



# BUILDING A LEARNING COMMUNITY THROUGH DIALOGUE

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“A self is probably the most impressive work of art we ever produce, surely the most intricate.”

Jerome Bruner

*Making Stories*

p. 14

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# WHAT IS A COMMUNITY?

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Take 2-3 minutes to write what you consider to be the characteristics of a productive community.

Then share & discuss in pairs or triads.

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# FEATURES OF DIALOGUE THAT LEAD TO LEARNING

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- be innovative
- have broad bandwidth
- recognize misunderstanding
- construct a common space
- account for the otherness of others
- acknowledge power differences
- make room for different communication genres
- be facilitated by awareness and silence

adapted from Hermans & Hermans-Konopka,  
*Dialogical Self Theory*, 2010

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DIALOGUE IS **INNOVATIVE** WHEN  
PARTICIPANTS ARE ...

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- able and willing to recognize other perspectives
  - willing to adapt, revise, and develop their initial stances
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# DIALOGUE HAS **SUFFICIENT BANDWIDTH** WHEN PARTICIPANTS ARE ...

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- open to a range of different positions relevant to a particular dialogical relationship
  - aware of some mutual range of that bandwidth
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DIALOGUE **RECOGNIZES**  
**MISUNDERSTANDING** WHEN  
PARTICIPANTS ...

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- accept misunderstanding as part of the process
  - are willing to exchange and compare viewpoints in order to work thru misunderstanding
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# DIALOGUE **CONSTRUCTS A DIALOGICAL SPACE** WHEN PARTICIPANTS ...

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- feel accepted as dialogical partners and free to express from their own point of view
  - are open to each other's experiences in which a diversity of experiences can be shared
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# DIALOGUE **VALUES OTHERNESS** WHEN PARTICIPANTS ...

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- engage in the discovery, acceptance, and even stimulation of the differences between self and others
  - acknowledge the multiplicity that exists within self and others
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# DIALOGUE **ACKNOWLEDGES POWER DIFFERENCES** WHEN PARTICIPANTS ...

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- engage voluntarily
  - consider relative social positions, whether formal or tacit
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# DIALOGUE **TAKES SPEECH GENRES INTO ACCOUNT** WHEN PARTICIPANTS ...

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- understand the range of what seems appropriate in terms of response in a given encounter
  - are willing to unpack terms that may have very different connotative meanings
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# DIALOGUE **VALUES BOTH AWARENESS AND SILENCE** WHEN PARTICIPANTS ...

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- take into account the range of stances
  - acknowledge that not speaking can represent being fully present and undistracted
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# FEATURES OF DIALOGUE THAT LEAD TO LEARNING

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- be innovative (**learn from others**)
- have broad bandwidth (**aware of dialogue range**)
- recognize misunderstanding (**part of the process**)
- construct a common space (**valued and free to express**)
- account for the otherness of others (**celebrate difference**)
- acknowledge power differences (**recognize relative positions**)
- make room for different communication genres (**consider the context**)
- be facilitated by awareness and silence (**being present**)

adapted from Hermans & Hermans-Konopka,  
*Dialogical Self Theory*, 2010

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If our intent is to create a learning community thru dialogue, what are the possibilities and the complexities for doing so as represented by this framework?

Discuss this for a bit in small groups

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Consider some activity or approach to discussion that you use in your classroom. Using this framework, how is this activity or approach already using dialogue to further learning and what might you do to amplify the dialogue and thus the learning?

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“To be, then, is to be with the other in dialogue  
unfinalizably and in an ever renewable way.”

Dimitri Nikulin

*On Dialogue*

p. xi

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“Everyone is capable of dialogue, except for a morally wrongful man, who is incapable of dialogue insofar as he treats the other as a forever finalized object.”

Dmitri Nukulin

*On Dialogue*

p. xi

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## Further Reading?

Fecho & Clifton (2017) *Dialoguing across Cultures, Identities, & Learning*. Routledge

Fecho, (2011) *Teaching for the Students*, Teachers College Press

Further Dialogue?  
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