Critical Conversations Model (Kang & O’Neill*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Conversations</th>
<th>Conversations in which <strong>power dynamics</strong> in <strong>social context</strong> are illuminated, substantively examined in the moment, and subsequently reflected upon in order to produce change – personal, systemic, institutional</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| What are the objectives? | Encourage deeper awareness of power, privilege, structural inequities and the immediate impact these have on the learning environment and to produce change in the moment  
  - Practice critical consciousness using tools of reflexivity and critical reflection  
  - Engage ambiguity to allow participants to move through conflict/tension toward greater understanding of self and others – creating change.  
  - Engage content toward deeper understanding in context |
| Intersubjective relationships among multiple perspectives in context | |
| Deciding | Questions to inform the instructor’s decision:  
  - Is this a teachable moment?  
  - Is there sufficient time?  
    - If not, acknowledge to the group the need for critical conversation, the importance of having time available, and schedule when it will occur.  
    - Do I have the skills and stamina to engage in and facilitate a critical conversation with this group of students in this class? What support do I need?  
    - What might be the consequences if I/we do or do not engage in a critical conversation at this time on:  
      - Student learning;  
      - Classroom dynamics;  
      - Course evaluations;  
      - Students’ reactions beyond the classroom?  
      - My own growth and learning? |
| Tune-in |  
  - Facilitator reflects internally on own social identities and positionality in relation to group membership, content and context.  
  - If co-facilitating, check in with each other regarding intersecting social identities and their impact on group process, content and context. |

### Build the scaffold & develop shared language

- Acknowledge the opportunity to engage in critical conversations.
- Identify and share **hopes and concerns** about engaging in critical conversations.
- Establish and commit to a **time frame** knowing that such conversations are rarely finished. Rather, they develop and continue in myriad ways. This is to be encouraged.
- Collaboratively develop **group guidelines**, based on expressed hopes and concerns, for engaging with each other.
- Decide on the focus of the conversation.
- Develop shared language about key concepts central to the critical conversation.
  - Be aware that this can become the focus of the conversation.
  - If such shared language exists already in the group, acknowledge this and move into the focus of the conversation.

### Dive into the conversation

![Diagram](image.png)

- **Notice**
- **Discuss**
- **Reflect**
- **Name**
- **Action**

- How does the content and context affect interaction in the moment?
- What power dynamics do you notice in the group?
- What assumptions might be taken for granted?
- What larger societal and structural power dynamics are implicated and active in current interactions?

### Transition forward

- Honor the contributions of all participants and express appreciation.
- Acknowledge the on-going nature of the conversation.
- Mark the end of the conversation.
  - Do not debrief the conversation at this time (unless in facilitator training)
  - Plan for follow-up conversation as appropriate and possible.

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## Critical Conversations Model *(Kang & O’Neill*)

### After the session: facilitator reflection

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How am I feeling?</td>
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<td>What have we learned?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What went well? What didn't go so well?</td>
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<td>What might I do differently?</td>
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<td>What would be most useful to process/debrief the critical conversation? For example,</td>
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<td>Are there any next steps?</td>
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### NOTES: