

DEI - INFORMED DIALOGIC ACTIVITY GENERAL STRUCTURE

Class: Upper Division Undergraduate Course (3000 level)

Topic: Intersectionality

Lesson Focus and Goals:

- Define intersectionality and develop an understanding of how intersectionality and different parts of identity impact perspectives of the world.
- Practice intersectionality as a critical lens to view the world.

General Outline of Dialogue Activity/Sketch of Facilitation Plan:

One “traditional” mode of instruction is lecturing on class content, followed by an activity to demonstrate the class content and make connections. The example of this “traditional” format perpetuates the power structures in the classroom, while prioritizing class content consumption with minimal formative assessment to gauge student comprehension of the class content. Dialogic practices challenge the “traditional” format and provide a more interactive approach to understanding class content, while prioritizing personal experience/voice and application of knowledge through dialogue and class activity. The activity will involve me asking questions to the class and then the students engaging in different modes of self-reflection and dialogue in order to develop a communal and individual understanding of intersectionality.

Structure/Activity:

On this day, I plan to utilize 4 different dialogic practice protocols alongside 2 facilitator moves (at least) in order to define and develop an understanding of intersectionality. During the activity, we will begin with an individual writing activity within our “Journey Journals” to respond to the question: What is intersectionality and what does it mean to you?. After 5 minutes of writing, the students will engage in “pair shares” to start sharing their ideas and generate dialogue amongst one another. Then, I will ask for responses and display them through the use of a visual element. Once a general understanding of intersectionality has been developed, we will engage in an interactive activity utilizing pipe cleaners for crafting our own parts of identity.

Once we engage in the activity, the class will then split into small groups for dialogue amongst one another, followed by the fishbowl method as the entire class was structured to encourage dialogue from internal to interpersonal to small groups and lastly, large group dialogue. At the end of class, we will all share a key takeaway and write it down in the “Journey Journal” to help us at the end of the semester when we all reflect on our journey in class as part of a final assignment.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF DIALOGIC PRACTICES

Protocol 1: Individual Writing

Justification:

- To provide space to write down personal thoughts, experiences, values, beliefs, etc. as a way to begin thinking critically about the self in relation to intersectionality.

Advantages:

- Allows a mode of self-reflection
- Allows for privacy of thoughts/self-reflection
- Acts as a starting point to generate ideas in relation to intersectionality

Pitfalls:

- Students may not have any motivation to actually write
- Students may experience writer's block

Protocol 2: Small groups

Justification:

- To start to engage in dialogic practices and reveal own personal experience/perspective on intersectionality.

Advantages:

- Allows to share person voice in a smaller format
- Promotes personal connection to a smaller group to validate, expand, challenge personal experiences (less at stake when talking to a smaller group)
- Begins to expand personal understanding of intersectionality through multiple people sharing personal narratives
- Enhances the possibility to strengthen interpersonal relationships and supports personal dialogue as a way to create a more inclusive environment through personal connections.

Pitfalls:

- Small group dynamics: some voices may dominate/be more expressive, while others may feel more hesitant to share their perspective (especially if it differs).
- Tokenization can occur when student population is primarily White and smaller representation of People of the Global Majority (POGM) is present.
- A lot of pressure may be placed upon POGM as individuals of POGM may be taken as being the "voice of all [insert marginalized identity]".
- Students can be resistant/hesitant to openly sharing about personal identities, especially those who are underrepresented or political turmoil may be currently experienced in the social world.

Protocol 3: Fishbowl

Justification:

- To build upon previous discussions and begin to expand understanding of intersectionality through personal narrative being shared in larger group

Advantages:

- Allows more voices to be heard in a larger group format
- Provides the space for people who feel moved to speak without judgement
- Exposes different perspectives of intersectionality and the ways in which individuals are utilizing/understanding intersectionality in the moment
- Provides a way to gauge understanding of intersectionality, which allows me to help define/clarify/expand understanding of intersectionality alongside class teasing out their own understanding as a community
- Allows for me as the facilitator to validate/support/challenge/monitor discussions and point to/name/sit with/mitigate harm if it occurs

Pitfalls:

- Some voices may dominate
- Some voices may feel silenced/not able to speak
- People may not want to share
- People can possibly veer off topic/overshare

Protocol 4: Open Discussion

Justification:

- To practice a mode of self-reflection, while validating people's perspective/experience in an effort to bring activity back to the original purpose of class

Advantages:

- Allows for a mode of crowd sourcing personal thoughts and publicly naming intersectionality, positionality, and difference as a community
- Allows students to be the voice of class and state points of curiosity/confusion to expand meaning of intersectionality
- Provides a way to utilize observations as a way to name a more "objective" perspective and removes the pressure of personal or "subjective" perspective by repeating/naming what occurred or something someone said

Pitfalls:

- Some voices may be overheard/dominate
- Some voices may feel silenced/not able to speak
- Silence may occur
- Group thinking may occur and limit a more expansive understanding of class topics
- People may not want to share
- People can possibly veer off topic/overshare

Facilitator Move 1: Asking for Themes

Justification:

- To implement aural and visual modes of class engagement
- To create a visual representation of topics/ideas/themes discussed
- To create communal notes and a collective resource that will be shared on Canvas

Implementation:

- One way to implement this is by using a mentimeter to highlight themes and remove the pressure of people having to speak in a group setting
- Another way to implement is to utilize a chalkboard/whiteboard to write down themes or have students write down themes as a way to create a communal list
- We would analyze the themes and also think about what is missing, what do the themes tell us, how may they change if we have other people/scenarios, or relate themes to readings to challenge us to think more critically

Facilitator Move 2: Calling for responses

Justification:

- To create a mode of critical engagement as the class continues to implement different concepts and theories learned over the semester.

Implementation:

- One way is to draw upon this to allow the space for positing different/challenging ideas or as a way to get the class to think more critically about various perspectives and personal embodiment of identity and intersectionality, while bridging the gap between theory/course content and practical application.