



Open Inquiry, Viewpoint Diversity, and Constructive Disagreement: Resources for K-12 Educators

Heterodox Academy is a group of educators, administrators, and graduate students who believe diverse viewpoints and open inquiry are critical to research and learning. The resources below are intended to provide K-12 educators with materials to create classrooms that welcome diverse people with diverse viewpoints and that equip learners with the habits of heart and mind to engage that diversity in open inquiry and constructive disagreement.

Conceptual Frameworks

- **The HxA Way.** A printable poster for your classroom, highlighting five useful values when embracing pluralism and constructive disagreement: Make your case with evidence, be intellectually charitable, be intellectually humble, be constructive, and be yourself.
- **Introduction to HxA.** The suggested articles introduce the curious reader to essential information about HxA and the social and ideological issues currently faced by students, teachers, and administrators. These readings aim to increase awareness about principles of open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement.
- **How to Create a Political Classroom.** This guide utilizes research of high school classrooms to instruct teachers on how to create a classroom environment that is conducive to open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement.

Essential Readings

- **Why K-12 Education Needs Viewpoint Diversity Now.** This blog post introduces why K-12 schools should prioritize the values of HxA—open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement—in their schools.
- **"The Coddling of the American Mind"** by Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt. This book shows how the problems in schools today have their origins in three ideas that have become increasingly woven into American childhood and education: "What doesn't kill you makes you weaker; always trust your feelings; and life is a battle between good people and evil people." A detailed summary of the book is available [here](#).
- **"Don't Label Me"** by Irshad Manji. This book shows how to do diversity without inflaming the culture wars and is a valuable tool in learning to create cultures in which viewpoint diversity is part of diversity itself. A classroom discussion guide is available [here](#).
- **"The Case for Contention"** by Jonathan Zimmerman and Emily Robertson. This book provides a historical analysis of how controversial issues have surfaced in K-12 public schools, makes the case for why controversial issues should be taught, and provides recommendations for including controversial issues in school curriculum. A classroom discussion guide is available [here](#).

Topic-Specific Reading and Resources

- **Suggested Readings on Racism and Reform.** This list of suggested readings was submitted by members of the HxA Advisory Council. It approaches the historic moment we are in—and the possibilities for change with regard to race, racism, policing and the criminal justice system, and everyday experiences of African American --from diverse perspectives.
- **Political Polarization Resource List.** This resource list contains HxA tools, blog posts, and podcast episodes on the topic of political polarization. The tools that can be used in classrooms to generate thoughtful, nuanced conversation about the issue of political polarization.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources.** K-12 schools are among the many institutions requiring diversity, equity, and inclusion training for their staff. HxA has a variety of resources that explain the research behind these initiatives and provide advice for how to constructively express your concerns about these trainings.

Classroom Resources

- **Writing Student Learning Outcomes.** This guide offers steps for using intentional curricular design to help students engage in open inquiry and constructive disagreement and to ensure courses, assignments, and class sessions advance critical outcomes.
- **OpenMind.** A psychology-based educational platform designed to depolarize campuses, companies, organizations, and communities. OpenMind helps people foster intellectual humility and mutual understanding, while equipping them with essential skills to engage constructively across differences.
- **Virtual Free IC Classroom Session.** The goal of the Virtual Free IC Classroom Session is to connect students from different classrooms to facilitate conversation, share ideas, and celebrate each other's differences. This is a step-by-step guide for teachers on how to set up a virtual Free IC session with another classroom.
- **Kialo Edu.** Kialo is the world's largest argument mapping and debate site, and Kialo Edu is specifically designed for classroom use and free for educators to use. Kialo's mission is to promote well-reasoned discussion and critical thinking online, and it's clear, visually compelling format makes it easy to follow the logical structure of a discussion and facilitates thoughtful collaboration and conversation.

Classroom Activities

- **Creating Connection.** This activity, based on experimental social psychological research, prepares students to take the interpersonal risks of sharing diverse viewpoints, admitting the limits of their own knowledge, or expressing genuine curiosity about the experiences and perspectives of others. It's a great activity to start the semester or school year.
- **How Do You See It?** This article by Debra Mashek teaches a valuable lesson on perspective taking in the classroom.
- **"Your Voice is Your Superpower"** by Jessica Bohrer and Sandy Bohrer. This book introduces young children to free speech and the value of viewpoint diversity. A classroom discussion guide is available [here](#).
- **"All Minus One."** An illustrated book produced by HxA and based on John Stuart Mill's famous essay, On Liberty. This special edition brings Mill's work to life by making it accessible and relevant to modern readers. We offer it for free as a [downloadable pdf](#), an [audio reading](#), as well as a [paperback available for purchase](#). A classroom discussion guide and classroom activities are also [available here](#).
- **Have Students Interview Someone They Disagree With.** This activity, based on a Heterodox: The Blog [post with the same title](#), aims to promote viewpoint diversity in high school classrooms, while simultaneously showing students they can be exposed to disagreement and difference without suffering.
- **Dialectical Thinking Classroom Activity.** Dialectical thinking accepts that, in our daily lives, opposing sides almost always have some merit. This activity will help students understand issues more completely and accurately, develop more effective solutions, have more productive dialogue, improve their relationships with people with whom they disagree, and increase their emotional stability and mental health.
- **Seeking Disconfirmation.** This activity will help students challenge their own thinking and guide them down a pathway to a deeper understanding of why they and others think the way they do. This will prepare students to work with others who have opposing perspectives to develop shared goals and solutions.
- **Thinking Logically: Learning to Recognize Logical Fallacies.** This resource outlines common logical fallacies that students may have experienced in their own interactions or those in their social networks and need to be aware of to effectively engage in discussion and debate. The resource also includes suggestions for activities that can be adapted for high school or college students.

- **Beyond Bigots and Snowflakes**. Ilana Redstone created a series of six videos that offer tools and techniques designed to encourage tough conversations for more open dialogue. Having open and honest conversations is a skill that is learned; thus, the guide offers discussion questions and activities to accompany the videos so students can practice this skill.
- **How to Read a Book - Guide and Classroom Activities**. "How to Read a Book" by Mortimer Adler and Charles Van Doren instructs readers on how to read for information and understanding. The aim of the reading guide and the corresponding activities for reading is the same as the aim of "How to Read a Book"—to come to terms with the author, identify the problems they aim to solve, identify key arguments they are making, and make critical judgments about the arguments to either agree or disagree with the author. The dialogue activities in the guide further this aim by translating the principles set forth by Adler and Van Doren to discussion and deliberation.
- **"Which One Doesn't Belong? A Shapes Book"** by Christopher Danielson. A special one for the math teachers out there, each page of this book contains a thoughtfully designed set of four shapes. Each of the shapes can be a correct answer to the question "Which one doesn't belong?" Because all their answers are right answers, students naturally shift their focus to justifications and arguments based on the shapes' geometric properties.

Resources for High School Students

- **Questions to Ask When Applying to College**. If you are a high school student who will be touring college campuses—and if you enjoy being with and learning from people who see the world differently than you do—here are seven questions to ask during campus visits to get a sense of whether a school values open inquiry and, in turn, has created the conditions necessary to prepare you for a diverse, challenging, and complex world.
- **10 Colleges Where You Won't Have to Walk on Eggshells**. These are schools—large and small, public and private—where multiple sources of information suggest that students will have better odds of developing the habits of heart and mind necessary to thrive in a world of complexity, nuance, and difference.
- **Bridge USA**. An organization for undergraduate students that champions ideological diversity, promotes a solution-oriented political culture, and teaches constructive engagement in order to develop a generation of political leaders that value empathy and common purpose. Share it with your college-bound students

Get Involved

- **Become a member**. HxA recently expanded its membership program to include K-12 educators, administrators, and staff, who play an important role in preparing students for higher education (and beyond). Membership is free and provides access to events, resources, and connection with others in the HxA network. [Learn more and apply today](#).
- **Join the Heterodox K-12 Education Community**. This member-led community provides the best way to directly connect with others in the K-12 space who value open inquiry and viewpoint diversity.
- **Help design and vet resources for K-12 educators**. We are always seeking to expand our library of [tools and resources](#), please contact events@heterodoxacademy.org with any valuable additions to this list or if you would like to help with developing or evaluating tools and resources.

Connect with HxA

- **Learn more about HxA.** This one-pager explains more about HxA and our work
- Join the conversation on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or LinkedIn

Other Organizations to Know About

- **Interfaith Youth Core.** An organization working on campuses and in communities to create a world where people of different faiths, worldviews, and traditions can bridge differences and find common values to build a shared life together.
- **Let Grow.** An organization committed to countering the culture of overprotection by building understanding that viewing today's kids as physically and emotionally fragile is bad for their future.
- **Civic Spirit.** An organization committed to educating, inspiring, and empowering schools across faith traditions to enhance civic belonging and responsibility in their student, faculty, and parent communities.