Facilitating Difficult Dialogues

Remember:
- Practice!
- Expect to make mistakes – No one is an expert
- We are accountable for classroom safety
- Be honest and open – this communicates courage, validates feelings, and legitimizes the dialogue

Preparing for Difficult Dialogues:
- Mentally prepare – Difficult Dialogues may advance learning objectives, or may emerge spontaneously
- Know yourself – What are your triggers? How can you remain calm? Are you listening?
- Set the tone – Ground rules; establish a respectful & safe learning community
- Statement on syllabus – Expectations for safe & respectful classroom

Facilitating Difficult Dialogues:
- Don’t avoid it – Be aware of the message that avoidance may send
- This is an opportunity to explore differing views and encourage critical thinking
- Do you need to exert your status in the classroom? If so, how?
- Have the students do the work

Tools for Facilitating Difficult Dialogues:
- Pause the conversation periodically
  - Validate the dialogue
  - Reinforce ground rules for respect
  - Ask students what they are learning from the moment
- “Think / Write / Pair / Share”
- Organize a Debate
  - Have students restate differing perspectives
- “Five Minute Rule”
  - Specific discussion about a missing point of view
- Fishbowl Exercise – concentric circles
- Critical Incident Questionnaire – collect, analyze, and report back to class
- Connect with students outside of class
- Trigger Warnings?
Difficult Dialogues References:


Website References:

U.S. military's exploitation of Native American languages and simultaneous U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs' attempts to exterminate those same languages:


Minnesota’s anti-Germanism:

http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHistoryMagazine/articles/47/v47i05p170-183.pdf

NDSU’s Bjørnson obelisk, displaying first stanza of Norway’s national anthem:

http://library.ndsu.edu/fargo-history/?q=content/bjornson-monument

http://heritagerenewal.org/stone/bjornson.htm

http://digitalhorizonsonline.org/cdm/ref/collection/uw/id/1935

U.S.-Dakota War:

http://www.usdakotawar.org