

Introduction:

Foss and Griffin (1995) re-imagined traditional rhetoric by creating an alternative way of communicating across differences in opinion, namely through *invitational rhetoric* (IR). IR is a rhetorical practice that welcomes and honors all perspectives on a topic without the traditional rhetorical practices of persuasion and domination. This activity encourages participants to discover new ways of discussing and disagreeing across differing perspectives and provides real-world examples of IR practices.

Facilitator Notes:

This activity can be adapted to an asynchronous format with online discussion posts instead of class discussion.

Objectives:

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Articulate and critique current and alternative rhetorical approaches.
2. Reframe traditional rhetorical practices that end in win and loss and develop ways of conceptualizing and honoring opposing viewpoints that exist in the same space.
3. Consider new and inviting ways of engaging with those who hold different opinions and perspectives.

Time:

1 hour.

Group Size:

Small group.

Materials:

Handout (in [Downloads](#)).

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Minimization
- Acceptance
- Adaptation

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:**Cultural Self-Awareness**

- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).

Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks

- To demonstrate sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs & practices.

Empathy

- To interpret intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview.
- To demonstrate ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group.

Curiosity

- To ask complex questions about other cultures.
- To seek out and articulate answers to these questions that reflect multiple cultural perspectives.

Openness

- To initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others.
- To suspend judgment in valuing interactions with culturally different others.

Other Skills:

Teamwork; Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion.

Activity Instructions:

1. Decide how you would like to instruct students to prepare prior to this activity. Possibilities are as follows:
 - No preparation required.
 - Students can read the handout provided in [Downloads](#) prior to the activity.
 - Students can read the Foss and Griffin (1995) article entitled *Beyond persuasion: A proposal for an invitational rhetoric* prior to the activity.
 - A combination of the above bullet points.

**Asynchronous option: Students will need to at least read the handout as part of the asynchronous activity. You can decide if you would like them to also read the original article.*

2. Once you've instructed students on how to prepare, begin by discussing the concepts of traditional and invitational rhetoric introduced in the handout. Based on your preparation instructions, you can have students read the article and summary as part of the activity or jump right into discussion.

**Asynchronous option: You can skip this step and instead simply provide the handout (and original article if you wish) to students to prepare for the discussion questions below.*

3. Engage in a discussion with students, posing the following questions based on [Foss and Griffin \(1995\)](#):

- What do you think of Foss and Griffin's critique that the universal applicability and dominance of traditional rhetorical practices should be challenged?
- How would you describe IR in your own words?
- Are there any aspects of IR you feel skeptical about? Which aspects and why?
- Have you ever witnessed or participated in IR? What was the context? The outcome?
- What aspects of IR could you use in your daily life? How and when might you apply IR?
- Which real-world societal issues might benefit from IR?
- Traditional rhetoric and invitational rhetoric both have their own limitations. Can you think of other rhetorical possibilities that might reflect other cultural viewpoints and/or identities/intersections of identities?

**Asynchronous option: Instruct students to post their answers to these questions in the form of a discussion post on an online platform.*

Related Tools:

- [Disagree Better: Empathy Gym](#)
- [Invitational Rhetoric Activity](#)