

The background of the entire page is an abstract composition of teal and white. It features a large, thick, curved teal shape that sweeps from the top left towards the bottom right, creating a sense of movement and depth. The remaining space is white, with some subtle texture and faint teal lines suggesting a watercolor or ink-wash style.

Inviting Dialogue

Renewing the Deep Purposes of Higher Education

AT HOME

IN FRIENDSHIP

PEDAGOGY

POLEMIC

STUDENT LIFE

TEASING

WORKPLACE

DISCUSSION

RESEARCH

How do we engage each other, and where?

CONVERSATION

FACULTY GOVERNANCE

ANNOUNCEMENT

ADMINISTRATION

PERSUASION

WITH COMMUNITY

PRONOUNCEMENT

IN THE MEDIA

DEBATE

ONLINE

BANTER

LOCALLY

CROSSTALK

NATIONALLY

GOSSIP

INTERNATIONALLY

DIALOGUE

DD symposia topics

STATE OF OUR DEMOCRACY

RACE

RELIGION & TOLERANCE

Where is there silence, polarization, distraction?

POWER

CLIMATE CHANGE

COMMON WEALTH

What should and must we speak about together?

RACE IN THE ERA OF OBAMA

SUSTAINABILITY

GENDER

SLOWING IN A WIRED WORLD

ENGAGEMENT

REFLECTION

CREATIVITY

PRESENCE

What does the practice of dialogue offer us?

RESPONSIBILITY

RESPECT

EMPATHY

POWER

DISCERNMENT

CIVILITY

TIME

MOMENTUM

COLLABORATION

TRUST

Inviting Dialogue

Renewing the Deep Purposes of Higher Education

Perspectives on the Difficult Dialogues Initiative
at Clark University
from Spring 2005 to the present

THE HIGGINS SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
CLARK UNIVERSITY

2010

PROJECT PROFILE

Difficult Dialogues at Clark University was launched in 2005. It began as one of 27 independent programs nationwide selected from more than 700 proposals from colleges and universities by the Ford Foundation for their national Difficult Dialogues initiative.

The Difficult Dialogues initiative at Clark University raises awareness and develops skills of dialogue as a distinct approach to discourse, and encourages its practice among faculty, staff, and students. Through a wide range of public programs, faculty development, dialogue-affiliated courses, dialogue seminars, and work with student life, we support more conscious approaches to discourse and exchanges across difference. By engendering a *culture of dialogue* on campus, our intention is to deepen experiences of learning and engagement, and to encourage an ethos of transparency and collaboration across our community.

We offer this document for our own community as an invocation of what we've experienced and accomplished, and as a resource for others interested in encouraging cultures of dialogue in their institutions and organizations.

For additional information, please consult our website at www.clarku.edu/difficultdialogues.

Project Elements

PUBLIC SYMPOSIA

semester-long programs focused on an issue, which include talks, panel discussions, film screenings, and arts events, with the integration of dialogue throughout

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

workshops with outside consultants on dialogic practices, in-house programs, and ongoing conversations among faculty on the relationship between dialogue and pedagogy

NEW & REVISED COURSES

an average of sixteen DD-affiliated courses offered each semester, including The Dialogue Seminar – in which students engage with the current symposium topic through focused dialogic practice

STUDENT LIFE & CAMPUS CLIMATE

campus-wide collaborations and workshops, building skills of dialogue among students and student groups (i.e. Residential Advisors, Student Council, student-initiated dialogue groups), staff (workshops), and faculty (through program development and faculty governance)

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

working with various organizations within the Worcester community to foster relationships and to bring dialogue to our shared concerns

Sponsors & People

THE HIGGINS SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

The Department of International Development,
Community, and Environment (IDCE)
The Graduate School of Management (GSOM)
The Office of the Dean of the College

Sarah Buie

Director, Difficult Dialogues

Director, Higgins School of Humanities

Miriam Chion

DD Associate Director '07–'09

Jane Androski '02

DD Assistant Director '06–'09

John Sarrouf

DD Assistant Director '09–

Lisa Gillingham

Program Coordinator, Higgins School '08–

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

David Bell

Barbara Bigelow

Sarah Buie

Miriam Chion

Tim Downs

Patty Ewick

William Fisher

Amy Daly Gardner

Fern Johnson

Meredith Neuman

Edward Ottensmeyer

Walter Wright

Jason Zelesky

DD FELLOWS 09/10

Erica Getto

Amber Huffstickler

Tim Hutchinson

Laura Nowell

Nora Oliver *DD intern*

Lila Trowbridge

DD FELLOWS 08/09

Hannah Caruso

Abhishek Raman

DD FELLOWS 06/07

Ian DeZalia

Jin Min Lee

Chris Patterson

Sheryl-Ann Simpson

Introduction & Gratitudes



SARAH BUIE
*Director, Higgins School
of Humanities*

WHAT DOES EDUCATION NEED TO BE at the outset of the twentieth-first century? By what means can we seriously address the changing educational needs of our students and the contemporary challenges of our world? How do we deepen the processes and practices of learning, encourage engagement, and nurture creative action? Can we shift our collective discourse in a fundamental way – toward more honest and mutual investigation, exchange and collaboration?

For the last five years, many of us at Clark have been immersed in these questions. We've been asking about the way we do the work of higher education, and positing some new directions. We've done so through a project that is a dialogue in itself – exploratory, iterative, and open-ended. We've asked, listened, and followed it as it emerged.

Our premise is that it will take our best attention and creative collaboration to meet the challenges we face in higher education and our world. Becoming aware of the patterns of discourse in which we habitually operate is an initial and critical step. From there, dialogic practices and awareness are crucial to developing the presence, insight, common ground, and resourcefulness we need now.

The work of the Difficult Dialogues initiative at Clark began when we responded to the Ford call for proposals in the Spring of 2005. Though there was a range of more specific issues and incentives behind their call, we took *dialogue* itself as our path. Examining discourse on our campus, we began to explore the possibilities for more mindful and fruitful exchanges in classrooms, campus life, faculty governance, and in relationships with the larger community.

Implicit in the work has been the question of the “deeper purposes of higher education” and the skills and values of citizenry – of the nation and the world. We've sought answers by nurturing practices that encourage reflection, question assumptions, deepen engagement, support listening and creative collaboration, and open new possibilities. Practices that provide ground and momentum for effective action.

We've seen a great many twists and turns in the process, but *dialogue* has, in its questions and practices, seeded itself and spread, slowly and with resilience, in a variety of ways throughout our campus life. Now, five years after we first received Ford's call, the dialogue work here continues to grow and evolve.

It is a great pleasure to appreciate those who have made this work possible through their support and their participation. First, our gratitude to the Ford Foundation, which ignited this process for us and provided support for its first two years – Alison Bernstein, Bob O'Neil, Gregory Anderson, and Garrett Batten in particular. Also to our colleagues at other Difficult Dialogues schools, for their example and company, especially LaGuardia Community College, Bunker Hill Community College, Barnard College, and SUNY Albany.

Sarah Buie is Director of the Higgins School of Humanities and of the Difficult Dialogues Initiative. She is Professor in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts and has offered a number of dialogue seminars and courses with a dialogue emphasis.

We also are deeply grateful to Mark Fishman '82, member of the Clark Board of Trustees, whose generous gift has helped to fund staffing for the program.

While the Difficult Dialogues initiative at Clark is based in the Higgins School of Humanities, this work has truly been a collaborative effort among a great many people, departments, and programs. It also has been supported by the wise counsel and inspiration of many others beyond the campus.

Deepest gratitude goes to the many colleagues on the Clark faculty and staff who have helped to hold and develop these questions – in your work with students, and in the planning and sustenance of the project itself. You are the reason the project has been possible, and you've made it so in the face of daunting competing pressures. Thanks to William Fisher of IDCE for his companionship in launching this effort. Miriam Chion, former Associate Director, was a powerful partner and good friend in building the project. Walter Wright has been at the center throughout. Barbara Bigelow, Patty Ewick, and Fern Johnson are committed and inspiring companions at the heart of the project and its efforts. Dave Bell, Tim Downs, and Ed Ottensmeyer have been vital to its spirit and sustenance. Amy Daly Gardner, Jason Zelesky, and Meredith Neuman bring wonderful energy and fresh insight to the work. We are grateful for wide-ranging support within the institution, including that from John Bassett, David Angel, Nancy Budwig, Denise Darrigrand, Lynn Olson, Jack Foley, Andy McGadney, Jim Gomes, Mary Jane Rein, David Coyne, Patty Doherty, Rachael Shea, and Jane Baker.

A number of faculty members have stepped forward to undertake aspects of the project. Whether by their thoughtful reconsideration of pedagogy, teaching dialogue courses and seminars, initiating and coordinating programs, serving on the project executive or steering committees, bringing dialogue into faculty governance, offering support – they have made all the difference. They include (but are not limited to) Paul Ropp, Mary-Ellen Boyle, Kristen Williams, Jennie Stephens, Wes DeMarco, Sarah Michaels, Betsy Huang, Steve Levin, Ginger Vaughan, SunHee Gertz, Thomas Kuehne, Judi DeCew, Amy Richter, Toby Sisson, Elli Crocker, Dianne Rocheleau, Parminder Bhachu, Les Blatt, Gino DiIorio, Liza Grandia, Laurie Ross, Maria Acosta-Cruz, Ravi Perry, Priscilla Elsass, Karen Frye, Gil Pontius, Ray Munro, Rob Boatright, Joe DiRivera, Halina Brown, Anita Fabos, Marguerite Arndt, Marianne Sarkis and Paul Posner.

The steering committee of the Higgins School of Humanities has been supportive of this venture since its start. I'm grateful to SunHee Gertz, Ginger Vaughan, Jay Elliott, Marvin D'Lugo, Ben Korstvedt, Matt Malsky, Judi DeCew, Scott Hendricks, Drew McCoy, and Amy Richter.

Lisa Gillingham, Higgins School program coordinator, brings warmth, discernment, effectiveness, commitment, and humor to her very large slate of

responsibilities, and I am so grateful. John Sarrouf, new assistant director for the project, has already deepened the process and scope of our work with his grace, perceptivity and skills, working with students and colleagues alike. Lisa Coakley, former Higgins School program coordinator, was wonderfully effective and supportive in the first two years of the project. Kris Allen documented our events and served as a facilitator with her inimitable care, intelligence, and passion. She also edited this document with insight, patience, and skill.

We have been blessed with enthusiastic Fellows since the outset of our project. A team of four IDCE graduate students (Chris Patterson, Jin Min Lee, Ian DeZalia, and Sheryl-Ann Simpson) gave us great ballast for our initial work – through their ideas, commitment, facilitation skills, and high energy. Hannah Caruso '09 and Abhishek Raman '09 were the first undergraduate Fellows, and student pioneers in the project as a whole. They each have made inestimable contributions to this work inside and outside the University. Fellows Nora Oliver '10, Lila Trowbridge '12, Laura Nowell '11, Erica Getto '09, Amber Huffstickler '09, and Tim Hutchinson '10 continue in their footsteps, with commitment, skillful facilitation, and project support. Nora has also made a special contribution as a DD intern, carrying the work of dialogue into a number of new settings in the student community.

The forms through which we communicate can be dialogic too; our team of designers have understood this potential well. Many thanks to Brian Dittmar '94 for the beautiful Higgins/Difficult Dialogues calendar each semester. Stephen Albano '07 is a miracle-worker, providing posters with appeal and immediacy in record time. In this book, Mary Banas has succeeded beautifully in weaving together the voices of the project to convey the polyphony of the project itself. Ayanna Ashley Doiron and MB Flanders of Flanders + Associates were design midwives to this document, finalizing all its details and getting it to press. Jane Androski '02 has been the design voice of the project since the beginning, bringing grace and purposefulness to its many materials. Iris Arsenault of Curry Printing has provided cheerful and utterly reliable support.

Experienced guidance from a number of wise people has been critical to the success of the project. Early consultants to the faculty development process include the Public Conversations Project (Dave Joseph, Bob Stains, Meenakshi Chakraverti), Dialogos (Peri Chickering and Barbara Cecil), the Way of Council (Bonnie Mennell and Paul LeVasseur), and The Democracy Imperative (Nancy Thomas). We have been inspired and supported by the work of NCDD and Sandy Heierbacher. Special thanks to Peri Chickering for deep listening and insight, and to Bonnie Mennell and Paul LeVasseur for companionship in the work.

Diana Chapman Walsh (President Emerita of Wellesley College) is a visionary for the deeper purposes of higher education. She responded to my early inquiry

about helping us launch the project with a remarkable keynote in the Fall of 2006 and has been inspiration and presence ever since. Cynthia Enloe has offered enthusiastic support throughout and insightful counsel at critical moments. The founders of the Greenfire Retreat Center (Connie Chandler-Ward, Judith Carpenter and Adelaide Winstead) modeled and lent support to this work. Patricia Romney inspired us, with her writing on *The Art of Dialogue*, and with her keynote at the *Inviting Dialogue* conference. Elizabeth Coleman (President of Bennington College) stirs our imaginations with her work and challenges us to the implications of what we have been doing for new curricular models.

There is a growing landscape of dialogue work in higher education, which was made more visible at our recent regional conference, *Inviting Dialogue/renewing the deep purposes of higher education*. Though there are too many people and programs to name, we are grateful for the larger movement into which our work can flow, contribute, and be supported, and for all that others are doing.

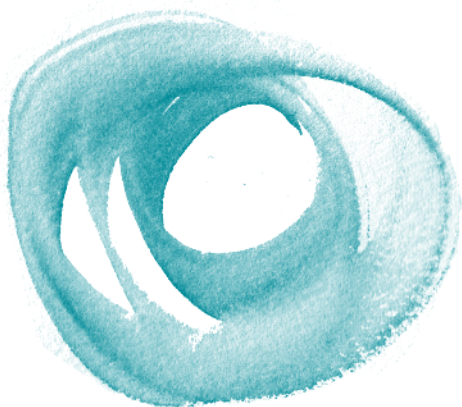
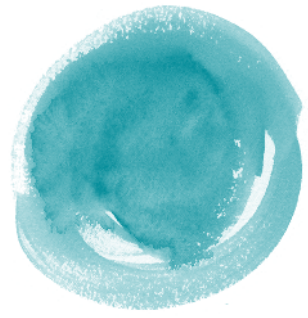
Thank you to those many participants in the activities of the program – students, speakers, panelists, artists, faculty, community members – it is you who show up for the practice of dialogue, and you that carry its fruits into the world.

Jane Androski '02 began as project assistant in March 2006, became the Assistant Director, and served until August 2009. Together we grew into the project, its implications, and its potential. She gave administrative support, form and vision to the project, with clear-sighted thinking, an open heart, and lots of gentle humor. There could have been no better partner with whom to build such a venture.

Walter Wright has balanced the roles of colleague, Dean of the College, DD executive committee member, and husband to the project director with remarkable grace. His counsel, commitment to, and steady support for the project are part of its foundation. I am also deeply grateful for family and friends who have been so supportive over the years of the project.

Alice Coonley Higgins established an endowment for the Higgins School of Humanities nearly twenty-five years ago. The School has proven a perfect home for this endeavor, and the project has helped fulfill the School's mission as a public forum. Alice spoke and wrote of her desire that Clark "educate the whole person," and I hope and trust she would approve of our efforts. We are beneficiaries of her vision.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Susan Bue". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'S'.



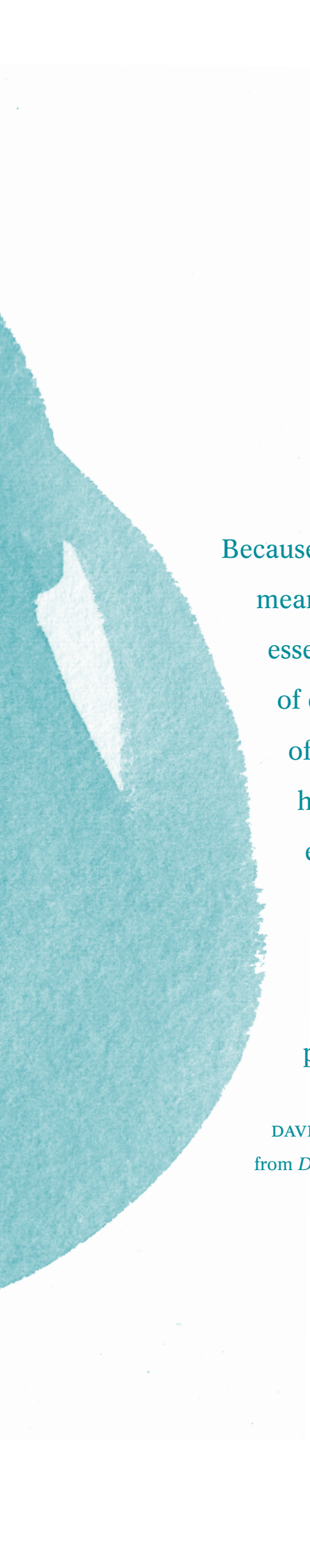
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Intentions



Because the nature of Dialogue is exploratory, its meaning and its methods continue to unfold.... Its essence is learning...as part of an unfolding process of creative participation between peers. The process of Dialogue is a powerful means of understanding how thought functions.... Without a willingness to explore this situation and to gain a deep insight into it, the real crises of our time cannot be confronted, nor can we find anything more than temporary solutions to the vast array of human problems that now confront us.

DAVID BOHM, DONALD FACTOR, PETER GARRETT
from *Dialogue – a proposal*



WHY DIALOGUE, AND WHY NOW? Our efforts to establish a culture of dialogue on campus are in response to our challenging times. We have chosen to focus on how we communicate with each other as many of our social structures (the economy and systems of governance, education, and communication) are stressed to the limit, and the assumptions about the natural world on which they are based are unraveling. In the face of uncertainty and risk, the need for genuine communication, problem solving, and visioning among us is great.

At the same time, discourse in both our political and educational institutions too often fails to serve us. As generated by the public media, including the wide-sweeping impact of the internet, our collective discourse is increasingly shallow, polarizing, “cyberbalkanized” (Cass Sunstein), and unreliable, serving more as entertainment or distraction.

I think that in the past few decades the idea of liberal arts has drifted toward a model that is individualistic, entrepreneurial, instrumental, and competitive (neo-liberal arts?). I submit that attentiveness to the promise and possibility of dialogue may re-invigorate the most valuable elements of liberal education. — PATTY EWICK *Sociology*

Many of us are asking how we can make meaningful and effective contributions in these times. What is the role of higher education and educators in this social context? In the last fifty years higher education, under the pressures of specialization and corporatization, has increasingly moved away from the work of fostering citizenry. Questions of meaning, civic responsibility, and engagement – once the province of liberal arts education – have long been marginalized by humanists and scientists alike. Yet with sweeping global shifts under way, many assumptions on which current disciplines, curricula, and pedagogies were developed are being challenged, and the social structure and work toward which we orient our students (and their careers) are rapidly changing.

In many ways, however, our institutions of higher education are still the best sites in our society for developing the creative, ethical, and pragmatic



My first real encounter with dialogue came during my first meeting in the Dialogue Seminar. We sat in a circle and were introduced to the concepts of active listening and the acceptance of silence as virtue. My initial reaction to the class was one of skepticism, but at the end of the first session I felt my foundations being thoroughly contested. Why couldn't we just listen? Is simple attention so impossible? These were questions about myself and my understanding of the world which, until then, I had taken for granted.

ABHISHEK RAMAN

Difficult Dialogues Fellow 08/09

insights our times require. By acknowledging our common challenges, as well as our resources and opportunities, we can reclaim some of our deep purposes. It will begin with good questions.

How do we re-orient to the scope of the change under way, and our role in it? Can we nurture, not only critical thinking, but also moral intelligence, meaningful engagement, and creative problem solving in relation to the real crises of our time? Can we provide young people not only intellectual content, but also orientation and pathways for those challenges?

As David Bohm tells us, we won't find more than temporary solutions to the crises of our times without attention to root causes, both in the nature of thought and in our collective discourse.

Thus we have made attention to discourse itself our focus during these last four years at Clark. We've asked about the state of discourse in our society and in higher education. We've sought practices with the potential to be transformative and real tools for solving problems. An understanding of dialogue, both in theory and practice, has been the heart of our work.

We set out intentions in our proposal to the Ford Foundation by stating... *we will examine and engender the kinds of dialogue critical to a vibrant educational environment, as well as to a democratic society. We will develop among the community of faculty and students the skills to facilitate and participate in open, honest exchange and respectful expressions of differences. We will step outside accepted norms of political correctness, institutional and individual, to foster creative opportunities of genuine dialogue and "a stream of meaning flowing among and through and between us" (David Bohm, On Dialogue, 1996), making Clark's Difficult Dialogues initiative a program that will impact the entire campus community.*

In so doing, we've followed dialogue through the full spectrum of its meaning and application – from its slow, conscious, unfolding practice (opening inquiry, challenging assumptions, encouraging listening, allowing insight) to its potential as ground for collective engagement and effective action. In seminars, workshops, meetings, and classrooms to large community gatherings and public events, in the development and production of the dialogue project itself, and within institutional frameworks, we've brought patterns of discourse into relief. A sense that higher education does have a

powerful role to play has sustained and given momentum to the work, as well as the hope that our community could serve as a microcosm of the whole.

LIKE CONSIDERING A GOOD QUESTION, the practice of dialogue calls us to be present. It loosens assumptions, reveals tacit constructs, and invites further exploration. Like dialogue, a real question is a threshold to the unconditioned. If we ask it consciously, we may become radically available to ourselves, others, and to the unknown. The potential is that we gain access to deeper intelligence, our own and that of others. From there something new can happen, often in the forms of insight, empathy, and inspiration.

How do we engage each other, and where?

Where is there silence, polarization, distraction?

What should and must we speak about together?

What does the practice of dialogue offer us?

These were our good questions. Sensing a vital lapse in our collective discourse, we sought to name it, know it, and to act on its behalf. By doing so, we followed these questions into uncharted territory, and many of us did become available to each other, ourselves, and the process in unprecedented ways (see sections on Praxis and Reflections).

The questions have been steady prompts. They have slowed us down, disrupted our habits, provided us with tempting challenges and some remarkable satisfactions. They've provoked fresh perspectives on communication within classrooms, committee meetings, faculty assembly, public programs, e-mail list-serves, service learning programs, residential life and student organizations, and on the university as an organization and employer. By considering them, we've been called on to challenge assumptions, open new options, and become more engaged.

This kind of practice also naturally calls out the framework and dynamics of the system in which it takes place. What kind of community do we want? What are the norms of discourse in pedagogy and practices of the academy as a whole? How do these norms shape the educational process? Most importantly, what practices of discourse will align our work with our best intentions?

Our questions have elicited an exploration based on listening and response, shared responsibility, and organic development. We've come to see the deeper questions and intentions of dialogue practice gradually, through the process. Among them, professional assumptions, institutional constructs, systemic power relations, and discourse itself have become more visible, thus available for consideration, exploration, and insight.

At Clark, the potential of dialogue to facilitate and deepen our thinking and our behavior on these and other issues of concern (race, religion, gender, democracy, climate change, sustainability) continues to unfold. The relevance of these practices in a larger context is timely and widespread, and the value of its practice as a basis for effective action increasingly urgent.



Difficult Dialogues Keynote Address

November 1, 2006

DIANA CHAPMAN WALSH

“So I see at the heart of your project profound intellectual questions the academy needs to be taking up in our difficult dialogues, and profound institutional questions as well: Who our students can be if we attend more closely to their true intellectual needs. How our work lives can be, if we attend to one another, our aspirations and our struggles. What our institutions can be, if we attend to the whole enterprise as a shared responsibility.

And the world we could create, if we could learn to engage each other fruitfully across the differences and the silences that are polarizing and disempowering us and undermining our ability to govern ourselves responsibly. How do we take some risks and break down some of the barriers that perpetuate the over-commitment, overwork, accelerated pace, and resulting isolation, polarization, suspicion and mistrust that are, I think, the arch-enemies of thoughtful dialogue and, with it, deep and integral learning.”

DIANA CHAPMAN WALSH

President, Wellesley College 1993–2007

Professor Patricia Ewick
(at right), in conversation
with students and Worcester
community members at the
event *A Brighter Future:
Opening Our Hearts to Our
Neighbors*, November 2008



The Heart of Liberal Education

Dialogue as a Practice within the Academy

Patricia Ewick

My understanding of dialogue has altered significantly since I joined the Difficult Dialogues Project four years ago. At first, I thought that dialogue was a pedagogical technique designed to encourage students to speak up about difficult and controversial subjects. Over time, I have learned that dialogue is more than an instrumental teaching technique; it is more *poiesis* than *techne*. I have come to appreciate that dialogue embodies much of what lies at the heart of a liberal education and, as such, has the potential to revive our commitment to this purpose.

First, dialogue is fundamentally committed to acknowledging and examining the assumptions that lie behind our interpretations and explanation of the world. Engaging in dialogue entails not only finding out what others think, but discovering why they think that way, and by way of that, why we think the way we do. This knowledge of self and other emerges out of a deliberate and respectful effort to excavate the often unstated foundation of ideas, judgments, values, and beliefs. Dialogue resists flattening, simplifying assumptions and instead acknowledges and embraces the complexity of phenomena. It can contain contradiction, and even conflict, without rushing to judge or reconcile differences. It involves acquiring what C. Wright Mills called “skills of controversy with oneself [and others]” which we call “critical thinking.”

Second, the practice of dialogue reminds us that thinking – critical or otherwise – is not something that is done silently and by one’s self. By offering an opportunity to mutually discover what too often goes unspoken, dialogue

also makes explicit the fact that the production of knowledge and understanding is always a collective enterprise, whether we recognize it as such or not. Noting the dialogical nature of thinking, Bahktin states “the word in language is half someone else’s.... The word does not exist in neutral and impersonal language...but rather in people’s mouths, in other people’s contexts, serving other peoples intentions: it is from there that one must take the word and make it one’s own.” In other words, tracing ideas to their source within historically situated subjects, ourself and others, is a powerful antidote to the reification of thought that so often stymies communication, creativity, and consciousness.

I think that in the past few decades the ideal of the liberal arts has drifted toward a model that is individualistic, entrepreneurial, instrumental, and competitive (neo-liberal arts?). I submit that an attentiveness to the promise and possibility of dialogue may re-invigorate the most valuable elements of liberal education.

Patty Ewick is Professor of Sociology and a member of the Difficult Dialogues Executive Committee; she participated in the DD faculty development process. Her courses “Punishment, Politics and Culture” and “Deviance” are regularly listed as dialogue courses.



Context

It occurs to me, surveying the Columbia undergraduates, that the terrorists did win...since September 11 we've become more like them. The essence of the way zealots think about the world is polar: good and evil, holy and profane, them and us.... President Bollinger, who recently navigated a pitched battle about academic freedom and civil classroom discourse on his own campus, described intellectual inquiry as this: "To learn is to ask: 'Is that true? Maybe there's something to what she just said. Let me think about it.'"

'Is that true? Maybe I should change my mind.'

When is the last time you can remember a public dialogue that followed that useful course?

ANNA QUINDLEN, about the Columbia University graduation in *Newsweek*, May 30, 2005



Issues of power in the political street art of Oaxaca, Mexico, were the focus in this event celebrating the photographs of Aaron Tukey. His exhibition, *War of the Walls / Rebellion and Graphic Art in Oaxaca*, and this panel including Dianne Rocheleau (Geography), Elizabeth Kubick (Witness for Peace), and Tukey were part of the DD symposium on *Power* in the Fall of 2007.

AMERICAN SOCIETY IN THE LAST TWO DECADES has been an especially challenging context for the values and conditions that support practices of dialogue. The Constitution and thus our democracy were based on the notion that we are best able to govern ourselves through civil discourse, in which we deliberate and dialogue across our differences. Perhaps these aspirations, laid out at the launch of our national experiment in democracy, have never been truly fulfilled; the politics of the last fifty years certainly have been increasingly polarized.

Our public discourse as well in the last two decades has become more simplified, coarsened, and polarizing, and often absent altogether. Public conversations on real social needs and creative solutions have limited

United States colleges and universities serve as privileged social spaces dedicated to full and unflinching examination of fundamental issues, without regard to vested interests that may attach to one or another outcome. — THE DRAMA OF DIVERSITY AND DEMOCRACY/ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (AAC&U, 1995)

venues. In the media and politics, issues of difference are strategically flattened or become the subject of wild distortions.

While polarization and dampening of discourse had been on the rise for decades, they intensified still further in the winter of 2005. George W. Bush had just entered his second term with a small and contested margin. Efforts to control public inquiry and civil rights had increased since 9/11, with the Executive branch claiming them necessary to protect U.S. citizens from potential terrorist threats. With the war in Iraq under way, misrepresentations and abuses had begun to leak out; the media as a whole seemed unreliable for accurate reporting and analysis. While tensions between the political left and right were exacerbating, public dialogue or engagement on the issues was subdued. At Clark, where the cultural mythology is one of progressive politics and activism, there was little open discussion among members of the community about any of these issues.

United States colleges and universities from the beginning acknowledged and embraced a special responsibility to ensure that the nation's leaders would be well prepared, intellectually and morally, for their responsibilities in a republic founded on reasoning. Traditions of free speech and unfettered inquiry were woven into the very fabric of the American research university. Intellectual diversity, dialogue and deliberation constitute distinctive strengths of American higher education.

Our nation's campuses have become a highly visible stage on which the most fundamental questions about difference, equality, and community are being enacted. To this effort, filled with promise and fraught with difficulty, the academy brings indispensable resources: its commitments to the advancement of knowledge and its traditions of dialogue and deliberation across difference as keys to the increase of insight and understanding.

THE DRAMA OF DIVERSITY AND DEMOCRACY/HIGHER EDUCATION AND AMERICAN COMMITMENTS
REPORT, AAC&U, 1995

Until relatively recently, many considered the academy as a major resource for sustaining public discourse. A number of founders of our first institutions of higher education (John Witherspoon at Princeton, Benjamin Rush at Penn, among others) extolled the values of the Scottish Enlightenment, including those of ethical education, free inquiry, and the role of dialogue in civic responsibility. In the 19th century the introduction of the German research university model, used to create Clark University, challenged these priorities. However, they persisted in many venues, especially in the numerous liberal arts colleges founded in that period.

If once steward to academic freedom, critical thinking, and skills of citizenry, the academy has increasingly skirted the role of “advancing public understanding of the large societal issues that confront us all.” Among other agendas, its focus has moved to preparing students for careers within corporate economy, meeting demands of government and corporate research funding, “marketing” higher education experiences to student and parent “consumers,” and staying abreast of briskly evolving information technologies. Members of the faculty – stretched between responsibilities of teaching, research, and service – are chronically overextended. In addition, faculty career incentives and disciplinary frameworks are geared toward narrowly defined research goals, not the work of civic engagement of those once called “public intellectuals.”

All economic pressures in one guise or another, these priorities have led to more corporate values and practices (marketing, outcomes assessment, etc.) within the organizational behaviors of higher education. In this context, colleges and universities are less conducive to practices of reflection and questioning of assumptions than they once might have been. They are less attuned to re-evaluating their role in meeting the contemporary challenges of our world.

In the academy, the best way to deal with controversy and difficult dialogues is to engage with those with whom one disagrees, not to isolate them...we must develop rigorous academic programs to engage students in constructive dialogue around difficult subjects. Students

2005 George W. Bush is inaugurated for a second term • A student leader complains that MUCH OF THE STUDENT BODY NEVER TALKS ABOUT RACE, RELIGION, OR THE STATE OF OUR DEMOCRACY • Faculty assembly consists of reports from administrators and committee chairs punctuated by pronouncements from a few outspoken colleagues • FORD FOUNDATION ISSUES A CALL FOR PROPOSALS for their Difficult Dialogues initiative in April 2005 • Despite their private concerns, COLLEAGUES RARELY SPEAK TO EACH OTHER ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY, and most are hesitant to raise political issues in classrooms • Following a series of small lunch conversations instigated to build interest and support, a number of faculty work to develop a proposal for Ford • There is LITTLE EVIDENCE OF POLITICAL AWARENESS, let alone protest, among the students • Students report that they avoid raising issues of race or religion or politics among themselves, as they fear the confrontations that might arise • “GOD KNOWS WHAT THEY TALK ABOUT,” one colleague bemoans • Small groups of humanities faculty meet at lunch through the Fall, talking of the increasing need for more engagement around difficult issues we are facing as a nation and world • WE BELIEVE WE WILL DO THE WORK WE HAVE ASKED THE FORD FOUNDATION TO HELP US WITH, WHETHER OR NOT WE RECEIVE THE GRANT • We learn of our Difficult Dialogues GRANT FROM FORD in December 2005 • **2006** The dialogue project continues to develop through faculty collaboration in executive and steering committees and symposium planning groups • SEVENTEEN FACULTY PARTICIPATE IN THE DD FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS with consultants throughout the Fall, and other faculty and staff attend a one-day workshop on dialogue • A FEW JUNIOR COLLEAGUES WITHDRAW FROM THE PROGRAM — one fears speaking openly among colleagues of different ranks; another cites the “liberal pretensions” of the program and the dangers of dialogue in our culture • THE FIRST *Dialogue Reader* IS ASSEMBLED AND CIRCULATED • For the DD program launch, a spectacular installation designed by advanced design students fills the staircase of the University Center and STAYS UP ALL YEAR • Leaders on both sides of the abortion issue share their experiences with dialogue over a ten-year period • Three hundred community members participate in the DAY OF LISTENING, A CAMPUS-WIDE EXPERIENCE OF ATTENTION TO SKILLS OF LISTENING •



Diana Chapman Walsh, president of Wellesley College, tell us in her keynote address

that “AN IMPORTANT GOAL OF WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS CALLING THE

ACADEMY BACK TO ITS HIGHEST PURPOSES.” • **2007** Thirty

faculty members across disciplines sit together in a circle to

share THE FEARS AND JOYS OF TEACHING – and to consider

what a more dialogic emphasis means or would mean

to them • A Conversation Café following the film *Race*

is the Place BRINGS COMMUNITY MEMBERS TOGETHER

IN DEEPENING CONVERSATION ON THEIR OWN

EXPERIENCES AROUND RACE • The provost joins a

dialogic process with full- and part-time faculty as they

voice concerns about the role of non-tenure track faculty •

A SPOKEN WORD CHORUS ON FAITH DEVELOPED BY A JUNIOR FACULTY

MEMBER weaves the voices of students and their religious experiences •

The Presidential race begins; BARACK OBAMA AND HILLARY CLINTON

ANNOUNCE THEIR CANDIDACIES • Six faculty members participate in a

panel following the screening of a film on whiteness (produced by

one of them), and SOME STUDENTS EXPRESS FRUSTRATION AT

FACULTY ATTITUDES THAT THEY FEEL ARE “BEHIND THE TIMES” •

Dialogue Seminars facilitated by Difficult Dialogues Fellows are

offered for the first time • Ford emphasizes assessment in

relationship to the project “outcomes,” citing the need to

translate the results of project work into language that

can be understood by their trustees • Social science

colleagues charged with developing such

measures are repeatedly frustrated in creating

them • Anne Fadiman, Diana Eck, and

Cynthia Enloe highlight our Fall

symposium with THEIR EXPERIENCES AND

INSIGHTS ON DIALOGUE AND POWER • **2008**

THE STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT INTRODUCES

DIALOGIC PRACTICES TO STUDENT COUNCIL

PROCEEDINGS • The Climate Change symposium is

launched with a day-long Focus the Nation event,

in which 27 FACULTY AND NEARLY 400 MEMBERS

OF THE COMMUNITY meet over the course of the

day in sessions that include dialogue as a

component •



continued on page 55

need this training to take their places as successful leaders in civic life to participate as members of our democracy. — FORD FOUNDATION CALL FOR PROPOSALS, APRIL 2005

How can a university overcome the obstacles present in today's academy and society to engender the kind of open, thorough, and respectful dialogue about difficult issues essential to the maintenance of a democratic society? — CLARK UNIVERSITY PROPOSAL

The most important aspect of freedom of speech is freedom to learn. All education is a continuous dialogue — questions and answers that pursue every problem on the horizon. That is the essence of academic freedom.

WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS

The Ford Foundation's call for proposals for its new Difficult Dialogues initiative in April of 2005 merged these two concerns (the challenges to our deliberative democracy in terms of public discourse, and the role of higher education regarding those) into one and reached out to the nation's institutions of higher education for proposals that would address them. By naming the problem, as well as lending its support and credibility to the initiatives that followed, the Ford Foundation made a significant contribution to opening a conversation on the state of discourse itself, both public and educational, and how we might reclaim it.

IN ITS INITIATIVE, FORD FOUNDATION SOUGHT TO bring the “indispensable resources” of the academy to bear on a national climate of polarization and mistrust, even though the academy as such a forum had been increasingly limited by a cultural climate of silencing and avoidance. As we wrote in our proposal: *Despite Clark's commitment to and framework around these goals, conversations with faculty and students reveal a reality quite different from our stated intentions. Too often, important dialogues simply are not taking place...our initial research suggests that many Clark faculty and students shun controversial topics altogether (“everyone I know avoids confrontation,” one senior reported).... Under these circumstances, the vital practices of discernment, critical thinking, and free academic inquiry are threatened...*

We find that faculty and students at Clark lack skills for engaging in controversial discussion.... In addition, many faculty lack experience in facilitating difficult and potentially volatile processes which can involve

dealing with more than intellect alone.... Whether arising from fear, avoidance, denial, lack of critical thinking or from reluctance to engage in difficult dialogues – silences such as these undermine the basic premises and values of a liberal education...

These silences occur in the widening gap between the content of our communal discourse and the realities of our political, economic and social world. We believe that this problem has become systemic and indicative of what is happening not only at Clark, but in contemporary American education as well as in public discourse across the United States. However, Clark is a revealing case study, given its explicit values, its progressive history, and its workable size; as such it can serve as a model in this regard.

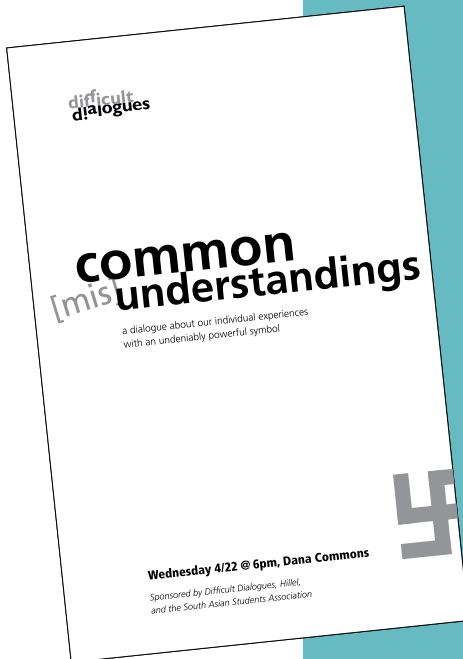
It was into this climate that the Ford Foundation came forward. They called to the nation's colleges and universities for proposals in which civil discourse across difference was the unifying principle. The call was an open one, the request as much a question about the nature of dialogue as a call for a specific action or solution. At Clark, both William Fisher, director of International Development, Community, and Environment Department (IDCE), and Sarah Buie, director of the Higgins School of Humanities, immediately sensed the significance of their initiative and began a collaboration leading to an initial proposal submission in mid-May 2005.

Nearly 730 institutions of higher education responded to the Ford proposal, from every corner of the country and from a widely disparate group of schools. From this large initial group, about 130 institutions were invited to submit complete proposals. Clark was one of 27 colleges and universities to win full funding from Ford; we learned of the award in early December 2005.

Common [mis]Understandings: *coming together around a controversial symbol*

DD special event, Spring 2009

DIALOGUE AS 'THE SPACE BETWEEN'



In their Higgins School seminar *Asians and Jews in the United States*, Professors Betsy Huang and Shelly Tenenbaum mentioned the swastika in a lecture on anti-Semitism. Students from India who had positive associations of the swastika as a Hindu symbol of good luck and prosperity were surprised when their American peers spoke passionately about their association between the swastika and Nazi anti-Semitism.

Shortly after this discussion, the South Asian Student Association (SASA) met to plan an event to celebrate the holidays of Eid and Diwali. When members wanted to include swastikas in the decorations, Kirtana Tanuku '10, president of the group and a student in the course on *Asians and Jews*, realized that this symbol might be offensive to Jewish students on campus. Kirtana took the initiative to write to Shira Moskowitz '09, president of Hillel and also a student in the course.

The executive boards of SASA and Hillel met, and by the end of the meeting, SASA agreed to postpone displaying the swastika until next year. The groups made a commitment to host an educational event on campus about the multiple meanings of this powerful symbol. The event brought over fifty community members together for a presentation and dialogue about the ancient symbol.

In the Spring of 2009, Kirtana and Shira approached Difficult Dialogues for help in creating a public event around the various cultural perceptions of the swastika. Their goal was to create a dialogue in which participants could share their experiences with this symbol, and to hear those of others. They recognized that

thoughtful planning and facilitation were needed to create dialogue around this potentially volatile issue. During the semester, the DD program served as a base for their efforts, offering resources on dialogic practice and a context for their event. Their story is evidence of the seeds of dialogue have spread throughout our community.

We are not asking you to alter the feelings that the swastika evokes. Instead, we are asking you to learn about the sincere experiences of others who have had different cultural encounters with the swastika.

SHIRA MOSKOVITZ '09
Clark undergraduate
President of Hillel

JANE ANDROSKI '02
DD Assistant Director

voices

Working across Disciplines

Faculty Engagement with Dialogue

Barbara Bigelow

One of the most striking outcomes of the Difficult Dialogues Initiative has been the faculty commitment to bring dialogue to as many corners of Clark University as possible – whether through the Executive and Steering Committees, the faculty development process, teaching dialogue courses, or planning and engaging in the symposia.

One of the reasons for this commitment is the isolation many faculty feel as a result of the “siloeing” of academic departments. Collaboration between departments, whether to coordinate teaching or to engage in multi-disciplinary research, is rare. People publish in different journals and attend different conferences, and these differences extend into their teaching and research. When collaboration or interaction around issues of research or teaching does occur, it is because of individual initiative or serendipity and not because of procedures or processes

encouraging collaboration and interaction in our broader or immediate academic environments.

The Difficult Dialogues Initiative has provided an opportunity for faculty to engage with each other across disciplines in ways that have begun to disassemble these silos. For instance, once a month, faculty who teach Difficult Dialogues courses come together for lunch to engage in dialogue about teaching. All of the faculty who attend, including those who have been at Clark for many years, have commented that they have never experienced anything like this before. Introducing dialogue into the classroom has meant making transparent the power relationship between faculty and students, and moving between the traditional teacher-student mode of teaching and a less conventional facilitator-participant mode. Faculty share instances in which they have successfully, or not so successfully, moved

Panel of professors Betsy Huang, Anne Geller, Odile Ferly, and Aimee Sands, *What Makes Me White*, March 29, 2007



between these roles, and through this sharing, risk the vulnerability implicit in admitting “mistakes” in an academic environment. The willingness to take this risk reflects the trust that has developed in the dialogue process and in each other.

The Difficult Dialogues Initiative has successfully disassembled some of the barriers that exist among faculty, but some are deeply embedded, particularly those related to a promotion and tenure system that reward teaching, research, and “traditional” service. The official reward system values teaching, research, and service to the field and the university. Although participation in the Difficult Dialogues Initiative does not necessarily reward faculty on these measures, both tenured and untenured faculty are willing to commit significant time and energy to the committees and symposia, to introducing dialogue into their classes, and to the opportunities that arise in Clark’s nascent culture of dialogue.

The Difficult Dialogues Initiative addresses a hunger for connection and authenticity in the faculty that had not been articulated or perhaps even known until the opportunity to sate it emerged. Yet, a reality of academics at any research institution is the need for untenured faculty to become a recognized expert in a clearly defined area of research. Activities that are perceived as derailing untenured faculty from these paths are typically discouraged. Untenured faculty have found their involvement to provide them with opportunities for connection and creativity, but have also expressed concern about the extent to which this involvement will be valued. This creates a dilemma that senior faculty involved in dialogue need to help junior faculty address.

Culture change takes time, and silos built up over decades and supported by established and institutionalized norms and values are slowly disassembled. As we move into the future, our greatest challenge is to continue the process of embedding dialogue into the Clark culture. Many tenured associate and full professors are actively engaged in dialogue, and even some who have remained on the periphery have initiated opportunities. For example, in the Spring of 2007, a faculty member hosted a lunch and dialogue for faculty on race and racial issues at Clark University. The lunch was well attended by tenured and untenured faculty, and participants left engaged and energized, having taken part in an experience unique in their time at Clark. Activities such as these operate to further disassemble silos and provide opportunities for tenured faculty to reach out across departmental boundaries to their untenured colleagues. The process is akin to planting seeds. Not all of them will grow, but as time passes, each seed that takes root will cast its own seeds.

Barbara Bigelow is a professor of Management at Clark University, a member of the Difficult Dialogues Executive Committee and was a participant in the DD faculty development process. Her course “Introduction to Management” is regularly listed as a dialogue course, as well as her graduate-level seminar on Dialogue.





Dialogue



shed preconceptions

think together, listen together

understand power

respect the coherence of another's view

release fear

open to uncertainty

ask real questions

hear something new

create conscious space



be open to
uncertainty

listen
together

hear
something
new

think
together

release
fear

understand
power

DD Project Launch
2006 UNIVERSITY CENTER
INSTALLATION

Installation by senior-level graphic design students – Kara Scimeca, Tom Jankiewicz, and Nathan Chin – to raise awareness of the Difficult Dialogues initiative within the Clark community. The phrases used in the installation are a reflection of our intentions for dialogue and continue to serve as points of orientation for our work.

ask real
questions

create
conscious
space

“THIS CENTURY MUST BE ONE OF DIALOGUE,” urges His Holiness the Dalai Lama. But what is dialogue, really...something precise and substantial, or too often simply a feel-good catch-all concept?

At Clark, we have found the term *dialogue* to be a potent gift from the Ford Foundation. The name *Difficult Dialogues* seems to speak to people when they hear it. Beyond the catchy nomenclature and compelling concept of DD, we saw immediately that *dialogue* itself – its practice, precision, and deeper implications – was the key to our work. From the beginning we focused not only on specific issues around which dialogue was needed but also on the practice, which had increasingly “gone missing” in our public discourse and on our campus.

Our premise has been that no lasting shifts in our engagement of *difficult* issues can happen without looking deeply at the “unnoticed rules of the system,” including current practices of discourse and our assumptions about them. These conventions and social norms include many forms of discourse that tacitly or explicitly discourage listening, respect, sharing power, engagement, or shifts and evolutions in thinking. (For more information on these forms of discourse, please consult the discourse continuum in the Appendix.)

In contrast, discourse practices akin to dialogue – attentive listening, the ability to learn something new (even change one’s mind), willingness to examine assumptions, suspend judgments, and share power – focus on the process of relating. By inviting exchange, understanding, and new ideas, they undergird critical thinking, deliberation, and problem solving. These practices are necessary to empathetic relationships, collaboration, and effective action, and are crucial to the process of a healthy and democratic society. Yet for all they offer, they are counter-cultural and rare in most aspects of our public or private lives.

The word *dialogue* is often thought to refer to an exchange between two beings. But with a closer reading of its roots we find *dia* (“through”) and *logos* (“word” or “meaning” or “to gather together”). So it is a *flow of meaning or relationship*, a process or space that supports the flow and/or gathering of meaning. And it can take a variety of forms.

Democratic manners develop as we engage in the *difficult dialogues* between disparate community ideals and identify points of intersection in community experiences, aspirations, needs, successes, and failures. In this vision, we recognize that engagement across differences is inherent in the moral democratic creed upon which this nation was founded.

THE DRAMA OF DIVERSITY AND DEMOCRACY/HIGHER EDUCATION AND AMERICAN COMMITMENTS REPORT, AAC&U, 1995

As a microcosm of the larger culture, Dialogue allows a wide spectrum of possible relationships to be revealed. It can disclose the impact of society on the individual and the individual's impact on society. It can display how power is assumed or given away and how pervasive are the generally unnoticed rules of the system that constitutes our culture. But it is most deeply concerned with understanding the dynamics of how thought conceives such connections.

DAVID BOHM

The practice has simple tenets. It begins by establishing agreements which seed trust and insure each person is heard. Participants agree to share time, speak honestly, listen with respect, and acknowledge issues of power. They look to ask real questions and explore with an intention to gain understanding.

They agree to challenge their assumptions, even listen for other possibilities; they make an effort to set aside fears and the need to win. Fundamentally they must be willing to engage, given the assurance of some safety if they do. (For specific dialogue agreements and methods, please consult the Appendix.)

So dialogue is intentional conversation – a space of civility around a topic, of conflict resolution or a prelude to action. It can also be a process by which a group discerns what serves its collective well-being, as in native councils. We can even call it dialogue when through heightened consciousness, we challenge our assumptions and are mindful of our exchanges, whether alone or in company. While it most often calls for a partner, a group, a circle, dialogue can be the solitary process of creative response, a work of art evolving in iterations.

Our culture presents countless obstacles to our willingness and ability to be genuinely present to a dialogic exchange. Without a context of trust within which people experience themselves as free and equal, the prospect of real dialogue is limited. Spaces of commerce, governance, education, and even those of friends and family often lack the pre-conditions for dialogue; other patterns of discourse are the norm.

Yet fear around the prospect of dialogue is a telling indicator of its potential. To acknowledge and consciously address real or perceived barriers to dialogue is a necessary passage to its benefits; that transit is a microcosm of the work as a whole. In addition, the intentionality of dialogue serves us in holding tensions and paradoxes, and experiencing the “spaces between,” where new and synthetic awareness may arise. The Public Conversations Project describes it as *shifts happen*, invoking the power of dialogic space to foster interaction from which insight, reconciliation, and creativity can arise.

The influence and impact of *dialogue* can be radically refreshing and powerful. As such, it can also inspire resistance for the demands it



Bridging the Abortion Divide

Difficult Dialogues Launch Event, November 2, 2006

DIALOGUE AS 'THE SPACE BETWEEN'

Abortion – just speaking the word evokes strong emotions, so how could six leaders from opposite sides of the abortion issue maintain a secret dialogue with each other for more than five years?

Laura Chasin, founder and director of The Public Conversations Project, served as moderator for this event, as we discovered how people with fundamental differences in world view could arrive at a place of mutual understanding and respect through dialogue. With great candor, the women described their private dialogues – initiated in 1994 by PCP after a fatal shooting at a Brookline abortion clinic – as frustrating, discouraging, even painful. Yet, they recognized that in coming together, they were bridging deep divides that contributed to the heightened tensions surrounding this issue.

When the participants went public by writing about their story for the *Boston Globe* in 2001, it was clear that the trust they developed had enabled them to defuse their public rhetoric and take actions that prevented further violence in Boston:

We hope our experience will encourage people everywhere to consider engaging in dialogues about abortion and other protracted disputes. In this world of polarizing conflicts, we have glimpsed a new possibility: a way in which people can disagree frankly and passionately, become clearer in heart and mind about their activism, and, at the same time, contribute to a more civil and compassionate society.

I take dialogue seriously – as a way of life, a sense of self that is relational and interactive, a state of being that is responsive, welcoming, soliciting of what others truly believe and feel.... There ought to be a way to bring that quality of solicitation to relationships, of making contact with the human dimension of whatever you are doing and whomever you encounter.

CHARLES WESLEY DEMARCO
*Visiting Assistant Professor
 of Philosophy*

makes and the possibilities it unleashes. Some of its distinguishing characteristics include:

DIALOGUE AS PRESENCE AND ENCOUNTER Participation in dialogue hinges on presence to oneself and to others. It is mindfulness in action, encouraging conscious relationship to one's own mind and to the meeting with others.

The encounter of dialogue depends on establishing conditions for trust between participants. In advance, we agree to speak honestly, listen with respect, release judgments, and seek to understand the other. We do so in good faith, trusting that there can be benefit in shedding defenses, and that in so doing, we further conditions in which we ourselves can hear and learn something new.

DIALOGUE AS REFLECTIVE THOUGHT As a practice of examining assumptions, dialogue positions us to see and reflect on the process of thought itself. We first become conscious of discourse as a practice, allowing us to make choices about it. We also can better examine our own thinking and that of others.

By encouraging us to examine the structures within our own thinking and patterns of relating, dialogue illuminates the “unnoticed structures of our society” and the power dynamics in which we exist. It enhances our ability to see clearly what is happening, and to name it.

DIALOGUE AS ENGAGEMENT Dialogue presumes participants each have a voice and together, joint ownership of the topic at hand. By acknowledging that agency, it calls for each participant to take up his/her share.

The practice of being heard in the nonhierarchical space of dialogue empowers and dignifies its participants. Though exploratory, not goal-driven, in its essence, dialogue depends on asking real questions, identifying issues, engaging awareness, and catalyzing action based on what is held to be in the common good. As such, it provides ground to purposeful action.

Ancient versions of dialogue include the use of “council” by native peoples to discern community decisions. In the work of an institution such as a university or in relationship to other issues, dialogue can build trust,

empower members of a community to take responsibility, hold the tension of differences, and engender creative problem-solving. As a mode of developing engagement and a ground for action on any issue, dialogue can focus that which is valued in common and serve as a basis for trust and solidarity.

In true dialogue, both sides are willing to change.

THICH NHAT HANH

DIALOGUE AS “THE SPACE BETWEEN” Dialogue is based on creating a safe space for exchange through “pre-conditions” or agreements. The voices of all participants, even if in serious conflict or disagreement, can be held and explored in this common space. Dialogue at its most generative precipitates new insights or collective wisdom through the respectful co-existence of

Change happens by listening and then starting a dialogue with the people who are doing something you don’t believe is right.

— JANE GOODALL

difference. A number of ancient traditional maps of energy (Taoist *yin-yang*, Hindu *yantras*, Buddhist *mandalas*) see this play of “dualities” as fueling creativity; the practice of dialogue can do so as well.

Practices for creating intentional spaces in which difference is acknowledged and explored can benefit exchanges of all sorts, from the personal and local to the national and international.

DIALOGUE AS LISTENING AND CREATIVE MATRIX In the creative process, as in dialogue, something new emerges through presence and encounter. Both are iterative listening processes, requiring presence in the moment as new information and opportunities unfold. Playful and exploratory, both dialogue and the creative process depend on willingness to enter the unknown, to be free from preconceptions, and to respond to the flow of ideas and information, whether alone or with others.

In dialogue, new visions and possibilities arise and take form in response to encounters with difference, uncertainty, or brainstorming. Relationships, art-making, communication, and effective problem-solving all benefit from this process.

How we understand our differences, how we engage them, and how we transform our conflicts and struggles over our differences into crucibles for learning from each other...that's a big conversation, and I think that it is the conversation for the 21st century. How can we bring ourselves together and really hear each other across these divides?

DIANA CHAPMAN WALSH

DIALOGUE AS A FORCE FOR LIBERAL EDUCATION AND DEMOCRATIC

SOCIETY Dialogue and democracy are both based on willingness to participate and engage as a member of a collective, and to share responsibility for its well-being. While these values are cited as the basis of our democracy, they have been countered and undermined by a number of strong forces – economic, political, technological, and social. The academy itself has in many ways failed to take up serious consideration of the pressing challenges of our time, as it conforms and limits its role around these same pressures.

The process of dialogue can make us responsible to ourselves and to each other. It does so by calling out our individual and mutual dignity, and our personal and collective power. Its unspoken invitation is that we take responsibility for our actions. It gives us strength and builds solidarity and trust through appreciating differences and establishing common ground.

Through dialogue, creative and innovative solutions to problems can arise. In summoning that collective wisdom, the process puts us in touch with sources greater than our individual knowledge and skills.

As it gives voice to all participants and supports grass roots initiatives, dialogue can be subversive of top-down structures and of persons or organizations unwilling to share power. As it encourages us to question assumptions, dialogue gives us the skills and incentives to see deeply into structures of governance, economy, environmental behavior, and social norms around race, religion, gender, and age.

The practice of dialogue is a fundamental methodology for working across difference, and for gaining creative insight on our problems and solving them together. In these ways, dialogue is a force for the most valuable aspects of liberal education and democracy.

The Dialogue Seminar

An Interview with Hannah Caruso '09

DIALOGUE AS A FORCE FOR LIBERAL EDUCATION



When I was a junior, I signed up for the Dialogue Seminar. I don't know why I signed up, I didn't need the credit, and I didn't know what dialogue was. I think I was attracted to it because the symposium was on religion, which is very important to me. During that semester, I had my first experience of dialogue with fifteen other students and two graduate student facilitators. It was a challenging experience personally and allowed me to reflect on my own life and beliefs in ways that I never had before.

I can now see my education split into two completely distinct halves. I spent my first two years of college taking classes that I was more or less interested in. Then I took the Dialogue Seminar. The act of speaking out loud about my own experience and having people there to listen was very powerful. It allowed me to engage in my own development – personal, cognitive, and emotional. I began questioning things about myself that I had taken for granted, and it set off a chain reaction of questioning everything in my life.

What happened in the Dialogue Seminar was not contained to it once a week. Other classes after that felt completely different because I chose them based on what I wanted to learn about. Now even in lecture-style courses, I find myself asking a lot of questions about the assumptions we're making. I am simply more engaged in my own education.

I think everyone deserves the opportunity to own their own learning, and to control the direction of their education. The standardization of education manipulates us into being passive learners, and it is so easy to carry forward into college. Dialogue has been my remedy to all of that.

An interesting thing about facilitating the Dialogue Seminar was watching some students go through the semester asking, "When are we going to come to the culmination? What is this all leading to?" I got to experience with them the radical idea that maybe the whole point is to be together – not some sort of marvelous ending in which we all create this beautiful world together – but to sit together and be together. That's the end and the means at the same time.

HANNAH CARUSO '09

Difficult Dialogues Fellow 08/09

Hannah Caruso served as a Fellow during the academic year 08/09. As part of her involvement, she co-facilitated two semesters of the Dialogue Seminar. She is currently pursuing a masters degree at Clark in International Development and

Social Change. She continues to bring dialogue into her work with the Worcester community – with groups such as EPOCA (Ex-Prisoners Organizing for Community Advancement).

I have taught the philosophy of religion course at Clark for many years and can't remember words as candid and heartfelt on the subject of religion on this campus.

WALTER WRIGHT
Dean of the College

The chorus was a wonderful event. I don't think that I ever felt so moved in my entire time being at Clark. I caught myself crying for some of the questions because it was the first time at Clark that I really felt that other people wanted to share what they believed in. There were other people who were just as scared as I was to talk about their faith.

CLARK STUDENT

I am an American Jew, which means I have all the luxuries of being an American and all the requirements of being Jewish, which is fun sometimes.

I'VE BEEN GOING TO UU CHURCHES SINCE I WAS BORN. MY MOM WAS RAISED UU AND GRANDMOTHER WAS UU. MY DAD IS A BUDDHIST MONK. WHEN I CAME SCHOOL I DIDN'T BELIEVE IN GOD, I WAS A REALLY STAUNCH ATHEIST. SINCE BEING HERE, I'VE FOUND GOD AND I'VE FOUND THAT DIVINITY IS REALLY EVERY THING ABOUT WHO I AM. IT'S BEEN A REALLY INTERESTING EXPERIENCE TO DISCOVER THAT WITHIN MYSELF AND BE SURROUNDED BY AN INSTITUTION WHICH IS...RELIGION IS A TABOO HERE, AT CLARK.

Don't you believe in heaven? Don't you believe in something?

FOR A WHILE I WANTED TO COMPLETELY REJECT THAT THERE WAS A GOD.

We're in a space together, sharing spiritual experiences. I don't think there's anything more powerful than that.

What a blessing to have this chance to be conscious and to pursue happiness within that consciousness with so little holding me back. There's always the idea that considering yourself agnostic is just being a cowardly atheist.

IT WAS VERY HARD FOR ME TO FEEL SPIRITUALLY CONNECTED HERE... I FELT MORE SPIRITUALLY DISRUPTED. I BELIEVE IN ZEUS AND I BELIEVE IN ALLAH. WHAT DO YOU CARE? YOU'RE NOT EVEN RELIGIOUS. OKAY, EXPLAIN THAT TO ME.

God is something that we laugh about.

We're in a Space Together

Personal Faith, Expressed through Spoken Word Chorus

Meredith Neuman

I teach an early American literature survey course which includes lots of religious writing, and students sometimes have difficulty with that material. Their active or cultural faith can interfere with their critical ability to interpret text. Agnostic or atheist students sometimes can't get beyond thinking the writer is simply a "dupe." Students of various religious perspectives, even those who aren't currently "practicing" their faith, sometimes have difficulty dealing with doctrinal differences between themselves and the author.

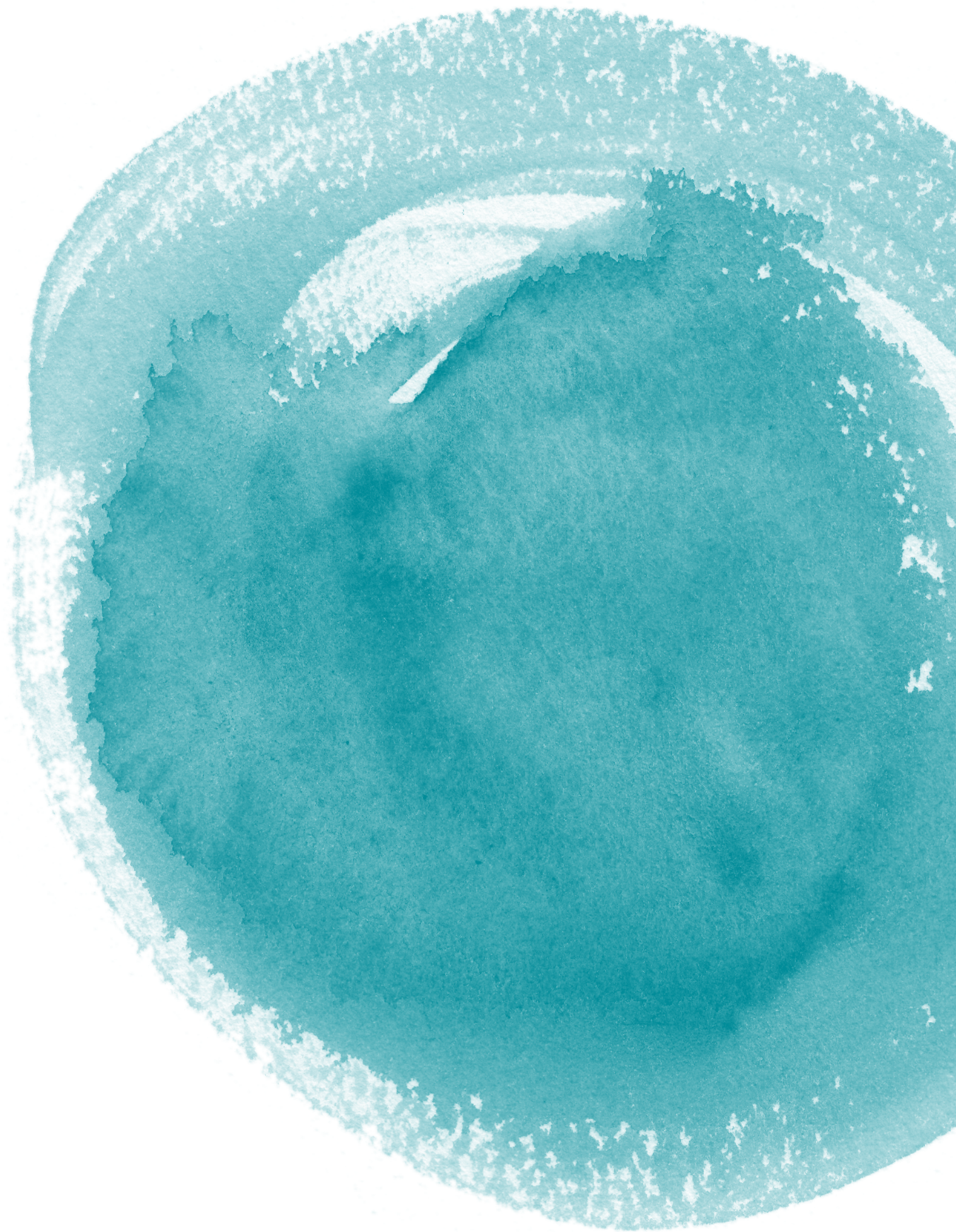
I wanted to create an experience in which students could talk openly about their personal relationship with religion. I suspected the unspoken discomfort I saw in class was just the tip of the iceberg. I wanted to know more about students' encounters with issues of faith and belief at school, especially how these encounters influenced their own beliefs and assumptions. I hoped that these conversations would go beyond the basics of simple denominational differences and provide a safe forum in which to share questions and perspectives about a range of experiences regarding organized religion, personal spirituality, and individual convictions (including agnosticism and atheism).

In one dialogue teaching meeting I was struck by Walter Wright's account of a dialogue-focused conference in which participants' own words were "performed" each day as a "spoken chorus." I wanted to adapt this idea, especially after attending a Difficult Dialogues event in which the Q&A by students took off from the main event and became amazingly personal and revealing. How could I provide a forum that would present a full range of student experiences and afford some anonymity and safety?


I sent out invitations to participate in interviews to students in DD classes. I went to the Student Activities Fair to invite students of various religious, spiritual, and ethnic student groups. In all, only about 16 responded, but the intensity of their conversations was extraordinary. We began with set questions about their religious identity and experiences at Clark, but each conversation quickly took its own unique turn. Many students were at a spiritual juncture and trying to work out their own faith. Dialogue created a space for the students to speak, and I was surprised when many students said they had never expressed some of these things or even put them together before. These one-on-one dialogues were the most valuable part of the experience for me.

Two undergraduate students (Ayaan Agane and Heather Cenedella) transcribed the interviews, and together we wove the stories into a script: a spoken chorus in four movements. *Questions of Faith* was performed in October 2007 by a group of Clark students, as part of the Difficult Dialogues symposium, *Religion and Tolerance*.

Meredith Neuman is assistant professor of English and a member of the Difficult Dialogues Executive Committee. Her course, "American Literary Renaissance," has been offered as a dialogue course.



Praxis



It's when we let our guard down and allow our differences and doubts to surface and interact that something authentic and original can begin to emerge, tentatively, in the spaces between us.

And I've found that it's often in these fleeting and complicated moments that the heart and mind can come into synchrony, pointing to altogether novel educational possibilities. The key is to remain alert to those moments and to move with them when they arise.

DIANA CHAPMAN WALSH in *Trustworthy Leadership*



Clark students, faculty, and staff, and Worcester community members join in dialogue on 'what it means to be a neighbor'; this conversation took place at the Difficult Dialogues symposium event *A Brighter Future: Opening Our Hearts to Our Neighbors* in November 2008.

WE DEVELOPED THE DIFFICULT DIALOGUES PROJECT as a resource for dialogic awareness and practice in our individual work and in our collective campus life. Efforts to define dialogue or describe the process don't approach the lived experience. Only in *praxis* (the marriage of theory to practice) do we understand its nature and significance. Given that, creating new spaces for dialogue practice and encouraging it in existing ones is the central work of the dialogue project.

We see the praxis of the project in the areas of *process, practice, issues, classes, space, presence, and flow*.

Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection.

PAOLO FREIRE

CREATING PROCESS The Difficult Dialogues project calls out the largely invisible question about the nature of discourse on our own campus, in a way synonymous with dialogue itself.

The initiative was launched out of the faculty, and from the beginning, we built the grant proposal and later the project itself in a largely dialogic process – from the bottom up. A group of ten colleagues worked on the initial proposal; an expanded committee of sixteen weighed in on the final

At the beginning of this session, I thought, “I want to DO dialogue.”
I now understand that it's a process – and the process is important.
Students should be part of this re-imagining of education.

— ANDREA LEPAGE

proposal. After the Ford proposal was submitted, lunch meetings were held with interested faculty throughout the Fall of 2005 to encourage interest in the work of the proposal, whether or not we received Ford funding. As a result, more than thirty very excited people celebrated the news of our funding from Ford in December 2005.

An *executive committee* from the faculty was formed, representing a range of disciplines: philosophy, English, sociology, international development, management, and the arts. A set of four *Difficult Dialogue Fellows*, all graduate students in International Development, Community, and Environment (IDCE), was named and assisted in the initial work in a wide variety of ways. A larger *steering committee* gathered over time and



Our ability to come together allows us to break inherited rigid university structures. It is a re-alignment of power – people at the margins articulating their voice. Not only those with the tools of articulation have the knowledge. Dialogue is about listening/engaging with those at the margins who may be stepping into the core.

MIRIAM CHION

DD Associate Director (2007–2009)
Assistant Professor IDCE

participated in developing the direction of the project. At one point as many as 50 faculty, staff, and students were members of that group. These groups and smaller committees within them developed many of the initial concepts for programming and outreach.

Throughout the process, we've focused on sharing ownership and responsibility for the project and encouraging *collaboration*. Planning groups gather creative contributions from members of the faculty and the community for project programs. The integration of dialogic practices in all of our gatherings – organizational meetings, workshops, public events, Conversation Cafés, etc. – has been a priority. We make efforts to include faculty, staff, and students together in as many aspects of the programs as possible, working across perceived divisions of role.

The evolution of the project continues to be dialogic – involving listening, questioning, and assessment and reassessment as it unfolds. We develop its forms and practices through this iterative process, expanding, contracting and adjusting as new questions, issues, constraints, or opportunities present themselves. This process is in many ways countercultural in an academic institution, where many commitments (and positions within hierarchy) are predetermined. In addition, faculty members have taken up activities and modes of teaching new to them, often involving significant commitments of time and energy beyond their normal teaching and research. Despite these challenges, we have enjoyed remarkable participation and creativity from faculty across the disciplines.

ENTERING PRACTICE The process of the project itself has been our first and most pervasive practice, and our best teacher. But another dimension of entering practice has involved learning about dialogue, drawing from the understandings and resources of others, and beginning to practice what we were learning.

In our planning phase, we did extensive research on the literature related to dialogue and its network of practitioners. Despite the rich existing practicum, we knew that Clark faculty members would need and want to develop their own approaches and commitments to dialogic practice. Only then could it thrive in individual teaching practices and collective pedagogy.

To facilitate orientation and resources for that thinking to develop – and a context in which experiences of dialogue could take place – we began with a full semester of *faculty development* on the practice of dialogue in the Fall of 2006. Seventeen faculty participated in it, and twenty-four faculty and staff attended an additional one-day workshop. Consultants to these workshops included the Public Conversations Project, Dialogos, and Ashland Institute.

In seeking to understand what a dialogic culture might mean in our context, we turned to those who have considered the question of dialogue in depth – David Bohm, Martin Buber, Paolo Freire, William Isaacs, Diana Chapman, Walsh and others. Compiling these materials led us to create a *Dialogue Reader* of essays and short descriptions of methodologies, distributed to faculty involved in faculty development and other aspects of the project. Now in its third edition, it is in the hands of many more faculty, as well as scores of students.

Other workshops early in the project included three *staff workshops*, an ongoing faculty practice group through the Spring of 2007, and Steering Committee workshops on the state of our democracy and race. These enhanced the awareness of dialogic practice among many faculty and staff. Consultants included faculty from the School for International Training, the Democracy Project, and others.

Through these experiences, we have become familiar with a variety of *dialogic methods*, including the work of David Bohm and colleagues, the PCP methodologies, the Way of Council, the Conversation Café, Study Circles, and Appreciative Inquiry. Some faculty members have adapted aspects of these methods in their own teaching. Students have taken up dialogue methods in their own organizations and community projects. We employ a variety of methods in the work of the project itself (see Appendix).

Given the tremendous range and scope of dialogic methodologies, we are still beginners in the facilitation and scholarship on dialogue. We draw inspiration and expertise from the ever-increasing network of dialogue and deliberation professionals (exemplified by the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, of which we are a member).



Focus the Nation

Teach-in on climate change, January 31, 2008

DIALOGUE AS ENGAGEMENT

Clark joined more than 1700 other colleges, universities, and schools across the country on January 31, 2008, for the Focus the Nation teach-in. The program here was initiated by Assistant Professor Jennie Stephens of IDCE, with assistance from the Difficult Dialogues program as part of our DD Symposium on climate change.

In a series of sessions throughout the day, twenty-eight Clark faculty members representing seventeen different academic departments and research institutes presented and shared insights related to the climate challenge. After brief faculty presentations, each session was devoted to an open forum for dialogue and interaction among presenters and audience. Topics ranged from *Integrating Climate Change into Formal and Informal Education*, *AIDS and Climate Change*, and *The Carbon Footprint of Food Choices* to *A Playwright's Perspective on Climate-Change*, *The Politics of Green Buildings* and *The Impact of Climate Change on Peace*, among others.

The practice of dialogue was integrated into sessions, not through creating standard procedures, but by setting a tone for exchange – by encouraging respectful listening, speech that aims to increase understanding, and the deepening of engagement. Framing to help establish that tone was provided by the presenters at the outset of each session, by reminding the audience of agreements from the Conversation Café process (see Appendix), including a respectful sharing of time. The day ended with a celebration among the faculty presenters; one faculty participant toasted the day as distinctive and effective due to its emphasis on the process of dialogue.

Seventeen faculty members from a range of departments participated in a series of planning meetings to develop the DD symposium on climate change, of which this event was a critical part.

ADDRESSING ISSUES To open silences around the pressing concerns of our time, we develop substantial programming for their exploration. Integrated theme-based programming each semester, in which public events are linked to Dialogue Seminars and other courses, encourages new levels of reflection and engagement. Whatever the focus (i.e. race, climate change, local green economy, issues of power and gender), our programs raise difficult questions, and often bring together for the first time people on campus and in the community with expertise and interest in the topic. These programs develop skills in dialogue practice among the participants, as well as create, encourage, and support a foundation for further action. Community members often initiate programs, resulting in attendance by a number of constituencies over the course of the term.

Our greatest challenge in programming has been to encourage more dialogic experiences at public events. A number of factors influence public engagement – conventions of discourse, willingness of participants to engage, time constraints, limits of the space/seating, and the preparedness or ability of guest speakers to engage dialogically with the group. We have gradually developed more skillful approaches to creating larger-scale dialogues.

We began the public programming with a series of launch events introducing the practice of dialogue to the community in November 2006. The intensive two-week period included a keynote by Diana Chapman Walsh (then President of Wellesley College); a panel with Boston leaders on both sides of the abortion issue, facilitated by the Public Conversations Project; a workshop on the Way of Council; our first Day of Listening, among others.

Our grant period included a year-long symposium (2007) with programming developed with and through the project Steering Committee and subcommittees. During the year we explored four topics – the state of our democracy, race, religion and tolerance, and power – each for a period of approximately six weeks. Each mini-symposium included six to eight public events, with a range of outside and Clark speakers, panel discussions, workshops, arts events, films, Conversation Cafés, and Days of Listening. Many faculty took the initiative in creating programs and participating in them, including a panel on whiteness, a faculty conversation on race, a panel of religious leaders, a spoken-word chorus on student experiences of faith, and an exhibition on Visual Dialogue.

Inquiry and violence cannot co-exist.

PETER GARRETT

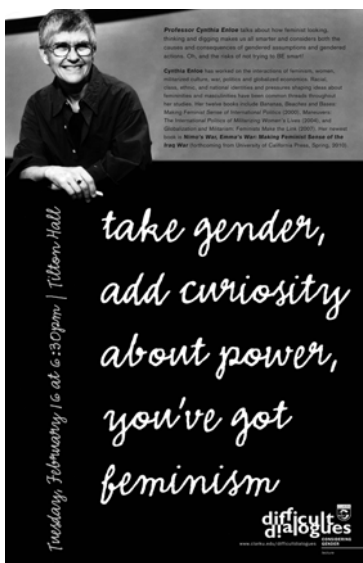
Communicating through Design

Developing the Space of Dialogue

DIALOGUE AS CREATIVE MATRIX

Communication from the DD project creates a type of space – one with the potential to build recognition, interest, and understanding. We developed the initial design identity from the work of an advanced graphic design class in the Spring of 2006. A group of seniors designed the DD logotype and celebrated the launch of the project in a major performance piece and large window installation in the University Center.

The project identity has continued to be used and expanded on through the website design, posters, invitations, publications, and exhibitions. Most fully developed by Jane Androski '02 during her years as Assistant Director, and added to by Brian Dittmar '94, Stephen Albano '07 and now Mary Banas, the lively aesthetic explorations of the DD design work have helped establish the project on campus with style and meaning.



A fully functional multiracial society cannot be achieved without a sense of history and open, honest dialogue.

CORNEL WEST

Since that first year, we develop a new Dialogue Symposium each semester around a significant contemporary issue, such as:

CLIMATE CHANGE (Spring 2008) and the necessity for dialogue around this emerging planetary challenge attracted sectors of the Clark community (geographers, biologists, chemists, environmental scientists, research staff) new to the DD work. We sought to deepen factual knowledge of the issue, look at the risks and responsibilities ahead, and see from a range of perspectives as we seek solutions. It spurred involvement from faculty and students and brought together individuals who, despite their common concerns, had not yet worked together. The symposium included 15 events, including a keynote talk by David Orr, a range of faculty-initiated programs, a Focus the Nation teach-in (involving 28 faculty) as part of a national event, an exhibition project, and three student-initiated events.

RECLAIMING THE COMMON WEALTH (Fall 2008) focused on topics of shared values during the Fall election season. In our programs and dialogues we encouraged our community to ask what lies beneath our differences, whether in politics, gender, class or religion; we encouraged conversation on what it is in both nature and culture that belongs to all of us and future generations, and what we need to do to sustain it. The symposium included visits by Lewis Hyde, Stephanie Kaza, an exhibition of paintings of *Americans Who Tell the Truth* by Robert Shetterly, and a community-wide roundtable dialogue on "Being a Neighbor," co-sponsored with the City of Worcester Office of Human Rights.

RACE IN THE ERA OF OBAMA (Spring 2009) followed on the heels of the 2008 election of Barack Obama as the first African-American President. The American experience is intertwined with the legacy of slavery and the discrimination it fostered. Obama's election set the struggles and abuses of this legacy into fresh relief, giving us an opportunity for new conversations. Included in the symposium were a screening of Obama's March 2008 speech on race (with a dialogue following), the film series *Race/Power of an Illusion* (followed by Conversation Cafés), and a talk by Tim Wise on whiteness.



Black Clark alumni D'Army Bailey and Shelia McCann spoke on their experience of race at Clark in the 60s.

OLD FORMS GIVE WAY/VISIONING THE NEW (Fall 2009) addressed the uncertainty and change under way in our economic, political, and educational systems. Challenges to these systems and the environment ask that we radically reassess the nature and scale of human activity on the planet. In this symposium, we “visioned the new” together, in local forms of governance, agriculture, energy and green economy; we also considered processes for moving toward those more resilient ways of life, through collaboration, democratic workplaces and dialogue. Launched with a film series, we held two major dialogic events – one on The Transition Towns Initiative, and the other, a gathering of Worcester stakeholders for a local green economy.

Diana Eck, Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies at Harvard University, participated in the Fall 2007 dialogue symposium on religion with her talk, *Can Religions be Tolerant? Is Pluralism Possible?*

The language of pluralism is that of dialogue and encounter, give and take, criticism and self-criticism. Dialogue means both speaking and listening, and that process reveals both common understandings and real differences. Dialogue does not mean everyone at the ‘table’ will agree with one another. Pluralism involves the commitment to being at the table – with one’s commitments. — DIANA ECK *The Pluralism Project, Harvard Divinity School*

CONSIDERING GENDER (Spring 2010) asked what gender is, and explored both its biology and the ways we construct it. We considered the violence, inequity and intolerance that arise around it, as well as the subtlety of gendered assumptions. Its role in pop culture, the fluidity we are experienced around its definition, and the questions of power that surround it were on the table as well. We held brown bag lunches to explore its impact on the LGBT community, the workplace, and parenting; a film series, an exhibition a performance, several talks (Rebecca Jordan-Young, Cynthia Enloe, Paula Giddings, Tricia Rose) and a community dialogue were the basis for ongoing conversation.

Why is there fear about this method – dialogue? In the classroom, I have tried to make exercises that promote position-driven discussion – I ask a question, and show the two sides. But I realize that when the sides aren't clear, things really open up and open forms are scary for me. I want to be sure the students get what I am offering them. How does improvisational dialogue work? How can I just 'go with it' in my class? I want to learn.

SARAH MICHAELS
Professor of Education

SLOWING IN A WIRED WORLD (Fall 2010) will consider the impact of information overload, constant connectivity, work pressures, and personal and family responsibilities, which continue to increase and accelerate. Interwoven with these pressures are new technologies and modes of communication, which alter the ways we learn and how we relate to each other. The symposium will slow us down to look at what we are experiencing, and to ask questions about it together. How has the acceleration of life been seen historically and philosophically? How do changing technologies affect our health, our relationships and the ways we learn? Do we want to change our relationship to these forces, and how? The symposium will include a film series, exhibitions, talks and panels, and a number of community conversations. Meditation and qigong practice groups will be held.

HOLDING CLASSES Integration of dialogic awareness into the classroom experience has been a top priority for the dialogue project from its inception. The nature of classroom discourse is a primary expression of the values of an educational institution, and its best opportunity for meaningful engagement with students. It is also at the core of faculty commitment to the institution. Despite the many pressures to the contrary, most faculty at Clark are strongly committed to their teaching and students.

By bringing more dialogic awareness and practice to the classroom, we shift the character and possibility of our work as educators. We develop in our classroom – and by extension our community – the skills, attitudes, and predilections for reflection, engagement, deliberation, problem-solving, and action.

In higher education, pedagogical methods most often include lecture, question and answer, demonstration, debate and discussion, and service learning experiences. With grading as a factor, and faculty seen to hold an “expertise” in the subject matter, a power imbalance is inherent in the structure. Despite the fact that the faculty member holds greater responsibility for both content and process, we can create classroom experiences that encourage more horizontal power relationships, student engagement, responsibility for their own learning, and creative exchange.

We have developed those more dialogic approaches in the classroom

in a gradual and exploratory way, given that we are all in the process of learning what that might mean, and what it makes possible. The faculty development process with seventeen faculty members in the Fall of 2006 was geared not at specific pedagogical applications for dialogue, but at an experiential understanding that was both theoretical and practical. Participants were provided with the *Dialogue Reader*; with essays from David Bohm, William Isaacs, Paolo Freire, Martin Buber, Patricia Romney and others, and some specific methodological tools.

For the integration of more dialogic methodologies and attitudes, we knew that each faculty member would need to develop their own

My understanding of dialogue as a pedagogical approach is that it entails a deliberate and sustained scrutiny of our assumptions, blind spots, values and biases... — PATRICIA EWICK *Logan Course Proposal*

commitment and approach. Our work was to spark their interest, underscore the relevance of doing so, and provide information and support as they undertook the process. In the early months of the project, we held a series of lunches at the local Vietnamese restaurant with small groups of faculty to brainstorm about the relationship between dialogue and pedagogy. Through these sessions, we learned more about why the faculty were interested, what they were already doing, what they were afraid of, and what they might like to try.

In Spring 2007, this preparatory work resulted in an initial group of eighteen courses offered with a dialogic emphasis (either in content, method or both). This level of involvement has continued over the last six semesters, with an average of sixteen dialogue courses across the curriculum (including several First-year Seminars) being offered each semester. As of Spring 2010, forty-one members of the Clark faculty have taught a course with a dialogue emphasis at least once over the last four years. Seventy-three different courses (and a total of 112 class sections) have been affiliated with the program.

Many, but not all, participating faculty were involved in the faculty development process. They each have taken up the dialogue emphasis in their own ways and faced their own distinct challenges. Many have drawn

The Day of Listening

DD launch event, October 2006

DIALOGUE AS LISTENING



“I’m Listening” proclaimed the bright yellow buttons that appeared on backpacks and t-shirts. They were a quiet declaration that on this day, members of the Clark community were ready to gather for a shared experience in listening.

Held as part of our 2006 launch, the event was modeled on a similar effort developed by Mount Holyoke College and introduced to Clark by IDCE Professor David Bell. We envisioned the event as a way to introduce listening as an essential first step towards dialogue, as well as a way to build community across campus.

In each of the twenty-six sessions held throughout campus that day, trained facilitators – students, faculty, and staff – guided the participants (several hundred in all) through a series of questions. Starting out in pairs, they were asked to recall a recent time when they were listened to, and where they could tell it had made a difference. The listening pairs provided an opportunity for focused attention and engagement – each person talking and listening in turn, without interruption, bringing a consciousness to listening that is often absent in our day-to-day interactions.

The larger group then went on to reflect on those stories through questions like: What makes for a good listener? What gets in the way of listening? They leaned in, engaged in conversation, and shared experiences with one another – most often, with someone they had just met. They spoke of the benefits of good listening – as well as the challenges that come with it.

Difficult dialogue, we know, begins and ends with deep and open listening – to each other, and to ourselves. It begins and ends in presence, as Peter Senge, Otto Scharmer and their colleagues have written. It requires an effortlessness that, paradoxically, comes only after the significant effort of doing the work before the work.

DIANA CHAPMAN WALSH
Keynote

Since the Day of Listening, I have stopped myself many times during conversations with friends and family and refocused my attention on what they were saying. That reminder is always in the my head now. As I actively try to block out distractions, I become a more considerate listener.

KARA SCIMECA '06



The Day of Listening is an important practice towards encouraging the growth of dialogue on campus, but several factors make it difficult to sustain. Though we have held several of these Days since our initial launch event, busy and often competing schedules are a persistent condition and prevent the kind of cross-campus participation that many would like to see. To take even an hour to “slowdown” (a term many use to describe this experience) often seems impossible – the structure of the day is too immovable and the formal incentives to participate too few. Professors sometimes require the participation of their students, but since a key ingredient for dialogue is a simple willingness to participate, the results have been mixed.

Despite these obstacles, we continue to look for ways in which these underlying conditions can shift because we believe so strongly in the value of this model – both for spreading the experience of dialogue throughout our campus and as a way to build community through engagement with others.

JANE ANDROSKI '02

Former Assistant Director, Difficult Dialogues

from the resource of dialogue symposium events for their classes as well.

We bring our experiences to an ongoing dialogue teaching meeting, held over lunch once each month. These gatherings have been remarkable, both as opportunities to share the real risk-taking and exploration we are doing independently, and to learn and benefit from each other's experiences. They have been dialogues in themselves, in which we practice together, experience a degree of honest communication rare in our setting, and share insights for our work.

I facilitated the first offering of the Dialogue Seminar this semester, in which we did “all dialogue, all the time.” It was noticeably different from other courses I have taught. I have never been more terrified in a classroom. Bringing that level of dialogue means giving up power, and becoming part of the process. — WALTER WRIGHT *Dean of the College*

The development of Dialogue Seminars to accompany the topic of the semester's public programming may be (along with the Fellows) the single most distinctive and effective aspect of the dialogue program. These half-credit courses began in the Fall of 2007, when the DD graduate Fellows undertook one of the visions in original proposal that had been dropped due to lack of staffing.

In pairs, and with oversight from faculty, the graduate Fellows facilitated two intensive Dialogue Seminars around the topics of religion and tolerance, and power. Students were required to attend most of the Symposium events on these topics, with the content of the events feeding the ongoing classroom dialogue. Agreements for dialogue were developed in the group over the first couple of sessions and revisited periodically. The students kept journals that they shared on-line and wrote short reflection papers. The Fellows experimented with different dialogue modalities, and students often took responsibility for facilitating part of a session. Many students reported later that the Dialogue Seminar changed the nature and trajectory of their Clark education.

The model has continued since then, with a Dialogue Seminar running

along with the DD Symposium each semester. The class size has grown to twenty, facilitated by a faculty member assisted by our new Fellows, all undergraduates who participated in earlier Dialogue Seminars.

In the Fall of 2009, one seminar accompanied the Dialogue Symposium, and a second was offered on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Professor Kristen Williams proposed and volunteered to facilitate this venture into a substantial and ongoing engagement with students on this issue. She was assisted by Assistant Director John Sarrouf and two Fellows.

Within classrooms, attention to the practice of dialogue is enlivening and empowering to both faculty and students. We have seen students gain a sense of shared responsibility for the process of learning and become more deeply engaged in their work. Seen as trustworthy, full participants in the work of the class, students live up to that expectation.

The Dialogue Seminars have been powerful and successful examples of what is possible if we commit to these transformative learning experiences. But the work of the dialogue classes is perhaps even more ground-breaking and thus more significant, as many faculty challenge themselves to re-envision what is possible within their disciplinary frameworks. In so doing, they become open to new and surprising possibilities.

SHAPING SPACE Dialogue is in itself a space – physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. The possibilities for dialogic exchange are shaped by the setting in which it takes place – as much a precondition for dialogue as are agreements that encourage safety and trust. Dialogue is also a space within time, an intentional space in which we show up, slow down, and become present, having made a commitment for a portion of our day.

Creating such spaces – a physical space that encourages nonhierarchical exchange, and a framework of time that allows people to bring full attention to the process – is often counter-cultural in the fast-paced life of an academic institution. At present *classroom spaces* are designed for students to take notes from expert lecturers, and students commonly double- and triple-book their time.

Most of our classroom spaces at Clark were not developed with dialogic exchange in mind. These spaces have been challenging for colleagues who

Dialogue is a risk worth taking in the classroom. It allows the learning space to be bigger, and allows students to take more responsibility for their learning.

MIRIAM CHION

Toward Dialogue on Global Warming

Difficult Dialogues Symposium Event, October 2007

DIALOGUE AS ENGAGEMENT



The issue of climate change interweaves with all aspects of life on earth. How do we understand the nature of climate change, and how do we grasp what is at stake? How do we express our uncertainties, and explore our connections? Faced with the overwhelming nature of this issue, we often find ourselves alternating between states of denial and despair.

As part of our symposium on “Power,” Susi Moser (Clark PhD ’97) – a consultant for climate science and policy – asked us to explore what lies between these polarities. To do so, she invited us to engage in dialogue with each other about our personal relationship to climate change.

As an audience, we listened as she presented information about climate change and proposed questions for further reflection. As participants, we explored our questions together in small groups throughout the evening. In doing so, we were able to consider the issue in new ways, and many left feeling engaged like never before.

The whole idea of her event was that she didn’t want to talk AT us, she wanted to talk WITH us! It was really awesome. There was a great mix of people there – faculty, students, administrators and local residents – so it made for a great dialogue.

ASHLEY TRULL ’10
Clark Sustainability Initiative



Climate change scientist Susi Moser created a collaborative conversation among us on the issue.

are trying to move their teaching practices in a non-hierarchical direction. The few versatile classrooms on campus are now in high demand; we hope that this will inspire alterations in other more confining classroom spaces.

In the summer of 2007, the Higgins School and Difficult Dialogues office moved to *Dana Commons*, where we configured a space for dialogue. The “fishbowl” is a large room with a wall of windows looking out to a courtyard of trees. It is furnished with handsome upholstered chairs and small round tables; another sixty event chairs are stored nearby. Though in a state of constant flux, it is still calm and inviting. Changing art exhibitions related to our symposium programming are installed on its walls each semester, and the furniture is easily re-configured to meet the needs of small or large meetings, lunch gatherings, workshops, or public talks and events.

The space of the circle best signifies and supports the process of dialogue. Whatever the room set-up, we aim to make it nonhierarchical, so that participants sit “in circle,” whether with fellow faculty, students, or with a visiting speaker. We explicitly create circles of chairs whenever possible and experiment with new versions of “circle-making” as required by the needs of our events. Hospitality (food and drink as appropriate) is another way we make the space welcoming, convivial, and relaxed.

All types of communication from the project create another type of space – one that hopefully builds recognition, interest, and understanding. We see the design process and products for all aspects of project outreach as a critical space – signalling our intentions, and inviting response and interaction.

The most important architectural development at Clark in the last thirty years profoundly enhances the climate on campus to support a dialogic culture. The spatial dynamics of the campus and community were powerfully altered with the opening of a renovated Goddard Library in January 2009. This well-known modern icon by John Johansen, completed in 1969, had become outmoded, given an unwelcoming entrance and old assumptions about study and research practices. With a brilliant redesign of the ground level as an *Academic Commons* and refurbishment of the upper levels by Stephen Foote of Perry Dean Rogers, the library now serves as a campus hub. It encourages all kinds of exchange in spaces that are both public and

enclosed, conversational and quiet, flexible and flowing. People run into each other and stop to talk. Students sit together and study. Faculty make coffee dates, small classes meet in well-equipped seminar rooms, and gatherings take place in upstairs lounges with moveable furniture and views of the campus. The campus community is enhanced and communication encouraged by the creation of what has become the new heart of the campus.

Dialogue is...the outer counterpart to the inward cultivation of mindfulness. — JON KABAT-ZINN

BEING PRESENCE Awakening to questions of discourse, and thus to dialogue practice, depends on mindfulness – first within oneself, and then developing skills of mindfulness together. Doing so requires “the work before the work,” and we support the groundwork for our project in a number of ways.

We began by including a *Way of Council* workshop taught by Bonnie Mennell and Paul LeVasseur as one of the eight events that launched our initiative. Council is a powerful and unabashedly spiritual form of dialogue practice used for discernment and deliberation in communities around the world since ancient times. Bonnie and Paul returned to campus in the Spring of 2009 to lead a faculty development workshop based on Council for twelve faculty members, as well as a public workshop for twenty participants.

A two-part meditation workshop with an accomplished Zen teacher David Rynick was one of our early public programs. We continue in this vein with *meditation practice* sessions, offered by the dialogue project (in collaboration with the Klein Professorship) for the last two years.

The introduction of these and other intentional practices is a way of reinforcing that aspect of dialogue. These include regular *Days of Listening*, in which sessions on listening are held around the campus (see Appendix for more information).

FOLLOWING FLOW Listening for and following out the “viral” flow of the DD project has been a dynamic and ongoing process. We focus on developing environments for dialogic skills and experiences, in hopes that these efforts will generate more of the same. Yet the impact and expansion of interest in

THE CLARK SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE (CSI) USES DIALOGUE AS A MEANS OF BUILDING THEIR ORGANIZATION • Meditation sessions are initiated by a group of faculty and are held twice a week as part of the dialogue project • The official period for our Ford Difficult Dialogues grant comes to an end in March 2008 • The Residential (RA) and Peer Advisor (PA) groups (90 undergrads in total) receive mini-trainings in dialogue during the Fall Orientation Week • As an event in the DD Symposium on *Reclaiming the Common Wealth*, the Worcester Human Rights Commission and DD co-sponsor a roundtable dialogue on WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A NEIGHBOR • It is ATTENDED BY MORE THAN 150 PEOPLE FROM CAMPUS AND AROUND THE CITY • Most classes proceed within traditional formats, but more than 16 COURSES EACH TERM ARE TAUGHT WITH A “DIALOGUE EMPHASIS” (as interpreted by the individual instructor), and Dialogue Seminars are offered every term • BARACK OBAMA IS ELECTED PRESIDENT in November 2008 • “MY CLARK CAREER CAN BE BEST DESCRIBED AS ‘BEFORE AND AFTER DIALOGUE,’” says a graduating senior and DD fellow • **2009** Faculty Assembly is relaxed and full of conversation; a three-minute “mingle” to meet others has become a part of the regular agenda • FACULTY LIST-SERVE DISCUSSIONS ARE INCREASINGLY CIVIL, THOUGH BURSTS OF POLEMIC STILL ARISE • Another Consortium institution requests help with problems around issues of race and class – the DD project leads a workshop for a faculty group there and connects them with a leading dialogue consultant • STUDENTS OF DIVERSE RACIAL BACKGROUNDS EXPLORE THE ISSUE OF “RACE IN THE ERA OF OBAMA” IN A WEEKLY DIALOGUE SEMINAR • In an event organized by one of the DD Fellows, black alums D’Army Bailey ’65 and Shelia McCann ’71 talk about their experiences of race in their undergraduate years at Clark • D’Army encourages students to speak out and act on racial injustices in the University and beyond • A PAIR OF STUDENTS CREATES A DIALOGUE EVENT AROUND THE SYMBOL OF THE SWASTIKA, WITH 30 COMMUNITY MEMBERS ATTENDING • Trustee Mark Fishman makes a substantial gift to the DD Project • A focus group on the Israeli-Palestinian issue continues its second year of meetings and launches its first public dialogue • A faculty member in the group volunteers to facilitate a Dialogue Seminar on the issue in Fall 2009 • STUDENTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN ISSUE START A DIALOGUE PROCESS BETWEEN THEMSELVES; 40 STUDENTS ATTEND THE FIRST SESSION • A new faculty member is selected using a dialogic deliberation process • Protests erupt around the Gaza

issue, and STUDENTS WRANGLE OVER THE USE OF A LOUDSPEAKER • AMIDST THE
PROTESTERS, ONE STUDENT CALLS TO OTHERS ASKING THEM TO SIT IN
COUNCIL WITH HIM, and they find a place on the grass •

Following a period of campus unrest around the invitation
of Norman Finkelstein to campus, President Bassett
suggests that DD facilitate a campus-wide
conversation on academic freedom in the Fall •

AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS RETREAT FROM THE
ROLE OF CONSTANTLY REPRESENTING THEIR RACE
AND THE ISSUE OF RACE, but they hold a very

successful “Black Monologue” event in the Spring,
with an appreciative racially mixed audience • Director

Sarah Buie is named to the board of the Public Conversations Project
and SPEAKS ON THE PROJECT AT THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF THE

CONSORTIUM OF HUMANITIES CENTERS AND INSTITUTES (CHCI) • A
senior in the Race Seminar writes in his last reflection paper that

EVERY CLARK STUDENT SHOULD TAKE A DIALOGUE SEMINAR • In
September John Sarrouf joins the project as Assistant Director •

JOHN BASSETT ANNOUNCES HIS RESIGNATION FROM THE CLARK
PRESIDENCY, effective July 2010 • Kristen Williams and John

Sarrouf co-facilitate with Fellows a challenging Dialogue
Seminar on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict • In November,

DD SPONSORS A COMMUNITY-WIDE DIALOGUE FOR NEARLY
200 PEOPLE ON A LOCAL GREEN ECONOMY IN WORCESTER •

With Dave Joseph of the Public Conversations Project,
we plan for a winter conference on *Inviting Dialogue*

• David Angel is named successor to John Bassett as
President of the University • **2010** On a sunny day

in February, our regional conference *Inviting
Dialogue/Renewing the Deep Purposes of Higher
Education* BRINGS TOGETHER 80 COLLEAGUES

REPRESENTING 25 COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
AND OTHER DIALOGUE PROFESSIONALS •

Coming at last to the end of its long
gestation, this volume goes to press in
the late spring, and we look forward
to distributing it to colleagues



dialogue often happens out of sight and in indirect ways; there is continual surprise and pleasure in its new offshoots.

Following the flow has often meant creating new forms to meet needs as they arose, or to support interest on the part of others. We see it in the many self-initiated and sustaining projects generated by other groups in the climate of and with the support of the dialogue project. In this fourth year of the project, we are often approached to be collaborators for events or consultants for situations that would benefit from dialogue. Outreach through presentations, professional organizations, and conference participation is a regular part of our work.

MEETING NEW NEEDS As the project developed, we saw the need for a group to serve as both a campus resource and a cross-community practice group including faculty, professional student life staff, and students. The *Dialogue Resource Team (DRT)* began with a one-day training session with consultant Peri Chickering and met periodically during a period of eighteen months. The structure and time commitment gradually proved too cumbersome for many members, especially the professional staff, and the group was disbanded. Many original members continue to participate in other aspects of the project, as members of the Executive Committee, Fellows, or dialogue course faculty.

The initiative has brought dialogic practices into some faculty governance deliberations, administrative processes, and to campus conflicts as they arise. We offered to facilitate conversations around the issue of non-tenure track faculty positions, brought a dialogic process into a faculty hiring process, and were asked to develop a campus-wide dialogue on the freedom of speech issue.

In response to a conflict at a public event on the issue, we developed an *Israeli-Palestinian conflict focus group* among members of the community. Its seven participants come from varying viewpoints. After meeting for almost two years for conversations and readings on the issue, the group has developed a fair degree of trust and gained some skills of dialogue. The group has sponsored two public events in the last year, and member Kristen Williams proposed and offered a Dialogue Seminar on the issue in the Fall of 2009.



One of the best examples of how the DD program enriched my time at Clark was their support of the Women of Color Collective. The members of WOCC came together in huddled conversations, sharing experiences positive, and often negative, about our experiences as students at Clark – the moments we had in classes suddenly unable to find our voices, and the silences that existed between us as students from many different parts of the world. Our dialogues helped us to develop a vocabulary both to describe and to shift these silences; they helped us to explore how race, ethnicity, and religion impacted our relationship with other classmates, the university, and the democracy at large.

SHERYL-ANN SIMPSON
Difficult Dialogues Fellow '06/07

The Dialogue Seminar emerged to meet a felt need. In the initial semester of the project, facilitation of dialogue at public events and in existing classes often frustrated the students eager to deepen their experience of dialogue. Dialogue Seminars were first offered in the Fall of 2007 to address this need and have proven essential in the work of the project.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT Student participation, beyond attendance at events or involvement in classes, has taken many forms, often with remarkable commitment on their part.

Some of their work has been linked to particular issues – the development of a Women of Color collective in IDCE, a forum of the Clark Sustainability Initiative (CSI) and the planning process for Summer of Solutions, the development of a public dialogue event around the symbol of the swastika, and the creation of a student dialogue group around the Israel-Palestine issue.

Other students have taken dialogue practice into their work and study commitments: Hannah Caruso '09 (DD Fellow 2008–09) has worked with dialogue in EPOCA and other non-profit organizations; Abhishek Raman '09 (DD Fellow 2008–09) brought dialogic awareness to the Student Council in his tenure as president. Others have integrated dialogic practices in their student teaching, in their community service, and in research and service projects abroad.

Four graduate Fellows in IDCE, who received small stipends in the funded phases of the project, were wonderful collaborators in the development of the initial phases. The Fellowship has continued, growing into a voluntary participation for academic credit on the part of undergrads and graduate students. Two Fellows participated in AY 2008–09; there are six Fellows in AY 2009–10. Their primary role is to help facilitate the Dialogue Seminars, but they also help plan and support events, facilitate Conversation Cafés, initiate events, and publicize the program.

A current Fellow and Residential Advisor, Nora Oliver '10, has created an ongoing series of resources for the Residential Advisors, including screening films followed by Conversation Cafés, and other links to our campus-wide programming and issues. She has worked to bring dialogic practice to a number of student groups and at their request, ran dialogue trainings for student leaders in the spring of 2010.

A particularly powerful way in which the work of the project has been received and carried by students is the adoption of the Way of Council. Having learned about Council during a workshop in the project's launch, the students' practice of holding Council among friends and acquaintances naturalized on campus and continues today.

COLLABORATION Developing *partnerships and collaborations* has been a value of the project since its inception. Beyond the constant collaboration within the DD project itself, we are often approached by other individuals and groups with suggestions for joint projects having a dialogue emphasis.

Examples include co-sponsorship of events with the president and the Mosakowski Institute; co-sponsorship with the City of Worcester Office of Human Rights of a large dialogue event on "neighbors"; creation of a local green economy dialogue event for 200 community members, involving more than twelve participants from government, business, and local non-profits in its planning; collaboration with an IDCE grad student in a "Difficult Dialogues through the Movies" film series (Fall 2009). In collaboration with the Brookfield Institute, two undergraduate Fellows facilitated deliberations at the World Wide Views project (September 26, 2009) in anticipation of the UN climate summit in Copenhagen.

CONSULTING AND TRAININGS We develop workshops and presentations to introduce practices of dialogue and dialogic thinking both on and off-campus. We offer trainings on dialogue for the Residential Advisors (RAs) and the ACE (Academic Clark Excellence) students during Week One, the first-year student orientation. We are working with CETL (Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning), offering a session on dialogue for all graduate teaching assistants and PLAs (Peer Learning Assistants). The Office of Community Engagement and Volunteering has approached us to work with MAD (Making a Difference) scholars. The aids 2031 project based in IDCE has asked us to consult with them about developing dialogic events centered on their issue.

We have become our own trainers, having created a half-day faculty development session of our own to offer faculty new to the project and to the possibilities of bringing dialogue to their classrooms. At other institutions,

we have offered presentations, participated in panels or had campus visits from Anna Maria College, Wellesley College, University of New Hampshire Discovery Program and Franklin Pierce College.

PRESENTATIONS AND ALLIANCES We have offered presentations and led workshops at the Rhode Island School of Design, the annual meeting of humanities centers directors (CHCI), the annual meeting of The Democracy Imperative, and at our own regional conference on dialogue in higher education. We are members of the NCDD (National Coalition of Dialogue and Deliberation) and the Democracy Imperative (TDI).



Way of Council workshop with Bonnie Mennell and Paul LeVasseur at the *Inviting Dialogue* conference, February 2010.

Way of Council

A Reflection On Bringing Practice into Students' Everyday Lives

DIALOGUE AS PRESENCE

Imagine sitting in a room of about ten fellow students, only knowing about three of them. Everyone is sitting on pillows, blankets, stools, chairs, and other odd things lying about the living room. A beautiful plant, three candles, and a rock lie in the center of our circle. The rock is picked up, introduced as the talking piece for the evening; a poem is read, and “Council” begins.

Way of Council was introduced through a workshop that other friends attended during the first Difficult Dialogues symposium in 2006. They saw it, just as I do now, as a way to gather, reflect, and practice a method of communication unlike than any other we experience on a regular basis. Now Council is a part our lives and community here at Clark. Through an e-mail list, Facebook, and the more traditional word of mouth, anyone can call for Council by providing the time and location, and before long we gather. Sometimes four people come, sometimes there are twenty, but no matter how many join in, everyone leaves feeling connected, grounded, and usually with many new thoughts of exploration and inquisition.

Council is a very organic experience in my mind. We gather with ideas and feelings floating in our heads, but as the talking piece moves around the circle we are no longer in our own heads. We release our personal judgments and complexities to really listen to each other. At the beginning of Council, just as in all dialogue practices, we create agreements, reminders of how we can become fully present and feel safe in the space. By following these simple agreements, such as speaking and listening from the heart, confidentiality and spontaneity, all those sitting there are able to fully listen to the words that are said and not said about our personal lives, collective lives, and the spaces in between.

The Way of Council has really become a movement here at Clark. It is a way for a group of extended friends to come together in our busy schedules to sit, slow down, and really listen to one another.

NORA OLIVER '10

Difficult Dialogues Fellow and Intern

Teaching My First Dialogue Course A Reflection

Walter Wright

In the Spring semester of 2007 I taught my first dialogue course. PHIL 105 *Personal Values* is an introduction to philosophy through ethics, a course that I had offered many times before without a dialogue emphasis. This edition of PV was similar to earlier ones in several respects. It took up issues in personal and social morality, including economic justice and world hunger, war and terrorism, sexuality and racism, and abortion. Also, it surveyed the basic alternatives in moral theory.

This course differed from all my previous PV courses. First, it included a series of in-class dialogue exercises. Second, it required students to attend Difficult Dialogues Symposium events (on the state of our democracy and race), to discuss these events, and to write an analytical essay about one of them (one of five essay assignments). With the assistance of a graduate assistant, Sheryl Ann Simpson, I devoted seven class meetings to small group dialogue exercises. I was especially interested to note any changes that happened as a result of switching from debate and discussion to dialogue. Additionally, the class meetings following important symposium events (Eugene Jarecki's film and the faculty racism panel come to mind), included a review of the event and student responses to it. With thirty-five enrolled students, this section was the same size as most versions of this course that I have taught. However, the outcome was somewhat different.

I approached this experience with trepidation, thinking at the outset that including dialogue experiences as a part of the course could have two negative consequences. First, it could mean reducing the philosophical content this class usually covered. Second, it could mean giving up the controlling position that faculty usually

enjoy in the classroom and creating a place for all of us to meet on a more equal basis. Although I was choosing the dialogue experiment, that prospect was not entirely comfortable. I wondered how the students, so used to the conventions and structures of the regular classroom, would react to this unusual approach. The dialogue exercises we did included some different formats: (1) small breakout groups that reconvened to share results (i.e. to generate class agreements for dialogue and to share responses to symposium events), (2) small breakout groups that continued (i.e. jellybean sharing – an exercise on distributive justice), (3) larger breakout groups that reconvened (i.e. an exercise on defining racial categories), and (4) larger breakout groups that did not reconvene or share at all (men's and women's councils on gender and sexuality).

How were the results of this course different from previous versions?

ONE Although the dialogue exercises were conducted as separate sessions, their influence permeated the entire course. Student participation in class discussions during the non-dialogue meetings differed noticeably in three ways: (a) more students than usual spoke in class, (b) the students seemed to listen to one another more intently and to be less judgmental regarding views with which they disagreed, and (c) class discussions were more coherent. In short, class discussion in our more conventional sessions was noticeably better than those in previous versions of this course.

TWO There was a higher level of student engagement in the class. Although I did not formally take attendance, class sessions were generally full. The number of students who



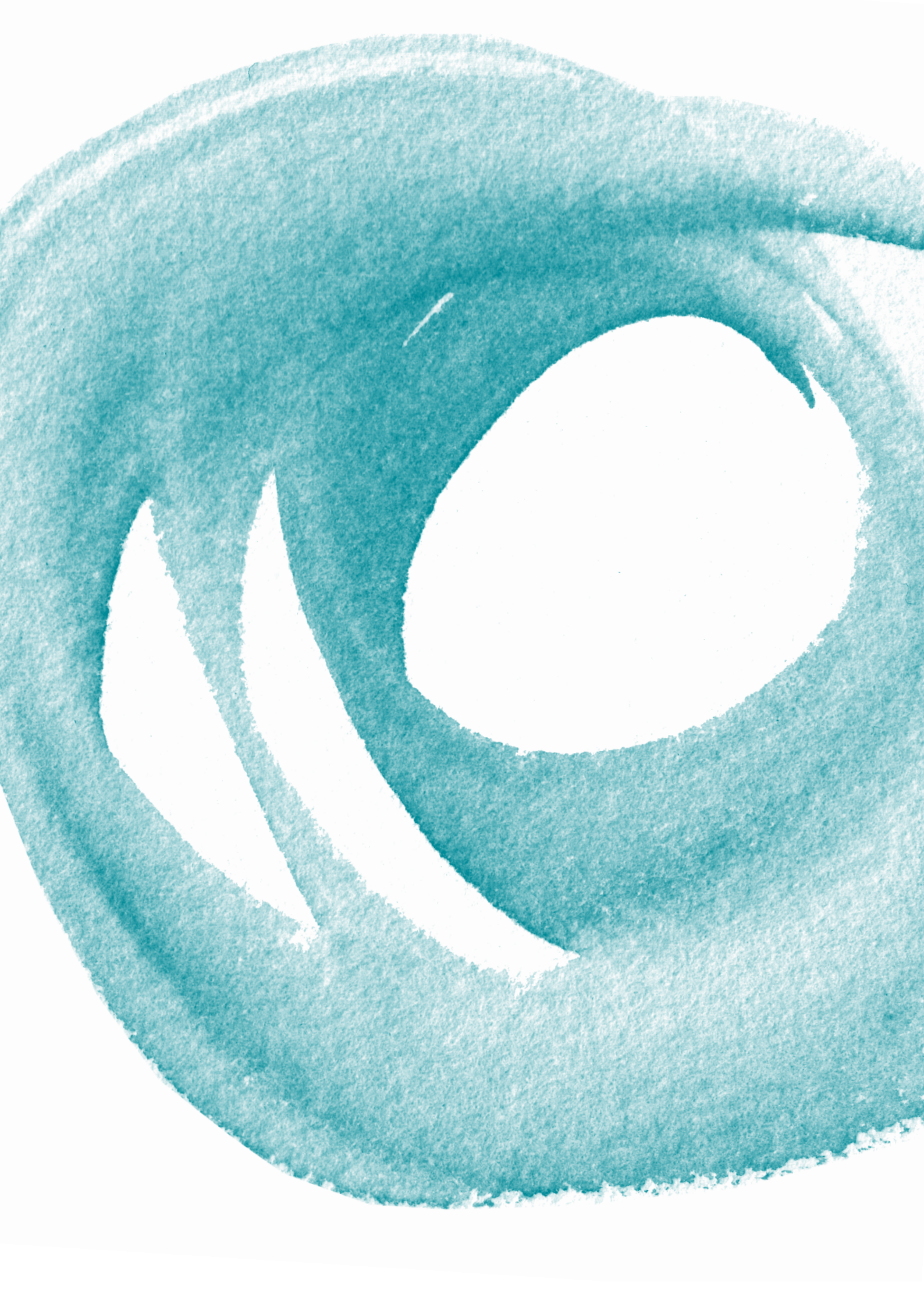
sought me out after class was greater, and students in the class paid closer attention to the proceedings.

THREE In the dialogue sessions themselves, students gave voice to questions and concerns that were more candid than had often been the case. Students articulated and stood behind their discomforts about the process while still actively participating. There was also a lot of good feeling and laughter in the dialogues. The group as a whole raised probing questions and stayed with them. The issues we were able to open and explore in the “men’s council” were remarkable.

FOUR From things individual students said to me before and after class, I believe that students in this class were more engaged in the university’s intellectual and cultural life outside the classroom than my students in previous years seemed to be. My initial concerns about this course both proved justified. We did cover less “content,” and it was indeed necessary for me to cede control over the direction of the class, within certain limits. However, the benefits more than compensated. First, the course created additional student engagement in lively intellectual work. Second, the students took more control of their own educational trajectories, and finally, I was renewed by the new pedagogical possibilities that this class opened for me.

One last note – perhaps the biggest surprise benefit in teaching a dialogue course came in the four meetings that brought together the group of faculty teaching dialogue courses. In each session, we sat in a circle and took turns talking about our experiences with this new kind of teaching. The candor and respect in the room were remarkable. We listened carefully, we talked truthfully about our successes and challenges, and we all went away enlivened. I learned so much from my colleagues in these conversations that I had to wonder why we had not been talking together like this all along.

Walter Wright is Dean of the College, Professor of Philosophy and a member of the Difficult Dialogues Executive Committee. He was a participant in the DD faculty development process. His course “Personal Values” has been offered as a Dialogue Course, and he has facilitated the Dialogue Seminar with the Fellows.

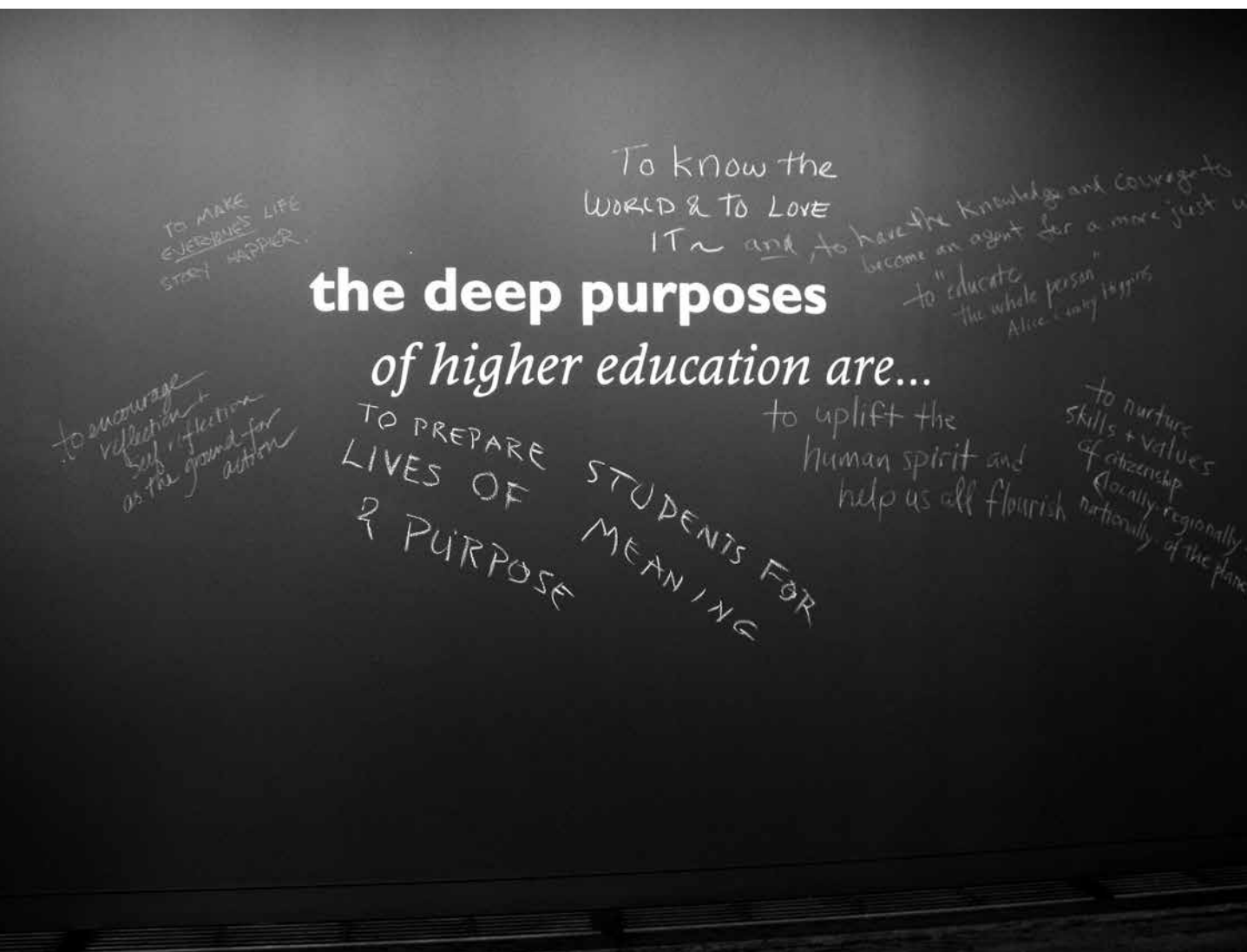




Reflections

We have an obligation to have difficult dialogues in a way we really never had before. That obligation is deep and more acute. We have to develop the skills and capacities for dialogue. That is what the Difficult Dialogues program is doing at Clark in all its variety of courses, lectures, and experiences. Difficult Dialogues has put Clark out there as a model of how we can take step-by-step advances by gaining those special skills and capacities that are so crucial today.

CYNTHIA ENLOE



Participants in the *Inviting Dialogue* conference in February 2010 were encouraged to share their thoughts on the walls of the gathering space in Dana Commons.

THE WORK OF THE PROJECT IS ONGOING, and reflection a mainstay of its practice. Included here are a few of those reflections, gathered from various documents and members of the project at different points in the process.

ON DIALOGUE & OUR FACULTY

The first focus was the quality of exchange among ourselves as faculty initiators of the project. Our proposal grew out of many small and larger conversations where we probed the definitions of dialogue and its role in teaching. These conversations laid a solid basis for our planning process, once it was established into more formal structures (executive and steering committees) made up of a diverse group of faculty across gender, race, and rank. Early meetings revealed our inexperience and resistances. The challenges of creating a collective and collaborative process were time-consuming, sometimes awkward and frustrating, and unique in this setting.

However, the enthusiasm of the faculty, their willingness to take risks and to create this project through dialogue was unprecedented, defying apathy and indifference. Many faculty broke out of their disciplinary “silos” and set aside skepticisms to sit together with trust and respect, to listen intently, speak freely, learn new skills, and build the project collectively. Some faculty gatherings had a level of trust and engagement not seen before among those who have been here for decades. As a result, the enlivened faculty took up different program aspects of the project, creating events, forums, courses, and facilitations, together and individually, with collegiality and creativity.

My understanding of dialogue has altered significantly since I joined the Difficult Dialogues Project two years ago. At first, I thought that dialogue was a pedagogical technique designed to encourage students to speak up about difficult and controversial subjects. Over time, I have learned that dialogue is more than an instrumental teaching technique; it is more *poiesis* than *techne*. I have come to appreciate that dialogue embodies much of what lies at the heart of a liberal education and, as such, has the potential to revive our commitment to this purpose.

REPORT TO THE
FORD FOUNDATION

PATRICIA EWICK
Sociology

REPORT TO THE
FORD FOUNDATION

Perhaps our most significant challenges are due to the nature of academic life as currently lived. We began the project from a base in the faculty, and that continues to be our strength and the source of our greatest challenges. It is rare for academics to consider their higher purposes together in any kind of public forum other than some national organizations and conferences, and those kinds of conversations had not taken place at Clark in many years, if ever. Faculty develop and practice in a culture defined more by competition and disciplinary concerns than by attention to the processes by which students (and all of us) learn, grow, affiliate, and solve problems together. In addition, many faculty members suffer from overload; both complexities of scheduling and demanding professional pressures and responsibilities make it very difficult for them to take up something else. This kind of “optional” program provides no official reward at year-end evaluation.

Despite those pressures, a remarkable number of faculty persist in one or several levels of involvement with our DD project. The “dialogues” of flexibility and rigidity, passion and fear, commitment and self-protection, altruism and self-promotion, creativity and disciplinary coding, and the co-existing realms of teaching and scholarship within members of the faculty offer essential questions (and fertile ground) for this work of nourishing a “culture” or “climate” of dialogue within the academy.

MIRIAM CHION
Community Development

Overall, the Difficult Dialogues Initiative has had a much higher participation of women than men. This is visible in the executive and steering committees, organization of symposia, and attendance at events. This high level of women’s participation was particularly prominent among faculty and staff. Student participation was somewhat more balanced between male and female.

This presence of women allowed in-depth reflections on the trajectory of women’s role in academia and changes in gender conditions at Clark. Female faculty recognized the power they acquired over time and the persistent and new challenges they confront. The emphasis on listening and equal air time at the dialogues undermined the dominant performance of loud voices, interruptions, and demonstration of intelligence and productiveness. This “controlled” dialogue increased the level of comfort and engagement for many female faculty and provided channels of support among junior and senior female faculty.

Difficult Dialogues has brought to light the power and challenges of women in academia. Women's participation in Difficult Dialogues raised a number of questions. Was this a space of recognition of gender relations and female faculty accomplishments at Clark and in academia? Or, has dialogue been a women's responsibility in academia parallel to that in the household? Have women engaged in dialogue as a more powerful platform from which to address tensions and conflicts? Is this a division of labor in which women deal with "domestic" matters while male faculty deal with research and administration? Are these dialogues shifting the power differential or reinforcing the existing patterns?

Our high level of faculty participation in the Dialogue Project belies a number of academic and structural obstacles. The demands of a research career, coupled with the merit system of the institution, can preclude additional responsibilities of this sort. Research travel, conference participation, sabbatical leaves, advising, administrative and committee responsibilities, and job changes have been a constant challenge to regular commitment to the project by faculty. There are issues of trust between colleagues who are divided in a number of structural ways. There are other institutional resistances to a new initiative that does not originate from the administration, or have an institutional home in an established "teaching and learning" office. Central involvement of faculty has also repeatedly highlighted various power differentials (faculty/student, faculty/staff, faculty/administration, administration/staff) that riddle the university community.

REPORT TO THE
FORD FOUNDATION

There was quality to the conversations different from anything I had been part of before in this institution. Things came awkwardly at first, because...we started with our own rudimentary understanding of what dialogue was and of what would constitute a meeting that was done more dialogically. Who knew? And could we bring faculty members into a process like this?

SARAH BUIE
*Visual & Performing Arts and
Higgins School of Humanities*

There was lots of searching. We let it grow organically, people choosing and developing it from their own priorities, from their own sense of what is needed. It made for surprises.... Much better things came out of this process

than we could ever have planned from just a few of us talking about it... people came, knowing that they would be heard, that they could play a part. Being this creative together – having a sense of possibility and then acting together – has been surprising and joyful.

CYNTHIA ENLOE
*Government & International
Development*

An advantage that Clark has in its Dialogue Project is that many faculty involved in Difficult Dialogues have had experience of working in Women's Studies and thinking about what's distinctive in feminist ways of teaching. Many faculty from different disciplines have been pulled into the Difficult Dialogue effort at Clark. It changes them and their interactions outside of Clark.

Difficult Dialogues is taking new forms. That is the genius of the Difficult Dialogues group. The members come from so many disciplines and areas of skills. Yet having now such a strong core in the arts [the Higgins School] has done a lot to shape its innovative spirit, recognizing the importance of space and atmosphere. A lot of what makes risk-taking a collective experience is not the topic on the head of the paper, but the atmospherics. What feminists call the "organizational climate" is very important. How the issues were presented by the arts [music, photography, literature, graphics, film] has affected the insights we are gaining.

ON DIALOGUE & OUR STUDENTS

VIRGINIA VAUGHAN
English

Dialogue fits in with Clark's mission of "learning through inquiry." In our classes we do not deliver a body of knowledge but encourage students to make the knowledge theirs and to interact with it. That happens through dialogue. On the international, national and personal level, dialogue is absolutely critical.

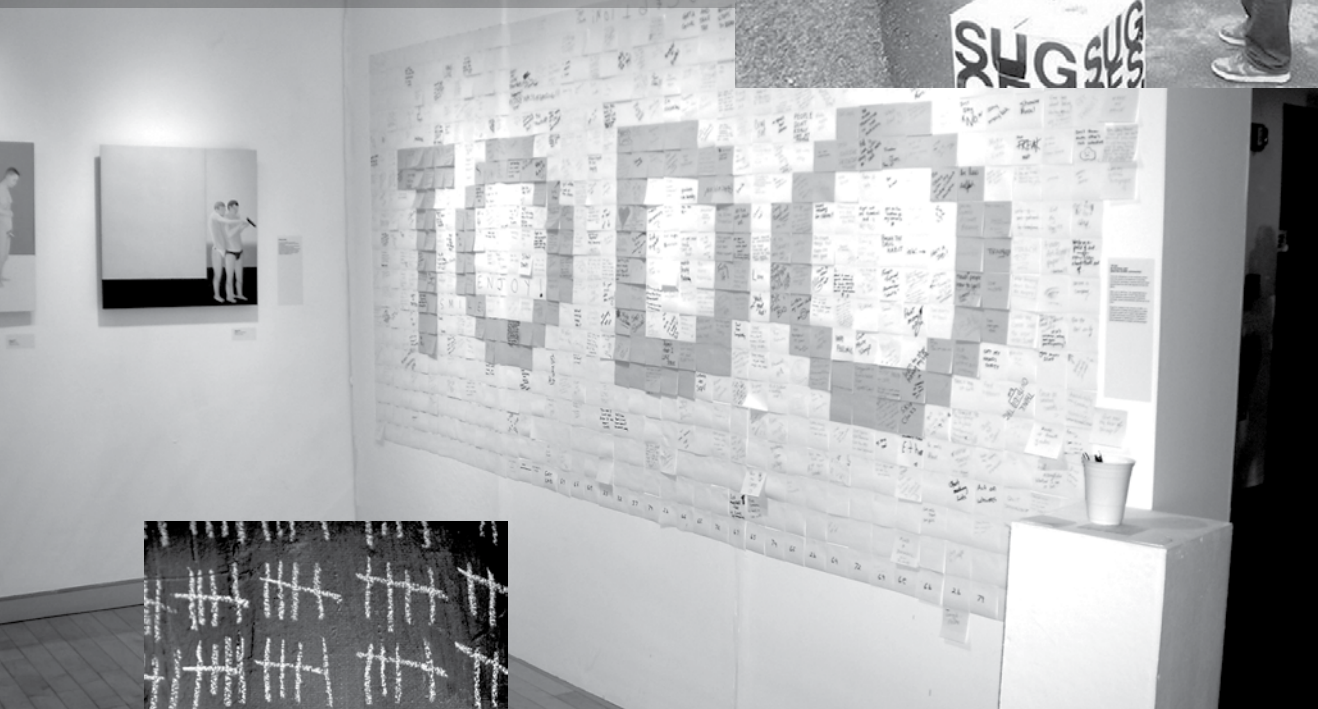
REPORT TO THE
FORD FOUNDATION

A number of obstacles to student participation have surfaced through the project. In our early research, we learned that students were often hesitant to speak in class, or among themselves, on contentious issues out of fear of conflict with a peer or faculty member. (We see that the DD rubric has supported those students in speaking both in class and among themselves, given a more common awareness on campus of its principles and practices.)

Visual Dialogues Exhibition

DD Symposium Event, Spring 2007

DIALOGUE AS CREATIVE MATRIX



Visual Dialogues brought artists to campus whose work confronts difficult topics, as well as those working in ways that stimulate dialogue and interaction. Many of these images and performance pieces are difficult to look at, to understand, or to think about. Several artists invite viewers to collaborate and actively engage in the work. This, too, may be difficult if one is more comfortable thinking of art as essentially ornamental and passive.

Some of these pieces are intimate and deeply personal; other projects tackle global issues, while others directly reflect the desires and fears of the participants. The art may also evoke changing responses over time. Some narratives are immediate, others more subtle.

Curated by Associate Professor Elli Crocker, the exhibition included the work of nine artists/teams including Stephen DiRado, Michael Dowling, Steve Hollinger, Illegal Art, Steve Locke, James Montford, Sarina Khan Reddy, Elaine Spatz-Rabinowitz, and Thomas Starr. It was held in the Schiltkamp Gallery of the Traina Center for the Arts, with performance pieces mounted around campus.

In addition, under serious time constraints from academic and extracurricular commitments, students have had difficulty attending programs on a consistent basis. Some events drew large crowds, while other drew only the most loyal. The most reliable attendees were those enrolled in either dialogue courses or the Dialogue Seminars.

Underlying the more structural challenges for all members of the community is the more fundamental obstacle of fear – fear of conflict, of transgressing institutional and hierarchical norms, of failing to meet other responsibilities, of being politically incorrect, of being seen as overreaching one's professional role. Despair is another root cause of silence, as some feel that there is nothing to be gained by speaking together about difficult issues.

PATRICIA EWICK
Sociology

There are fifteen students in my DD class, and I asked them to write an essay on their experience of dialogue at Clark. They're hungry for it [learning dialogue skills]. They wrote intelligently about their silences – silence either because they were intimidated or self-imposed silence because they did not want to offend someone. They felt it was important to learn dialogue because their other classes are too rapid fire [to engage in dialogue]. I'm astonished how ripe the students are for dialogue.

HANNAH CARUSO '09
DD Fellow

I've noticed that when one person speaks from the heart and their experience that it brings a kind of authenticity to the conversation, and most people in the room respect that. (Some don't know how.) It can create a culture of respect.

I think dialogue is incredibly challenging. Just because I enjoy it doesn't mean it is easy. It is a constant challenge to step outside our habit of judging each other constantly and to refocus. To listen to others and try to actually hear what they are saying is not usual for us.

There are so many students from different backgrounds here. We are talking about those differences [in class]. Then we can go outside, beyond campus, and bridge the gap. We will be able to sit down with people all over the world and talk about our differences.

ON DIALOGUE & OUR ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

I saw the immediate potential of Difficult Dialogues when I read the proposal. It had such potential to work with the institution to bring synergy between the three signatures experiences of a Clark education: 1) Make a Difference, 2) Learn through Inquiry, and 3) Experience Diverse Cultures...“About Clark” on our website shows a Venn diagram showing the nexus, or overlap of the three signatures. Difficult Dialogues holds the potential to work on the three signatures at once.

NANCY BUDWIG
*Dean of Graduate Studies
& Research*

Difficult Dialogues has also found synergy in different parts of the Clark community. Its programs demonstrate an ability to bring together and cut across the boundaries between graduate and undergraduate students, faculty and students, faculty and faculty, the various disciplines, and the University and the wider community. One major impact of Difficult Dialogues, then, is finding synergies across the three signatures of a Clark education and across diverse groups on campus.

With Difficult Dialogues, we’ve opened a door for something to happen. If dialogue is a process, then the whole program is a process. There’s no end point. It is just a commitment to something that always has to be revisited and is freshly implemented.

IAN DEZALIA
IDCE Graduate & DD Fellow

Dialogue can [help us be] a wealthier, healthier, and more caring organization. At the personal level, we envision a change in attitude that will support a cultural change for a university that is more open to itself and to the world. We envision a greater ability to navigate power with less fear; dissolving fears by acknowledging and changing power relations.

MIRIAM CHION
Community Development

Part of the educational process must be to invite real encounters for people of different backgrounds and races. We are failing in our educational mission if we don’t create the environment, programming, and opportunities where students of different backgrounds and racial heritages can learn from each other and come to an understanding of issues surrounding those differences. We made an active decision that is what we are about, and it calls upon us to...invest in some practices to support that goal.

DAVID ANGEL
Provost & President-Elect

VIRGINIA VAUGHAN
English

A culture of dialogue at Clark would mean we have better communication as an intellectual and social community. Faculty would engage in serious discussion of pedagogical, scholarly and social issues, always showing respect for a broad array of viewpoints, always speaking carefully and listening more carefully. There would be face-to-face dialogues instead of relentless e-mail. We would have time to talk to each other and to listen. For the students, it would mean not only the free and open exchange of ideas within the classroom, but as well there would be student-initiated forums on topics of interest to the entire community.

NANCY BUDWIG
*Dean of Graduate Studies
& Research*

The program has had real impact on our understanding on how visions, dreams, and possibilities can be implemented.... I was blown away and need to know more about how the Difficult Dialogues project has been so successfully implemented. Clark is a place where over the years people have had amazing dreams and plans for the future, but when it comes to translating them into implementation, we've sold ourselves short.

At every level there was strategic thinking about how to maximize the Difficult Dialogues resources and a level of precision, timing, and excellence that can be obtained.... In addition to mobilizing financial resources, the project has mobilized human resources.... Each event had to be as good as the others, and a common thread of excellence ran through them. We should tap into that knowledge about how to build in excellence to programming and sustain momentum as the Difficult Dialogue project has across several months. There are very few events that have hit campus like this, where just about everyone on campus knew something about it regardless of what part of campus they were attached to.

CYNTHIA ENLOE
*Government & International
Development*

The Difficult Dialogues phrase itself is wonderful because a lot of people think they want to be in dialogue, but most of us don't want to be in a "difficult" dialogue. It takes so much stamina because you feel nervous, guilty, and uncomfortable. Education at its best should be both inclusive and discomfiting, and that is what the Difficult Dialogues program has done at Clark. It has created this space where people feel included and can be both discomfited and safe. "Safe" never means merely comfortable.

Dialogue is a place where you can take risks, but it is tough to ask new questions and get new answers.

ON DIALOGUE & THE INDIVIDUAL

In mainstream U.S. culture, high value is placed on the individual, on achievement, and the idea that the best and most powerful arguments should win. These values foster debate and challenge individuals to articulate their viewpoints, but they can also lead to the silencing of others and to responding with silence in the face of controversy. What has impressed me throughout the dialogue project is its power to change the stance a person takes when confronted with diversity of opinion and controversy. To actively listen and be silent in order to understand another's viewpoint, to express ideas with the aim of helping others understand what you have to say – these are vital skills to be sure. But they are skills born not just of the right techniques but of an attitude that requires training; that attitude is at the heart of dialogue.

FERN JOHNSON
English

With so many deeply controversial issues facing us, we need the attitude of dialogue – what I like to call “dialogue mindedness” – to anchor how and when we speak. Too much civility glosses over important points of difference, just as too much combativeness polarizes positions. Dialogue does not ensure resolution, but it does open possibilities for deeper appreciation of perspectives that we might not have thoughtfully engaged. Listening for understanding and speaking to be understood are twin keys to communicating into and not just about the messiness of controversial issues.

The response of the everyday self to dialogical engagement can alter the organization and orientation of that self. Genuine observance of dialogical equality can transfigure the self and its relationships because the way it relates to itself is altered when the way it relates to others is altered. The practice of dialogical suspension is particularly transformative. When suspension of judgment is successful, and especially when it becomes natural and easy, further depths of self or self-function are revealed. This is especially true when the dialogue is a difficult dialogue, and we can in the midst of difficult dialogue sustain suspension. We might call this

WES DEMARCO
Philosophy

excursive dialogue, because it is an adventure, with little or no map of where one is going; the map is made as we venture together into *terra incognita*.

For one thing, at this level we give ourselves over to the peculiar sort of spontaneity that emerges from group mind. This is a very deep level of dialogue, comparable to group improvisation in dance or music. It feels different. It is different.

ON DIALOGUE & SOCIETY

ZO TOBI '08
*Member of first Dialogue
Seminar classes*

We live in a fragmented, polarized society. I get the sense that universities are either the places that can replicate or change that. If we don't know how to listen and how to inquire, we're in trouble. Dialogue seems like a survival strategy for our race.

SARAH BUIE
*Visual & Performing Arts and
Higgins School of Humanities*

Our sense of reality, efficacy, morality, and possibility is so challenged in our society today. More than ever, we need to be demanding and effective critics of existing institutions and the corporate economy. We need to vision sustainable new models for economy, energy, governance and education together; to deepen our relationships to each other as community members on an interdependent planet, and to the process of education as a basis for real learning, collaboration, and creativity. The practice of dialogue is fundamental – a “skillful means” – as we work together.

HAROLD WINGOOD
Dean of Admissions

Difficult Dialogues is a great benefit for the students and the University. If students are required to learn how to engage in dialogue across differences and other difficult issues, that says a lot about our institution. And maybe our students, faculty, and staff can become the kind of change agents our country and the world need for a brighter future.

BARBARA THORPE
*Panel Member, Boston leaders
on abortion issue, DD launch*

Dialogue enabled us to come into the room together. Without this framework, it was too frightening to consider. As we grew in deeper intimacy and friendship, the divide between us became more painful. There is a longing to be known and understood by others that transcends difference. Holding on to that deep human longing and caring makes it possible to have a conversation over issues where we are deeply divided.

We are laying the groundwork to implement change. Nothing will happen without that. I want to learn about dialogue. I work in classrooms with cultural groups and am interested in how they relate and don't relate.

JAYSON FUNKE
Graduate Student Geography

We, collectively, as a country and as people are interconnected globally, and many realize that some questions must be raised, grappled with, resolved now. We have the capacity to do such harm today if we are what Hannah Arendt calls "thoughtless." Humans in the 1600s or even in the 1930s could and did do terrible things to other humans and to forests and wild creatures; but today we have the capacity to irreparably ruin this fragile spinning sphere. We had better collectively figure things out.

CYNTHIA ENLOE
*Government & International
Development*

Interconnectedness is not automatically positive. It on its own does not guarantee peace, justice, and respectful interchange. Interconnectedness – awareness of our mutual interests, our shared condition – can breed hatred and hostility. Our fears can blossom. Our hostilities, when combined with advanced weapons and advanced media technology, can do unspeakable damage to people we never see.

We have an obligation to have difficult dialogues in a way we really never had before. That obligation is deep and more acute. We have to develop the skills and capacities for dialogue. That is what the Difficult Dialogues program is doing at Clark in all its variety of courses, lectures, and experiences. Difficult Dialogues has put Clark out there as a model of how we can take step-by-step advances by gaining those special skills and capacities that are so crucial today.

The Encounters

Challenging My Conventions

Abhishek Raman '09

I must confess that I landed upon the practice of dialogue by accident and not by choice. But I wouldn't be the person I am today, and I wouldn't be where I am now, if it weren't for this accident. My experiences with dialogue have been varied, dynamic, transformative, and most importantly self-reflective. Dialogue has introduced me to the art of effective listening and the practice of respecting varied opinions and thoughts. It has taught me to dig deeper into my own understanding of the world by educating myself about how others see the world from their own lens.

To me, dialogue serves a dual purpose – personal enrichment through the production of a common truth. It brings strangers together in a shared space which soon becomes sacred through the deep conversations that form the basis of a meaningful dialogue. I experienced this, first hand, in Dialogue Seminars, Conversation Cafés, training sessions, and in the undergraduate Student Council meetings. Through my association with the Difficult Dialogues Initiative over many years now, I can certainly affirm that I am committed to bringing dialogue into every facet of my life because I believe in its capacity to positively affect the lives of those touched by it.

Tracing my own journey – an exploration of the encounter of Hinduism and Islam – reminds me of what brings me to this point in my life. At the age of six, I witnessed the Hindu-Muslim riots in Delhi, which took place as an aftermath of the demolition of the Babri Mosque by Hindu fundamentalists in 1993. I was very young then, but this incident had a lasting impact on the way I viewed the society I lived in. Why were Hindus killing their own countrymen and women just because they belong to a religion different from

theirs? I could not comprehend the feeling of hate that had engulfed my community at that time.

Many years later, at Clark, I came across the same issues of religious intolerance that I had witnessed in India. In the second year of its existence, the South Asian Students Association (SASA, which I founded) and the Muslim Cultural Society (MCS) had an argument over who had the legitimate right of celebrating the festival of Eid. SASA had started celebrating Eid and Diwali together since the year before the conflict as a gesture of communicating harmony between two religious communities that have been at odds with each other. But MCS, with its majority Arab student membership, did not want their event held as a South Asian-themed celebration. In the end, lacking a compromise, there were two separate dinners organized by the two organizations during the same weekend. This incident left me frustrated, confused, and with no answers to the questions I had about my faith and cultural identity.

As Pope John Paul II once said, “Before you go out, go deep.” It was during this period of personal confusion that I sought out for a change and was introduced to the Difficult Dialogues Initiative by Professor Sarah Buie. It was during my long association with the Initiative, first as a member of the Steering Committee and later as a Fellow that I really found my true calling toward promoting interfaith dialogue and religious pluralism. However, the seeds of my interfaith work were sown earlier, through my initial contacts with people at Clark. As Diana Eck articulates, “Our interfaith dialogue does not usually begin with philosophy or theory, but with experience and relationships.” Out of my two best friends at Clark, one was a devout Pakistani

Muslim who had lived in Worcester since she was three years old and a Sri Lankan Buddhist who once had strong intentions of becoming a nun. My sociology professor, the backbone of my senior independent study, was a Jew from North Dakota who taught me, a naïve international student with next to no knowledge about Judaism, so much about her religion and culture. Such encounters with people of other faiths in a global and religiously diverse university shaped and enlarged my own Hindu faith toward a Hinduistic form of pluralism.

I consider Professor Buie to have been my first real encounter with the “otherness” of a world view. During the first meeting of the Dialogue Seminar class, she had us sit in a circle and explained the meaning of active listening and the acceptance of silence as a virtue. My initial reaction to the class was one of skepticism, but at the end of the first session I felt my foundations being thoroughly contested. Why couldn't we just listen? Is simple attention so impossible? These were questions about me and my habits of understanding the world, which I had until then taken for granted.

As Diana Eck puts it, these questions that I had raised about my own practices are the questions which define our human existence at the beginning of the 21st century. Thus, dialogue became a part of my everyday life, and I slowly started incorporating it in everything I did – in my role as a resident advisor, as the president of the undergraduate Student Council and in my work toward promoting interfaith dialogue by supporting Israel-Palestine student dialogue groups at Clark. Moreover, I started incorporating dialogue outside of the carefully orchestrated


meetings and consultations with faculty and staff members – in the communities and contexts of my daily life's experiences. Dialogue has also led me to pursue my current assignment with the Pluralism Project at Harvard University. Here, I study the ways in which people in each religious tradition articulate and interpret their faith in the fast-paced and fast-changing world in which we now live.

Abhishek Raman served as a Fellow during the academic year 08/09. As part of his involvement, he co-facilitated two semesters of the Dialogue Seminar and brought dialogue to his work as president of Student Council. He is now a Leadership Associate for the Interfaith Youth Corps, working with fellows on twenty campuses to develop interfaith dialogue.





Going Forward



...a new definition of leadership education is not only a set of programs, courses, or skills. It is an ethos that should extend across disciplines, departments, and individuals to permeate the way in which entire institutions function. That ethos is one that values the transparency, authenticity, collaboration, action, and interactivity that are fast becoming the hallmark of a new global society – one that young people are embracing and one with which older, more traditional institutions are grappling.

CYNTHIA GIBSON AND NICK LONGO

from forthcoming book *From Command to Community*



John Sarrouf (DD Assistant Director) and Kristen Williams (Government) facilitated a Dialogue Seminar on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Fall of 2009.

THE CONTEXT OF THIS WORK IS NOW SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT from that into which we launched the project, both on campus and nationally. On the Clark campus, awareness of the Difficult Dialogues project and the concept of *dialogue* are now quite widespread – with a whole range of ideas as to its meaning and practice. A significant number of faculty and students actively participate in various dialogue courses and programs. Public programs and Dialogue Seminars have opened and encouraged conversations and engagement around the issues of race, religious difference, the state of our democracy, climate change, and sustainability. The project is a point of reference and a resource for issues of conflict, whether it involves the Israel-Palestine issue, faculty governance, a hiring process, or the work of residential advisors. The silences as they still exist are more elusive than they were four years ago, and perhaps more intractable.

There are many subtle and immeasurable shifts for which the project has been a contributing factor. We see a wider range of pedagogical approaches, including serious engagement with dialogue, in our course offerings. There has been a livening of faculty relationships – the faculty development process, collaborations on a variety of dialogue programs and concerns, and conversations about dialogue and pedagogy have connected us in both informal and professional ways that are new and nourishing. There is more awareness of, and attention to, questions of discourse in aspects of our institutional leadership and faculty governance. There is a perception, both within the community and without, that Clark is a place of spirited and committed engagement, in which we are taking up the challenges of our time through serious conversations, a perception and reality that our public programming has played a substantial role in creating.

However, we believe that the most significant impact of this work has been with many of our students who, after participating in Dialogue Seminars and courses, ask for classroom practices in which they can be more engaged, and take more responsibility for their own learning. There has been an impact on the attitudes and direction of some students' engagement while at Clark, and on the trajectory of their careers after Clark. We find that students change their career paths and made new commitments within service learning projects, internships, student teaching, and fellowships to further develop and engage with the work of dialogue.

Believe in the power of dialogue among yourselves.... It requires courage, patience and determination. It requires mutual respect. The way of dialogue is the most mature, human way – the most effective way for producing solutions.

BISHOP CAROLOS FILIPE
XIMINES BELO

I see the main goal [of the DD program] as establishing a practice and culture of dialogue as a community. I think that, as a social institution, we have an education mission and a broader responsibility in the social world. Sometimes we use the educational process as an alibi for not doing the other. Diana Chapman Walsh's writings asked if we can be the kind of leaders we want our students to be. We have to start with ourselves.

RACHEL FALMAGNE
Psychology

ONGOING CHALLENGES We are also well aware of the challenges to our *culture of dialogue*, and its shortfalls. Pedagogical conventions around lecture and discussion are taken for granted by most academics; they – and the questions of what they encourage or discourage – are largely invisible. Our attention to the question of pedagogical methods has discomfited some; others have simply ignored it. Still others have thought the work to be naïve, given conditions of power, both in the institution and elsewhere.

Issues of power are indeed pervasive in an academic community and can shape possibilities for dialogue within it. Hierarchical relationships between administration and faculty, faculty and staff, faculty and students, and between faculty create obstacles to the trust required to establish genuine dialogue. Habits of discourse can reflect and substantiate power differentials. We have worked across these boundaries with some success, but just as often we have experienced their limits.

Despite remarkable participation from faculty, competing pressures on their time (including their own personnel reviews, advising, administrative duties at the department and university levels, and sabbatical leaves) and the culture of disciplinary research are constant factors, often undermining their involvement. Other faculty participate in a limited way, as they struggle to reconcile the pressures of covering content with a more dialogic pedagogy.

Although we have an active campus presence in programming and pedagogy, the committee charged with creating a new curriculum initiative has been slow to understand the rich implications of this work for their charge. Aspects of institutional politics have proved challenging, as has the constant struggle to sustain effective campus and community communication. We continue our quest for funding to sustain the project.

TRANSITIONS In the initial grant period (2006 through 2008), the task of building momentum around the work of the DD project was absorbing and fast-paced. Our emergent agenda, a dense schedule of meetings and programs, and an ever-expanding array of challenges and opportunities required close and nimble attention. That period of intense excitement and abundant creativity is transitioning into what we hope will be a period of stabilization and embedding. While the project schedule is still very

full, our efforts now focus on deepening the work. We are following out the threads of interest and influence already generated by the project, and exploring how the insights and opportunities of the initiative can be best sustained.

Our stated intention in our proposal to the Ford Foundation was to create a culture of dialogue by building skills, creating program opportunities, and integrating dialogue into courses. It was premised on the assumption that we knew what such a culture was, that it could be willfully encouraged, and that it was a much-needed direction for our community and our society, as well as a basis for re-engaging higher education with the pressing concerns of

It is a culture after all – part by design, part wild and surprising.
Intermittent, yet returning in cycles, this culture of dialogue is self-replenishing, an ever-expanding web of possibilities and challenges, as it meets a yearning for dialogue latent in our community and our world.

our time. Our choice of terms, our sense of what was possible, and our appreciation of the systemic obstacles were in some ways naïve. We've come to know a great deal more about the challenges that such a vision invites.

But as we've worked, we *have* tended a culture, layers growing and unfolding, from the bottom up. From collaboration and conversation, numerous sturdy cultural microcosms (classes, listening sessions, Conversation Cafés, topical focus groups, trainings for Residential Advisors) are growing, as well as larger organisms (faculty development, Dialogue Seminars and courses, dialogue symposia with public events on current issues). Nourishing each other – small and large, individuals and groups – they send out waves of influence, seeds that take root, grow in unexpected ways.

It is a culture after all – part by design, part wild and surprising. Intermittent, yet returning in cycles, this *culture of dialogue* is self-replenishing, an ever-expanding web of possibilities and challenges, as it meets a yearning for dialogue latent in our community and our world.

Our experience has proven to be an opportunity to *attend to one another, our aspirations and our struggles*, as well as a taste of what it could

So I see at the heart of your project profound intellectual questions the academy needs to be taking up in our difficult dialogues, and profound institutional questions as well: Who our students can be if we attend more closely to their true intellectual needs. How our work lives can be, if we attend to one another, our aspirations and our struggles. What our institutions can be, if we attend to the whole enterprise as a shared responsibility.

And the world we could create, if we could learn to engage each other fruitfully across the differences and the silences that are polarizing and disempowering us and undermining our ability to govern ourselves responsibly. How do we take some risks and break down some of the barriers that perpetuate the over-commitment, overwork, accelerated pace, and resulting isolation, polarization, suspicion and mistrust that are, I think, the arch-enemies of thoughtful dialogue and, with it, deep and integral learning.

DIANA CHAPMAN WALSH

Keynote

mean *to hold the whole enterprise as a shared responsibility*. It has allowed us to consider pressing contemporary issues with depth, to encourage engagement, to build community. It has built conscious skills of dialogue among a substantial sector of our community. The benefits of dialogue make it one potent answer to the question of what higher education might offer in the way of skills and pathways to young people and ourselves in these challenging times.



A Brighter Future

Difficult Dialogues Symposium Event, November 17, 2008

DIALOGUE AS A FORCE FOR DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Nearly 200 people – Worcester residents, public officials and community leaders, and members of the Clark community – gathered at Clark for an evening of shared reflection around the question of neighbors. The event was conceived through a collaboration with the Worcester Office of Human Rights as a way to talk about human rights on a local scale and was held as part of the DD Symposium, *Reclaiming the Common Wealth*. Throughout the evening, we asked: What does ‘neighbor’ mean to you?

Those in attendance shared stories of their own neighbors – people who may be different from them, but from whom there is the potential to learn something new. We heard from local poets, storytellers and musicians whose stories of neighbors reflected the richness of our shared community. We sat together in groups of ten for facilitated conversations, with people who we may/may not have known, to further consider such questions. Each conversation was guided by agreements about sharing time and listening. The experience was generative, insightful and inclusive.



I think what came out of that event, was that people realized that things like human rights and community building don't have to be top down. Human rights are something that we give to each other, receive from each other, and recognize in each other in our everyday interactions.

HANNAH CARUSO '09
Difficult Dialogues Fellow

Can We Talk Across This Divide?

The Dialogue Seminar on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Kristen Williams and John Sarrouf

The challenge we faced was to teach a course on the Israel-Palestine conflict entirely through dialogue – all the content came as outside assignments, no lectures, and very little in-class questions of the professor-as-expert. The knowledge we built was a shared responsibility and sought to accomplish the dual goals of teaching the conflict itself and how to dialogue about such a difficult issue. The class was made up of Israelis, Palestinians, passionate American partisans on both sides, and a handful of students curious about the issue and approaching it for the first time. We sat to speak after week ten of a fourteen week semester course.

JOHN I'm thinking of one person in particular who keeps on saying how she's having to take a really hard look at the way she talks, at her impulses to hurl offhanded comments across the circle. Now her desire to check those impulses seems by itself, even without all the information, a huge lesson because, in some ways, it's a process class.

KRISTEN That's it. The exciting moments have been when I've read people's reflective pieces and they've been so deeply introspective about challenging their own narratives or their beliefs or their positions, and willingly acknowledge that. Saying, "Wow, I hadn't thought about the conflict in this way before," or "I hadn't ever questioned the fact that I have a narrative and that narratives are socially constructed." And so one of the things we have to keep pushing is to get away from position questions, the yes-no, that would then just shut off dialogue.

JOHN Yes. It's been interesting to me that people so want to know what other people's

position is, where they stand. I've been trying as much as I can to stay away from that, to keep anybody from driving a stake into the ground and claiming a space, because it's so hard to pull your stake up once you've driven it down. Maybe that's fine for a negotiation on, you know...

KRISTEN Jerusalem!

JOHN ...Jerusalem. It's not quite as fine for a dialogue, because it doesn't give you the luxury to explore. You have to defend your own position. There's no safety. I think especially in these difficult dialogues, people have readied defenses. And they will put them up when threatened. You come straight at them, they'll put them up. But if you approach from the side, it throws them off center – they get curious instead.

KRISTEN Yes, and so having to remind them about the dialogue articles we read and the agreements we made, they need to open up the possibilities, the idea of common ground, getting to the center.

JOHN Yes. And there's this question about action and how does this get us to action. Because people, I think rightly, for a lot of reasons want to act on this conflict – on this injustice. How is dialogue useful in getting to action? I want to explore that further as we go.

KRISTEN But to me it's interesting because perhaps the outcomes aren't going to be the same for everybody. I was thinking about the conversation I had with one of the students. She talked about how this class has really forced her to question her assumptions and her narrative. She is at least willing to consider the implications of the positions and narratives that she holds. And to me, that's action enough.



In other words, it doesn't have to be a social movement that gets mobilized and takes to the streets. Each of them needs to ask themselves what they want to do next.

JOHN Because these are shifts that are happening. Asking ourselves the tough questions. I mean what you just described in that woman is actually quite an accelerated shift, right?

KRISTEN It's only been ten weeks. And at the end of the day, isn't that what we want students to do in terms of the form of critical thinking. This is the ultimate in critical thinking to me – that you

actually have to think critically about the views you hold. Forget about critical thinking about a journal article or some academic piece, but really critically thinking about yourself – that is the ultimate in introspection.

Professor Kristen Williams (Government) volunteered to teach a Dialogue Seminar on the Israel-Palestine conflict starting in the Fall of 2009. DD Fellows Lila Trowbridge and Laura Nowell and Assistant Director of the DD program, John Sarrouf, joined Professor Williams in facilitating the dialogue class.

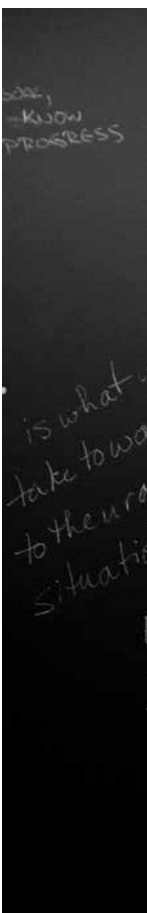


Thank you for extending the invitation to us students to attend Patricia Romney's talk and the Conversation Café that followed. I found it to be extremely insightful and meaningful. I walked away thinking about very many things, and with a deep, satisfied feeling – the kind that leads to confidence and inspiration for further ideas. I came home to my roommate raving and filled with energy and thoughts on what had just been spoken and sifted out in Romney's talk and in our following dialogues. [It is]...inspiring work that I feel privileged and proud to be a part of and will certainly take with me on my path in the coming years.

EMILY BELL '10



(TOP) Michele Holt-Shannon, University of New Hampshire; (LEFT) Peter Hocking, Rhode Island School of Design; (ABOVE) Alethia Jones, SUNY Albany



A REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The conference day was framed by Diana Chapman Walsh (President Emerita of Wellesley College), who called us to *a new agenda for higher education – one that encourages students to develop an awareness of themselves as reflective and responsible agents in the world*. She launched us with the question “*If you could be part of an ongoing conversation – on a campus or campuses (your own or others you know) about this idea of the deep purposes of higher education, what questions would you really really want that conversation to take up and how?*”

my hope is...

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in we face

SAY
MORE

ARTISTIC CREATIVITY WILL
SPARK & BE PART OF DIALOGUE

that
everything
horizon

my hope is...

For a university
not structured into
separate departments.

College campuses will
spawn an effective
movement for
CIVIC CLIMATE CHANGE

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- that waves produce waves
- THAT Dialogue Leads us
TO Discover OUR COLLE
HUMANITY IN ORDER
a positive impact
THIS EARTH

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not
envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.
It is not rude, it is not self-seeking,
it is not easily angered. It keeps no record
of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but
rejoices with truth. It always protects,
always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

THAT SOME
POLITICALLY
CONSERVATIVE VOICES
WILL JOIN OUR RANKS.

The great value of dialogic work rests in its nexus between real and ideal worlds. Its methods enact ideal principles like equality, respect, and dignity. Its goal (understanding) presupposes some great chain of being it serves and from which the betterment of mankind flows.

These principles are the ideals that animate dialogue, but it is its practice in the world of the real that gives it its value. All of the stimulating discussion at Clark would have been little more than academic exercise were it not for the very personal experience the dialogic process mediated. We would not care about its principles and meanings if they didn't impact the actual work we do and hope to do in the future. Dialogue makes ideal real and real ideal. Without the one, what is the point of the other? Dialectically, dialogically, creatively, we are called upon to move the work forward. Clark provided a model by which we can carry out this mission.

PAUL KUNIN '76



(ABOVE) Paul LeVasseur of the School for International Training in a dialogue session with Nancy Thomas of The Democracy Imperative, Laura Chasin of the Public Conversations Project and others.



(RIGHT) A session on dialogue and governance attracted many of the administrators and faculty leaders in the group.



Dialogue sessions and workshops throughout the day considered the issues of where dialogue lives on campus (pedagogy, governance, campus life, community relationships), and opportunities and challenges in each of those. Workshops were held on practices (Way of Council, Intergroup dialogue), interfaith leadership, crossing power lines, campus controversies, dialogue and deliberation for democracy, and dialogue and pedagogy.

In her lunch talk Elizabeth Coleman, president of Bennington College, asked that we seek to shape *an education that unites citizenship, dialogue, and democracy while simultaneously expanding and deepening our intellectual and imaginative resources.... The emphasis on effective action is critical. In addition to answering the question of what kind of a world should we be making, it is critical that we address as well what kind of a world are we making and what kind of a world can we be making.*

The last conference session focused specifically on the relationship between dialogue and action and transformation. The conference ended with final comments from Diana Chapman Walsh, and a sense from participants of a desire to continue conversations and the network begun with this meeting.

The Public Conversations Project co-sponsored the conference with the Difficult Dialogues initiative at Clark.



a conversation
i'd like to be
is how a part of...
to engage our
students deeply-



who are we
having a dialogue?

a question
I bring today...

IS DIALOGUE
MY HINDRA
MY SCALE?

a conversation
i'd like to be
is how a part of...

to engage our
students deeply-

"Each individual is
conscious of himself
but nobody is conscious
of themselves collectively"

Thomas Merton

what will it
take to make us up
to the urgency of the
situation we face

SHY
MORON

my hope is...

PERIODIC GIVING WILL
GROW/EXPAND/IMPROVE

For a university
not standardize
the spirit of inquiry

College campuses will
open an effective
platform for
CIVIC CLIMATE CHANGE

that I see
everything on the
horizon

ut under impeller
under cloud

-that waves produce waves

-That Dialogue Leads us

To Discover our collective

Humanity in order to make

positive impact on
this earth

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Appendix

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120	Annotated Bibliography & Online Resources

Definitions of Dialogue

“DIALOGUE” COMES FROM THE GREEK word *dialogos*. *Logos* means ‘the word’, or in our case we would think of ‘the meaning of the word’. And *dia* means ‘through’ – it doesn’t mean ‘two’... The picture or image that this derivation suggests is of a stream of meaning flowing among and through and between us. This will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which may emerge some new understanding. It’s something new, which may not have been in the starting point at all. It’s something creative. And this shared meaning is the ‘glue’ or ‘cement’ that holds people and societies together.

DAVID BOHM
On Dialogue

Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence, dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming – between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them.

PAOLO FREIRE
Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Dialogue...is a conversation with a center, not sides. It is a way of taking the energy of our differences and channeling it toward something that has never been created before. It lifts us out of polarization and into a greater common sense, and is thereby a means for accessing the intelligence and coordinated power of groups of people.

WILLIAM ISAACS
Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together

The roots of the word *dialogue* come from the Greek words *dia* and *logos*. *Dia* mean ‘through’; *logos* translates to ‘word’ or ‘meaning’. In essence, a dialogue is a flow of meaning. But it is more than this too. In the most ancient meaning of the word, *logos* meant ‘to gather together’, and suggested an intimate awareness of the relationships among things in the natural world. In that sense, *logos* may be best rendered in English as ‘relationship’. The Book of John in the New Testament begins: “In the beginning was the Word (*logos*)”. We could now hear this as “In the beginning was the Relationship.”

To take it one step further, dialogue is a conversation in which people think together in relationship. Thinking together implies that you no longer take your own position as final. You relax your grip on certainty and listen to possibilities that result simply from being in relationship with others – possibilities that might not otherwise have occurred.

To listen respectfully to others, to cultivate and speak your own voice, to suspend your opinions about others – these bring out the intelligence that lives at the very center of ourselves – the intelligence that exists when we are alert of possibilities around us and thinking freshly.

...we speak of dialogue as the outer counterpart to the inward cultivation of moment-to-moment non-judgmental awareness, or mindfulness.... No one needs to dominate in a dialogue, and indeed, it would cease being a dialogue at that point if one person or group attempted to control it. We watch the arising of and listen to the voicing of ideas, opinions, thoughts and feelings, and drink them all in a spirit of deep inquiry and intentionality, much as we do in resting in awareness in formal meditation practice, allowing it all to be treated as equally valid of at least being seen, heard and known without editing, censoring, vetting, or rejecting. A greater intelligence that seems to

JON KABAT-ZINN
Coming to Our Senses

reside in the group but is not in any one person often emerges, surprisingly, and with it a deeper collective understanding as a direct consequence of such spaciousness and openheartedness.

BRUCE MALLORY AND
NANCY THOMAS
When the Medium is the Message

...the need for inclusive forms of sustained and civil dialogue has become paramount... By this we mean inter-group and interpersonal conversations in which those present are granted an equal voice at the table, regardless of their formal status within the institution. And those at the table need to be engaged for a length of time sufficient to interrogate, deliberate and communicate. By consciously moving away from the win-lose model of traditional debate to a more equitable, safe and sustained approach to problem-solving, we can foster both ethical principles and democratic governance.

PATRICIA ROMNEY
The Art of Dialogue

Dialogue is focused conversation, engaged in intentionally with the goal of increasing understanding, addressing problems, and questioning thoughts and actions. It engages the heart as well as the mind. It is different from ordinary, everyday conversation in that dialogue has a focus and a purpose.... Dialogue, unlike debate or even discussion, is as interested in the relationship(s) between the participants as it is in the topic or theme being explored. Ultimately, real dialogue presupposes an openness to modify deeply held convictions.

The raising of questions, what I have called elsewhere the spirit of wonder, is a *sine qua non* of dialogue. Living in the questions is a good place to begin.

THE WOSK CENTER FOR
DIALOGUE WEBSITE
Simon Fraser University

What is dialogue? Dialogue is about expanding our capacity for attention, awareness and learning with and from each other. It is about exploring the frontiers of what it means to be human, in relationship to each other and our world.

Dialogue is concentrated conversation among equals. It offers helpful ways to work together cooperatively, encourages mutual understanding between diverse perspectives, produces healthy professional and personal relationships, and leads to stable, resilient outcomes.

What are some of the characteristics of dialogue? If you ask thoughtful *questions*, and listen openly to the answers, you'll have real dialogue. Scoring points as an individual prevents good dialogue. *Collaborating* as a group opens a much richer interchange. Debate is position-based and polarizing. Dialogue is *interest-focused* exploration, and reflective. *Trust* is the by product of *respect*. It transforms complex problems into collaborative, solution-oriented outcomes. There is no front of the room in dialogue. *Equality* is encouraged among participants. Everything is *personal*. Probe someone's values and personal experiences, and you'll understand their stance on policies.

JOHN BACKMAN
Why Can't We Talk?

Dialogue: an intentional, shared exploration of an issue, whose purpose is to deepen mutual understanding if not move closer to the reality of the issue, and whose structure requires participants to lay aside their preconceived notions and participate with a clear mind and a listening heart.

It's when we let our guard down and allow our differences and doubts to surface and interact that something authentic and original can begin to emerge, tentatively, in the spaces between us.

DIANA CHAPMAN WALSH
Trustworthy Leadership

And I've found that it's often in these fleeting and complicated moments that the heart and mind can come into synchrony, pointing to altogether novel educational possibilities. The key is to remain alert to those moments and to move with them when they arise.

We know that the most effective process for discovering these layers of meaning is through interactive and iterative dialogues and that if we undertake them sincerely and openly – and patiently – we can sometimes find our way to something entirely new. We assume that individual voices speak and act for the system as a whole, and we listen carefully for a variety of voices and the competing values they represent.

Life coheres into selves and system. In its great cohering motions, life is a poet. It brings together seemingly separate elements to create and discover new meaning.... The only way to know a system is to play with it. Life's restless urge to experiment and discover, its great tinkering, its wild surprises, invite us to become experimenters.

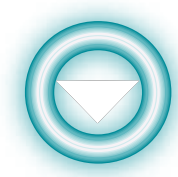
MARGARET WHEATLEY AND
MYRON KELLNER-ROGERS
A Simpler Way

We can support systems in being resilient by encouraging them to exercise their freedom to explore new connections and new information.... Open and inquiring, such systems become wiser about themselves.

As we become aware of the distinctions between forms of discourse, we can be more conscious in the ways we engage in them.

Though a general and stylized tool, this continuum offers some of those distinctions. It moves along a range from controlled / controlling to free, from fixed to fluid, from preconceived to exploratory, from autocratic to collaborative. We can locate many of our cultural norms around discourse in education, commerce, journalism, popular culture, religion, art and politics on the continuum. Silence has an interesting role in relationship to these forms of discourse. On the left end of the continuum, several forms of communication are not about exchange at all but are aimed at silencing others. On the other end of the continuum, silence is fertile ground for dialogue, giving rise to collective wisdom.

SARAH BUIE
Director, *Difficult Dialogues*
Director, *Higgins School of Humanities*

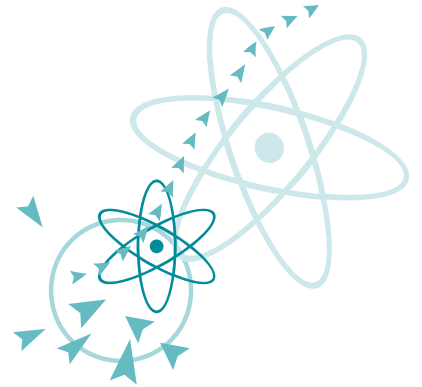
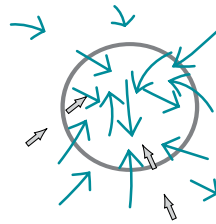


Orwellian language	pronouncement
lying or reframing so as to deceive or manipulate in order to gain one's own ends	authoritarian one-way message inequality of power no intention of exchange "I know what is best"



silence
avoidance paralysis, numbness distraction denial, secrecy confusion, stress arising from fear

Discourse Continuum



polemic

"argument is war" (Lakoff)
i.e. Crossfire
lack of listening
aggression
sparring
use of intimidation
efforts to discredit 'opponent',
sometimes by any means,
whether true or false
one version of the truth

debate

implies fixed positions
making arguments,
point by point
winners and losers
right or wrong
reasoned, logical
efforts at "winning"
one is chosen
legalistic (courtrooms,
judgments, punishments)
lack of ambiguity

discussion

civil discourse
give and take
negotiation
problem-solving
efforts at persuasion
conciliation
consensus
examination and
"breaking apart"
of issue
seeing its elements

dialogue

requires conditions of trust
based on listening
respect
self-reflection
questioning assumptions
equality
exploring the unknown
without judgment
beyond "positions"
erotic, like a dance
potential for discovery
expanded understanding
insight
creativity
innovation
action
appreciation
of common ground

silence

open to the unknown
collective wisdom



DIALOGUE METHODS

The variety of forms and methods in dialogue is a testament to both its flexibility and adaptability. It also speaks to the enduring roots of dialogue in societies ancient and modern. Dialogue is as much about how we orient to each other as it is a specific method or form, though forms share certain aspects: active listening, reflection, transparency, examining power and creating space for egalitarian participation.

The following five methods have been referenced in this document, and are the primary ones we rely on to guide our work. As part of our repertoire, they each have their specific applications. We work with them in an iterative process, adapting them as new questions, issues, constraints, or opportunities present themselves. The goals and shape of each practice are sketched so that the reader might imagine what the method is like in its working. We also include resources for more information.

Methods

BOHM DIALOGUE

Inspiration

Bohmian dialogue is less a dialogue technology that can be applied in particular situations than a deep theory about the nature of thought itself. The principles and practices of Bohmian dialogue inform the fundamental approach of many present day thinkers and practitioners of dialogue and deliberation, although few pursue dialogue's deep possibilities with the focus and conceptual clarity of David Bohm.

Concept

David Bohm is best known for his work in quantum physics, and his work on dialogue grows from his physics. Challenging the prevailing moods of atomism and reductionism, Bohm introduced the concept of an "implicate order," which he understood as a deep connectedness and holism underlying the apparently plural constitution of the world of experience from some set of fundamentally discrete basic entities. Similarly, Bohm conceived "thought" not as a dispersed property of separate individuals but as a field flowing between and among us.

For Bohm, a pervasive incoherence in the process of human thought is the essential cause of the endless crises affecting mankind. For him, dialogue is a process in which people join together to explore the field of "thinking" collectively. It invites participants to suspend their individual assumptions and prejudices, allowing these presuppositions to become visible. The purpose of dialogue practice is entirely exploratory. It aims at opening and learning. In that way Bohmian "dialogue" is distinct from discussion, debate, and deliberation. However, engaging in dialogue is not an empty theoretical exercise powerless to address and resolve present human crises. To the extent that entering the space of dialogue helps enhance and support the coherence of human thinking, the practice helps release the deep incoherence from which he believes these crises flow.

Method

In Bohmian dialogue, a group of twenty to forty participants sit together without any particular agenda or predetermined purpose for a couple of hours in sessions that repeat over time. At the beginning, Bohm suggests that a facilitator might be helpful, although this role is not a necessary part of his idea. Participants agree to suspend their assumptions, to view each other as peers in the conversation, to be as honest and transparent as possible, and to build on one another's ideas as the conversation advances. This creates "a free space for something new to happen," as participants follow the unfolding of thinking in which they are situated. The aim of the process is for each member of the group to become clearer about their

own assumptions and presuppositions and to see the collective movement of thinking that is emerging in their shared process.

RESOURCES

David Bohm, *On Dialogue*, ed. Lee Nichol (New York: Routledge, 1996)

Naomi Gryn, "David Bohm and Group Dialogue, or The Interconnectedness of Everything," *Jewish Quarterly*, Autumn 2003, pp. 93–97

www.david-bohm.net

CONVERSATION CAFÉ

Inspiration

In many structured events – lectures, movies, panels – some people are information givers while others are information receivers. Audience members sit and listen; perhaps they ask a question or make a comment. But we yearn for more: more involvement, more interaction, more collaborative learning.

Concept

Public events are perfect places to encourage dialogue in your community. They spark many thoughts, questions, and experiences in all of us. Conversation Cafés are a way to bring that energy into the room by giving a short-hand dialogue structure to an event. We use Conversation Cafés after a film screening, after a speaker, almost anytime we need to jump right into a spontaneous dialogue without a lot of participant preparation.

Method

SET UP Seat five to ten people in small groups forming as much of a circle as your space will allow (this number is flexible, but works best in groups under ten if possible). Prepare progressive dialogue questions to get the group started – two or three questions that matter to the group and get them personally engaged in the topic. Designate one facilitator per group, but a single host can give all the groups spoken or printed instructions. Facilitators introduce themselves and the process.

DIALOGUE Pass out the dialogue agreements and ask the group to read, discuss, and agree to them. This shortens the agreement process, allowing more time on the topic. The agreements can be altered, but they prove a good distillation of what a group normally finds acceptable and tend to encourage good dialogue. Ask the question. Give the group a minute to think about the question before answering. This allows people to gather their thoughts, encourages brevity, and allows people to listen rather than worrying about what they are going to say.

Ask someone to begin; go around in the order of the circle once so that everybody has the chance to share.

People are always allowed to pass, as some want to participate by simply listening.

Open the floor for “pop-corn” style dialogue where people speak as they wish. Always remind the group of their agreements to give space to others and be mindful of the space each individual takes up. Ask next question, following the same pattern of asking, pausing to think, going around, and opening up.

SYNTHESIS After the dialogue in the smaller groups, bring the whole group back together to synthesize their discoveries. You can ask for a report from each group, or pose a question like, *What new idea did you hear tonight that you will be taking away with you?* Or invite people to write their ideas on a large sheet of paper for everybody to look at as they leave.

Give people the option of sharing contact information so that they might come away from an event having built a community and making connections that might extend beyond the Conversation Café.

RESOURCES

www.conversationcafe.org

DIALOGUE AGREEMENTS

When speaking & listening

Allow equal time for all voices within the circle

Suspend judgment as best you can

Speak for yourself not for others

Speak not to persuade but to be understood

Be an active listener listen to gain understanding

Question your own assumptions and notice those of others

Concentrate on listening rather than on what you will say next

Overall process

What is said in the circle is confidential

One may choose to pass at any time

DAY OF LISTENING

Inspiration

It is challenging to foster the deep listening at the foundation of dialogue in our communities in these times. Building the skills of listening is an essential first step toward effective dialogue and toward building a culture of dialogue on campus.

Concept

To encourage an awareness and practice of active listening, we gave listening its own day on campus. By assigning facilitators and creating listening spaces, we made the process more intentional. A Day of Listening challenges our normal more impulsive and reactive mode of listening. By giving it a literal space, we prioritize attention to discourse.

Method

SET UP On our first Day of Listening, 26 one-hour sessions took place all over campus. Strategically placed to be accessible and to attract all facets of the Clark Community, the sites were marked with big yellow “Listen Here” signs.

Pairs of thirty facilitators drawn from the faculty, students, and staff set the scene by welcoming each group. They encouraged participants to have fun while exploring the relationship between listening and dialogue.

Facilitators called participants back to the circle and asked the group in a final round of sharing: *What enhances the process of listening? What gets in the way? What are the characteristics of good listening – good listeners? How can we more often create that space with others?*

Participants left with a bright yellow button proclaiming, “I am listening,” and an increased awareness of the power and possibility of listening intentionally to each other.

PRACTICE Each listening group was rearranged into random pairs to reflect and talk for two minutes each. They asked each other to describe *a recent time when you listened to someone or when someone listened to you – and where you could tell it made a difference*. This was done without preliminary introductions. Participants were then called back into the main circle for general introductions and to share why they came to the Day of Listening.

The group was then divided into different pairs and addressed these questions: *Do you feel that your partner was listening? Did you feel heard? What made you feel this way? What was it like to be listened to? What do you need to do to become a better listener? How can you encourage others to do so?*

PUBLIC CONVERSATIONS PROJECT APPROACH

Inspiration

When the need for conflict engagement or creative collaboration in a group becomes evident and new ways of conversing about issues is desired, we turn to the Public Conversations Project (PCP) approach.

Concept

The Public Conversations Project approach to dialogue is a highly structured conversation. According to PCP, “the participants’ primary goal is to pursue mutual understanding rather than agreement or immediate solutions. As participants pursue this goal, they sometimes decide to pursue other goals...to become better informed together or to build consensus about ways that they can act on shared values.” When people experience a polarizing conflict, PCP encourages conveners to: *gain clarity and consensus about the purposes of the conversation; make communication agreements that will help the group to achieve its purposes; and appoint a facilitator whose sole responsibility is to help participants honor their agreements and reach their shared purposes.*

Method

The PCP method and its success depend heavily on collaboration in the dialogue and in the preparation, working closely with conveners – leaders who initiated the dialogue process.

Engage participants by telephone or e-mail to address questions and concerns about the process or the participants’ ability to abide by the agreements. Begin to build a relationship with the participants.

PREPARATION Explore the appropriateness of the PCP Method to the given situation by asking, “Is this the right method for the situation? Is there time and resources to see the project through?”

Map the situation, by interviewing potential participants and knowledgeable parties about the “old” stuck conversation and “new” possibilities for understanding. Develop a provisional meeting design, by working with a diverse subset of participants and conveners to develop an outline for the process.

Issue invitations that allow participants to make an informed decision about whether this kind of gathering and process will serve their ends. Include in the invitation: a statement of objective, participants’ expectations of facilitators, conveners’ and facilitators’ expectations of the participants, contact information, and a list of proposed group agreements that will set expectations.

MEETING Meetings rely on a structure with clear and carefully worded dialogue questions. Facilitation is characterized by transparency, compassion, and legitimacy. Legitimacy is gained by the collaborative nature of the design, the agreements made by the participants, and the group decision-making processes that allow for participant ownership.

Feedback is actively sought to encourage further reflection by participants on the process and the content. It helps to determine next steps, and for designers and facilitators to learn from the experience and better their practice.

RESOURCES

For more information and detailed explanations please visit the PCP website at www.publicconversations.org

WAY OF COUNCIL

Inspiration

Our communications and state of community too often reflect our fast-paced, stress-filled world. When we look for a way of centering, delving deeper, and bringing a spiritual consciousness to our interactions, we use Way of Council.

Concept

If we slow down to connect with the spiritual in each of us and in our surroundings, we become aware that each of us is a piece of a whole and healthy community. This practice starts with a deep awareness of the self – our heart and mind – with becoming aware of our own inner landscape of attachments, judgments, insecurities, and needs. Way of Council depends on empathic listening and acceptance of others.

Method

CREATING SPACE Arrange the group in a circle. Give attention to the surroundings if possible. Create a focal point – a candle or meaningful object to place in the center of the circle to remind the group of its higher purposes. Mark the sanctity of the process with some offering of hope – a dedication, poem, or prayer.

Choose an object to be used as a talking piece, held by the person speaking. This object should symbolize the visions and intentions of the group. The talking piece achieves many purposes. It empowers the speaker, assuring each has the full time needed; it signals a clear beginning and end to each person's sharing; and it creates space between speakers for reflection. When at rest in the center of the circle, the talking piece evokes the potential of the group.

PRACTICE Clearly mark an opening that honors the transition between the normal ways of communicating and the intentions and forms brought to the Way of Council. A check-in or "open council" can start with sharing names and reasons for participating. Follow the guidelines for Council as shown here. Pose a question and ask people to share responses around the circle. Be open to a sudden eruption of suppressed issues that may disrupt the planned agenda. Embrace the opportunity hiding within the disruption or digression.

In closing, determine the group's readiness for closure. Acknowledge what has been done and what has been left undone. Allow for a last go-around or place the talking piece in the center for participants to pick up if desired. End with some formal or ceremonial gesture.

RESOURCES

www.ojaifoundation.org/Council

COUNCIL GUIDELINES

Speak from your heart.

Listen from your heart.

Be spontaneous.

Be pithy and to the point.

Speak whatever will serve yourself, the circle and the highest good.

Whatever is said in the circle, stays in the circle.

DIFFICULT DIALOGUES SYMPOSIA EVENTS

Fall 2006 through Spring 2010

This list includes the public programs sponsored by the Difficult Dialogues Initiative since its launch in 2006. More information on the symposia topics and individual events are available on our website at **www.clarku.edu/difficultdialogues**.

Symposia Events

November 2006

DD PROJECT LAUNCH

The Day of Listening

Campus-wide dialogue circles

Dave Bell (IDCE)

The Way of Council

Workshop

Paul LeVasseur (SIT)

Bonnie Mennell (SIT)

**Keynote Address: Diana Chapman Walsh,
President, Wellesley College**

Speaker and panel conversation

Diana Chapman Walsh

Miriam Chion (IDCE)

Barbara Bigelow (GSOM)

Dave Bell (IDCE)

Bridging the Abortion Divide:

The Boston Story

Panel and questions

Laura Chasin

Public Conversation Project

Boston dialogue members

**Communication for
Social Change Consortium**

Presentation and dialogue

Heidi Larson (IDCE)

James Hunt

David Bohm and the Wholeness of Nature

Presentation and Conversation Café

Les Blatt (Physics)

Promises

Film screening and Conversation Café

Ian DeZalia (IDCE)

Kevin Anderson (V&PA)

Drumming as Dialogue

Workshop

Earth Spirit

Spring 2007

THE STATE OF OUR DEMOCRACY

Beyond Partisan.org

Speaker and dialogue

Rob Weinstock, David Tutor, Adam Gomolin, Bill

Ferrell, Nate Byer (all Wesleyan '06)

Why We Fight: Eugene Jarecki

Film screening, talk and discussion

**How to Change the World: Self and Society in
American Transcendentalism**

Philip F. Gura

Day of Listening

Campus-wide dialogue circles

Hacking Democracy

Panel and Conversation Café

Nancy Tobi, Anthony Stevens,

Brian Cook (Government), Zo Tobi '08

Visual Dialogues

Exhibition and artist talks

Elli Crocker (V&PA), curator

Stephen DiRado (V&PA),

Michael Dowling, Steve Hollinger,

Illegal Art, Steve Locke, James Montford,

Sarina Khan Reddy, Elaine Spatz-Rabinowitz,

Thomas Staff

Spring 2007

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Symposium Planning Committee

Miriam Chion (IDCE)

Ginger Vaughan (English)

Odile Ferly (FL&L)

Betsy Huang (English)

Priscilla Elsass (GSOM)

Others as below

Facing the Truth: A Reconciliation Effort in Northern Ireland

Film screening and discussion

Donna Hicks

Who Framed Bilingual Education?

Speaker and dialogue circles

Fern Johnson (English)

Broken Promises, Broken Dreams

Speaker and dialogue circles

Alice Rothschild

Women's Studies

What Makes Me White?

Film screening and panel discussion

Aimee Sands (English), Winston Napier (English), Miriam Chion (IDCE), Betsy Huang (English), Anne Ellen Geller (English & Writing Center)

Periracism

Speaker

Ann duCille (Wesleyan)

AAICS Event

Coming Alive to this Moment:

Introduction to Zen Practice

Workshop

David Dayan Rynick Sensei, Melissa Myozen Blacker Sensei

Co-sponsored with Klein Professor

Paul Ropp (History)

Day of Listening

Campus-wide dialogue circles

Race is the Place

Film screening and Conversation Café

Fall 2007

RELIGION AND TOLERANCE

Symposium Planning Committee

Paul Ropp (History)

Meredith Neuman (English)

Jesus Camp

Film screening and Conversation Café

Faith and Tolerance in a Multi-Cultural World

Interfaith dialogue panel

Paul Ropp (History), Tom McKibbens,

Melissa Blacker, Mohamed Lazzouni,

David Coyne

Klein Professorship

Day of Listening

Campus-wide dialogue circles

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down

Speaker

Anne Fadiman

Presidential Lecture

Questions of Faith

A spoken word-chorus performance

Clark Students, Meredith Neuman (English)

Can Religions be Tolerant?

Is Pluralism Possible?

Speaker and discussion

Diana Eck (Harvard)

South Asian Studies Forum

Sound and Spirit

Performance

BoneSong

Valerie Claff (V&PA)

Fall 2007

POWER

Symposium Planning Committee

Miriam Chion (IDCE)

Les Blatt (Physics)

Patty Doherty (OIA)

Lisa Kasmer (English)

**War of the Walls: Rebellion and
Graphic Art in Oaxaca**

Photography exhibition

Aaron Tukey

**Don't Just Talk at Someone – Sit There!
Toward Dialogue and Engagement on
Global Warming**

Talk and dialogue circles

Susi Moser

**Bridging the Impossible: Confronting
Barriers to Dialogue between Germans,
Jews, and Palestinians**

Talk and panel discussion

Julia Chaitin, Thomas Kuehne (History), Debórah

Dwork (History), Rebecca Phillips, Srinivasan

Sitaraman (Government), Pamela Steiner

Strassler Center for Genocide Studies

**A Life in Two Genders: Women's Voices/
Past and Present, part 1**

Speaker and dialogue circles

Jennifer Finney Boylan (Bowdoin)

Office of Intercultural Affairs

**Regendering History: Women's Voices/
Past and Present, part 2**

Talk and panel discussion

Lisa Kasmer (English), Amy Richter (History),

Kristen Williams (Government), Valerie Sperling

(Government), Srini Sitaraman (Government)

**Power, Ethics, Science & Technology
at the Dawn of the Nuclear Age:**

A reading from Copenhagen

Play reading and conversation

Les Blatt (Physics), Gino DiIorio (V&PA)

**War of the Walls: Examining the Power
Relationships Behind the Art**

Artist talk, panel and Conversation Café

Aaron Tukey, Dianne Rocheleau (Geography),

Elizabeth Kubick (Witness for Peace)

Encounter Point

Film screening and Conversation Café

**Talking about the Subtleties of Power without
Paranoia: Some Feminist Clues**

Speaker

Cynthia Enloe (Government, IDCE)

Into Great Silence

Film screening and Conversation Café

Spring 2008

CLIMATE CHANGE

Symposium Planning Committee

Jennie Stevens (IDCE)

Halina Brown (IDCE)

Philip Vergragt (IDCE)

Rachel Shea (Goddard)

Olivia Taylor (Marsh)

many others as below

Some Like It Hot...but Lots More Don't:

The Changing Climate of US Politics

Speaker and Conversation Café

David Orr (Oberlin)

Presidential Lecture

Focus the Nation Teach-In

Two day event with workshops,

panels, activities

Jennie Stevens (IDCE), Ron Eastman (IDCE),

Heidi Larson (IDCE), Billie Turner II

(Geography), Jackie Geoghegan (Economics),

Brian Cook (Government), Philip Vergragt,

Robert (Gil) Pontius (IDCE), Gino DiIorio

(V&PA), John Baker, Liza Grandia (IDCE),

Mary-Ellen Boyle (Management), Halina

Brown (IDCE), Jim Gomes (Mosakowski),

Karen Frey (Geography), Joe De Rivera

(Psychology), Rob Goble (IDCE), Michael

Butler (Government), Paul Ropp (History),

Deborah Woodcock, John Rogan (Geography),

Robert J.S. Ross (Sociology), Betsy Huang

(English), Les Blatt (Physics), Colin Polsky

(Geography), Patrick Derr (Philosophy), Chuck

Agosta (Physics)

An Inconvenient Truth

Film screening and panel discussion

Karen Frey (Geography), Colin Polsky

(Geography), Billie L. Turner II (Geography)

The 11th Hour

Film screening and Conversation Café

Climate Care: Spirit, Prayer and Song

Rev. Fred Small, Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas,

Zo Tobl '07

Day of Listening

Campus-wide dialogue circles

The Day after Tomorrow

Film screening and panel discussion

Scott Hendricks (Philosophy), Betsy Huang

(English), Stephanie Larrieux (V&PA)

In Search of the Good Life

Panel and dialogue

Halina Brown (IDCE), Philip Vergragt (Marsh)

Global Warming and American Politics

Panel discussion

Congressman Jim McGovern, Congressman

Barney Frank, Kevin Knobloch, Brian Cook,

Jim Gomes

Mosakowski Institute

Yakoana

Film screening and Conversation Café

Rachael Shea (Goddard), Octavia Taylor (Marsh)

The Climate Movement:

Diverse Actions, Unified Goals

Dinner and dialogue

Clark Sustainability Initiative

California Takes on the Challenge of Climate

Change: Meeting the State's Energy Needs in

a Carbon-Constrained World

Speaker and discussion

Jackalyne Pfannenstiel

Geller Lecture Series

Confronting Climate Change on Campus:

Striving for Climate Neutrality at Clark

Panel discussion

Jennie Stevens (IDCE), Provost David Angel,

Dave Schmidt, Kate DelVecchio '08, Matthew

Most, Jackalyne Pfannenstiel

Art from a Changing Arctic

Film screening and Conversation Café

Karen Frey (Geography), Elli Crocker (V&PA)

Fall 2008

RECLAIMING THE COMMONWEALTH

Culture as Commonwealth: Why Art and Ideas Should Be Held in Common

Speaker

Lewis Hyde (Kenyon)

Presidential Lecture

Election 2008: The Presidential Candidates and Climate Change

Panel discussion

Jim Gomes, Fern Johnson (English), Sarah Buie (Higgins), Robert Boatright (Government),

Mark Miller (Government)

Mosakowski Institute

Americans Who Tell the Truth

Exhibition opening, artist talk and

Conversation Café

Robert Shetterly

Unlearning Consumerism: Toward a Mindful Society

Talk and Conversation Café

Stephanie Kaza (UVT)

What's Behind Your Vote?

Campus conversation

Election Watch 2008

Viewing election

Awakening the Dreamer Symposium

Workshop

Zo Tobi '08, Clark Sustainability Initiative, The Unitarian Universalist Campus Fellowship, Department of Global Environmental Studies

A Brighter Future: Opening Our Hearts to Our Neighbors

Speakers and dialogue circles

City of Worcester Human Rights Commission, City Manager's Community Coalition on Bias and Hate, College of the Holy Cross

Spring 2009

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

RACE IN THE ERA OF OBAMA

Symposium Planning Committee

Miriam Chion (IDCE)

Ousmane Power-Greene (History)

Fern Johnson (English)

Barbara Bigelow (GSOM)

A More Perfect Union: A Talk by Barack Obama

Screening and Conversation Café

Dean of the College Office

Inauguration Day

Television screening

Race: The Power of an Illusion, part 1

Film screening and Conversation Café

Ousmane Power Greene

Race: The Power of an Illusion, part 2

Film screening and Conversation Café

Dean Walter Wright, Hannah Caruso '09,

Abhishek Raman '09

Race: The Power of an Illusion, part 3

Film screening and Conversation Café

Shelly Tenebaum (Sociology),

Betsy Huang (English)

The Education of a Radical:

Civil Rights in the 1960s

Speaker and dialogue circles

D'Army Bailey '65, Abhishek Raman '09

Conversations on Race, Then and Now:

A Clark Perspective

Panel discussion

D'Army Bailey '65, Shelia McCann '71,

Abhishek Raman '09

Between Barack and a Hard Place:

White Denial in the Age of Obama

Speaker and Conversation Café

Tim Wise

Office of Intercultural Affairs

A Great Cry of Soul

A musical program for African American

History Month

David Howse, Sima Kustanovich

Evolutionary Momentum in African American Studies: Legacy and Future Direction

Winston Napier honorary conference

Karla FC Holloway, keynote speaker

Higgins School of Humanities

Office of the President

Office of the Provost

Department of English

The Way of Council

Faculty Development Workshop

Bonnie Mennell, Paul LeVasseur

Hubert Harrison: The Voice of Harlem Radicalism

Speaker and conversation

Jeffrey Perry

AAICS Event

A Sense of Belonging: A Photographic Journey through Nigeria

Exhibition

Adrienne Adeyemi '10

A Specter of Sex: Gendered Foundation of Racial Formation in the United States

Speaker and conversation

Sally L. Kitch (ASU)

AAICS Event

Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide

Speaker

Andrea Lee Smith, Strassler, Family Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies

Fall 2009

OLD FORMS GIVE WAY / VISIONING THE NEW

DD through the Movies

Film series throughout the semester

Izzet Sengel (IDCE)

Oscillating Topographies / Continua

Exhibition opening and artist talk

Sarah Walker

Escape from Suburbia

Film screening and Conversation Café

Rebecca's Wild Farm

Film screening and Conversation Café

In Transition

Film screening and Conversation Café

Contemplating a Steady-State Economy

Lecture

Peter Victor

Marsh Institute

Considering *The Second Coming* by Yeats

Dialogue circle

Steve Levin (English)

Envisioning Resilient Communities

Presentation and Conversation Café

Tina Clarke and others from Transition

Towns Initiative

Shaping a Local Green Economy

Community-wide dialogue

Omar Freilla, Sarah Assefa, Sarah Buie (Higgins/DD), Jennie Stevens (IDCE), Nora Oliver '10, Julius Jones

Spring 2010

CONSIDERING GENDER

Symposium Planning Committee

Kristen Williams (Government)

Amy Richter (History)

Fern Johnson (English)

Patty Ewick (Sociology)

Barbara Bigelow (GSOM)

Anita Fabos (IDCE)

Jason Zelesky (Dean of Students)

Bob Tobin (FL&L)

and others as below

DD Through the Movies

Film series throughout the semester

Izzet Sengel (IDCE)

World Wide Views

Presentation and dialogue

Nora Oliver '10, Lila Trowbridge '12

Codes of Gender

Film screening and Conversation Café

Patty Ewick (Sociology)

Guilty Pleasures: Sex and the City

Film screening and Conversation Café

Amy Richter (History)

Fern Johnson (English)

XXY (2007)

Film screening and Conversation Café

Bob Tobin (FL&L)

**Take Gender, Add Curiosity about
Power, You've Got Feminism**

Speaker

Cynthia Enloe (IDCE)

Dialogue – Why It Matters, Now!

Conference keynote and dialogue circles

Patricia Romney, Sarah Buie (Higgins),

Dave Joseph (PCP)

**Inviting Dialogue: Renewing the Deep
Purposes of Higher Education**

Conference

Diana Chapman Walsh

Elizabeth Coleman (Bennington)

Engendering Ourselves

Dialogue circles

Jason Zelesky (Dean of Students),

Amy Richter (History)

Hardwiring and Soft Science:

Rethinking the Brain

Lecture and conversation

Rebecca Jordan-Young (Barnard)

Pain, Passion and Possibility: Inspired

Teaching and Difficult Subjects

Lecture and conversation

Tricia Rose (Brown)

AAICS Event

Community Brown Bag Lunches

Dialogue circles

Barbara Bigelow (GSOM), Hillary Gleason '11,

Walter Wright, John Sarrouf

Body and Spirit

Exhibition opening and artist talk

Elli Crocker (V&PA)

**Ida B. Wells and the Beginning of the
Modern Civil Rights Movement**

Speaker

Paula Giddings (Smith)

AAICS Event

COURSES TAUGHT WITH A DIALOGUE EMPHASIS

Spring 2007 through Spring 2010

We asked faculty to consider the questions below if they were interested in offering a DD course; the course was included if they were willing and interested in entertaining some or most of these questions. Courses listed here have been taught at least once with an emphasis on dialogue; some have been taught as many as three times.

How do you understand dialogue and its significance? What particularly interests/concerns/motivates you regarding the practice of dialogue?

Have you intentionally considered its meaning and role as it relates to the classroom, and this course? Has that led you to use some specifically dialogic methods and processes in the classroom?

Does the structure of the course support respectful speaking and listening aimed at mutual understanding or appreciation of difference? Do you create safety so that students are encouraged to participate in this way?

Are students in the course encouraged to take ownership for their own learning, as well as the collective work of the course?

Does the work of the course encourage critical thinking and engaged listening to explore and hold conflicting points of view?

Dialogue Courses

ART HISTORY	Caravaggio	Andrea LePage
ARTS	Graphic Design Projects	Jane Androski
	Sacred Space	Sarah Buie
	Graphic Design Studio	Sarah Buie
	Printmaking Workshop/Artists Books	Jennifer Hilton
COMMUNICATION	Communication and Culture in Main South	Sarah Michaels
	Intro to Communication and Culture	Matt Malsky
	Intro to Communication and Culture	Sarah Michaels
ENGLISH	Introduction to Literature	SunHee Gertz
	Strategic Speaking	Fern Johnson
	Writing out Loud	Anne Geller & Gino DiIorio
	Language and Culture in the United States	Fern Johnson
	Aliens and Others in Science Fiction	Betsy Huang
	Language at Issue	Fern Johnson
	Webs and Labyrinths: Imagining Globalization in Art and Literature	Steven Levin
	Fictions of Empire	Steven Levin
	Ethnic America: Literary and Theoretical Perspectives	Betsy Huang
	American Literary Renaissance	Meredith Neumann
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE	Sustainability Science: Environment, Society and Technology	Jennie Stephens
	The Sustainable University	Jennie Stephens
	Discovering Environmental Science	Tim Downs
GEOGRAPHY	Gender and Environment	Dianne Rocheleau
	Globalization, Environment and Justice	Dianne Rocheleau
GOVERNMENT	Dictators and Revolutionaries in Latin America	Paul Posner
	World Order and Globalization	Kristen Williams
	Comparative Environmental Politics	Paul Posner
	Representation and Deliberation Theory	Rob Boatright
	Race and Political Representation	Ravi Perry
	Peace and War	Kristen Williams
	The Global HIV/AIDS crisis	Beverly Grier
	US-Latin American Relations	Paul Posner
HISTORY	Racial Thought and Body Politics in Modern Europe (1500–2000)	Thomas Kuehne
	The Holocaust Perpetrators	Thomas Kuehne

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Local Action, Global Change	Duncan MacLean Earle
	International and Comparative Analysis of Community Development	Miriam Chion
	Program Evaluation for Youth and Community Development Initiatives	Laurie Ross
	Controlling Capitalism: Another World is Possible	Liza Grandia
	Youth and Community Development	Laurie Ross
	Advanced Topics in Development Theory Conversations with the Ghost of Marx	Kiran Asher
	Tales from the Far Side	Jude Fernando
	Sustainable Development Assessment and Planning	Tim Downs
	In the Name of God: Religion, Identity and Violence in a Globalizing World	William Fisher
	Practicum in Community Development and Planning	Laurie Ross
	Community Development and Planning Research Seminar	Miriam Chion
	Community Planning Studio	Miriam Chion
	Land Use Seminar	Miriam Chion
	Energy and Climate Social Change Research Seminar	Jennie Stephens
	Public Communication Seminar	Ray Munro
	Public Communication Seminar	Timothy Downs
	Education and Development	David Bell
INTERDISCIPLINARY	The Dialogue Seminar: Climate Change	Walter Wright, DD fellows
	The Dialogue Seminar: Reclaiming the Commonwealth	Sarah Buie, DD fellows
	The Dialogue Seminar: Race in the Era of Obama	Walter Wright, DD fellows
	The Dialogue Seminar: Visioning the New	Sarah Buie, DD fellows
	The Dialogue Seminar: Israel, Palestine and The United States	Kristen Williams, John Sarrouf, DD fellows
	The Dialogue Seminar: Considering Gender	Walter Wright, John Sarrouf, DD fellows
MANAGEMENT / ID	Making a Difference	Mary Ellen Boyle, Laurie Ross
	Making a Difference	Mary-ellen Boyle, Micki Davis
MANAGEMENT	The Art and Science of Management	Barbara Bigelow
MUSIC / ART HISTORY	Seeing and Hearing in Early Modern Europe	Ben Korstvedt, Andrea LePage

PHILOSOPHY	Relativism and Absolutism Across the Disciplines	Wes DeMarco
	The Good Life	Wes DeMarco
	Personal Values	Walter Wright
	Personal Values	Wes DeMarco
	Philosophy of Law	Judi DeCew
PSYCHOLOGY	Psychology of Nonviolence: Personal Transformation and Social Struggle	Joe de Rivera
SCREEN STUDIES	Gender and Film	Marcia Butzel
SOCIOLOGY	Deviance	Patty Ewick
	Punishment, Politics and Culture	Patty Ewick
	Global Ethnographies	Parminder Bhachu
SPANISH	Studies in Hispanic Cinema	Inmaculada Alvarez
	Revolution and Rebellion in the Hispanic World	Belen Atienza
THEATRE	Theatre Studio	Ray Munro
WOMEN'S STUDIES	Introduction to Women's Studies	Patty Ewick

Annotated Bibliography & Online Resources

BIBLIOGRAPHY

David Bohm, **On Dialogue**, Routledge, 1996

The seminal work on dialogue by physicist David Bohm, whose thinking on dialogue as a way of understanding thought and generating collective creativity has been widely influential. Bohm sees dialogue as an exploration of thought that suspends assumptions and opens a path toward wholeness. He describes the principles and characteristics of dialogue understood as a “stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us.”

Martin Buber, *Dialogue* in **Between Man and Man**, MacMillan, 1967

This text presents a classic discussion of the contrast between monologue and dialogue by an early pioneer of modern thinking about dialogue.

Paulo Freire, *Dialogics – the essence of education as the practice of freedom* in **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**, Continuum, 1970

For Freire, dialogue generates critical thinking that decodes patterns of domination in our concrete situations and moves us toward liberation. Education does not present its own program but assists its dialogic emergence from the people.

Maggie Herzig and Laura Chasin, **Fostering Dialogue Across Divides** *A Nuts and Bolts Guide from the Public Conversations Project*, Public Conversation Project, 2006

One of the leading organizations that employs dialogic methods to help clients work through situations of deep conflict has prepared this very useful and detailed guide to the principles and practices of dialogue.

William Isaacs, **Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together**, Currency, 1999

A thorough treatment of the principles and practices of dialogue, this book draws examples from Isaacs’ broad experience consulting with businesses and organizations.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Dialogues and Discussions* in **Coming to Our Senses** *Healing Ourselves and the World through Mindfulness*, Hyperion, 2005

Dialogue is presented as the outer counterpart to the inner work of mindfulness.

Bruce Mallory and Nancy Thomas, *When the Medium is the Message: Promoting Ethical Action through Democratic Dialogue* in **Change**, September/October 2003

Two leaders of The Democracy Imperative project imagine creating permanent dialogue spaces on campus. Focusing on specific methods such as Study Circles, Intergroup Dialogue, and National Issues Forums, they advocate for dialogue and deliberation as basic to the work of higher education.

Patricia Romney, *The Art of Dialogue* in **Civic Dialogue, Arts & Culture Findings from Animating Democracy** by Pam Korza, Barbara Schaffer Bacon and Andrea Assaf, Americans for The Arts, 2005.

Beginning with a community conflict over a proposed production of *West Side Story* in Amherst, Massachusetts, Romney opens up the theories of dialogue advanced by Bakhtin, Freire, Bohm, and Isaacs. She applies their insights to the initial example.

Peter Senge, Dialogue and Discussion from *The Discipline of Team Learning* in **The Fifth Discipline** *The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, Currency, 2006

David Bohm's core principles can provide a framework for the development of a team learning approach.

Diana Chapman Walsh, **Trustworthy Leadership** *Can We Be the Leaders We Need Our Students to Become?*, Fetzer Institute, 2006

Walsh surveys literature on leadership and formulates five commitments that can help educators in colleges and universities become leaders "our students can trust." Her principles of trustworthy leadership are all about dialogue – "we need to create communities that can function as circles of sustaining support."

ONLINE RESOURCES

Animating Democracy Initiative

A program of Americans for the Arts Institute for Community Development and the Arts, fostering arts and cultural activity that encourages and enhances civic dialogues.

www.americansforthearts.org/AnimatingDemocracy

The Ashland Institute

Teaching the personal and collective capabilities needed to fulfill the promise of collaboration and creative community. Their offerings focus on skilled Dialogue and individual anchoring in Essential Self – both necessary to thrive in the intensities of our time.

www.id.mind.net

Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

A non-profit organization which integrates contemplative awareness and contemporary life, to help create a more just, compassionate, and reflective society.

www.contemplativemind.org

Conversation Café

Promoting community, democracy and wisdom world-wide through generating millions of open, respectful public conversations.

www.conversationcafe.org

Dialogos

A world leader and pioneer in the theory and practice of dialogue, organizational learning and collective leadership

www.dialogos.com

Difficult Dialogues Initiative

The initiative launched by the Ford Foundation in 2005, with 27 programs in colleges and universities around the country.

www.difficultdialogues.org

National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation

NCDD's mission is to bring together and support people, organization and resources in ways that expand the power of discussion to benefit society.

www.thataway.org

The Ojai Foundation

The Ojai Foundation seeks to strengthen individuals, families, schools, and communities by teaching ways of listening and speaking from the heart, practicing the Way of Council, and supporting the emergence of a compassionate, sustainable and peaceful world.

www.ojaifoundation.org

Public Conversations Project

PCP helps people with fundamental disagreements over divisive issues develop the mutual understanding and trust essential for strong communities and positive action.

www.publicconversations.org

The World Café

This website holds a wealth of information and resources about holding “conversations that matter”, based on a set of integrated design principles.

www.theworldcafe.com



ABOUT THIS BOOK

The map is not the territory. Through an emergent process, the Clark dialogue project encourages a shift of consciousness, and social change. Perhaps it goes without saying that this book, as a map of its evolution, is an approximate overlay, and there are many oversimplifications. More than that, the process of dialogue can be known only by doing it; neither the experience nor its viral impact is readily delineated.

What we offer here is a polyphonic chorus of evidence and reflections from project participants – an experiment in giving form to this complex inquiry unfolding even as we call it out for representation. Our primary hope is that it serves as an invitation to dialogue for you.

The conceptual framework for this document was developed by Sarah Buie and Jane Androski '02; the narrative and timeline were written by Sarah Buie. The methods section was primarily written by John Sarrouf; Walter Wright wrote on David Bohm and developed the annotated bibliography. Other contributions are as cited, with unattributed texts written by Jane Androski or Sarah Buie. Kris Allen served as editor for the document.

The document was designed by Mary Banas, and design-edited by Ayanna Ashley Doiron of Flanders + Associates. Photographs are by Rebecca Moses '10, Jane Androski, Carol Mancusi-Ungaro and others.

The typeface used throughout is Concorde BE, designed by Gunter Gerhard Lange in 1969 for the Berthold Type Foundry. The paper is Finch Fine. The book was printed in a first edition of 1,250 copies by Flagship Press.





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