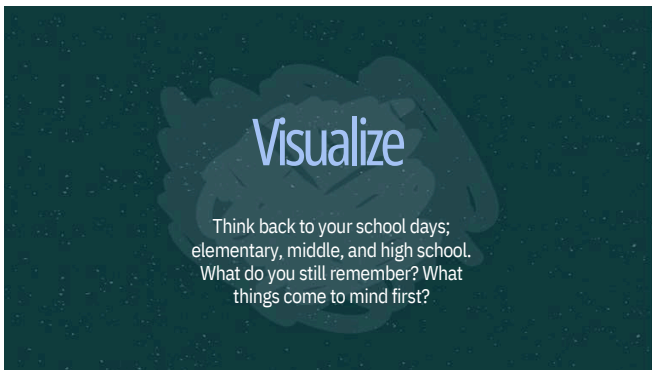
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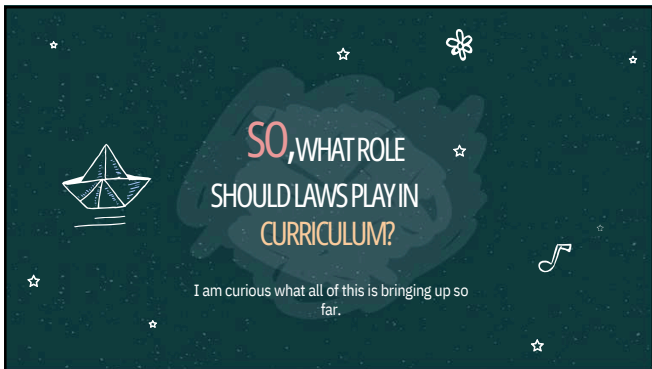
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What questions do you think are important when assessing, reviewing, thinking about a proposed or established law?

Even with research, I couldn't find a guide to this. What do you all think is important?

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**SB1040**  
(vetbed 6/8)

This bill gives parents the ability to file legal claims against any district that is allowing them to use the bathroom that matches their gender identity. "Any person who encounters a person of 'the opposite sex' in a multi-occupancy restroom...has a private cause of action against the public school if [they] gave permission to use the restroom"

**SCR1024**

Prohibits "soliciting an individual to confess race-based privilege or discuss his or her race or ethnicity or views on or experiences with the race or ethnicity of others" as well as "any formulation of diversity, equity, or inclusion or intersectionality".

**Questions to Consider**

- What is the benefit?
- Why are these laws necessary?
- Who is likely to be impacted?
- What is that impact?
- How do you feel about that potential impact?

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**Educate Yourself**

Plenty of spaces are good repository to track bills. You can find an organization you trust, but the best option is to read it yourself.

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# Dog Whistle Language in the Media: How We can Hear It?



Presented by: Derek Keith  
Brought to you by AZ Humanities

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In politics, a dog whistle is the use of **coded or suggestive language** in political messaging to garner support from a particular group **without provoking opposition**. The concept is named for ultrasonic dog whistles used in shepherding, which are audible to dogs but not humans (wikipedia).



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The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I'm saying? We knew **we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black**, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and **then criminalizing both heavily**, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? **Of course we did.**

-John Ehrlichman  
Nixon Counsel and Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs



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**Think About It**  
What are the ramifications of dog whistle language for people in society?

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What questions or thoughts should you have when consuming information and media?

Getting Critical

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**Additional Resources**

**Books:**  
Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class

**TedTALKS:**  
Dog Whistle Politics: Ian Haney López at TEDxUOregon

Dog Whistles, Walk-Backs, and Washington Handshakes: Decoding the Jargon, Slang, and Bluster of American Political Speech

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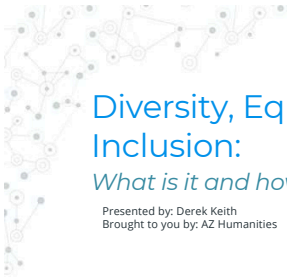
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# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

*What is it and how do we do it?*

Presented by: Derek Keith  
Brought to you by: AZ Humanities



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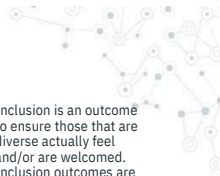
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## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity is the presence of differences that may include race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, language, (dis)ability, age, religious commitment, or political perspective.

Equity is promoting justice, impartiality and fairness within the procedures, processes, and distribution of resources by institutions or systems. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society.

Inclusion is an outcome to ensure those that are diverse actually feel and/or are welcomed. Inclusion outcomes are met when you, your institution, and your program are truly inviting to all.



<https://doi.extension.org/>

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What do you think are some of the benefits to having diversity in your life outside of work?

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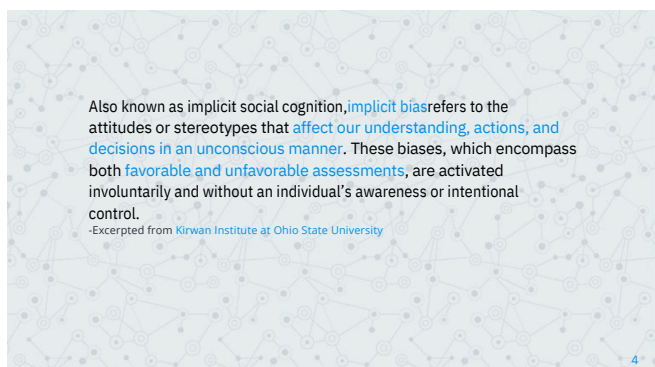
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Also known as implicit social cognition, **implicit bias** refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that **affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner**. These biases, which encompass both **favorable and unfavorable assessments**, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control.  
-Excerpted from [Kirwan Institute at Ohio State University](#)



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How do these communication guidelines promote a DEI mentality? (*shown at the beginning*)

- Respect
- Speak for Myself
- Make Space, Take Space
- Intent and Impact
- Try On
- Be Present
- And/Both

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### Additional Resources

|                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br><b>TedTalks</b><br>From the Inside Out: Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging | <br><b>Books</b><br>I Never Thought of it That Way<br>Monica Guzman | <br><b>Media</b><br>Documentaries :<br>13th<br>Coded Bias |
| Belonging, A Critical Piece of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion                                                                                                    | How to be an Anti-Racist<br>Ibham X. Kendi                                                                                                             | Mo vi es :<br>American Factory                                                                                                               |
| Why Corporate Diversity Programs Fail—and how to make small tweaks                                                                                              | Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People<br>Mahzarin R. R. Banaji & Anthony Green wa ld                                                                 | Hale County This Morning, This Evening                                                                                                       |



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