

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: FACILITATING CIVIL DISCUSSION & CREATING A VIRTUAL COMMUNITY

### 3-Hour Interactive Workshop

This professional development session will provide teachers across all disciplines with practical tools and resources that they can use to frame and facilitate discussions with students. It is important that schools be places for sharing and exploring the questions, concerns, and ideas that students have about current events. Close Up's virtual, practice-oriented session is intended to prepare teachers to engage with students about the 2020 election, the COVID-19 pandemic, and nationwide protests.

#### Session Overview

**Building a Community for Civil Dialogue:** Teachers will focus on the important task of establishing a community that accounts for a diversity of student experiences, readiness, interests, and learning profiles.

- Teachers will learn practical techniques to establish norms and procedures that foster civil dialogue between students.
- A Close Up facilitator will model best practices for keeping discussions inclusive, respectful, and organized.

**Understanding Values & Tensions:** Building on a set of mutually understood values can help form a common basis for discussion that promotes understanding and empathy.

- Teachers will receive a set of core values and tensions which interact to form the basis of virtually any controversial issue discussion.
- Teachers will take part in a model activity which applies these values to real-world scenarios in order to promote dialogue and comprehension.

**Facilitating Challenging Conversations:** Teachers will share their questions and concerns about the topics of the 2020 election, COVID-19, and political protests, and learn strategies to address those concerns effectively.

- Teachers will learn specific facilitation skills which enable them to place their own biases and perspectives to the side in order to keep students focused on understanding each other's perspectives.
- Teachers will take part in a discussion model which can be used to conduct meaningful civil discourse around any issue.

**Goals for Discourse:** Before engaging students in discourse, it is important to establish goals for learning and to understand how different modes of discourse lend themselves to certain outcomes.

- Teachers will learn the key structural differences between discussion, debate, and deliberation.
- Using a lesson model, teachers will take part in a deliberation to see a direct example of how the structure of discourse impacts learning outcomes.

**What to Do When Discourse Breaks Down:** Tensions can arise during challenging conversations; this component will prepare teachers to address and defuse tensions in the moment.

- A Close Up facilitator will guide teachers through a series of practical tools to manage discussions and help prevent disruptive discourse.
- Teachers will explore a set of scenarios surrounding the topics of the election, the pandemic, and the protests, and learn actionable techniques to keep students on track.

#### What's Included

- Interactive virtual training led by Close Up Curriculum & Professional Development Specialists.
- Access to Close Up's *Controversial Issues in the News* digital resource library for one year.
- All materials, including a digital teacher handbook, lesson plans, and classroom materials.
- Certificate of completion eligible for 3 hours of PD credit.\*
- Tech support during the session.

#### Next Steps

To learn more or to schedule professional development for your school or district, please contact a Professional Development Specialist at [classroom@closeup.org](mailto:classroom@closeup.org).

\*Please check with your school district in advance to ensure that the PD recertification credit is accepted.