

### A Few Thoughts on Dialogue . . .

<p><b>What are a few ways to define dialogue?</b></p>	<p>"Dialogue is not like other forms of communication (chatting, arguing, negotiating, and so on). Dialogue is an activity directed toward discovery and new understanding..." (Burbules, p. 8).</p> <p>"It is not something we <i>do</i> or <i>use</i>; it is a relation that we <i>enter into</i> - (Burbules, p. xiii).</p>
<p><b>What can we gain from dialogue?</b></p>	<p>"Dialogue represents a continuous, developmental communicative interchange through which we stand to gain a fuller comprehension of the world, ourselves and one another" (Burbules, p. 8).</p> <p>"A successful dialogue involves a willing partnership and cooperation in the face of likely disagreements, confusions, failures, and misunderstandings" (Burbules, p. 19).</p>
<p><b>What does dialogue ask of those engaged in it?</b></p>	<p>"Whether labeled 'discussion,' or 'dialogue,' or 'conversation,' the liveliest interactions are critical" (Brookfield &amp; Preskill, p. 7).</p> <p>"Our understanding of discussion [dialogue] incorporates reciprocity and movement, exchange and inquiry, cooperation and collaboration, formality and informality" (Brookfield &amp; Preskill, p. 6).</p>
<p><b>What are potential outcomes of dialogue?</b></p>	<p>"Once one embarks in a dialogical exchange, various degrees of convergent or divergent understandings might result. . . ." (a) agreement and consensus (b) not agreement but a common understanding (c) not a common understanding but an understanding of differences (d) little understanding but a respect across differences (e) irreconcilable and incommensurable difference (Burbules &amp; Rice, p. 409).</p>
<p><b>What helps us "sustain a dialogical relation over time"?</b></p>	<p>"...what we have called 'communicative virtues' ...help make dialogue possible... tolerance, patience, respect for differences, a willingness to listen, the inclination to admit that one may be mistaken, the ability to reinterpret or translate one's own concerns in a way that makes them comprehensible to others, the self-imposition of restraint so others may 'have a turn' to speak, and the disposition to express one's self honestly and sincerely" (Burbules &amp; Rice, p. 411).</p>

Brookfield, S. D., & Preskill, S. 2005. *Discussion as a way of teaching: Tools and techniques for democratic classrooms*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Burbules, N. C. 1993. *Dialogue in teaching: Theory and practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Burbules, N. C., & Rice. S. 1992. Dialogue across differences: Continuing the conversation. *Harvard Educational Review*, 61, 393-416.