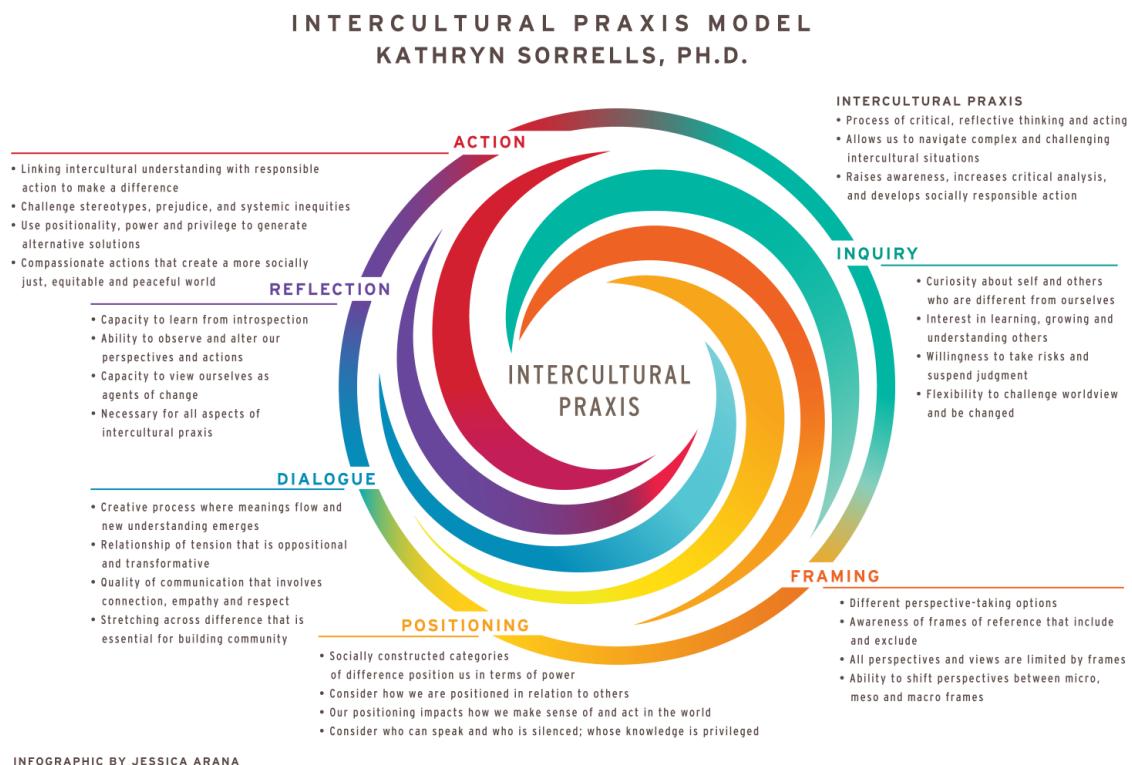


Navigating Difficult Dialogues: An Intercultural Praxis Approach

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Learning objectives/skills fostered:

1. To use the Intercultural Praxis model as a tool for navigating the complexities of cultural differences and power differences in intercultural situations.
2. To critically examine our perspectives and how our positionality and cultural frames influence us.
3. To build affective, conceptual, and skill-based capacities for difficult dialogues addressing issues of difference and power within group settings.

How/why is this a culturally relevant teaching practice, high impact teaching (HIP) or high operational practice (HOP from Pedagogy of Confidence framework)?

Learning challenge addressed: Introducing cultural differences (based on race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, etc.) within the context of institutional and historical systems of power. May be applicable in a range of courses that address social identities, privilege and power.

Context best used for: This learning activity can be adapted for a class of any size.

Brief description of activity: After a presentation and discussion of the Intercultural Praxis Model, students will read through and discuss a series of statements in order to better understand how their cultural frames and positionality affect their perspectives.

Material needed: Handout of Intercultural Praxis Model and handout of statements. Statements can be modified based on course topic and current controversial issues.

Process description: Share and discuss the Intercultural Praxis Model handout with students. For more information, see: Sorrells, K. (2016). *Intercultural communication: Globalization and social justice* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Draw attention to key points:

1. The model is intended to develop critical reflection, thinking, and action for effective engagement across cultural differences and power difference.
2. Cultural difference can be based on race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, age, etc.
3. Our differences position us within systems of power that confer access and advantage as well as restrictions and disadvantages
4. By developing each facet of the model (inquiry, framing, positioning, dialogue, reflection and action), students gain the capacity to engage in difficult dialogues.
5. This particular exercise focuses on understanding one's own cultural frames and positionality as well as those of group members.

Put students in groups of 4-5 and give them time to read through and consider each statement, and then share and discuss their reactions and responses to each statement with the group. Once the groups are done, have the class come together for a collective discussion. Ask students if everyone in their groups responded to the statements in similar ways and if not, what kinds of differences they noticed; from there, move into debrief/discussion questions.

Debrief/Discussion questions:

- How do your cultural frames inform your responses?
- How are your responses related to your positionality?
- How do cultural frames and positionality intersect to shape your responses?
- How do our differences in terms of power and positionality impact our standpoints?
- Reflect on the assumptions and judgments you may have about people who would make each of these statements.
- How is dialogue with people who are different in terms of culture and positionality a step toward creating a more equitable and just world?

Time needed: 35-40 minutes

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Statement Handout

- Hard work is all it takes for me to succeed in school, work and life.
- Big cities are generally not safe and people are not as friendly there.
- In the U.S., women are treated as fairly and equally as men.
- The police are viewed with suspicion in my neighborhood.
- Going to college/university is my primary responsibility.
- Gay marriage is legalized now, so homophobia is increasingly a problem of the past.
- Religious freedom is what makes the U.S. a great country.
- I have to work twice as hard to prove I am as capable and competent as others.
- For the most part, I can go pretty much anywhere in my city, town or region without feeling afraid for my safety.
- Interracial and intercultural relationships cause problems. People should stay with their own kind.
- I am one of the only ones in my family who has the opportunity to go to college/university.
- Since the U.S. has had a Black president, the country has basically moved beyond racism.
- I can get financial support from my family to pay for college/university, if necessary.