

**Frontiers of Democracy Conference  
July 21-23, 2011  
The “Neutrality” Challenge Track Summary**

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*In July, 2011, about 40 practitioners and academics interested in democratic engagement and civic learning came together at the Frontiers of Democracy conference at Tufts University. The conference was organized around three tracks. These are the notes from one of these tracks, entitled the "neutrality" challenge.*

**Track Description**

Concerns over neutrality challenge educators and practitioners alike. In public life, the question is how to balance the commitment to a politically neutral process with the desire to achieve more equitable outcomes. In the classroom, the question is how to present all perspectives on an issue yet take a definitive stance in an effort to educate for democracy. What are the politics of neutrality, on campus and in public life?

**Why focus on “the neutrality challenge?”**

Two years ago, in July 2009, more than 250 campus and community leaders came together at the University of New Hampshire to talk about deliberative democracy, the tide of civic change in society and on campuses, and what those changes mean for the practice and teaching of democracy. Some of the most animated discussions at [No Better Time: Promising Opportunities in Deliberative Democracy for Educators and Practitioners](#) (NBT) concerned a tension between advocacy work and deliberative democracy and, in particular, social justice as a desired outcome of public dialogue and deliberation vis-à-vis “inclusion” as a process goal. The primary concern was this: a strong democracy requires significantly more egalitarian social, political, and economic conditions than currently exist in society. How do we ensure that a deliberative *process* that is “inclusive but neutral” does not simply perpetuate an unjust status quo? Even the term “inclusion” is suspect in that it implies ownership by a dominant group with an invitation to others to participate. (To read a more comprehensive summary on this challenge, see the No Better Time [Report](#).) One goal of this track was to continue that discussion.

**Agenda and Report Contents**

**The track was broken down into sessions addressing the following questions/topics, addressed in this paper:**

- I. *What is the nature and scope of the problem we’re discussing*
- II. *What do we mean by the term, “neutrality?”*
- III. *Why are there tensions? What are some perspectives on neutrality and democracy-building?*
- IV. *Identifying promising practices and strategies*
- V. *Capturing the “big ideas”*
- VI. *What questions remain?*
- VII. *Conclusions*

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### **I. What is the nature and scope of the problem we're discussing?**

In order to engage workshop participants in defining the nature scope of the problem for them, we asked them to consider some vignettes based on real-world experience. We worked in small groups to review the vignettes – settings in which neutrality challenges might well be raised, in communities and on campuses. Those vignettes included:

- A request from a political party that you display a US flag on your office door
- Faculty attitudes and how their views might affect their teaching – or student perceptions of their teaching
- Intimidating tactics by politically motivated groups
- The role of deliberative democracy in human rights advocacy work
- Racial dimensions to public conversations
- Attempts by ideologues to hijack a neutral process

Some takeaways from the discussions on these vignettes concerned *voice, access, process, and outcomes*. Specifically, groups discussed:

- “Neutrality” is a difficult term – what do we mean by it?
- There are two dimensions to neutrality, those focused on means or process and those focused on ends or outcomes. How do we explicitly identify and make intentional choices about the neutrality challenges in any process we design or issue we tackle -- *before* we are faced with a challenge?
- “Neutrality” is a matter of finding the right balance, but what does that mean?
- We need to manage cultural biases and communications, but managing neutrality challenges does not stop there.
- View neutrality challenges as an opportunity to learn from each other.
- Are we being authentic if we choose not to reveal our own positions on issues? What are the tradeoffs of nondisclosure?
- What about data? What if the data supports one perspective over another?
- If our goal is a more equity and social justice, then we need to be transparent about it.

### **II. What do we mean by the term, “neutrality?”**

We asked participants to reflect on 3x5 cards on what they mean by “neutrality.” Nearly half of the session participants described neutrality in terms of a process that is “open to and inclusive of diverse perspectives or opinions.” To many, this meant not just being “open” but to assuring that a full range of viewpoints had actually received fair consideration. Others described neutrality in terms of outcome – assuring that there is no partisan agenda or predetermined outcome.

Many participants – about one third of the group—defined neutrality as “holding back” or “not revealing or imposing one’s own view.” One participant wrote, “Neutrality means not taking a stand. I like ‘impartiality’ better because it means not being pre-invested in a specific end or outcome.”

Some distinguished between “neutral” and “values-free.” “Neutrality,” one participant wrote, “means an attitude of open-endedness regarding outcomes of a democratic process – but a ... commitment to certain facts and values consistent with democracy.”

Many participants questioned the choice of the term, “neutrality,” preferring or offering other language: “nonpartisan,” “fairness,” “impartial,” and “open-endedness.” (For raw data, see Appendix B)

### III. Why are there tensions? What are some perspectives on neutrality and democracy-building?

We began our discussion by examining some perspectives on the challenge. Participants were provided the following basic positions to frame the conversation:

**#1: Social justice is the work. Deliberation practitioners need to acknowledge that structural inequalities exist in society, these inequalities are detrimental to a strong democracy, and social, political, and economic justice are goals of the work.** Achieving a more equitable and just society is a bi-partisan objective. The recession has significantly and disproportionately affected poor Americans, blacks and Hispanics, and people without college degrees. We can all agree that, when inequalities grow large enough, they undercut and threaten the fragile foundation of our democracy, which should be unacceptable to all.

When civic organizations, policy makers, and deliberation practitioners work for “neutral” processes, where all voices and perspectives matter equally, they may be preserving the process at the expense of the outcome and ultimately reinforcing existing disparities in power, access, and opportunity. Less powerful voices are often silenced in the name of “neutrality” or “civility.” Equity and justice should be the explicitly stated goals of any person or organization working to strengthen democracy, including deliberation practitioners.

**#2: We need to be more intentional. What’s missing is an industry-wide commitment to a purposeful, explicit examination of patterns of power, privilege, and structural inequality underlying any public problem.** We must always examine “the problems underneath the problems,” particularly, patterns of power, privilege, racism, and disparity. It’s easier to seek diversity in social identity and then assume that the conversation about underlying inequalities will flow from having “the right people” in the room. It’s time we go beyond “inclusive convening.” What’s called for is a high level of vigilance – so that we are examining, discussing, and working to resolve power dynamics and equity considerations at every step of an engagement and political process: issue naming and framing, process design, facilitation, action planning, reporting, and action.

**#3: It’s possible to be passionate about a topic – after all, we usually draw attention to an issue because we see something that concerns us – yet avoid seeking a pre-determined end.**

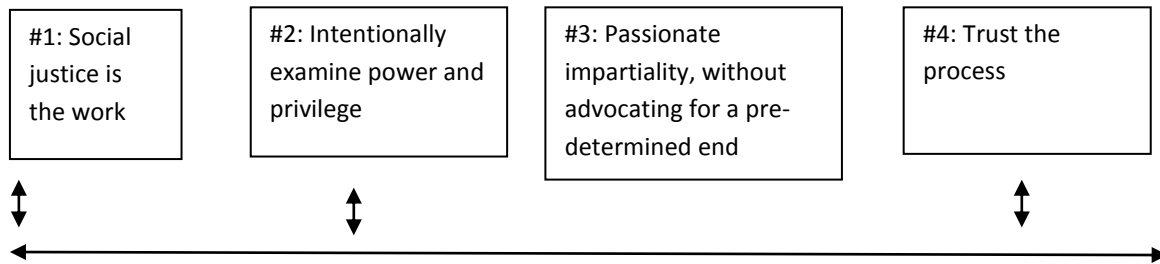
We can be simultaneously *impartial* about a topic and avoid directing any process to a pre-determined or partisan end—in order to take advantage of the positive impacts of neutrality—and *passionate* about related things, such as strengthening democracy, being inclusive, and solving public problems. “Passionate impartiality” (Martin Carcasson) takes seriously the criticisms of deliberative democracy and attempts to mitigate those concerns through their processes (from beginning to end). The apparent oxymoron of “passionate impartiality” thus serves to highlight the inherent tension in the work of deliberative democracy and ideally provides the practitioner with both the authority to bring people together across differences as well as the charge to do it in a way that honors the particular normative values underlying democracy.

**#4: Trust the process. Neutral deliberation, if it is done right, will foster social justice.** An explicit focus on equity and social justice will brand the work as partisan, taking away some of the important advantages neutrality can bring to the table. In our hyper-partisan political culture, neutral conveners and facilitators can be critical to moving conversations forward and undoing some of the negative consequences of polarization. If we define our work as focused on equity and justice, we will likely lose our legitimacy as the neutral convener, and will likely be less successful in bringing together a broad audience. We hold equity and justice in high regard – and “inclusion” is a well-established tenet of the work – but we’re in this for long term impact. Let’s first seek to change the nature of the conversations—and move away from partisanship and polarization. Such a move will then positively impact many concerns, including those tied to social justice.

**#5: The “tension” described here is overstated.** People who practice or preach “active citizen participation” are a diverse group, and their work reflects many goals and motivations. Some practitioners describe their work in terms

of “justice” or “equity.” Others, including most deliberative democracy practitioners and advocates, usually frame it in terms of “democracy” or “public deliberation.” But this generalization doesn’t begin to capture the complexity of the differences. Some observers claim that both sets of people are using the same basic tactics, with only small variations in the language they use. Others say that, particularly at the local level, organizers shift back and forth between justice-oriented and democracy-oriented approaches, depending on the situation.

We asked participants to discuss these perspectives and then, take a stand by lining up, physically, along this continuum:



The left side of the spectrum thus focuses more on social justice as the explicit focus of the work, whereas the right side focuses more on neutrality, with positions in the middle as alternatives that attempt to balance the competing ends.

One small group of people chose to create a “paradigm shift” category focused on “social and ecological sustainability” and “stewardship of the planet.” They suggested that the criteria by which products of deliberative decision-making will be evaluated be explicitly established upfront, and that democratic processes could be designed using criteria on human interaction and environmental effects. A strong commitment to both would strengthen public life.

Only one person aligned with #1. About eight people aligned with #4. The remaining participants split between #2 and #3. Five people chose to work on the new category. Each group was then instructed to use breakout rooms and discuss promising practices for each goal.

#### **IV. Identifying promising practices and strategies**

The lists of ideas generated within each perspective are provided in Appendix B. From these lists, we created a list of strategies that garnered some support across the perspectives (for all ideas generated in the discussions across small groups, see Appendix C). It should be noted, however, that we did not have ample time to develop clear consensus on these items. They were primarily developed by the primary organizers of the track. The list of common ideas included:

1. Be mindful of our choice of language, as potentially exclusive and/or compelling.
2. Be clear and explicit and transparent about goals, and design the process to match those goals. The process flows from the purpose.
3. Processes should be grounded in the words and perspectives of the community.
4. Focus on inclusion at multiple points of a process (topic selection, process design, framing, facilitation, convening, etc.).
5. Include multiple, diverse perspectives throughout.
6. Part of the task is building capacity and skills to wrestle with values tensions.
7. Study the issues, including facts, history, context, data.
8. Good skilled facilitation and convening can mitigate some tensions.

This list was approved when a small subset of the group reconvened on Saturday.

## V. Capturing the “big ideas”

We need to consider the context and goals of our work. To many practitioners, the goal is “better deliberation, public problem solving, and policy making.” With this as a goal, it may be appropriate to “trust” a carefully designed process. No one believed that opening up a process – making it more accessible and welcoming – was adequate. A trustworthy design would include the perspectives of the community, inclusion at all points in the process, and inclusion of all viewpoints on a problem.

To others, the goal of the work is “a stronger democracy,” and there seemed to be broad support for the view that a “strong democracy” is more equitable than what currently exists. Yet that is not the only perspective on democracy; another perspective is that a strong democracy is one in which people have the freedom to thrive and pursue their own version of happiness, even if it is far greater than someone else’s. It is this tension – whose version of democracy we are working toward and how to balance equity and freedom – that was left by the group unanswered. Part of the work is grappling with the values tensions in democracy, including the tension over *what kind of democracy we want to create*.

In the end, we agreed that:

- We also need to examine our own perspectives on democracy and to factor in (and possibly compensate for or balance out) that perspective in organizing, framing, convening, and facilitating a public process, and
- At the very least, we need to examine dimensions of power, privilege, and inequality at every stage of planning and designing any democratic engagement process.

What we left unresolved was the question of whether every issue must be explicitly examined through an equity perspective (e.g., race, gender, educational attainment, and class).

- Some participants felt that, if we do not include inequity in the actual perspective taking/dialogue/deliberation/problem solving, then we are “not neutral.” We would be implicitly supporting the (unequal) status quo.
- Others felt that, under some situations and with some issues, framing discussions without an explicit inequality frame may lead to better results. We must always consider inequality, and the appropriate planning process will inherently do just that, but we may not frame the issue specifically in those terms. If we always examine an issue through an equity lens, we risk our neutrality and impartiality – and potentially alienate some participants.

## VI. What other questions remain?

We were unable to address adequately these two topics:

1. *To be authentic in this work, we (civic educators, civic leaders, and deliberative democracy advocates) need to “hold up a mirror” to ourselves and be more honest about our own power and privilege, be it based on race, gender, class, educational achievement, or other social, economic, and political advantages.* To put it bluntly, the most visible deliberative democracy advocates, and civic leaders more broadly, are white, educated, and middle class. Peter Levine estimates that at least 90% of the top leaders of the 117 organizations in his [civic renewal map](#) are white and have college degrees. To what extent has historic and current structural racism gotten us to this place? What’s called for is a serious conversation about white privilege in our work.

2. *In the classroom and on campuses, how do we present all perspectives on an issue yet take a definitive stance in an effort to educate for democracy?*

In the 1990s, concerns over ideology on campuses were once again brought to the forefront. This began with a barrage of accusations of liberal bias in the classroom by conservatives, which were then discounted by academics as coming from extremists with their own political agenda. In more recent years pressures for greater transparency in the classroom have begun to open it up to public scrutiny, including by those concerned about ideological bias. A 2008 study by Smith, Mayer and Fritschler found that college faculty as a whole were significantly more likely to identify themselves as liberals when compared to the general public, but also that student complaints of liberal bias were rare and that ideology had little impact on hiring and promotion. They also found that ideological variations by discipline are wide. The most liberal departments are English, foreign language, and sociology, and the least liberal are economics, agriculture, and business. In addition institutional cultures vary greatly with some campuses having a strongly conservative culture, some a pronounced liberal culture, and many hard to pigeonhole into a category. Perhaps the most important conclusion by Smith, et. al. is that institutions of higher education are not uniformly bastions of liberal bias as initially charged, but rather typically avoid explicit consideration of political issues, much less the values and ideology underlying the perspectives on issues. As a result, colleges and universities fail to support an environment for dialogue and problem solving on current political, social, and economic matters.

Specifically, we need to consider two perspectives on this challenge:

**#1: Academics are often on the forefront of many significant normative debates in society. They have the expertise – and the obligation – to use their expertise, and classroom platform, to take a stand for the betterment of democracy.** Expert knowledge and opinion count. Teachers should never set out to indoctrinate students or manipulate public opinion, but some public questions are central to a discipline and demand a definitive stance. Consider, for example, the faculty member who teaches economics and can contribute to the public discourse on what makes the economy grow, or the environmentalist who teaches the evidence about climate change. It is unrealistic to expect people who have studied and formed an opinion on a public issue to set that expertise and knowledge aside. Well-reasoned opinions are appropriate and necessary. But while academic often has training and specialization leading to expertise, academics as “experts” have the opportunity to work *with* and not *for* others, drawing on their own expertise while acknowledging that many other forms of knowledge and experience are critically important in helping to cultivate and sustain civic agency. How do we reconcile these tensions? But more importantly, are these tensions?

**#2: It may be unrealistic to expect professors to be neutral, but they need to act neutrally in the classroom.** A faculty member’s role is to provide a venue for the robust exchange of ideas in ways that are balanced and objective. To some extent, the challenge here is one of process: who gets called on, how to treat a particular perspective, what assignments to give, how to hold back personal beliefs and opinions in the interest of encouraging independent thinking and a safe space for study and dialogue. The job is to create a learning environment where students can exchange ideas and draw their own conclusions. Neutrality, in this sense, is based on the idea that academic professionals have the opportunity to foster democratic discussion and interaction. Part of that process is to be honest with one’s own position and acknowledge that s/he is a social actor with values and claims. Depending on how neutrality is defined, we run to risk of sidelining or excluding —intentionally or not— the academic professional’s own role as a citizen, creating an artificial space in which a valueless position is manifest.

## **VII. Conclusions**

We need more opportunities to come together and talk about the difficult dimensions of the work we do – be it democracy building or educating for democracy. Certainly years of diffuse experiments in “what works” in democracy and democratic education provide some valuable lessons. The purpose of this session was to examine the nature and scope of the challenges and to brainstorm, together, “what works,” and where we need to continue to experiment, assess, and come together – again – and share. But more than simply discovering “what works,” the session invited participants to critically reflect on their own beliefs and assumptions about what neutrality means and how we might further define this term and make sense of its impact on our work in making democracy work. Without walking away with a list of best practices, the neutrality track encouraged honest discussion about how academics and practitioners alike might think about the importance of the topic of neutrality, regardless of what that means and how it’s defined.

## **Appendix A: Case studies/vignettes: What is the nature and scope of this topic?**

We will be sharing personal real-world experiences to identify themes and patterns in the neutrality challenge as it is encountered in practice. Below are a series of very brief experiences that have happened to us. We also welcome some of yours.

### ***Question areas for discussion:***

- A. Which of the experiences below stand out for you? What dimension to this topic is important to you personally? Do these kinds of things happen in your community or on your campus?
- B. Is neutrality being challenged here or is something else at stake? What are the values in conflict?
- C. What is being risked in the way that you respond? What will be the people involved learn from your behavior?

### ***Experiences:***

1. The College Republicans are going around to faculty and staff and asking them to display American flags on their doors. What do you say to them?
2. You team-teach a class on the Israeli-Palestine conflict with a newly hired faculty member. One day, a student stops by your office and says, "I was just talking with Professor So-n-So [your team-teacher]. Did you know that she has maps on her wall of the Middle East *without* Israel in there? They aren't old maps. They are new ones. I take it she doesn't believe Israel should exist?" The student, who happens to be Jewish, says she is dropping the course. What do you say or do?
3. You've organized a community dialogue on social services, and a group of men identifying themselves as a chapter of the Black Panthers show up, say they are there to "monitor the process" and refuse to participate. They quietly stand in a corner but their presence is not lost on the groups charged with deliberating.
4. You signed on with a partner to co-host a public forum, which is more of panel discussion with questions than a deliberation. Concerned that there is no place in the event for a public voice, you've convinced your partner to conduct a post-event survey that explores the attitudes and preferences of the participants, which you will provide to the local newspaper. A campaign manager for a gubernatorial candidate, who had previously agreed to participate, threatens to boycott and bad-mouth the forum if you conduct the survey. Your partner wants to cave in to his demands.
5. You are running a United Nations-sponsored workshop for "emerging human rights leaders" on deliberative democracy. While you are reviewing common principles and practices in DD, a participant asks, "I am a human rights activist committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. How can I use this process to advocate for human rights and freedoms?" How do you respond?
6. You are facilitating a public dialogue on immigration in American society. During a discussion on challenges facing immigrants, one participant suggests that the challenges have less to do with immigrant status and more to do with race. Another rolls her eyes and responds, "Oh, please, don't racialize this conversation, too." Another adds, "I can't think of too many public issues in this country that aren't affected by race and racism." Another says, "If I had known this would devolve into a conversation about race, I wouldn't have come." The conversation basically erupts. Now what?



7. You are moderating a group at a deliberative event that is operating many such groups in the same room simultaneously. The organizers of the event are pushing tables to stay on schedule to get through the deliberative process and framing paper. The participants at your table unanimously want to throw out the framing paper and craft their own response to the issue from a different perspective. You can tell your table is not alone. Where are your loyalties here?

8. In response to a preview article about your forthcoming event, a group has labeled you in the newspaper as an undercover spy for the U.N., working to take away people's cars. They show up at the door to your public deliberation armed with brochures and conspiracy theory books. How do you handle them?

Write out one of your own experiences where neutrality was challenged:

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### Appendix B: What does the term “neutrality” mean?

Participants were asked to define what neutrality meant to them and how their work connected with neutrality on index cards. Martín Carcasson examined all the answers to the first question, and organized them into the following themes:

#### Being open/inclusive to opinions (15)

An openness to different opinions and a commitment to allowing opinions to come to the table
Originally it meant giving equal credence to all ideas not taking a position. Now it means allow all to participate and express their views
Non partisan, non judgmental, open to a variety of opinions
Nonpartisan, not value free
Neutrality is not a word that we use any longer, but we talk about democratic conversations where people have a chance to consider a variety of views. We work with facilitators to help them understand how challenges to equitable voice can arise in the conversations, and we’re exploring ways to integrate equity and inclusion into organizing and recruitment and problem solving after the dialogue.
Being nonpartisan, supporting community driven goals, no matter whether I agree with them ideologically or not
Not trying to advocate a particular political perspective/outcome, yet presenting a full range of viewpoints and challenging faulty reasoning/facts
Intentional inclusion within a specific group
Inclusive and as free of bias as possible
Inclusiveness (all voices) and a process that allows everyone to share in the conversation. Our facilitators are neutral in that they don’t express their opinions. They facilitate so that others can speak their mind.
Treating others with respect, making all opinions welcome, not imposing biases, being open minded, no hidden agenda in what you’re doing, giving your values as an equal, facilitating without them present
Non partisan Not impose my views/values on others Stick with process v. content
Neutrality is absolutely key to bringing all voices/perspectives into public work
Functionally, I try to function in an open, neutral manner because it is necessary to bring diverse perspectives and stakeholders to the table (which I value)
Open, Inviting, Balanced, Accessible

### Tied to holding back on one's own opinion, not imposing (9)

Not being explicit about opinion on content
Neutrality means not taking a stand. I like impartiality better because it means not being pre-invested in a specific end outcome
Being nonpartisan, supporting community driven goals, no matter whether I agree with them ideologically or not
Leading a process without interjecting my values, positions, interests, etc., and instead providing a space for others to share and examine their own
Not trying to advocate a particular political perspective/outcome, yet presenting a full range of viewpoints and challenging faulty reasoning/facts
Inclusiveness (all voices) and a process that allows everyone to share in the conversation. Our facilitators are neutral in that they don't express their opinions. They facilitate so that others can speak their mind.
Treating others with respect, making all opinions welcome, not imposing biases, being open minded, no hidden agenda in what you're doing, giving your values as an equal, facilitating without them present
Non partisan Not impose my views/values on others Stick with process v. content
Listening to my students Reflecting before helping with conflict resolution Striving to give options to my students Looking for opposite opinions of mine when presenting to students

### Creating a particular space (4)

Neutrality means to me a welcoming and inclusive space for discourse and co-creation
Leading a process without interjecting my values, positions, interests, etc., and instead providing a space for others to share and examine their own
Providing a safe forum to enable informed decision-making and self-determination of others, goal of consensus agreement, more informed and engaged public
creating a safe space for students to learn and flourish , in practice, neutrality often means as little as nonpartisan

### Is not value-free (4)

Almost synonymous with "fairness" I can be passionate about a topic but still fairly consider another side
To me, neutrality means being reflective to the fact that I cannot be completely "neutral," that I will always be with my "values."
Nonpartisan, not value free

Neutrality means an attitude of open-endedness regarding outcomes of a democratic process—but an admission of a commitment to certain facts and values consistent with democracy

**Push backs on neutrality (4)**

I find neutrality problematic. Again, I think we should be open to hearing from others, learning and changing our opinions/actions, but I don't think it is necessary to maintain a neutral stance towards issues of oppression and gross inequality

Is meaningless

Neutrality is not a word that we use any longer, but we talk about democratic conversations where people have a chance to consider a variety of views. We work with facilitators to help them understand how challenges to equitable voice can arise in the conversations, and we're exploring ways to integrate equity and inclusion into organizing and recruitment and problem solving after the dialogue.

I believe strongly in deliberative democracy. I also struggle with the trusting the process because for me, the process (without the full spectrum of voices, especially those who have been disenfranchised and underrepresented) can fail at creating a more just democracy, which is my goal with young adults

**Tied to data/objectivity (3)**

Neutrality means adopting deliberative procedures to identify what we know already, before our debates start—and then applying that knowledge to set the playing field for current issues

Neutral because I use data to report outcomes, without having an agenda (partisan agenda) about what the outcome is.

Not trying to advocate a particular political perspective/outcome, yet presenting a full range of viewpoints and challenging faulty reasoning/facts

**Not invested in a specific outcome (2)**

Neutrality means not taking a stand. I like impartiality better because it means not being pre-invested in a specific end outcome

Neutrality means an attitude of open-endedness regarding outcomes of a democratic process—but an admission of a commitment to certain facts and values consistent with democracy

## Appendix C: Notes (newsprint) from small groups discussing strategies

### #1: Social justice is the work

Identify community assets and resources  
Identify root causes of problems  
Create forums for students and community members to share ideas/address problems (resources)  
Convene conversation about power and privilege

Social justice strategies

Redefine the term “social justice” to equal access to resources  
Create a society where all have the ability to fully participate b/c they have resources to do so

### #2: Intentionality re matters of power, privilege

Intentionally introduce multiple diverse perspectives/continuum (teaching materials)  
Increase awareness of facilitators, conveners, and organizers  
Invite people to the table (co-create process/co-plan)  
Intentionally choose co-planners  
Increase access to participation (transportation, etc.)  
Identify barriers and eliminate  
Educate people about structural inequalities  
Building alliances among groups  
Build capacity of providers to do needs assessment

### #3a: Passionate impartiality

Multiple processes that encourage perspective taking (theater of the oppressed)  
Self – reflection  
Training students to be issue mappers and critical thinkers  
Facilitation to ensure broader range of voices, including round robin and empty chair techniques, and devil’s advocacy  
Teach people how to talk about values and struggle with the tensions  
Framework for inclusion (groups and perspectives, expansive)  
Getting beyond the mainstream  
Design process so any perspective/individual can be successful

### #3b: Passionate trusting of the process

Identify, engage, and amplify traditionally under heard values  
Identify and bring values discussions into public engagement processes using dialogue as a vehicle  
Ensure all perspectives have the same opportunity of being heard and honored  
Be mindful of how language/rhetorical choices (framing issues) can promote or exclude groups  
Build common understanding of complex issues through joint fact-finding  
Create opportunities to explore the relationship science and values have to each other

### #4 Trust the process

Code of conduct (ground rules)  
Upfront about values brought to discussion & regarding process outcomes  
Facilitating conversation through specific (transferable) skills  
Listening skills (facts and relationships)  
Safe environment/validation  
Speaking own truth  
Ownership of the issue/ different perspectives  
Context important/dictates and adapts to process  
Open-ended – trust the process  
Data/facts

**“New Paradigm”: Environmental and human sustainability**

Toward a sense of deliberative democracy that includes attention to social and ecological sustainability

1. Upfront – intentional conversation re: the criteria by which products of deliberative decision-making will be evaluated
2. Explicit consideration of affect of built environment on human interaction and prospects for public life
3. Civic education that enhances commitment to strong, robust, public(s) and stewardship of public goods ☐ including the planet

Facilitation critical

Checks – self-connecting statements